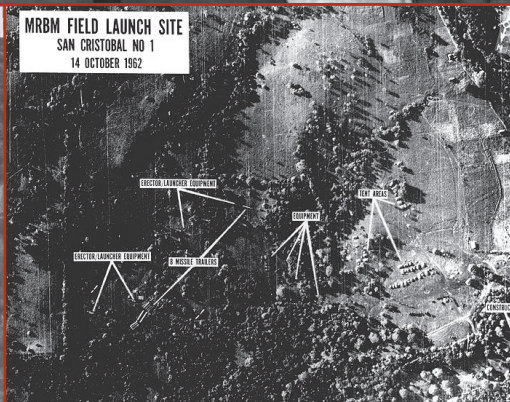
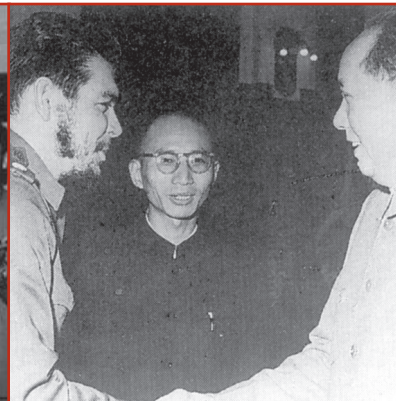


COLD WAR INTERNATIONAL HISTORY PROJECT

BULLETIN

The Global Cuban Missile Crisis at 50 New Evidence From Behind the Iron, Bamboo, and Sugarcane Curtains, and Beyond



Featuring new evidence on:

- * When Che Met Mao
- * Behind Closed Kremlin Doors
- * The View From Havana
- * Khrushchev Unplugged
- * The Soviet-Cuban Missile Crisis
- * Mikoyan's "Mission Impossible"
- * Cuba and the Sino-Soviet Split
- * Would-Be Mediators? Brazilian, Polish, Dutch...
- * Raul Castro in Eastern Europe, Kosygin in Havana

Published in cooperation with the National Security Archive • Edited by James G. Hershberg and Christian F. Ostermann





The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars is the national, living U.S. memorial honoring President Woodrow Wilson. In providing an essential link between the worlds of ideas and public policy, the Center addresses current and emerging challenges confronting the United States and the world. The Center promotes policy-relevant research and dialogue to increase the understanding and enhance the capabilities and knowledge of leaders, citizens, and institutions worldwide. Created by an act of Congress in 1968, the Center is a nonpartisan institution headquartered in Washington, D.C.; it is supported by both public and private funds.

Conclusions or opinions expressed in Center publications and programs are those of the authors and speakers. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Center staff, fellows, trustees, advisory groups, or any individuals or organizations that provide financial support to the Center.

The Center is the publisher of *The Wilson Quarterly* and the home of both the Woodrow Wilson Center Press and the dialogue television and radio program. For more information about the Center's activities and publications, please visit us on the Web at <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/>.

Joseph B. Gildenhorn, Chairman of the Board
Sander R. Gerber, Vice Chairman

Jane Harman, Director, President and CEO

Public Board Members:

James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress
Hillary R. Clinton, Secretary, U.S. Department of State,
G. Wayne Clough, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution,
Arne Duncan, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education,
David Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, James
Leach, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities,
Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary, U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services, Designated Appointee of the
President from within the Federal Government: Fred P.
Hochberg, Chairman and President, Export-Import Bank

Private Board Members:

Timothy Broas; John T. Casteen, III; Charles E. Cobb, Jr.;
Thelma Duggin; Carlos M. Gutierrez; Susan Hutchison;
Barry S. Jackson

Wilson National Cabinet:

Eddie and Sylvia Brown, Melva Bucksbaum and Raymond Learsy, Ambassadors Sue and Chuck Cobb, Lester Crown, Thelma Duggin, Judi Flom, Sander R. Gerber, Ambassador Joseph B. Gildenhorn and Alma Gildenhorn, Harman Family Foundation, Susan Hutchison, Frank F. Islam, Willem Kooyker, Linda B. and Tobia G. Mercurio, Dr. Alexander V. Mirtchev, Wayne Rogers, Leo Zickler

Cold War International History Project

EDITOR: CHRISTIAN F. OSTERMANN

GUEST-EDITOR: JAMES G. HERSHBERG

ASSISTANT EDITORS: LAURA DEAL, ALLISON LYALIKOV

DESIGN: DIANA MICHELI

Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) was established at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., in 1991 with the generous support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. It is directed by Christian F. Ostermann, who oversees the Wilson Center's History and Public Policy Program.

The Project supports the full and prompt release of historical materials by governments on all sides of the Cold War, and seeks to accelerate the process of integrating new sources, materials and perspectives from the former "Communist bloc" with the historiography of the Cold War which has been written over the past few decades largely by Western scholars reliant on Western archival sources. It also seeks to transcend barriers of language, geography, and regional specialization to create new links among scholars interested in Cold War history.

Among the activities undertaken by the Project to promote this aim are a periodic Bulletin and other publications to disseminate new findings, views, and activities pertaining to Cold War history; a fellowship program for young historians from the former Communist bloc countries to conduct archival research and study Cold War history in the United States; and international scholarly meetings, conferences, and seminars.

CWIHP receives funding from the Korea Foundation (Seoul), the MacArthur Foundation (Chicago), the Karl and Martha Maunter Fund, the Carnegie Corporation (New York), the Leon Levy Foundation (New York), the Blavatnik Family Foundation (New York), and other donors.

Donations to the project are very welcome and, like all contributions to the Wilson Center, are tax-deductible.

CWIHP Advisory Committee

William C. Taubman (Amherst College), Chair

Michael Beschloss

James H. Billington (Library of Congress)

Warren Cohen (University of Maryland – Baltimore County)

John Lewis Gaddis (Yale University)

James G. Hershberg (George Washington University)

Samuel F. Wells, Jr. (Woodrow Wilson Center)

Sharon Wolchik (George Washington University)

CWIHP Senior Scholars

Hope M. Harrison (The George Washington University)

Chen Jian (Cornell University)

A. Ross Johnson

Bernd Schaefer

David Wolff (Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido)

Vladislav Zubok (Temple University)

From the CWIHP Director



The Cold War International History Project is pleased to present this Issue of the CWIHP Bulletin on “The Global Cuban Missile Crisis.” Timed for publication on the 50th anniversary of this most dangerous Cold War crisis this October, the Issue continues the Project’s mission to enrich scholarship and public policy debate through new archival evidence from inaccessible (or less easily accessible) archives around the world.

This online Issue features sources on the Cuban Missile Crisis from more than twenty countries: Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany (East and West), Hungary, Italy, Israel, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, and North Vietnam. In *toto* they will, we hope, contribute to internationalizing the history of the crisis—with respect to decision-making drama during the crisis centered in Moscow, Washington and Havana, as well as its near global ripples and reverberations that made themselves felt in such distant corners as Pyongyang and Hanoi. Three major introductions set the historiographic scene for these materials. Shorter introductions and editorial notes provide first analytic cracks at the sources.

A centerpiece of the issue—“Sino-Cuban Relations and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1960-62”—grows out of the remarkable archival opening at Foreign Ministry Archive of the People’s Republic of China in recent years. Since 2004, CWIHP has supported this process in cooperation with Chinese scholars (centered especially around the Cold War Studies Center at East China Normal University). Based on agreements with the Foreign Ministry since 2005, CWIHP has been releasing and will continue to release major new tranches of documentation on China’s Cold War era foreign policy. In August 2011, CWIHP and East China Normal University launched the Wilson Center-ECNU Cold War Studies Initiative designed to bring junior and senior Chinese scholars to Washington for archival and other research. A special China portal on CWIHP’s website at www.cwihp.org will feature many of these collections.

The documents in this Issue will also be available through CWIHP’s new state-of-the-art Digital Archive database, content management system and website which—once launched later this year—will transform and improve the storage, description, and searchability of our online collections. CWIHP is in the final year of a three-year

development and digitization project funded by the Leon Levy Foundation (New York), H.F. “Gerry” Lenfest and the Blavatnik Family Foundation (New York), as a result of which CWIHP’s newly digitized collections will be accessible through a new, visually dynamic and user-friendly website.

As part of the Wilson Center’s History & Public Policy Program, CWIHP continues to be joined at the hip with the Korea Foundation-funded North Korea International Documentation Project (NKIDP) in exploring former Communist-world archives on North Korea’s politics and foreign policy. Similarly, CWIHP is expanding its “collection scope” with a focus on the international history of nuclear proliferation through a Carnegie Corporation-funded Nuclear Proliferation International History Project (NPIHP).

As all CWIHP productions, this Issue is a collaborative enterprise. As editor, my particular thanks go to Jim Hershberg who returned to CWIHP as a guest editor for this Issue with his boundless enthusiasm, expertise and energy for the subject; and Tom Blanton and Malcolm Byrne and their team at the National Security Archive who helped to obtain many of the documents featured in this Issue for a path-breaking set of critical oral history conferences in Havana in 2001-2002. I am grateful to the contributors, translators and researchers of this issue, including Alex Barrow, Pierre Asselin, Jordan Baev, Csaba Bekes, Bastiaan Bouwman, Phil Brenner, Christopher Dunlap, Piero Gleijeses, Malgorzata Gnoinska, Peer Henrik Hansen, Tanya Harmer, Hans-Herman Hertle, Adolf Kotlik, Mark Kramer, Guy Laron, Garret Martin, Hirata Masaki, Tim Naftali, Leopoldo Nuti, Silvio Pons, Stephanie Popp, Sergey Radchenko, Svetozar Rajak, Bernd Schaefer, Regina Schmidt-Ott, Marty Sherwin, Rimko van der Maar, Ruud van Dijk, Oldrich Tuma, David Wolff, Qian Zhang, Shen Zhihua, and Vlad Zubok. We greatly appreciate the support of the Karl and Martha Mautner Fund.

At the Center, my work as CWIHP director has benefited from the support of The Hon. Jane Harman, President, Director and CEO of the Wilson Center, Michael Van Dusen, Rob Litwak, Peter Reid and his wonderful design team, in particular Diana Micheli. Last but not least, I owe thanks to my talented and dedicated staff at the Project: James Person, Tim McDonnell, Laura Deal, Allison Lyalikov, Pieter Biersteker, Charles Kraus, and Kristina Terzieva. All of them have played critical roles in assuring that this Issue came out in time and in good shape. They in turn have been supported by an extraordinary group of research assistants and junior scholars this past spring and summer: Kian Byrne, Daniel Chardell, Chandler Grigg, Jordan Harms, Yuree Kim, David Najmi, Phan Ngoc, Emily Olsen, and Benjamin Venable.

Christian F. Ostermann is the director of the Woodrow Wilson Center’s History and Public Policy Program and has headed CWIHP since 1997/98.

Contents

INTRODUCTIONS

The Global Cuban Missile Crisis, by James G. Hershberg	7
The Cuban Missile Crisis Isn't What It Used to Be, by Thomas S. Blanton	11
Back to the Archives, by Martin J. Sherwin	19

SECTION 1: ASIA

Sino-Cuban Relations and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1960-62: New Chinese Evidence (Obtained by Shen Zhihua and Sergey Radchenko, translated by Zhang Qian, and introduced by James G. Hershberg and Sergey Radchenko)	21
Japan and the Cuban Missile Crisis (Documents obtained, translated and introduced by Masaki Hirata)	117
The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Origins of North Korea's Policy of Self-Reliance in National Defense (Documents introduced by James F Person)	121
North Vietnam and the Cuban Missile Crisis (By Pierre Asselin)	130
Mongolia and the Cuban Missile Crisis—A Glimpse Inside the Ulaanbaatar Archives (Document introduced and translated by Sergey Radchenko)	132

SECTION 2: LATIN AMERICA

The Final Frontier: Cuban Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis (Introduced by James G. Hershberg)	135
Chatting with Che: Conversations in 1961 between Cuban Revolutionary Ernesto Guevara and the Soviet Ambassador in Havana, and a Brazilian Record of his Meeting in Punta del Este with JFK Aide Richard Goodwin (Introduced by James G. Hershberg)	157
Before the Bay of Pigs—What Did the Cubans Know? Cuban Intelligence Reports, January-May 1961 (Introduced by James G. Hershberg)	168
Mexican Diplomacy and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Documents from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Mexico City (Introduced by Tanya Harmer)	191
The Anti-Castro Cuban Émigré Forces: Mexican Documents, 1961-1963 (Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro and translated by Tanya Harmer)	217
Brazil and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Documents from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Brasília (Obtained, translated, and introduced by James G. Hershberg)	229
Brazilian Foreign Policy toward the Cuban Issue—A Secret Foreign Ministry Conclave, 26-27 December 1961 (Documents obtained and introduced by James G. Hershberg)	283

Chile and Brazilian Mediation during the Cuban Missile Crisis: Documents from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Santiago (Obtained and translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer)	295
SECTION 3: SOVIET UNION	
The Malin Notes: Glimpses Inside the Kremlin during the Cuban Missile Crisis (Introduced by Timothy Naftali and translated and annotated by Mark Kramer with assistance from Naftali)	299
A Trigger for Khrushchev's Deployment? Alexei Adzhubei's Report on His Conversation with John F Kennedy, 30 January 1962 (Introduced by James G. Hershberg)	316
The Polyansky Report on Khrushchev's Mistakes in Foreign Policy, October 1964—Excerpt on The Cuban Missile Crisis (Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya)	324
Fidel Castro, Nuclear War, and the Missile Crisis—Three Missing Soviet Cables (Obtained by the National Security Archive and introduced by James Hershberg)	325
The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Documents on Anastas Mikoyan's November 1962 Trip to Cuba (Introduced by Svetlana Savranskaya)	331
SECTION 4: COMMUNIST EUROPE	
Czechoslovakia-Cuba Relations and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1959-1962: Evidence from the Prague Archives (Introduced by James G. Hershberg)	349
We Were Truly on the Verge of War—A Conversation with Nikita Khrushchev, 30 October 1962 (Obtained by Oldřich Tůma)	400
Czechoslovakia and Cuba, 1963 (Introduced by James G. Hershberg)	404
Hungary and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Selected Documents, 1961-63 (Introduced by Csaba Békés and Melinda Kalmár)	410
Poland, Cuba, and the Missile Crisis, 1962: Ciphred Telegrams from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Warsaw (Obtained and introduced by James G. Hershberg and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska)	463
Polish-Soviet Exchanges on Cuba, 1963-1965 (Introduced by James G. Hershberg)	507
Gomulka on the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Danger of War (Introduced by James G. Hershberg)	512
Romania and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Soviet Nuclear Warheads for Romania? (Documents obtained, translated, and introduced by Petre Opreș)	514
Bulgaria and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Documents from the Sofia Archives (Obtained and introduced by Jordan Baev)	522

Documents on Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 1960-1975: New Evidence from Sofia Archives (Obtained and introduced by Jordan Baev)	535
Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 1963—A Hungarian Perspective	589
Yugoslavia and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Documents from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Belgrade (Introduced by Svetozar Rajak and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović and Rajak)	591
East German Reactions to the Cuban Missile Crisis (Introduced by Mark Kramer)	615
Cuba's Irritation over the Missile Inspection Issue: Notes from a High-Level Cuban-East German Conversation (Translated and introduced by Mark Kramer)	620

SECTION 5: NON-COMMUNIST EUROPE AND ISRAEL

Konrad Adenauer and the Cuban Missile Crisis: West German Documents (Introduced by Christian F Ostermann)	622
The Italian Communists and Cuba, 1959-1963—Documents from the PCI Archives (Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow, and introduced by Silvio Pons)	638
Italy and the Cuban Missile Crisis (Sources introduced and translated by Leopoldo Nuti)	661
The Netherlands, the Missile Crisis, and Cuban-Dutch Relations, 1962-1964: Documents from the Dutch Archives (Obtained and introduced by Rimko van der Maar and translated by van der Maar and Bastiaan Bouwman)	674
The Cuba Crisis 1962 – As Seen through Danish Intelligence Sources (Documents obtained, translated, and introduced by Peer Henrik Hansen)	708
Our Man in Havana: When a Local Danish Newspaper was Able to Report from Cuba (Document obtained, translated, and introduced by Peer Henrik Hansen)	725
Switzerland and the Cuban Missile Crisis (Documents obtained, translated, and introduced by Stephanie Popp)	728
French Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis (Translated and Introduced by Garret J. Martin)	750
Israeli Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis (Obtained, translated, and introduced by Guy Laron)	759

SECTION 6: AFTERMATHS, 1965-1968

Documents on Raul Castro's Visit to Eastern Europe, and Cuban-East European Contacts, March-May 1965: Records from the Polish, Bulgarian and Czech Archives (Introduced by James G. Hershberg)	764
Mystery Wrapped in a Riddle and Kept in a Sphinx: New Evidence on Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin's Trip to Cuba, June 1967, and the Turn in Relations between Cuba and the Soviet Bloc, 1967-68 (Introduced by Philip Brenner)	792

The Global Cuban Missile Crisis—Surfing the Third Wave of Missile Crisis Scholarship

By James G. Hershberg

For the first quarter-century following the events of October 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis was primarily recounted, analyzed, and understood through an American lens. A vivid (and usually heroic) narrative emerged, centered on the deliberations and decision-making of John F. Kennedy and his advisors around the table of the “Excomm,” from the memoirs, recollections, and leaks of former US officials.¹

In 1971, political scientists Graham T. Allison consolidated these mostly American versions of what had happened into an influential secondary study, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*.² A few years after that, millions of TV viewers experienced (or re-lived) the brush with World War III through a docudrama, “The Missiles of October,” in which actors playing JFK and RFK—William Devaney and Martin Sheen, with exquisite Kennedy accents—guided their nation, and the world, along and then away from the brink of nuclear destruction. In all of these accounts, the communist adversary Nikita Khrushchev mostly loomed off-stage, a mysterious, menacing presence in Moscow, although the emergence of his smuggled-out memoirs at least offered a tantalizing glimpse into the Soviet side of the story. (Fidel Castro, in Havana, barely rated a mention, widely viewed as an after-thought and a mere Kremlin stooge.)

Exactly twenty-five years later—and exactly twenty-five years ago—all this began to change. In October 1987, against the backdrop of Mikhail Gorbachev’s glasnost, a conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis featured, for the first time, alongside surviving veterans of the Kennedy Administration, three authentic Soviet witnesses: the sons of Khrushchev and his closest associate, Anastas Mikoyan, and a former Khrushchev speechwriter. After decades of pervasive secrecy (and stolid Soviet spokesmen like foreign minister Andrei “Grim Grom” Gromyko), the spectacle of authentic Kremlin insiders thoughtfully, cordially, even cheerfully relating anecdotes and analyzing the crisis was a thrilling novelty, promising further revelations. And over the next five years of “critical oral history” conferences organized by James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, including gatherings in Moscow and then Havana, indeed yielded a slew of findings from Soviets (i.e., Russians, after the USSR vanished at the end of 1991) and even Cubans, including Fidel Castro.³ For the past two decades, even as more American sources continued to stream out (especially more Excomm tapes and transcripts, various intelligence materials, and FRUS volumes), this “second

wave” of Missile Crisis research and scholarship has profited from the release of Soviet sources, via both oral history conferences and the tentative opening of Moscow archives.⁴ This deluge of new information from the “other side” has yielded a narrative and historiography far more balanced in its depiction of actions and decisions of *both* superpowers. Two particularly important secondary works, Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali’s *One Hell of a Gamble* (1997) and Michael Dobbs’ *One Minute to Midnight* (2008), finally superseded Allison’s *Essence of Decision* as standard secondary works by exploiting this increasingly rich Russian source, and by bringing the Cubans into the drama as autonomous (and at times angry) actors, not mere Soviet pawns.⁵

This, then, is the Third Wave—the most extensive collection ever presented of original, never-before published, non-US primary sources on the Cuban Missile Crisis, including translated archival documents and other sources from more than twenty countries: Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, East and West Germany, Hungary, Italy, Israel, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, and North Vietnam.⁶

Over the past two decades, there have been some scattered efforts to decentralize Cuban Missile Crisis historiography, to widen the aperture of analysis by examining it from perspectives other than Washington or Moscow.⁷ But this collection points to the opportunities offered by recent diverse archival openings, particularly in Europe, Asia, and Latin America, to go much farther, and in particular to delve far deeper into the secretive communist world. New sources help to discern the interrelationship of the crisis and the concurrent strains in ties between the Soviet and Chinese leaderships as well as the tensions caused by the crisis between Moscow and Havana—what an important new book (on Anastas Mikoyan’s “Mission Impossible” to explain Khrushchev’s decision to remove the missiles to the angry Cubans) calls *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*.⁸

By “Third Wave” I do not mean to inject Toffler into Missile Crisis discourse, but to make the point that the scholarship on the event—or what Soviets knew (and Russians still know) as the Caribbean Crisis, and Cubans refer to as the October Crisis—now seems poised to go global, in multiple respects. For one thing, not only Americans and Russians (and presumably at least some Cubans) blanched at the prospect of a possibly imminent thermonuclear war—the entire world’s attention was seized, gripped by a mixture of terror and fascination as the drama played out, wondering if, seventeen years

after Hiroshima, the Cold War was on the verge of ending with a cataclysm that could kill millions, devastate civilization, and even deliver a lingering doom (via radioactive fallout) to those waiting “On the Beach” in Australia and other locales spared from immediate incineration. How did the rest of the world react, and how was it affected in its subsequent views of the Cold War, nuclear weapons, and other issues?

For students of international affairs, the question boiled down to states: how was the crisis perceived and how did it influence the leaderships of countries around the world—whether in the communist camp, shaken as it was by the widening Sino-Soviet split; the US-led “free world”; or the neutrals, struggling to be a coherent force, barely a year after the Non-aligned Movement was formally created. Even in far-off East Asia, the crisis had a manifest impact—communist sources presented here detail how Khrushchev’s perceived surrender prompted the leaderships in both North Vietnam and North Korea to question the value and credibility of Moscow’s security guarantees, turning them towards accelerated build-ups of their own military capabilities as well as toward the more bellicose Chinese. “The prospect of a hanging concentrates the mind wonderfully,” Dr. Johnson famously said, and historians have recognized that crises deserve special and close attention, for they force leaders and governments to make decisions and articulate positions under pressure, often clarifying or catalyzing or defining previously unclear positions and relationships, and forcing them to the surface. This was true not only for the US government, as exemplified in the wonderfully preserved, secretly-recorded Excomm sessions (which don’t tell us *everything*, as Martin J. Sherwin usefully reminds us), but for the Soviets and other leaderships as well.⁹ “A crisis unfolds in many layers, drawing leaders and their agents in different countries into shifting relationships,” observes Michael H. Hunt, who notes that “only when all the parties involved are combined to achieve a rounded picture” can the difficulties and complexities of the “highly dynamic and interactive process” inherent in a truly international crisis be seriously explored or comprehended.¹⁰

Finally, aside from learning more about countries that were admittedly supporting actors or even bit players in the Cuban drama, moving beyond the traditional sources also helps us to understand the lead actors better. Take Cuba. Since 1992, the Cuban Government and Fidel Castro have personally hosted several useful conferences that, in addition to enabling conversations among US, Russian, and Cuban participations, featured some releases of Cuban records. This *Bulletin* contains a selection of the most interesting Cuban documents that emerged from conferences in Havana to mark the 40th anniversaries of the Bay of Pigs and the Missile Crisis in 2001-2002, courtesy of the National Security Archive, which co-organized

the gatherings. Yet, to date, the Havana authorities have permitted only limited, selective access to state and communist party archives. As a result, the next best thing to discern what was happening in the Cuban leadership and in Cuban foreign policy is the contemporaneous records of those countries with diplomats in Havana able to meet with Cubans, gather gossip, and send back reports from behind the “Sugarcane Curtain.” These include, but are not limited to, those communist countries who maintained inter-party contacts with Cuban comrades, both in Havana and through exchanges of high-level visits, both with the old communist party (the Popular Socialist Party, or PSP) and with Fidel Castro’s 26th of July Movement.” There are dozens of records of talks not only with Fidel Castro but with those in his inner circle, including his brother Raúl (now Cuba’s president), Ernesto “Che” Guevara, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, and others. Want to know what was discussed when Ernesto “Che” Guevara met Mao Zedong? Look inside: although the Cuban records remain sealed, the Chinese archives have yielded extensive records of the conversations when these icons of 20th century revolution first encountered each other in Beijing in November 1960—and other exchanges between Beijing and Havana.

The evidence presented here also contributes valuably to analysis and knowledge regarding the Soviets—including some previously unpublished Russian documents, such as authoritative translations of the Malin Notes of Kremlin discussions (the closest Soviet analogue to the Excomm tapes), important cables from Moscow’s ambassador in Havana relating talks with Fidel Castro, and more. But records from outside Russia, particularly in East-Central Europe in the realm of the late, unlamented Warsaw Pact, also provide insight. A record found in the Prague archives of a conversation between a visiting Czechoslovak communist leader and Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow on 30 October 1962 offers a virtual oral history interview with the Soviet leader only two days after he agreed to withdraw the nuclear missiles from Cuba, when emotions were raw. Cables from Soviet-bloc embassies in Havana in the fall of 1962 (particularly the Czech, Polish, and Hungarian) testify, also, to the intense emotions that were flowing, both during the preparations to fight the “imperialists” during the crisis, and the confusion and bitterness in the aftermath of Khrushchev’s concession.

Finally, the documents even raise new questions and offer new information about the frequently-reconstructed goings-on in Washington—not everything was written down in US documents, and telegrams from Swiss, Dutch, and other ambassadors record some reactions of senior officials and also reveal hidden attempts to communicate between Washington and Fidel Castro’s Havana. In particular, the Brazilian, Yugoslav, and Chilean documents shed light on the attempt

by Rio to mediate a solution to the crisis and a broader amelioration of the US-Cuban confrontation, illuminating some usually hidden dynamics of the crisis both in Latin America and in the neutral or non-aligned world.

In sum, significant Russian (and even American) evidence continues to emerge on the Missile Crisis, illuminating old debates and sparking new ones, but the increasing availability of an astonishing array of formerly inaccessible archival and other sources from around the world enables us to tell new stories and glean fresh insights and information on old ones. I hope you will enjoy exploring this endlessly retold story from the many original and fascinating new perspectives offered by this “Third Wave” of evidence: Surf’s up!

* * * * *

Assembling this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin* (like any!) required labors from many people. At the Wilson Center, I thank Christian F. Ostermann, CWIHP Director and Editor of the *Bulletin*, for allowing me to join him for this issue as Guest Editor, for authorizing some fairly serious expenditures to pay for the translations of many documents from various countries, and for supporting my work in many ways over the years. I also thank those involved in the production of the issue, especially Allison Lyalikov and Laura Deal. My gratitude also goes to the National Security Archive, whose cooperation was essential. Since its creation in 1985, the Archive has organized a vast number of activities, conferences, and publications related to the crisis, and its director, Thomas S. Blanton, in particular, has galvanized this effort and aided my own research in too many ways to name. At the archive I also want to thank in particular Malcolm Byrne (who located electronic copies of many translations obtained for the 2002 conference in Havana); Svetlana Savranskaya (energetic seeker and interpreter—literally and figuratively—of Russian sources for two decades); Peter Kornbluh; and William Burr. I also thank all the colleagues and friends around the globe who helped procure documents and contributed introductions, translations, commentaries, permissions, and advice for this issue, in the process diverting from their crowded schedules and enduring persistent harassment to meet the arbitrary deadline of the 50th anniversary of the Missile Crisis as well as numerous editorial queries. In no particular order (and advance apologies to anyone inadvertently omitted), these include: Timothy Naftali, Guy Laron, Rimko van der Maar; Malgorzata Gnoinska, Hirata Masaki, Csaba Bekes, Jordan Baev, Tanya Harmer, Svetozar Rajak, Leopoldo Nuti, Silvio Pons, David Wolff, Garret Martin, Peer Henrik Hansen, Piero Gleijeses, Phil Brenner, Carlos Alzugaray Treto, Hans-Herman Hertle, Stephanie Popp, Pierre Asselin,

James Person, Alex Barrow, Bastiaan Bouwman, Christopher Dunlap, Adolf Kotlik, Shen Zhihua, Sergey Radchenko, and Qian Zhang deserve particular kudos for translating a stray conversation during a conference at Hong Kong University this past February into the amazing collection of Chinese archival materials published here. A special word of thanks to James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, and Mark Kramer, for their pioneering and continuing efforts over the past quarter-century to obtain evidence, oral history and documentary, on the communist side(s) of the Cuban Missile Crisis. And finally, thanks to my family, especially my wife Annie, for tolerating my latest Cold War obsession over these last few months, including during a nominal family summer vacation.

All of the above contributed in their own manifold ways to fulfilling the slogan of the researchers of one fondly-remembered cold war history project that also had a Cuban angle: *Documentos o muerte! Venceremos!*

Notes

1 Influential early works by former US officials included Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965); Roger N. Hilsman, *To Move a Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967); Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1969).

2 Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1971).

3 On the series of conferences, see esp. James G. Blight and David A. Welch, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reexamine the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1990); and James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), pp. 474-91.

4 For translated Soviet documents on the Missile Crisis that emerged from Russian archives in the decade after the USSR collapsed in 1991, see esp. the compilations in *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 58, 63-77; nos. 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 370-338; and nos. 14-15 (Winter 2003/Spring 2004), pp. 385-98, all available on the CWIHP website.

5 Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *“One Hell of a Gamble”: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-196* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1997) and Michael Dobbs’ *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008). Allison’s work also received a make-over, with a new edition co-authored by Philip Zelikow, in 1999; Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1999).

6 For space reasons and to underline this publication's value to a field still dominated by Americans, I have excluded not only US documents but others that they can read, i.e., those from other English-language archives that are now available, including Australian, British, Canadian, Indian, and United Nations.

7 See, e.g., Maurice Vaisse, ed., *L'Europe et la Crise de Cuba* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993); Peter T. Haydon, *The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis: Canadian Involvement Reconsidered* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1993); L.V. Scott, *Macmillan, Kennedy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); and James G. Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban

Missile Crisis, 1962," pts. 1 and 2, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and 6:3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67.

8 Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012)

9 For Sherwin, see his essay in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

10 On the importance of crises, see, e.g., Michael Hunt, *Crises in US Foreign Policy: An International History Reader* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), p. 422.

The Cuban Missile Crisis Just Isn't What It Used to Be

By Thomas Blanton

This special issue of the estimable Cold War International History Project *Bulletin* represents the latest high-water mark of more than 25 years of document-splunking that has radically changed what we thought we knew about this most-studied of all international crises. Indeed, the Cuban Missile Crisis just isn't what it used to be,¹ because historians, political scientists, psychologists, documents fetishists, and eyewitnesses (including even Fidel Castro) have revised and reconstructed all of our received narratives, while adding many new ones we never thought about before. In this issue, we even find extraordinary new details on the global impact of the Cuban Missile Crisis, for example in East Asia, and on the development of what would become today's North Korean nuclear program! In a classic example of what the *Bulletin* does best, this issue features—for the first time in print—Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev describing his motivations for putting the missiles in Cuba, and pulling them out, practically in real time, as he debriefs the Czechoslovak Communist leader Antonin Novotny on 30 October 1962. This spectacular oral history complements such gems in this issue as the thorough translation of the Malin notes from the Soviet Politburo during the crisis—the kind of information that the CIA would have killed for at the time.

Documents like these, excavated from the frequently uncooperative clutches of security establishments and archives around the world, have punctured one after another the myths of the Missile Crisis. The old story revolved around unprovoked aggressive behavior by the Soviets met with tough American brinkmanship. President John F. Kennedy's biographer Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. conveyed the conventional wisdom (and the well-spun press coverage after the Crisis) when he described Kennedy's "brilliantly controlled... matchlessly calibrated" crisis management that forced the Soviets to back down. Secretary of State Dean Rusk provided the most famous quote about the Crisis: "We're eyeball-to-eyeball, and the other fellow just blinked." But the documents over time (and with the benefit of a series of pioneering "critical oral history" conferences that confronted the policymakers with the evidence, and each other) compelled new conclusions and new narratives suggesting, in fact, that both sides blinked, that the Crisis arose from adventurism beforehand by both Kennedy (his harassment of Cuba with assassination plots and Operation Mongoose) and Khrushchev (his deceptive deployment of the missiles); and that both leaders stepped

back from the brink because of their mutual sense of events spinning out of control.²

Indeed, the new evidence suggested the Crisis was even more dangerous than policymakers thought at the time, with multiple potential flashpoints, mostly unbeknownst to the highest officials and certainly out of their control, girdling the globe with nuclear weapons whose routine deployment was standard operating procedure for both U.S. and Soviet militaries. Thus, American fighter jets scrambling over Alaska to defend an off-course U-2 spy plane over Siberia during the most dangerous day of the Crisis (27 October), each carried nuclear-tipped air-to-air missiles under their wings. Soviet diesel submarines, harassed at the quarantine line with signaling depth charges as the crisis neared its climax, each carried a nuclear-tipped torpedo for taking out large surface ships, or even fleets!³ Armageddon was upon us in October 1962; events were in the saddle and riding mankind; adventurism, accident and human fallibility spelled a doom that was only avoided by luck and restraint. Yet humility and contingency rarely featured in the literature of supposed "lessons learned" from the Cuban Missile Crisis, surely the most-cited (and most mis-cited) of historical analogies for subsequent American policymaking, ranging from the "calibrated" escalation of the Vietnam War to the 2003 invasion of Iraq.⁴ Different lessons resonated in locations like Hanoi, as this *Bulletin* points out, where hardliners saw Soviet weakness and decided to raise the military ante in the South.

The CWIHP *Bulletin* to the contrary notwithstanding, American-centricity dominates discussion of the Crisis even now, but first the trickle and then the flood of new documentation since the 1980s has provided multiple correctives to the *Thirteen Days* version, which centered in the Oval Office, bashed Moscow, and ignored Havana altogether. Yet the slow motion crisis in U.S.-Cuba relations that catalyzed events in 1962 continues even today. The primary sources—and not least, two historic conferences hosted by Havana in 1992 and 2002—have restored Fidel Castro to the Crisis equation as an independent variable, at the center of key episodes ranging from the anti-aircraft firing decisions on the most dangerous day, to the protracted endgame of the Crisis that continued well into November.⁵

In fact, the story of the documentary history of the Cuban Missile Crisis deserves a book in and of itself, but this brief introduction is not the place, nor has the space, to do justice to that remarkable progression, which proceeded in

fits and starts over three decades despite enormous barriers to the recovery of history. The primary sources were all too often not primary at all, obscured or concealed by secrecy classification systems, bureaucratic inertia and obfuscation, and not least of all the self-interest of many participants to massage the record. Yet, without this basic research of opening the sources, the next levels of scholarly work are hardly possible, or merely speculative. Indeed, in the absence of rigorous evidence, political science models rushed in where angels feared to tread.⁶

A few “docu-moments” stand out, however, as emblematic of the power of primary sources, and worth citing here. Back in 1986, for example, a psychologist with an historical bent (Jim Blight) then in residence at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government came to the (less than a year old) National Security Archive to ask about new documents on the Missile Crisis. Blight had met former defense secretary Robert McNamara during a project called “avoiding nuclear war,” and McNamara had challenged the notion of crisis management altogether, arguing for the elimination of nuclear weapons and the study of crisis prevention instead.⁷ Blight’s dean, Graham Allison, had challenged the novice researcher to make *Essence of Decision* irrelevant, clearly doubting the possibility.⁸ And other scholars were complaining that the bookshelves were already too full of Missile Crisis volumes—what else was there to learn?⁹

At the Archive, Blight encountered a couple of beer-bottle crates¹⁰ full of newly declassified records obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, including some real eye-openers. Here, for example, were two pages of Top Secret single-spaced notes, taken and signed by McNamara as one of 5 people in the room, detailing the White House military briefing on 21 October, the day before the President’s speech announcing the presence of the missiles in Cuba and the imposition of a quarantine—not an air strike, as so many of his advisers had recommended. The notes show the head of the Air Force Tactical Air Command, General Walter Sweeney, describing the hundreds of sorties that would hit Cuba on the first day, but honestly admitting that he couldn’t guarantee taking out all the missiles: “[H]e was certain the air strike would be ‘successful’; however, even under optimum conditions, it was not likely that all the known missiles would be destroyed.”¹¹ In other words, a single one could well be launched—boom goes Atlanta.¹² By the end, the discussion turned to the President’s brother Bobby (speaking perhaps on behalf of JFK) who said he opposed the air strike for two reasons, the similarity to what the Japanese did at Pearl Harbor, and the “unpredictable” Soviet response that could “lead to general nuclear war.” Needless to say, Jim Blight the psychologist and incipient crisis analyst was riveted, a fly-on-

the-wall in the White House room, connected by the primary source to the very day and hour of decision.

Such documents led Blight to bring together all the Kennedy aides in March 1987, at a congenial resort in the Florida Keys. Face to face with the mounds of declassified documents, and with each other, lips loosened. In one of many highlights, former national security adviser McGeorge Bundy read out a letter written by former Secretary of State Dean Rusk for the occasion, revealing for the first time anywhere an initiative known only to Rusk and President Kennedy, undertaken on the evening of the most dangerous day—just in case direct communication with Khrushchev through the Soviet ambassador failed. Rusk wrote, “It was clear to me that President Kennedy would not let the Jupiters in Turkey become an obstacle to the removal of the missile sites in Cuba because the Jupiters were coming out in any event.” On the night of 27 October, JFK tasked Rusk to reach the Dean of the School of International Affairs at Columbia University, Andrew Cordier, a former top aide to UN Secretary General U Thant, to propose that he be ready to urge Thant to make a public proposal for a trade of the Turkey missiles for the Cuba missiles, as an alternative to war (thereby allowing Kennedy to, as it were, accept his own proposal, laundered through Thant). As it happened, Khrushchev on Sunday morning (Washington time), 28 October, accepted the non-invasion pledge, and the secret withdrawal of the Turkey missiles, so the Cordier ploy was unnecessary—but the revelation (in combination with the transcript of the 27 October Excomm discussions, also disclosed around this time) illuminated JFK the dove, the diplomatic trader doing anything he could to avoid war, backing away from the brink.¹³

The next documentary breakthroughs came in January 1989, just before an American delegation led by McNamara arrived in Moscow to test Jim Blight’s “critical oral history” method with actual Soviet officials, including the former foreign minister Andrei Gromyko and former ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin. Just then, the National Security Archive’s Freedom of Information work opened the first of the long-secret Operation Mongoose files, detailing the U.S. covert operations against Cuba after the failed 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. The documents upset the conventional wisdom—dating back to the ExComm discussions and forward to books such as Graham Allison’s—by reinforcing Cuban and Soviet claims of U.S. aggression (and threatened potential invasion) as the catalyst for the Soviet missile deployment, and the defense of Cuba as the leading Soviet motivation. At the least, the evidence forced the American delegation to put themselves in Soviet and Cuban shoes. One Mongoose prospectus, written on stationery of the Office of the Secretary of Defense in July 1962, even described a serious policy option

as “Use a provocation and overthrow the Castro-Communist regime by U.S. military force.”¹⁴ McNamara himself was sufficiently sobered by the documents to change his mind about the conventional wisdom: “I want to state quite frankly,” he stated at the January 1989 Moscow conference, “that with hindsight, if I had been a Cuban leader, I think I might have expected a U.S. invasion.”¹⁵ (This statement of empathy, made not only in front of the Soviets but also a Cuban delegation that the Russians had invited – much to the surprise and consternation of the Americans! – played no small role in the subsequent invitation from the Cubans to come to Havana and hear from Fidel himself.)

The other Moscow documentary highlight in 1989 featured the interplay between documents and memory and secondary literature. Former ambassador Dobrynin, citing his own still-secret cables about his meetings with Bobby Kennedy, challenged Theodore Sorensen about Bobby’s famous memoir, *Thirteen Days*, which skated over the details of what Dobrynin said was Bobby’s explicit offer on 27 October to trade the Jupiter missiles in Turkey for the Soviet missiles in Cuba. Publicly of course, the Kennedy administration had denied any such deal; aides had blamed UN ambassador Adlai Stevenson (a Kennedy political rival) for suggesting such a thing; Rusk had cabled ambassadors after the Crisis denying it and McNamara had even done so in testimony to Congress. But under pressure in Moscow, Sorensen admitted he had edited a “very explicit” reference to the secret deal out of RFK’s manuscript, which he had edited, uncredited, after Robert Kennedy’s June 1968 assassination but before its posthumous appearance the following year. Not until 1994 would the Dobrynin cable itself from 27 October reach the public domain, through the Japanese broadcaster NHK. Another year would pass before scholars could read Dobrynin’s follow-up cable, recording his 30 October meeting with RFK, where Bobby handed back to the Soviet envoy a formal letter from Khrushchev mentioning the deal, and explained, “Speaking in all candor, I myself, for example, do not want to risk getting involved in the transmission of this sort of letter, since who knows where and when such letters can surface or be somehow published – not now but in the future – and any changes in the course of events are possible. The appearance of such a document could cause irreparable harm to my political career in the future.”¹⁶

Testimony to the power of the primary source to alter the present and the future as well as what we think of the past came again in Havana in January 1992. Just before the conferees arrived, the Soviet Union had collapsed, and so had U.S. government barriers to the declassification of the previously secret correspondence between Kennedy and Khrushchev during the Crisis – which the organizers hast-

ily compiled into a briefing book for the conference.¹⁷ The conference schedule listed Fidel Castro only for the opening and closing discussions, but instead, the Cuban leader stayed for all four days, because, he said, the Kennedy-Khrushchev letters grabbed him. Apparently, Castro had stayed up all night reading the 85 pages of letters bargaining away his fate, behind his back, “that is why I was a bit sleepy yesterday here in the meeting.”¹⁸

The drama of documents opening then opened other documents. At one of the breaks in Havana 1992, Archive staff presented Castro with more than 10,000 pages of declassified U.S. documents, neatly preserved on microfiche, and with a two-volume index – testimony to the U.S. Freedom of Information Act. Not long afterwards, Castro snapped his fingers and hauled out his own archives, including a long and previously unknown letter from Khrushchev a few months after the crisis, addressed to the young passionate revolutionary, describing snow falling on the birches, inviting the Cuban to visit and make up and go hunting and fishing together.¹⁹ At another point, while introducing the 23 October letter he received from Khrushchev, Castro started to read from it and said, “I’m declassifying here. Does ‘declassification’ have anything to do with the class struggle? [Laughter.]”²⁰

In this context, declassification became an epidemic. The Soviet general perhaps most conversant with the missile deployment planning, Anatoly Gribkov, matter-of-factly included in his Havana conference presentation a discussion of tactical nuclear weapons in the Soviet forces in Cuba. The Americans were stunned. McNamara even interrupted the translator to make sure he heard that correctly – tactical nukes would have meant enormous casualties in a U.S. invasion, and a major escalatory trigger to which the U.S. would have inevitably responded in kind. Massive controversy ensued from Gribkov’s disclosure, including multiple news headlines and journal articles, with scholars of Soviet command-and-control disbelieving. But subsequent releases, some by Gribkov’s initiative and others found in the collection of the late Soviet military historian Gen. Dmitry Volkogonov at the Library of Congress, proved that the Operation Anadyr deployment plans included even more tactical nuclear weapons than Gribkov had described, and that, just like on the U.S. side, tacticals were in all the war plans as standard operating procedure. The danger factor in the Cuban Missile Crisis had just gained an exponent.²¹

After the 1992 conference, the declassification continued. The Cubans became willing, after repeated requests, to give the Americans a copy of the core account on the Cuban side of the Crisis – Castro’s lengthy secret speech to his comrades during a tense moment in Cuban-Soviet relations in early 1968, reviewing the whole history of the Missile Crisis from

the Cuban perspective, including his dark feelings of being sold out by the Soviet Union. At a subsequent gathering, a Cuban official would refer to the secret speech in a dinner toast, lifting a glass of rum “to our next historical inquiry together, to the mystery of whether Cuba has suffered more from American aggression, or Soviet friendship?”²²

Après Havana, le deluge! The CIA hastened to mark the 30th anniversary year and claim credit for its photographic breakthroughs of 1962 with a published volume of declassified documents and a conference under the “bubble”—in the auditorium at Langley, Virginia—even including uncleared Havana conference participants such as Khrushchev’s son Sergei.²³ The State Department took longer, but released far more, with its *Foreign Relations of the United States* volume and microfiche supplement of documents on the Missile Crisis.²⁴ The John F. Kennedy Library finally achieved in late 1996 the declassification of the October 1962 ExComm tapes, 17 hours worth. Multiple published versions of the tape transcripts ensued—particularly from the ambitious project launched by the Miller Center at the University of Virginia—and the new evidence forced scholars to look again at JFK the dove. On 27 October, for example, as the Joint Chiefs are urging the invasion of Cuba, JFK remarks, “We can’t very well invade Cuba, with all its toil and blood there’s gonna be, when we could have gotten ‘em [the missiles in Cuba] out by making a deal on the same missiles in Turkey. If that’s part of the record, but ah... then you don’t have a very good war.”²⁵

Post-Soviet Russia now was losing the documents race, as the brief period of archival openness in the early 1990s (corresponding to the CIA’s) had given way to a pattern of negotiated exclusive-access arrangements. Notably, the academician Aleksandr Fursenko teamed up with the Harvard-trained Canadian scholar Timothy Naftali and a major publisher’s book advance to take advantage of the usually-off-limits Kremlin archive (Archive of the President of the Russian Federation), together with a wide range of other sources (even some materials from the former KGB and GRU archives), to produce a whole new narrative centered in Moscow for a change. Among many other highlights, at the core of the Fursenko/Naftali account were the remarkable short-hand notes taken by Khrushchev aide Vladimir Malin during meetings of the Presidium of the Central Committee—the distilled Soviet equivalent to the ExComm tapes, or as close as we’re likely to get—featured in this *Bulletin* in a new updated translation by Mark Kramer and Naftali. These contemporaneous notes showed Khrushchev abandoning adventurism almost immediately after Kennedy’s 22 October speech, pulling back from the brink, ordering Soviet ships still en route to Cuba to turn around, avoiding confrontation, sending instructions

to his commanders in Cuba against using nuclear weapons without direct orders from Moscow—in effect, going dove much like his counterpart in Washington.²⁶

By the time of the 40th anniversary of the Missile Crisis in 2002, documentary momentum and current events conspired to bring the eyewitnesses back to the table in Havana. Washington was debating the imminent invasion of Iraq, on the ostensible grounds of weapons of mass destruction present there; while pundits and policymakers cited the Crisis for their own ends with phrases like “credible threat of force” and even “blockade.” Robert McNamara was ready to go back to Havana, seeing yet another opportunity for him to deliver his jeremiad on nuclear weapons and crisis prevention. Fidel Castro was ready to receive the visitors, not least because Hollywood had left him out of the Crisis again, with the blockbuster movie *Thirteen Days* featuring Kevin Costner as Kennedy—a movie that Castro viewed with Costner in a private screening in April 2001.²⁷

But this time around the headlines in Havana came from underwater. By October 2002, the Archive’s sleuths in Russia and at the Navy Yard in Washington had matched some extraordinary oral histories and contemporaneous diaries from Soviet submariners, together with the extensive U.S. Navy tracking charts for the four diesel “Foxtrot” submarines deployed from Murmansk to what they expected would be their permanent base in Mariel. (Their families would have followed, for a nice tour in the tropics, so imagine the disappointment when Khrushchev ordered the subs to stall after 22 October and ultimately to return home.) Unbeknownst to the U.S. Navy, busy tracking and harassing and “forcing to the surface” the submarines, each one carried a nuclear-tipped torpedo and orders to use it if a war broke out. On the ExComm tapes one hears Kennedy’s concern at the harassment of the Soviet subs, even without knowing about the torpedoes, and McNamara’s reassurances that only “signaling depth charges” (like grenades) would be used. At the Havana conference table, retired Navy Captain John Peterson (aboard a key destroyer chasing the subs in 1962) explained the sailors’ frustration at dropping such firecrackers, so they encased the grenades in toilet paper tubes and the cardboard would keep the pin from popping and only disintegrate hundreds of meters down, right next to the Soviet subs. Also at the table was former Soviet submariner and signals intelligence officer Vadim Orlov, who described the impact of the “signaling” depth charges as the equivalent of being inside an oil drum getting struck with a sledgehammer. Coming on top of horrendous temperatures (the subs were made for the Arctic, not the Caribbean) and equipment breakdowns (including interruptions in communications with Moscow), the Navy’s pressure—culminating above Orlov’s sub on the most dan-

gerous day of 27 October—nearly put the commander of that submarine over the edge. Thinking the war had already broken out upstairs, the Soviet captain ordered the arming of the nuclear torpedo, and only calmed down under the influence of a peer officer aboard named Vasily Arkhipov. For McNamara especially, and for the reporters present in Havana, this was news—yet another example, previously unknown, of how close we were to Armageddon in October 1962, how fallible we humans are, how illusory the notion of crisis management.²⁸

For the documents fetishists among us, Havana's most joyful moment came when a historian got to play ambassador. The Kennedy ExComm had discussed at length at the height of the Crisis sending a message to Fidel through the well-respected Brazilian ambassador in Havana, Luis Bastian Pinto—a message (camouflaged as Brazilian rather than American) that would warn Castro that his Soviet allies were negotiating behind his back, that the presence of the missiles endangered Cuba, and more. Events intervened on 26 and 27 October; by the 28th Khrushchev had already announced the deal; and the Brazilian message, by the time it was delivered to Castro by an emissary sent from Rio, received little attention, since the Cuban leader did not realize its actual source of inspiration. Only four decades later, at the 2002 Havana conference, did a scholar inform him that in fact the message had been scripted in Washington, not Rio, and approved personally by JFK and the Excomm. Though Castro told the professor he would still have scoffed at the proposal, regardless of its source, the discovery of the hidden Brazilian effort (which in fact climaxed a nearly three-year attempt to mediate between Washington and Havana) helped inspire this special issue and its focus on the global history of the Missile Crisis.²⁹

Substantively, the most significant new evidence on the Missile Crisis actually extends it well beyond the conventional thirteen days. At the 2002 Havana conference, and in the text of his posthumous book in 2012, Sergo Mikoyan detailed the Soviets' initial plan to leave the tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba and even train the Cubans to use them—Cuba as a nuclear power! Drawing on the extraordinary series of transcripts of his father's meetings with the Cuban leadership in November 1962, plus the cables back and forth with Moscow, Mikoyan the historian explained how Mikoyan the deputy premier at first empathized with Castro's sense of betrayal, but gradually came to see the volatile Cuban leadership as undependable. In effect, Cuban intransigence (their righteous indignation at the Soviet pullout without consultation, and unilateral actions like Castro saying on 16 November the Cubans will shoot at the low-flying U.S. planes) convinced the Soviets that it was too risky to leave behind any nuclear weapons in Cuba. In the culminating 22 November con-

versation with Castro, the Soviet emissary even conjured up a (nonexistent) Soviet law that purportedly prohibited the transfer of such weapons beyond Soviet control—and then cabled his colleagues in Moscow practically urging them to hastily devise such a law. But thus the Missile Crisis was finally settled.³⁰

Now, 50 years after the fact, we are approaching a multi-national, multi-archival, multi-lingual history of the Missile Crisis, even as we are getting further and further away from the immediacy, the sense of crisis, the “lived forward” and “understood backward” reality. The most important—and continuing—barrier to historical understanding of the Missile Crisis arises from excessive and anachronistic secrecy, mostly-outdated national security classification on all sides of the former Cold War. Decades after the fact, U.S. securocrats still censor references to the Jupiter missiles in Turkey and Italy, even though, as a contemporaneous document pointed out in 1961, the presence of the Jupiters was no secret, evident to anyone driving by on the highway: “It clearly makes no sense to classify the existence of the Jupiters and their location, but the Italian Government seems to want it that way, for political reasons.”³¹ Indeed, for political reasons, such historical nuclear deployments remain secret today by the order of the Republican-dominated U.S. Congress in 1998, which decreed in the Kyl-Lott amendments the re-review of documents declassified in the post-Cold War Clinton-era reforms just in case they referred to nuclear weapons—in effect the last gasp of a discredited Republican conspiracy theory that President Clinton had divulged nuclear secrets to the Chinese.³²

The intelligence bureaucrats have been just as retrograde as the nuclear ones, only now, 50 years later, beginning to declassify President Kennedy's intelligence briefings, the President's Intelligence Checklist (the so-called “pickle”). Reviewers of intelligence records have left whole sections of the Kennedy tapes deleted as somehow sensitive, even though written records and notes of the same conversations—including the deleted sections—have been declassified for years. For example, in the 26 October briefing of Kennedy on the latest photographs over Cuba, the tapes are missing the section where CIA director McCone points to a shot of a LUNA/FROG tactical missile launcher and suggests the possibility of “tactical nuclear weapons for fighting troops in the field.” This of course had been known publicly at least since General Gribkov announced the deployment at the 1992 Havana conference, and the JFK Library's own descriptive notes on the meeting include the direct McCone remark quoted here.³³

Of course, researcher frustrations with Washington's archival bottlenecks pale beside those encountered in Moscow. Huge swathes of the Soviet archives—those of the KGB,

military intelligence (GRU), and the General Staff, for example—remain almost completely off-limits to researchers in the newly authoritarian Russia. Similarly, continuing official hostility between Cuba and the U.S. offers an excuse, or pretext, for authorities on both sides of the Florida Straits to keep all too many of the relevant files locked away in the vaults. Were it not for the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, many of the contents of this special issue of the CWIHP *Bulletin* would likewise remain concealed under ideological control.

Over and above the security blockades are the actual assaults on the record. Fidel Castro has described a Malecon flood that inundated the Cuban foreign ministry archives, stashed in a basement. More pernicious have been the actual alteration and even destruction of the historical record by participants. The most egregious offenders here were the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, who ordered in 1974 (after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that President Nixon could not keep his Watergate tapes to himself) the destruction of their entire taped proceedings dating back to the 1950s, leaving only 31 pages of notes dating from the Missile Crisis period.³⁴ On a lesser scale, but still emblematic, was the penciled scratch-through—possibly by Bobby Kennedy himself—altering his 30 October memo addressed to Secretary of State Rusk (but later found only in a Presidential file) to delete mention of the specific Turkey-for-Cuba missile trade he had discussed with Dobrynin.³⁵

Persisting control of key records by interested parties, including the memoirists with exclusive access to files, has certainly enabled self-serving official spin over the years. For example, the RFK family continues to claim ownership of the Attorney General's office files as if they were personal records, even though the security classification of most of the 62 boxes would preclude the family from even looking at the files they supposedly own.³⁶ But the documentary history of the Cuban Missile Crisis also features notable exceptions such as in the generosity of scholar/eyewitness Sergo Mikoyan. Archives of the world will unite—they have nothing to lose but their chains!

Even the documents fetishists must also give credit to the memoirists like Sorensen and Schlesinger who gave us roadmaps to the documents, and went on to participate enthusiastically in the whole series of “critical oral history” conferences, helping to supply the atmospherics and context sometimes missing from the documents—and even specific exchanges that the documents did not capture verbatim, but which lodge themselves in memory. Such is Sorensen's account of Dean Acheson's advocacy for an immediate and massive air strike on the Soviet missiles in Cuba. Acheson was asked, what would the Soviets do in response? “I think I know the

Soviet Union well. I know what they are required to do in the light of their history and their posture around the world. I think they will knock out our missiles in Turkey.” Then what should we do? “Well, I believe under our NATO treaty with which I was associated, we would be required to respond by knocking out a missile base inside the Soviet Union.” Then what do they do? “Well, then that's when we hope cooler heads will prevail, and, they'll stop and talk.”³⁷

Notes

1 The title owes its inspiration to the late C. Vann Woodward, “Our Past Isn't What It Used to Be,” *The New York Times Book Review*, 28 July 1963.

2 For an earlier overview, see Thomas Blanton, “Annals of Blinksmanship,” *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 1997. For myth-by-myth puncturing, see the series of Web postings by Michael Dobbs including *The “Eyeball-to-Eyeball” Myth*, posted 2 July 2008, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/dobbs/, and for the most current standard account, Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Knopf, 2008).

3 See Michael Dobbs, *Missing Over the Soviet Union*, posted 11 June 2008, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/dobbs/maultsby.htm.

4 For the latest account, in “transmedia” format, by the pioneers of “critical oral history,” see James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, *The Armageddon Letters: Kennedy/Khrushchev/Castro in the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).

5 See James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, The Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon, 1993). For the best account of the post-October crisis, with an extraordinary selection of previously unavailable transcripts of Cuban-Soviet discussions, see Sergo Mikoyan, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev and the Missiles of November* (Stanford, CA/Washington, DC: Stanford University Press/Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012).

6 The best-selling and most influential academic book on the Crisis, Graham Allison's *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971), relies on models of decision-making (rational actor, organizational process, and bureaucratic politics) to tell the story, although the cascade of new evidence has rendered most of those explanations as obsolete as the Jupiters (that is to say, still powerful, but not at all what you'd want to deploy anywhere). For the most comprehensive review of Allison, as well as of his second edition of *Essence*, co-authored in 1999 with Philip Zelikow, see Barton J. Bernstein, “Understanding Decisionmaking, U.S. Foreign Policy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2000), pp. 134-164.

7 Blight and Lang, *The Armageddon Letters*, Appendix A.

8 James G. Blight and David A. Welch, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reexamine the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1989), p. viii.

9 See Eliot A. Cohen, "Why We Should Stop Studying the Cuban Missile Crisis," *The National Interest* (Winter 1986), pp. 3-13. Cohen now serves as a senior foreign policy adviser for Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney.

10 There remains some debate among eyewitnesses as to whether the beer boxes were Pabst Blue Ribbon or Schaefer, but either low-end brand would have been a favorite of the Archive's upstart softball team, the Info Czars.

11 Robert McNamara, "Notes on October 21, 1962 Meeting with the President," Document 26 in Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, *The Cuban Missile Crisis 1962: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (New York: The New Press, 1992; revised edition, 1998), pp. 154-155. This volume, together with the 40th anniversary Web postings at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/docs.htm, provide a selection of "greatest hits" from the massive indexed reference collections on the Crisis produced by the Archive in 1990 (edited by Chang) and 2006 (edited by Kornbluh) totaling some 5,000 documents, all available through the Digital National Security Archive published by ProQuest, <http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/home.do>.

12 A reference to "boom goes London and boom Pa-ree, more room for you and more room for me," in Randy Newman's classic song, "Political Science" (1972).

13 Blight and Welch, *On the Brink*, pp. 83-84. But see Philip Zelikow and Ernest May, eds., *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy: The Great Crises, Volume Three* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001), p. 485, for doubts about the Cordier contingency.

14 Brig. Gen. Edward Lansdale, "Review of OPERATION MONGOOSE," 25 July 1962, Document 7 in Chang and Kornbluh, *The Cuban Missile Crisis 1962*, pp. 40-47.

15 Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight, and David A. Welch, eds., *Back to the Brink* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), p. 7. For the best review of pre-Crisis invasion evidence, see James G. Hershberg, "Before 'The Missiles of October': Did Kennedy Plan a Military Strike Against Cuba?" in James A. Nathan, ed., *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 237-280.

16 For the most comprehensive account, including the Dobrynin cables, the *Thirteen Days* text, and commentary from Sorensen and others, see Jim Hershberg, "Anatomy of a Controversy," *CWIHP Bulletin* 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 75-80; and Jim Hershberg, "More on Bobby and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *CWIHP Bulletin* 8-9 (Winter 1996-1997), pp. 274, 344-347. The RFK quote is on p. 345.

17 Credit goes to Professor Philip Brenner of American University, long-time National Security Archive board member, and Archive founding director Scott Armstrong, who insisted on a Freedom of Information lawsuit to break loose these and several thousand other documents – with the *pro bono* help of the Washington law firm of Crowell & Moring.

18 Blight, Allyn, and Welch, *Cuba on the Brink*, p. 219.

19 See Khrushchev to Castro, 31 January 1963, Document 84 in Chang and Kornbluh, *The Cuban Missile Crisis 1962*, pp. 332-342.

20 Blight, Allyn, and Welch, *Cuba on the Brink*, p. 211.

21 Blight, Allyn and Welch, *Cuba on the Brink*, pp. 54-75, includes Gribkov's original presentation and the American reaction. For the best substantive overview of the issue, correcting previous accounts, see Raymond L. Garthoff, "New Evidence on the Cuban Missile Crisis: Khrushchev, Nuclear Weapons, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *CWIHP Bulletin* 11 (Winter 1998), pp. 251-262. For dramatic evidence of the tactical nuclear weapons ultimately targeting Guantanamo in the event of a U.S. invasion, see Michael Dobbs, "The Soviet Plan to Destroy Guantanamo Naval Base," posted 4 June 2008, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/dobbs/gitmo.htm.

22 For Castro's secret speech and the overall role of Cuba, the indispensable volume is James G. Blight and Philip Brenner, *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba's Struggle with the Superpowers After the Missile Crisis* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002). For the dinner toast, see *The Washington Post* "Live Online" discussion, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: 40 Years Later," with the author, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/liveonline/02/special/world/sp_world_blanton101602.htm.

23 Mary S. McCauliffe, ed., *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962* (Washington D.C.: Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1992). For the conference, the author was present.

24 The State Department's *FRUS* volume on the Cuban Missile Crisis, published in 1996, is online at http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/history/frusXI/index.html.

25 Sheldon M. Stern, *Averting 'The Final Failure': John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Meetings* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 367. Stern's is the best one-volume version of the tapes, providing narrative and evidence from other documents in addition to the direct quotes.

26 Alexandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997). For the Russian text of the Malin notes, see *Presidium TsK KPSS, 1954-1964* (Presidium of the CC CPSU), ed. Alexander Fursenko (Moscow: ROSSPAN, 2003).

27 McNamara discussions with the author in Washington and in Havana during 2002; author's observations of Castro at the Kevin Costner screening in Havana, 9 April 2001, which produced even more documents: Thomas Blanton, "What If the Cuban Missiles Hadn't Been a Secret?" *Slate*, 19 April 2001, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/chatterbox/2001/04/what_if_the_cuban_missiles_hadnt_been_a_secret.html.

28 See William Burr and Thomas Blanton, "The Submarines of October: U.S. and Soviet Naval Encounters During the Cuban Missile Crisis," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book 75, posted 31 October 2002, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB75/>; and Svetlana Savranskaya, "New Sources on the Role of Soviet Submarines in the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol. 28, No. 2 (April 2005), pp. 233-259. One

of the latest TV documentaries on the Crisis, premiering on PBS on 23 October 2012, focuses on the Arkhipov story as “The Man Who Saved the World.”

29 See James G. Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962, (Parts 1 & 2),” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, No. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and No. 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67.

30 Sergo Mikoyan, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*.

31 “Report on Visit to Jupiter Sites in Italy,” 18 September 1961, by Allen James, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of European Affairs, SECRET (original in DoS Lot 65D478, National Archives, posted on the National Security Archive web site at http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/NC/nh3_4.gif). For dozens of similar examples, see William Burr, “More Dubious Secrets,” <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nukevault/ebb281/index.htm>.

32 See “DOE Puts Declassification into Reverse,” by George Lardner Jr., *The Washington Post*, 19 May 2001, <http://www.fas.org/spp/news/2001/05/wp051901.html>; and Matthew M. Aid, “Declassification in Reverse,” National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book 179, posted 21 February 2006, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB179/>

33 For this 38-second deletion, see Zelikow and Ernest, eds., *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy: The Great Crises, Volume*

3. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001), p. 327. For the contrast, see Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, p. 145 and note on p. 381.

34 See, on this episode, CWIHP *Bulletin* 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 276-77 fn 11. The text of the notes indicates they were handwritten in 1976 and typed in 1993. For the evocative notes, suggesting extraordinary detail and emotion that would have been heard on the tapes, see http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/621000%20Notes%20Taken%20from%20Transcripts.pdf.

35 See Jim Hershberg, “More on Bobby and the Cuban Missile Crisis,” CWIHP *Bulletin* 8-9 (Winter 1996-1997), pp. 345-347. Zelikow and May prefer RFK’s memo, written after the resolution of the crisis and in the midst of the credit-claiming, over Dobrynin’s, written immediately after the meeting. See *The Great Crises Volume Three*, pp. 486-488.

36 See Bryan Bender, “Kennedys Keep Vise-Grip on RFK Papers,” *The Boston Globe*, 5 August 2012, http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2012/08/05/index_details_contents_of_robert_f_kennedys_papers/.

37 Quoted in Douglas Brinkley, *Dean Acheson: The Cold War Years, 1953-1971* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 161-162.

Back to the Archives: The Cuban Missile Crisis At 50

By Martin J. Sherwin

It is always surprising, even to historians, when after fifty years of research and writing important events continue to be misunderstood. The Cuban Missile Crisis may be one of the most thoroughly studied incidents of the twentieth century but, as the documents in this volume make abundantly clear, there are numerous untapped archives around the world ready to offer up new insights and interpretations of this seminal *global* event.

In the United States the study of the Crisis has been EXCOMM-centric, the consequence of both the Kennedy administration's promotion of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council's role in the Crisis, and the later discovery that the president had recorded many of its meetings. But following the Crisis from the perspective of the Excomm, like a "fly on the wall," has led to a distortion: an evasion of the Crisis' historical context.

The Excomm's mostly hawkish advice was problematic. Had it not existed, Kennedy would still have blockaded rather than invaded Cuba. Most of the clear-headed advice he received was offered outside of its meetings by Adlai Stevenson, Dean Rusk, and George Ball, among others. Within 48 hours of being informed that the Soviets had secretly placed medium and intermediate range missiles into Cuba, the president had determined that an invasion entailed risks he was not willing to take; it became Attorney General Robert Kennedy's responsibility to convince the more aggressive EXCOMM members to support the blockade. There remains much to learn about the president's decision-making process.

The Crisis was a global-war-in-the-making, as a summary of the conversation on October 22nd, between former Secretary of State Dean Acheson and French President Charles De Gaulle suggests. "It is more likely that the Russians will try to force the United States to fire the first shot," the minutes of the meeting record in a summary of Acheson's presentation, "which would allow them to respond elsewhere: Berlin? Quemoy? South-East Asia? Korea? Or maybe all these locations at the same time."

"Moreover," the American continued, "the Russians will not fail to launch a massive propaganda campaign, especially towards the neutral countries – Africans or Asians – in order to push their public opinions to call on their governments to pressure the United States."

But somehow, the most devastating event in world history didn't happen, and how a war was prevented remains an enduring question. Was it the good sense of the principals—Kennedy and Khrushchev—that prevented a holocaust? Or,

was it the intense international pressure exerted both privately and publicly that led them to compromise?

The global reach of the Crisis further exposed the multiple poles of the allegedly bi-polar world. It was the Caribbean Crisis to the Soviets, and the October Crisis to the Cubans. But it was also a Sino-Soviet Crisis, a Sino-Indian Crisis, a Berlin Crisis, a NATO crisis, and a crisis in which the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations played a far greater role in the resolution of the Crisis than either the United States or Soviet governments were willing to acknowledge.

The U.N. forced the Crisis onto a world stage that made a participant of every nation that had a U.N. Ambassador, particularly if it was represented on the Security Council. It legitimized and encouraged the efforts of governments, such as Brazil, to promote independent peace plans. A telegram from the Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro to its Foreign Ministry, 24 October 1962, makes this point: "There is a general feeling in Brazil that the military blockade of Cuba, for the first time in the history of the Cold War, has brought the USA and the USSR to the very verge of the war because of one L[atin] A[merican] country, making in that way LA and Brazil the center of the Cold War. The feeling of immediate danger mobilized all circles in order to find the way out. They concluded [that the] values of their former independent policy, especially towards Cuba, enables them to influence more freely and with more authority on seeking peaceful solutions."

It involved not only Brazil, but all the Latin and Central American members of the Organization of American States. The energetic effort by the United States to gain OAS support for the blockade gave the nations of South America a sense that they were being taken seriously by a North American administration, perhaps for the first time. Cuba, of course, was a major player in the crisis, although no U.S. policy maker was willing at the time to believe that it had an independent role.

Reports of a Japanese diplomat in Moscow suggest that ordinary Soviet citizens reacted much like Americans after learning that the crisis had broken out.. Mothers with clear wartime memories, he reported on October 24, had rushed to nearby stores to buy large amounts of salt which quickly disappeared from shelves. There were also Soviet skeptics. "It's hard to understand why we had to build a military base in Cuba in the first place," a reporter confidentially told his interlocutor. "Kennedy looks gentle and timid. However once

he gets furious, he bites you hard and never leaves you even if he loses all his teeth like an Irish bulldog.”

The Castro brothers rage at Khrushchev for agreeing to remove the missiles without prior consultation with Havana is reflected in another Japanese diplomatic report. “At a dinner party on [November] 18th hosted by [Anastas] Mikoyan, the Castro brothers didn’t show up.” He then went on to speculate that “Castro might need the possibility of the US invasion because he wants to crack down on anti-government movements by stirring an excessive crisis mentality among the nation. That’s why he cannot accept the base inspection offer.”

The role that nuclear weapons had played in the first seventeen years of the Cold War was transformed by the Crisis. During those “careless years,” both the U.S. and Soviet governments had deployed its existential threat heedlessly to presumed advantage. The Eisenhower administration’s

Massive Retaliation policy and Khrushchev’s nuclear threats during the Suez Crisis are relevant examples. But the frightening realization that nuclear war could be only a stumble away, introduced a more cautious approach to nuclear diplomacy. It led to a re-evaluation of limited nuclear war. The Crisis made it clear that it was too easy to slip into a global war while climbing the rungs of an escalation ladder. That realization led Khrushchev to finally accept the existence of a separate West Berlin, with a Western military presence there.

Technology was another important feature of the Crisis. Not just nuclear weapons, but the vast array of related technologies that in many ways shaped the history of U.S.-USSR relations: ballistic missiles, surface to air anti-aircraft missiles, and the U-2. They were the basic components of the Crisis that took the lead in both its creation and resolution. Technology made things possible, and because they were possible, they were attempted; it was a metaphor for modernity.

Sino-Cuban Relations and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1960-62: New Chinese Evidence

Documents provided by Shen Zhihua and Sergey Radchenko, translated by Zhang Qian, and introduced by James G. Hershberg and Sergey Radchenko

The Cuban Missile Crisis not only marked perhaps the tensest juncture during the Cold War in the East-West conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, but also occurred at a moment of acute strains within the communist world. It happened as the Sino-Soviet split was widening, and Cuba was carefully maneuvering to try to retain the support of both major communist powers. Yet, until now, Sino-Cuban relations during this period have received relatively scant scholarly attention—in part due to the many obstacles impeding access to pertinent Chinese or Cuban sources, and also because the general impression has matched the conclusion of the only serious assessment of relations between Havana and Beijing during this period using Chinese-language sources, which in 2007 concluded flatly that, “By all indications, the Chinese were simply forgotten by the Cubans during the crisis.”¹

Since then, however, the opening of materials from the foreign ministry archives of the People’s Republic of China in Beijing permits far greater inside access to the workings of the Sino-Cuban relationship during the early 1960s, and the translated documents presented here constitute the first major revelations from this until now untapped source. Concentrating on the period 1960-62, they reveal not only a fascinating story of a budding relationship in the secretive communist world—of two leaderships on different sides of the globe, each led by charismatic and iconic figures who had seized power through successful revolutions, assessing each other and the prospects for collaborating to promote a shared cause—but specifically add a new, previously absent perspective on the international history of the Cuban Missile Crisis.



The Cuban Revolution astonished, fascinated, and inspired. The Communist world was reeling from the pains of the 1950s, when Soviet brutality in Eastern Europe, revelations of Stalin’s crimes, crises in Poland and Hungary, and confusion in the Western communist parties dampened revolutionary enthusiasm worldwide. At the same time, after Stalin’s death in 1953, the Kremlin began to downplay the prospects of war and revolution, adopting a more “peaceful” foreign policy. “Peaceful transition,” “peaceful competition,” and “peaceful co-existence” became the new Soviet imperatives in a nuclear age. This did not mean that Stalin’s suc-

cessor, Nikita Khrushchev, had completely abandoned revolutionary foreign policy, but he eyed closer targets—India, Egypt, even Indonesia—and he never dreamed of sponsoring communist revolutions among these prospective Third World allies. As for Latin America, it was so far from the Communist world, and was apparently lodged so firmly in Washington’s hands, that the Soviets were not even looking that way when Castro and his bearded commandos ousted Batista.

The Cuban Revolution, by one account, made the aging Soviet leadership “feel like boys.”² But Nikita Khrushchev was not the only Communist prophet to claim the revolution as his own. Mao Zedong, too, was full of enthusiasm for what Castro was able to accomplish. Since at least 1956, Mao had harbored private misgivings about the direction of Soviet foreign policy. He was not happy about its emphasis on peaceful coexistence with imperialism. The Chairman wanted a more assertive policy, summed up in his famous phrase, uttered at the November 1957 Communist meeting in Moscow in the wake of the Soviet triumph of Sputnik: “The East Wind is prevailing over the West wind.” The Cuban Revolution seemed to prove Mao’s point. In October 1959 he sharply quarreled with Khrushchev who was just then advocating the “Spirit of Camp David” and talked up the prospects of a détente with the United States. To Mao, Khrushchev’s efforts to ingratiate himself with Eisenhower appeared cowardly and pathetic, just as Castro’s feat showed what true revolutionaries can and should achieve. From the beginning of China’s relationship with Castro’s Cuba, Mao engaged in implicit, and then explicit, competition with the Soviet leaders to win over Cuba, and to interpret the legacy and significance of its revolution.

Although the Cuban Communists had previously turned up in China (Blas Roca was there for the 8th Chinese Communist Party [CCP] Congress in 1956), Mao was not paying special attention to Cuba, and its un-influential Popular Socialist Party (PSP) at the time. Mao’s meeting with Roca on 28 April 1960 was the first major discussion he had had with a Cuban Communist delegation. The Chairman pointed to the Cuban Revolution’s “global significance” because it proved Mao’s point about the basic weakness of American imperialism. “The Americans fear you,” Mao said. “They bully the weak and fear the strong.” Roca replied: “At least hate us, if not fear.” But no, to Mao, fear was the key point. He had long pondered the issue, dismissing the US famously as a “paper tiger.” It had not been two years since Mao ordered the bombardment of outlying Taiwan-held

islands, Jinmen (Quemay) and Mazu (Matsu). At the time the Chairman congratulated himself on scaring the Americans and successfully “sticking a needle up Khrushchev’s ass.”³ Now, the Cubans were carrying Mao’s revolutionary banner forward. “Being next to a huge tiger without paying the slightest attention to it, you just break down superstitions. There is a Chinese idiom, ‘see no people in one’s eyes.’ In your eyes, there is no American imperialism, no tiger. To you, the US could do nothing.” Here was another needle up Khrushchev’s ass.

Mao returned to this point in his conversation with Ernesto “Che” Guevara on 19 November 1960. This was the first encounter of these two great revolutionary icons. Having already contacted Chinese diplomats in third countries to urge the establishment of cordial relations,⁴ “Che” had come to China at the head of an “economic” delegation, to discuss trade and aid, a few months after Castro, in his 2 September 1960 “Declaration of Havana,” formally recognized the PRC (breaking relations with the “puppet” regime on Taiwan) and signaled Cuba’s readiness to accept Chinese economic and military help.⁵ These youngsters clad in military fatigues (Che, thirty-two years old, was among the oldest!) made for a curious contrast with Mao who took his rebel army on the Long March before some of his Cuban guests learned how to walk. This was not a problem for Mao, because the Cubans were “vigorous” and enthusiastic. “Enthusiasm is the first must-have,” Mao explained. “It just cannot be done without enthusiasm.” Mao, who had just witnessed disastrous results of his “Great Leap Forward,” spoke about Cuba but he indirectly criticized his own comrades-in-leadership for lacking the revolutionary enthusiasm to build communism. In a few years Mao would try to whip up this enthusiasm by unleashing the wrath of the “Red Guards” on the party establishment during the Cultural Revolution.

Although inexperienced, the Cubans were true revolutionaries—“internationalist” and “firm.” “Be firm to the end,” Mao taught Che, “this is the hope [of the revolution], and imperialism will find itself in greater difficulty. But waver and compromise, and imperialism will find it easier [to deal with you].” This lesson was not lost on the revolutionary romantic. Che was already leaning to Mao’s side in ideological matters, admiring Mao’s radicalism and his enthusiasm for the revolutionary struggle; there was a true meeting of minds between the two. Several years later we would see them fighting their revolutionary wars: Che—in Africa and later in Latin America, where he died a martyr in 1967 at the hands of the Bolivian government forces; Mao—in his own country, against his own people, amid the chaos of the so-called “Cultural Revolution.”

Mao saw similarities between the Chinese and Cuban revolutions. In fact, he could relate to Castro much better than the Soviet leadership could. Khrushchev, as a young man, marginally participated in the Russian Civil War but he was basically of the post-revolutionary generation. Khrushchev’s troubleshooter and close confidant Anastas Mikoyan had more revolutionary accomplishments on his CV but none that matched Mao’s years of guerilla struggle against the Guomindang, an experience that spoke to Castro’s own. In his many meetings with the Cubans the Chairman keenly emphasized these similarities. Batista, in his interpretation, was another version of Jiang Jieshi; both had used the same methods against the revolutionaries, and both were ultimately defeated by the same methods. Che acknowledged that there were “almost identical” aspects in the Chinese and the Cuban revolutions, especially in the methods employed, respectively, by Jiang Jieshi and Batista to “encircle” and “suppress” the revolutionary forces. Mao agreed, offering an anatomical observation on the nature of the revolutionary struggle: “When alien entities enter the body, white cells will encircle and suppress them. Jiang Jieshi treated us as bacteria and wanted to destroy us.”

For Mao, such similarities were immensely important, for they suggested the applicability of the Chinese revolutionary experience to other Third World countries. Cuba, though significant, was, after all, a small fish. There were bigger gains to be had in Latin America and elsewhere in the world. Unlike Stalin who, though also global in thinking, tended not to care about far-flung corners of the world where the Soviet Union had no direct security interests, Mao paid great attention to what was happening on the other side of the globe.⁶ He quizzed his guests relentlessly about the prospects for a revolution in just about every Latin American country, even tiny ones like the Dominican Republic or Haiti, though he was especially interested in what would happen in Brazil, the greatest potential gain in that part of the world. In his conversation with the Cuban President Oswaldo Dorticos on 28 September 1961 Mao turned to Brazil right away, recounting to Dorticos the recent visit of the Brazilian Vice-President (by now, President) João Goulart, a leftist who would be ousted in a military coup three years later. This future was yet unknown to Mao, and he had all the reasons to be optimistic that Brazil would one day follow Cuba. “The situation favors you,” he told Dorticos. “Brazil is such a big country, and then there is Mexico.”

Mao was not the only one excited and worried about Brazil’s future. The Soviets likewise eyed the country with great interest, and the Americans with commensurate fears. John Kennedy’s nightmare, that Brazil would soon turn communist and become a “second Cuba,” was Khrushchev’s dream—and also Fidel Castro’s. “In a few years,” the Cuban leader told the newly appointed Chinese Ambassador Shen

Jian on 11 February 1961, “Latin America will have big changes, and things that occurred in China will also take place here.”

For Mao, though, exciting as this was, the coming Latin American revolutions were but a part of the much bigger developments that would engulf the entire world in a powerful anti-imperialist storm. He repeatedly drew parallels between Cuba (and Latin America) and different African and Asian countries that, in the Chairman’s view, were also ripe for a revolution. In their conversations with the Cubans, Mao and Prime Minister Zhou Enlai made fascinating comparisons between seemingly random places like the Dominican Republic and South Vietnam, or Peru, South Africa and Tibet. Indeed, through these conversations one can trace the evolution of Mao’s thinking on the Third World, and the emergence of the narrative of the “Afro-Asian solidarity” that persisted through the mid-1960s. This thinking was premised on the assumption that China’s revolution was welcomed in most quarters of the world, and that the different African, Asian, and Latin American countries would follow Mao’s leadership and China’s example. “I have made a calculation,” the Chairman told Dorticos. “The imperialists and the revisionists [e.g., the Soviets] combined, people who oppose us, account for less than one tenth of the global population [which means] nine tenths of the global population support China.” Cuba, as both a Third World country and a member of socialist camp, was seen as one of the key allies that would support Mao’s bid for leadership in the Communist world, as well as the Third World.

Documents in this collection show that the Chinese government was willing to be generous to their friends from afar. Already in April 1960 Mao offered the Cubans weapons: “We would give as much as you want. It’s all right with us whether you would pay for them or not.” When Che made his maiden visit to China half a year later, he asked Beijing to purchase sugar from Cuba. Taking the right tack with his hosts, Che cited the amount the Soviets had agreed to buy (2.7 million tons). Prime Minister Zhou Enlai agreed to nearly double China’s share to 1 million tons, even though, by his own admission, “the Chinese people are not used to consuming much sugar.” “Habits could be changed,” Zhou added, smiling. After all, who could refuse an extra spoonful of sugar for the sake of the Cuban revolution? As China had no foreign currency to pay for the imports, Zhou volunteered to barter sugar for China’s produce, including for up to 200 thousand tons of rice. “We could help you just by each person having one less bite of rice,” the Premier told Che at the time of the most deadly famine in China’s history which would cost tens of millions of lives. This was because “the Chinese people

have a duty to support you.” Seeing such generosity Che declared his “mission” complete.



Despite an auspicious beginning in 1960-61, Cuba and China did not see eye to eye. Indeed, by 1962 Sino-Cuban relations were in something of a state of flux. On the surface they were very good, with ongoing cultural exchanges, trade, cordial diplomatic conversations, and protestations of revolutionary and ideological solidarity—but behind that was a looming uncertainty and tension brought about by the increasing schism between the two major communist powers. As observers noted at the time and the only serious scholarly study using Chinese-language sources agrees, Fidel Castro resolutely tried to maintain outward neutrality in the emerging Sino-Soviet split, especially given Cuba’s obvious economic dependency on economic aid from the Soviet Union. Yet it was also clear that on at least some ideological matters, especially the desirability and even necessity of pursuing armed struggle to promote revolution in Latin America and elsewhere in the Third World, some in the leadership, notably Che Guevara, found the bellicose China line more appealing than what some saw as Moscow’s more cautious, plodding strategy emphasizing “peaceful coexistence” with the West. Fidel Castro’s own preferences, such as they were, remained a carefully-guarded secret that was the source of considerable speculation that he may have been torn between ideological and emotional affinities for Beijing’s approach, and pragmatic recognition of the centrality of Soviet political, economic, and military aid which the Chinese could not match.

He was certainly deeply concerned. In early January 1962, a visiting communist diplomat reported that the Cuban leader, unprompted, had suddenly asked whether negotiations were being planned to reduce or eliminate Sino-Soviet differences, which were damaging the revolutionary cause, adding, “I hope so.” Mulling over the disconcerting rift, the Hungarian deputy foreign minister reported, “Fidel Castro returned again to analyzing the extremely harmful consequences that may follow from breaking up unity in the socialist camp, and the analysis of the international, especially the Latin American situation led him to conclude that this was the worst time possible for a debate like this and especially the worst time for the deepening of the antagonism between the Soviet and the Chinese parties.”⁷⁷

The Hungarian also reported complaints from Moscow’s ambassador that China’s embassy in Havana was consistently generating “anti-Soviet propaganda” and quoted senior Cuban communist Carlos Rafael Rodríguez as saying, with some resignation, that despite the government’s best efforts

to muffle the growing Sino-Soviet antagonism he “was afraid that it would not be possible to prevent this debate from becoming public until the end of time, which will raise serious problems.”⁸

A few months later, in late March 1962, Castro only deepened the mystery of Cuba’s position in the communist realm by overseeing a purge of the pro-Moscow Popular Socialist Party (PSP) and its leader, Aníbal Escalante, in a clear hint of displeasure with the Kremlin (which was soon forced to replace its ambassador in Havana as part of the fallout of what became known as the “Escalante Affair”).⁹ Shortly before Castro took that step, amid flourishing rumors in Havana of rising tension between Fidel and the PSP, the resident Yugoslav ambassador, quoting a “completely reliable source,” told a fellow communist envoy that Fidel Castro had recently stated that, despite being “completely aware” of and “extremely grateful” for Soviet help, he was nonetheless “considering the idea of revolution according to the Chinese.” Belgrade’s representative, besides reporting internal rifts within the Cuban leadership over whether to take a sharply anti-Yugoslav tone in its publications (i.e., echoing the Chinese rather than the Soviet line on the topic), in general described Fidel Castro as being “under [Chinese] influence” as compared to the pro-Soviet “old Cuban communists” (i.e., of the PSP).¹⁰ To make matters worse for Moscow, that same month, Castro’s visiting interior minister, Ramiro Valdés, had hinted at Beijing’s rising appeal for the Cuban revolutionaries when he noted that the Chinese were doing a better job of spreading their influence “on every continent,” and scolded that “the Russians must do this as well.”¹¹

Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali speculate that it was in part over concern that Havana might be drifting towards Beijing in the wake of the “Escalante Affair,” that Nikita Khrushchev decided in the late spring of 1962 to deploy nuclear weapons—an action he hoped would, aside from other consequences, firm up the somewhat shaky Soviet-Cuban connection.¹² Castro agreed to the deployment during a visit to Cuba by a Soviet delegation (under the cover of an agricultural mission) in late May/early June 1962. Over the summer, the secret Soviet deployment went forward, amid furtive consultations with the Cubans during missions to Moscow by Defense Minister Raúl Castro in July and by Emilio Aragonés and Che Guevara in late September/early October. The Soviet and Cuban records of these consultations still have not been declassified but the Chinese documents confirm one well-known anecdote that up to now has only been reflected in oral history. Asked what he would do if the Americans reacted aggressively to the missile deployment, Khrushchev told Aragonés and Che that he would “send the Baltic fleet.”¹³ Che confirmed this account to the Chinese

Ambassador in Havana Shen Jian: “They kept blathering, for example, that they would send their Baltic Fleet. They also told us that they preferred actions to hollow statements, and that the mighty Soviet Union would deliver a destructive strike upon anyone who dared to invade Cuba, etc. At the time we believed their words were true.” But, crucially, Che Guevara’s revelations (during their conversation on 1 December) postdated the crisis. The Cubans maintained secrecy regarding Operation ANADYR (the Soviet code-name for the deployments), including from the Chinese—and at times awkwardly so, as is evident from a Chinese record of a conversation, included below, between Shen Jian and Guevara shortly after the latter returned from the Soviet Union.

Of all the top Cuban leaders, “Che” was the closest to the Chinese philosophically and ideologically, given his backing (and fairly dogmatic and doctrinaire support, critics felt) for armed struggle and the most rapid implementation of “revolutionary” economic measures. As early as the summer of 1959 he had contacted Chinese diplomats in other countries to express interest in establishing closer Sino-Cuban political and economic relations (including Chinese sugar purchases); his November 1960 visit to Beijing and discussions with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai (the extensive translated Chinese records are reproduced here) had yielded an increase in those ties, including an agreement for Beijing to buy more Cuban sugar and extend a long-term interest-free loan; and the Chinese documents here testify to his close contacts with Beijing’s diplomats in Havana, before and after the missile crisis, even as the relationship later deteriorated, in 1965.¹⁴

When Che met Shen Jian on 13 October 1962—just four days before the Chinese diplomat left Havana for an ill-timed, long-planned trip home for a “holiday,” which caused him to miss the highpoint of the impending missile crisis—the two had a wide-ranging discussion of various topics, including the prospects for revolution in Latin America, but the current state of Soviet measures to defend Cuba’s security against the ever-looming threat of US aggression was a prime topic for discussion. (So, too was continued Sino-Soviet sparring over Albania, which “distressed” Che, who wished the polemics would cease and insisted that Cuba would not be “pushed to the battlefield” of the rival communist powers.) In response to Shen Jian’s probing, Che (perhaps uncomfortably) evaded giving a revealing description of his recent conversations in the Soviet Union. He claimed confidence in Moscow’s “very clear” backing by stating unequivocally that a US invasion would trigger World War III—yet he admitted a lack of clarity regarding precisely “what specific form” the Soviet support would take. By the time they met again—in another conversation presented below—after the Soviets had withdrawn their missiles (and Shen Jian had returned from China), Che would

both apologize for his lack of candor at their previous talk and grumble openly about his disillusionment with the Soviets for removing their missile under pressure from the Americans.

During the crisis in late October, Shen Jian's absence undoubtedly deprived China's embassy in Havana of the possibility of some high-level contacts (both with the Cubans and fellow diplomats) facilitated by the relationships the ambassador had established. Yet, contrary to Cheng Yinghong's assertion that "the Chinese were simply forgotten by the Cubans during the crisis,"¹⁵ the cables sent by the acting ambassador, chargé d'affaires Huang Wenyou, indicate that throughout the immediate crisis (i.e., in late October following JFK's 22 October speech announcing the discovery of the Soviet missiles) the Chinese saw a steady stream of important Cuban figures to gain information and assessments. These did not include Fidel or Raúl Castro or others at the highest level, but did include well-informed persons such as Joaquín Ordoqui, a member of the leadership council; the interior minister; a Chilean economist advising Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos; and representatives of the foreign ministry and the military's general staff (including military intelligence). The PRC Embassy even developed a relationship with Che Guevara's mother and other people in his circle, like one "Madam Moke" (transliteration) who kept the Chinese up to date on Che's thinking at the time of the crisis. Certainly, the Cubans' attention was focused on the United States and the Soviet Union—and diplomatically, Foreign Minister Raúl Roa seemed to consult more closely with ambassadors of such countries as Brazil and Yugoslavia¹⁶—yet they did not entirely "forget" about the Chinese.¹⁷

If anything, in fact, the Chinese were even more distracted than the Cubans, since Beijing was in the midst of its own crisis—and an actual shooting war, not a threatened one. Its border conflict with India, simmering for more than three years, had erupted into large-scale fighting on two Himalayan fronts in the second half of October 1962, raising the prospect of all-out war between the two most populous countries in Asia (and the world). The interaction between the two coincidental crises remains murky but one factor noticed at the time was that the Soviets, alarmed at the prospect of possible thermonuclear war with the United States, seemed to make a stab at closing ranks with the Chinese despite their feuding. Moscow had cultivated good relations with New Delhi and its leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, but in the midst of the missile crisis, on 25 October, a *Pravda* editorial on the Sino-Indian conflict appeared to side with Beijing.¹⁸

But any notion of Sino-Soviet rapprochement as a result of the Cuban crisis proved short-lived. The Chinese harshly criticized Khrushchev's decision on 28 October to remove

the missiles as a capitulation to the American aggressors, and the massive pro-Cuban rallies that the Chinese organized in Beijing, Tianjin, and other cities in the ensuing days (as well as blood drives and other symbolic gestures) were widely viewed by observers as less serious measures to back Cuba than implicit rebukes to Moscow.¹⁹ China's diplomats in Cuba also flaunted their solidarity. "As should have been expected, the Chinese have not missed a chance to exploit the temporarily unfavorable for us situation," cabled the Soviet ambassador in Havana, Aleksandr Alekseev, on 2 November. Juxtaposed with the seeming let-down from Moscow, Beijing's bellicose "pseudo-revolutionary statements," when reprinted in the local press, "flattered the excited Cubans." Worse, he reported, PRC embassy officials "went to the masses" to exhort them to fight the American imperialist aggressor, and ostentatiously appealed to the Cubans' "sentimental feelings" by donating blood to "cement the Chinese-Cuban friendship." Alekseev judged that "these cheap methods of propaganda did not have much success," but admitted that they intensified Cubans' "confusion," which had touched "not only common people, but also a number of Cuban leaders."²⁰

Meeting with an East European communist leader on 30 October, just two days after agreeing to withdraw the missiles from Cuba, Khrushchev crowed that the peaceful resolution of the crisis belied Beijing's claim that the Cold War was destined to end in a military clash—and in the process mocked Mao Zedong's disdain for their common, thermonuclear-armed enemy. "This clash (and we were truly on the verge of war) demonstrated that war today is not inevitably destined by Fate, that it can be avoided," he told Czechoslovakia's Antonín Novotný on 30 October. "The Chinese claim was therefore once again refuted, as well as their assessments of the current era, the current balance of forces. Imperialism, as can be seen, is no paper tiger; it is a tiger that can give you a nice bite in the backside. That is why one has to be careful of it..."²¹ Khrushchev was deeply upset by Chinese insinuations that he had shown weakness by retreating before the imperialists. "The Chinese demonstrated for three days in Beijing," he complained at a party plenum in November. "If this is their way of fighting imperialism, the imperialists could not give a damn." Khrushchev praised his own wisdom, which allowed the Soviet Union and the United States to avoid the fate of two stubborn goats on a narrow bridge: when neither yielded, both fell into the gully below.²²

In meetings with Chinese diplomats in Havana, described in their cables home printed here, Cuban officials warmly thanked China for its support. "China's support to Cuba in prompt organization of demonstrations has been a great encouragement to us," a Cuban foreign ministry aide handling relations with socialist countries

told Huang Wenyou on 31 October. “We feel very grateful.” A colleague gushed: “China’s statement has increased our strength. The Chinese government and people are, indeed, a government of revolution and people of revolution.” The next day, trade minister Alberto Mora Becerra, noting a pro-Cuban *Renmin Ribao* (*People’s Daily*) editorial, pronounced himself “grateful” and “satisfied” with the support from the “Chinese people,” whom he termed “our real brothers and comrades.”

Despite the politeness, at least some Cubans obviously felt some dissatisfaction at the lack of a higher-level channel to the Chinese even as they negotiated with Anastas Mikoyan, Khrushchev’s personal emissary, against the backdrop of acute resentment and bewilderment at Moscow. Attending the Soviet national day celebration at Moscow’s embassy on 7 November—at which, naturally, Mikoyan was the featured guest—Che Guevara took Huang Wenyou aside and requested Ambassador Shen Jian’s urgent return from China, “for there were lots of things to do.”

At this sensitive juncture, the Chinese embassy noted Cuban discretion in discussing with foreigners their disagreements with the Soviets, and on 2 November informed Beijing that they believed it wise not to take the initiative to discuss the “very complex” Soviet-Cuban relationship. Accordingly, the chargé d’affaire had received formal instructions from the foreign ministry to say as little as possible regarding the Mikoyan-Castro negotiations or reports of Soviet-Cuban discord. “With respect to the Cuban-Soviet relationship, [you] should not speak but listen,” Beijing directed its embassies, in Cuba and elsewhere, on November 6.

Despite that admonition, China’s position was made clear to all. Reporting to his government on the Soviet embassy national day reception in Havana, Czechoslovakia’s envoy noted, despite the “warm feelings and openness” on the surface, the persistence of “doubtful tones regarding the USSR’s approach.” The Chinese state news agency Xinhua, he added, was “making a special effort to feed those feelings with [its] blatant nonsensical information in a bulletin that the local press willingly accepts. There was even a comment about a new Munich....”²³ China’s embassy in Moscow, meanwhile, privately transmitted scornful analyses of what it termed the “fiasco” of Khrushchev’s diplomacy, harshly condemning his “conciliatory” and “submissive” agreement to withdraw the missiles, which it termed an appeasement of the aggressive imperialists that would bear “extremely bitter fruits” for the cause of revolution (see its cables of 31 October and 2 November 1962, included below).

When Shen Jian finally returned to Havana at the end of November, the documents show, he met in quick succession with Foreign Minister Roa, Che Guevara, and President

Dorticos, sending home lengthy reports of each conversation. Their conversations ran the gamut, from reviewing the recent crisis and Mikoyan’s just-concluded visit (with all critical of the Soviets, and Che, predictably, most acerbic), to Shen Jian’s briefing (and the Cubans’ questions) on the Sino-Indian border clashes, to reassessing the prospects for revolution in Latin America, to a discussion of plans for the next period in bilateral relations.

These higher-level conversations were indeed polite, even cordial and friendly. Roa formally expressed his government’s appreciation for their support during the crisis; Che began by apologizing for his lack of candor about the Soviet missiles when they had last spoken, just before Shen Jian had left for China in mid-October, and commiserated over respective experiences of (alleged) betrayal by the Soviets; Dorticos effusively thanked Shen Jian for the gifts of a newly-published Chinese edition of Fidel Castro’s works and the latest Spanish-language volume of Mao Zedong’s writings; the Cubans offered sympathy toward China’s stand in the stand-off with India, and shared jibes at Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Taken collectively, these Chinese documents, in particular, offer a snapshot of the Sino-Cuban dialogue and mutual attitudes, allowing a comparison with the immediately preceding high-level Soviet-Cuban dialogue now available with the release of essentially the full Soviet record of Mikoyan’s exchanges with his Cuban hosts.²⁴

To many observers, the Cubans’ angry refusal or reluctance to cooperate with Mikoyan and the Soviets—on issues ranging from foreign inspection of the missiles’ removal to the continuing US overflights to Castro’s insistence on evacuation of Guantanamo as one of his “5 Points”—suggested a congruence to Mao Zedong’s extremist views. “It is the Chinese that are the instigators of the intransigent position of the Cuban Government,” Yugoslavia’s foreign minister confidentially told a foreign diplomat, attributing Beijing’s actions in Havana to its “vast plans” to contest Moscow for influence in the communist world.²⁵ A Czechoslovak diplomat, speaking to a communist colleague, observed that Cuban leaders, feeling “alone” after Khrushchev’s agreement with Kennedy, were “influenced” by China’s strident position, as was evident from Mikoyan’s difficulties during his protracted stay.²⁶

Yet, while the Chinese documents suggest that Shen Jian (and by extension Beijing) benefitted from the still-raw Cuban disappointment with the Soviets, it seems an overstatement to conclude, as does Cheng Yinghong, that Khrushchev’s “humiliating retreat” in Cuban Missile Crisis “reinforced Cuba’s tilt toward China.”²⁷ For one thing, the Chinese documents finally provide *one* side of the Sino-Cuban dialogue, but we still lack *any* real internal, contemporaneous Cuban sources on how they viewed that relationship. And, for

another, some other diplomatic records from Havana—some published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—suggest that the Cubans may not have been completely happy or satisfied with China’s reaction to the missile crisis. After meeting with Raúl Roa on 29 October, the Yugoslav ambassador reported, in the midst of a lengthy conversation, the Cuban foreign minister had noted “that they didn’t have time to think about the Chinese and their stupidities.” The representative from the country endlessly blasted by Beijing as “revisionist” further added that the conversation with Roa “was held in the familiar atmosphere as among friends, with some pranks on the account of their ‘great friends’ the Chinese and others.”²⁸

But what about Fidel Castro? Absent internal Cuban evidence it is impossible to say for sure, but contemporaneous Soviet-bloc documents suggest that he, too, was peeved or at least disappointed at China’s behavior. Moscow’s ambassador in Havana reported that at the end of a conversation about the missile crisis on 23 October the Cuban leader had “touched upon the Chinese-Indian conflict and said that the actions of our Chinese comrades”—an evident allusion to reports that PRC forces had launched attacks along the disputed border—“complicate the positions of the Cubans both internally and in its international plans.” According to the Soviet envoy, Castro even described Beijing’s actions as “insults” and noted that the Chinese were “hinting to us to hush up our press about this event.”²⁹ Of course, at that moment Castro and Khrushchev were standing steadfast against Washington, but even after Soviet-Cuban divergences arose the Kremlin boss’s handling of the crisis, that did not necessarily mean the Cuban leader felt gratitude toward Mao Zedong. On 12 November, a cable from the Polish ambassador in Havana, Bolesław Jeleń, quoted Raul Valdes Vivo (then the editor-in-chief of a major publication, *Hoy* [*Today*], later a senior communist official and intelligence officer), as saying that Fidel Castro felt “embittered” by the Chinese reaction to the crisis. While Warsaw Pact nations had immediately put their military forces on alert (to one extent or another) after Kennedy’s speech on 22 October, China had hesitated and reacted strongly only after Khrushchev had announced the withdrawal of the missiles six days later. Despite its distance, China *could* have indirectly yet concretely aided Cuba’s cause by using force against the Nationalist Chinese-controlled offshore islands (i.e., against Mazu and Jinmen), which would have distracted the Americans, forcing them to worry about a potential military clash in the Far East should Washington need to defend Taiwan. Instead, Valdes Vivo complained (purportedly echoing Fidel Castro), China had “exacerbated the situation [on the border] with India, something that does not help Cuba.”³⁰

Coincidentally or not, Anastas Mikoyan—clearly reaching for any possible argument to salve Cuban dissatisfaction with Moscow and prevent them from seeing Beijing as a better ally or potential savior—egged on the Cubans to consider such arguments. On 20 November, at a particularly difficult juncture in his talks with Fidel Castro, who vociferously disputed the reliability of Kennedy’s non-invasion pledge, Mikoyan stressed that the Americans were unlikely to invade Cuba because, while Washington enjoyed a favorable “correlation of forces” in the Caribbean, the communist advantage elsewhere in the world, in Berlin and other places, “binds the Americans, ties down their hands.” Reporting to Khrushchev on the talk, Mikoyan recounted: “I noted that it would be useful, if the Chinese could strike against Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Macao.”³¹

Mikoyan naturally did not repeat such arguments when he met with socialist diplomats in Havana, since among those present was China’s Huang Wenyuan (Shen Jian had not yet returned from Beijing), shortly before he left Havana. (Following Beijing’s strict orders, the Chinese chargé d’affaires not only “did not say a single word during the cocktail party,” an Eastern European diplomat present reported, but when Mikoyan—who had made a point of reminiscing about the allegedly close Sino-Soviet coordination during the 1956 Hungarian “counter-revolution”—mingled with the guests, he backed off and didn’t even request a translation of the remarks.)³²

But when he met with Soviet-bloc diplomats in Washington (where he stopped at the end of November on the way home from Cuba) on 29 November, without Mao’s minion present at the home of Soviet ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin, Mikoyan felt no compunctions about teeing off on Beijing for its behavior during the Cuban crisis—and expressed confidence that the Cuban leadership agreed with his and Moscow’s view of their “totally wrong” Chinese behavior. A Hungarian diplomat present summarized Mikoyan’s account:

Comrade Mikoyan spoke very negatively about China’s activity in Cuba. He said that with their ultra left-wing views the Chinese confused some of the [Cuban] leaders, especially mid-level leaders, but they practically failed to help upset the enemy. For instance, they could have occupied Quemoy [Jinmen] and Matsui [Mazu] or Macao without any real risk. Instead, they were sending hundreds of thousands of petitions and attacked India, whereby they managed to turn India, at least temporarily, into a country supporting the western camp, to disrupt the Indian Communist Party and give a chance to the Indian right-wing to gain ground, etc.³³

In a more elaborate account of Mikoyan's remarks, Khrushchev's emissary was more detailed, and more scathing. Praising the Cuban populace's behavior despite many economic woes as well as the county's "flawless" military measures, he contrasted this with the feckless attitude of the Chinese:

Intensive activity had been undertaken by the Chinese; they had organized blood donations, sent resolutions, etc. This activity, however, has had no influence on the leadership of Cuba. Before his departure, Khrushchev was told by Castro that Cuba was with the USSR and would continue to be with it. In this connection Mikoyan reiterated some of the arguments that he had used in discussions with Cuban representatives, concerning the pseudo-revolutionary "positions" of the Chinese. The Chinese are very active in the use of revolutionary clichés, but have done virtually nothing useful for Cuba. Soviet garrisons were in Cuba, and if it came to a fight, they would give their lives, and not just give blood in a clinic...³⁴

Rather than "attacking Macao or Hong Kong and thus complicating the relationship of the USA with her allies Portugal and Britain," Mikoyan again complained, China had attacked India ("a neutral country") and was even courting Pakistan, a member of "aggressive" US-led alliances. Warming to the theme (and preaching to the choir), he compared China to the "ultra-left" Soviet faction that had resisted Lenin's "sober" policy in signing the Brest-Litovsk treaty in 1918, and lamented that Beijing's actions toward India had undercut the positions of friendly forces (e.g., Defense Minister Krishna Menon, who had been forced to resign, and the Communist Party of India) and strengthened right-wingers.³⁵

When he insisted that the Cuban leaders, including Fidel Castro, had eventually come around to the Soviet point of view, Mikoyan was putting the most positive possible spin on his difficult mission. Moreover, it is clear that not all of the *barbudos* were completely convinced by his arguments, and that the Chinese professions of revolutionary solidarity appealed to some—notably Che Guevara. Soviet-Cuban disagreements (over the recent past and, more ominously, over the future) clearly persisted, as the Chinese records of Shen Jian's talks with high-level Cubans after he returned to Havana suggest. When Cuban communist Carlos Rafael Rodríguez visited Moscow in December 1962 and met with Khrushchev—the first post-crisis meeting between a senior Cuban figure and the Soviets—Rodríguez admitted frankly at the outset of their meeting that "the shock" of the Soviet actions had not

entirely subsided for Cubans.³⁶ So wild was the speculation and pervasive the uncertainty concerning the extent of the evident Cuban displeasure at Moscow's actions that in late December 1962, according to a newly obtained and translated cable from the Netherlands' ambassador in Washington, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk raised the possibility that in the coming days Fidel Castro "may announce a 'change of policy' which would boil down to a break with the Russians followed by a reorientation either in the Chinese-Albanian direction, or a Titoist line." (These alternatives seem fairly mutually incompatible, but such was the state of Rusk's reported speculation; other alternatives he mentioned, allegedly on the basis of recent intelligence, were that the "extreme militant wing of the Cuban communist party could overthrow Castro with the aid of the Russian troops" or, conversely, that the "moment could be seized for a revolution which would be directed not only against Castro but also against the Russians present.")³⁷

Ultimately, however, despite their admitted shock, the Cuban leadership grudgingly decided that practicality dictated that they patch up relations with the Soviets—both economically and militarily, they depended on Moscow's aid, and knew the Chinese could not replace it. France's ambassador in Havana perceptively observed on 15 November, with Mikoyan still deeply engaged in secret and apparently difficult negotiations, that

The sympathies of the "Fidelistas" are far more with the Chinese, but since the latter cannot do anything for them in practical terms, be it for providing supplies or even more for providing fuel, they have to accept Russia's tutelage, and we can sense that this tutelage is becoming unbearable for the "men of the Sierra" — those, at least, who have not joined the opposition since their leader officially declared last December that he was a "Marxist-Leninist".³⁸

Behind closed doors, after considerable beating around the bush, the Cubans finally broached the subject directly to Mikoyan just before he left Havana after three weeks of sometimes contentious negotiations. "With concern to my hints about whether there was not a Chinese influence in their consideration of the Cuban events," Mikoyan cabled Khrushchev on 26 November, Defense Minister Raul Castro said "directly" that, while some Cubans undoubtedly sympathized with the Chinese line, the leadership included "not one adherent." "Chinese diplomats are trying warm to us, they invite us to lunches, engage in conversations, but we try to keep them at a distance," the defense minister was quoted as saying (a state-

ment that can now be tested alongside the Chinese records of the high-level conversations between China's ambassador and such figures as Roa, Guevara, and Dorticos in the coming days). In sum, Mikoyan reported, "Raul gave an open analysis of the Chinese government in connection with the Cuban crisis, which coincides with ours."³⁹

Nevertheless, when another senior member of the leadership, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, journeyed to Moscow a couple of weeks later, he found it necessary to clarify explicitly Cuban sentiments regarding China's role in the crisis and influence, if any, on Havana. According to Rodriguez's record of his talk with Khrushchev (with Mikoyan present) in the Kremlin, the Soviet leader stressed that despite making a tactical retreat in Cuba the Soviets were not "in any way on the defensive, I insist, not anywhere, even in Cuba," but rather still on the offensive. "But the Cubans did not understand us," Khrushchev complained indignantly to Rodriguez, "and they began to attack us in their press, using the words of the Albanians and the Chinese. If you are in favor of this position, please tell us so, and we promise you that we can shout more than the Albanians and the Chinese."

Rodriguez reassured him, even if, unlike Raul Castro, he admitted some sympathy for some Chinese positions among some in the leadership:

I wanted to make perfectly clear that in the attitude of Cuba during this crisis, not a trace of the Chinese position could be found, nor did Cuban positions derive from Chinese ones. I expressed that they knew well, and I did not wish to hide it from them, that among our leaders there were some who sympathized in concrete ways with some of the positions of our Chinese comrades, but I wished to explain how, in this crisis, even the comrades that felt more sympathy toward some Chinese positions found the attitude of the Chinese government erroneous, and that the solidarity they had expressed was too late and not sufficiently enthusiastic.⁴⁰

Rodriguez's visit, however, failed to fully clear the air, and when the Soviet deputy foreign minister, Vasilii V. Kuznetsov (who had been deeply involved in the post-crisis negotiations in New York City with US representatives Adlai E. Stevenson and John J. McCloy), visited Cuba in early January, his exchanges with the Cubans, and Fidel Castro in particular, remained tense, dispatches from East-bloc diplomats in Havana reveal.⁴¹ Sensing the continuing gap, Khrushchev sent Fidel Castro an extraordinary 30-page letter at the end of the month, explaining his thinking on the Cuban Missile Crisis and venting rage at the Chinese (without mentioning them by name)⁴²:

We understood that our country could be pulled into a war in the Caribbean Sea region. And this means that the war would become a world war... And we accepted this with full understanding of our internationalist duty. This is not resolutions, this is not cursing of imperialism, with which it cannot be weakened. As a Belorussian proverb goes, you curse a landlord, and he only gets fatter. This is truly so. One can curse imperialism as much as you want, but he won't lose any weight from this, it will not be weakened, and its insolence will not lessen. Imperialism takes into account only real force. It does not recognize anything else. Therefore, one can call imperialism a paper tiger, manure [*navoz*], or what not, but if imperialism does not see that there is real force behind these words... it will not be deterred, and its insolence and aggressiveness will not diminish.⁴³

Khrushchev also, again clearly if not explicitly, echoed the arguments Mikoyan had made to Cubans about China's failure to, in effect, put their money where their mouth was—they loudly proclaimed their support for Cuba, but did not take action (e.g., attacking or threatening to attack the off-shore islands or Hong Kong) when it might have actually mattered:

You may have observed that certain people and groups, and even the leaders of certain socialist countries, who limited themselves to observing the crisis, started to get agitated and to pontificate on the ways in which one should have acted during the crisis, criticizing those who carried the burden of the struggle. They say that we should have proceeded in this or that way, taken such-and-such a step, although they themselves took no steps and held themselves at the sidelines of the real struggle. We may rightly ask these critics why they, at the height of the crisis, did not take any step—verbal or material—that would have demonstrated their willingness to aid Cuba, to march with her if war broke out.⁴⁴

In this letter Khrushchev invited the Cuban leader to pay a visit to the USSR to engage in face-to-face conversations and chart a path forward in Soviet-Cuban relations.



Not until Fidel Castro took that lengthy trip to the Soviet Union that spring (i.e., late May-early June 1963), conducting numerous conversations with Nikita Khrushchev, did the two seem to have fully aired their mutual disagreements

and/or misunderstanding regarding the events of the crisis. Unfortunately, as of this writing, the detailed Soviet records of those May 1963 Khrushchev-Castro conversations remain sealed, but we know that, among other things, they discussed the Chinese aspect of the missile crisis. Khrushchev recounted his conversations with Castro at a Presidium (Politburo) meeting on 7 June 7:

I said [to Castro]: ‘instead of concentrating our revolutionary efforts against the enemy, they [the Chinese] opened fire on us. Who profited from this? The revolutionary forces? No, the imperialist forces profited from this, from the fragmentation and dispersion of the revolutionary forces.’ In a word, we talked a lot, approximately in this spirit. We left it [the conversation], then picked up again. And now, it seems, all of this, of course, had a result.⁴⁵

Indeed, after that intense bout of Soviet-Cuban summitry, bilateral relations improved – something that did not escape Beijing’s attention. On July 4 (just when a high-powered CCP delegation led by Deng Xiaoping went to Moscow for talks that put the last nail in the coffin of the Sino-Soviet alliance) the Chinese Foreign Ministry reported anxiously that after Castro’s visit to the USSR, “the rightists [in Cuba] became relatively more active while the leftists turned silent.” Even China’s best friend, Che Guevara, whom Shen Jian questioned about Castro’s visit, refused to discuss the subject. Some days later, when Che was in Algeria, he appeared cautiously supportive of the Chinese position in the quarrel with the USSR but whatever private misgivings he or Castro may have had, in public Havana evaded taking sides.⁴⁶ Reflecting the unsettled situation, despite the successful Castro-Soviet summit, some Soviet-bloc diplomats in the summer of 1963 worried that Cuba’s economic woes might lead to an increase in Chinese influence on the island, and fretted that the Havana authorities seemingly did nothing to impede the PRC embassy from “freely” spreading incendiary anti-Soviet propaganda to which at least middle- and low-level Cuban cadres were “strongly attracted.”⁴⁷ “One could seriously feel the Chinese Communist Party’s influence on Cuban politics,” a Czech foreign ministry analyst complained to a Hungarian colleague, detecting comparable “dogmatism, adventurism, and subjectivism” and citing Havana’s aspiration to become a “center of revolution” through the “mechanical application” of Cuba’s experience.⁴⁸ Indeed, the Cubans were by no means fully in the Soviets’ pocket—like Beijing, Havana refused to join the nuclear test-ban treaty Khrushchev signed with the Americans (and British) in August 1963 (although, a Czech document records, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez ardently tried to reassure Soviet-bloc comrades that Cuba’s stance on

this and other issue was “[its] own and absolutely not that of the PRC”).⁴⁹ Trying to maintain a balanced position, Castro even ventured a brief attempt to mediate between the communist giants upon learning of Khrushchev’s overthrow in October 1964.

That effort would fail, however, and Sino-Cuban relations would soon plummet, leading inevitably, in the zero-sum realm of the inter-communist dispute, to a tangible warming in relations with Moscow. Havana’s criticism of China (and increasing tilt toward the Soviets) became particularly evident after unsuccessful visits to Beijing by, first, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez in December 1964 and then, two months later, Che Guevara. Though probably the Cuban leader most ideologically sympathetic to the Chinese, Che ironically played a key part in the final virtual break between Havana and Beijing. During his hastily-arranged trip to China in February 1965 to try to salvage relations and convince the Chinese to make concessions to ameliorate worsening Sino-Soviet tensions, Mao did not receive him (unlike his earlier visit in 1960 or most Cuban official delegations since then), and senior officials Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, who did, rejected his overture.⁵⁰ The following month, meeting with Soviet-bloc communist leaders in Eastern Europe (and attending a meeting of communist parties in Moscow which China boycotted, symbolizing the split in the movement⁵¹), Raúl Castro decried the CCP’s “erroneous positions” and recounted Mao’s rejection of the Cuban attempt at Sino-Soviet mediation, including his harsh accusation that the Cuban leaders were afraid of imperialism, the PRC, and their own people. “A series of divergences still exist in the relations between the USSR and Cuba,” the Cuban defense minister told Poland’s Władysław Gomułka, “but they are indeed bigger with China.”⁵² Fidel Castro, who had for the first time begun openly criticizing the Chinese publicly in mid-March, was blunt and scathing on the subject to a visiting Czechoslovak military delegation in early April:

In the spirit of his last speeches at the University of Havana from the 10th of March and his speech in commemoration of the 13th of March, Fidel Castro sharply criticized Beijing’s approach to the issue of the ICM [International Communist Movement] and help to [North] Vietnam.... Beijing’s approach prevents effective assistance of the socialist camp countries [to North Vietnam], and also blocks the possibility of negotiations. Beijing’s conduct is unprincipled and inconsistent. Its objective is to damage the Soviet prestige and to promote at all costs its own selfish interests. He stressed that Beijing undermines the unity of the ICM only to assume a leading role. It is willing to sacrifice everything to this goal - even Cuba, which

it does not care about and whose very existence it is also willing to sacrifice in its efforts to achieve hegemony in the ICM. However, he [Fidel Castro] believes that even in the PRC, there are reasonable people who disagree with this narrow nationalistic policy, whose main protagonist is Mao Zedong. He believes that after his departure, these factions will be more able to gain prominence.

On the other hand, he emphasized the wide and selfless assistance provided by the USSR, without which the revolutionary and socialist Cuba could not even exist...⁵³

The pivot in early 1965 towards worse Sino-Cuban relations and greater cooperation between Havana and Moscow did not foreshadow an untroubled, immediate, or solid Soviet-Cuban alliance—simmering disagreements would persist, and flare into an open dispute in early 1968, as Castro once again purged members of the old communist party and hinted at accusations against the Soviets and some of their Eastern European allies for alleged interference in internal Cuban affairs.⁵⁴ Yet, the allure of the Chinese had faded (and the chaos of the Cultural Revolution did nothing to revive it), and Fidel Castro made his preference firm in late 1968, when he opted (despite considerable ambivalence and grumbling among Cubans) to support Moscow's invasion of Czechoslovakia that August to crush the Prague Spring (an act denounced by the Chinese). For the duration of the Cold War the Cubans would remain firmly in the Soviet camp, an affiliation only solidified in the 1970s when Mao Zedong welcomed Richard Nixon to Beijing and joined the (North) Americans—Castro's eternal foe—in a de facto alliance against the Soviets.⁵⁵ Asked during a conference in Havana in 2002 whether there was any chance Cuba might have tilted toward China in the Sino-Soviet split, especially in view of Mao's support for armed struggle and Khrushchev's behavior during the missile crisis, Castro paused, seemed perhaps to sigh, and said, approximately: I will give you my shortest answer ever—no. The fundamental reason, he went on, was Cuba's dependence on Soviet aid, and in particular regarding oil, in the face of the US embargo and economic pressure.⁵⁶ The implication was clear: the Chinese might talk loudly, and some Cuban revolutionaries liked at least part of what they were saying, but only the Soviets could act concretely to save the revolution.



The documents in this collection are mainly declassified records from the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives in Beijing (see the source notes at the end of each translation for more specific citations). For invaluable help in obtaining access

to these materials, we thank Shen Zhihua and the Cold War International History Studies Center at East China Normal University, Shanghai. For supporting these extensive translations, we thank CWIHP director Christian Ostermann. We would also like to thank Zhang Tengfei in Beijing and Shi Po in Ningbo. The translations posed many challenges, but one particular problem, not completely solved, involved the double-translation/transliteration of names, places, organizations, etc., from Spanish to Chinese and then to English. We have tried to make correct identifications wherever possible, and apologize for any errors. For aid in identifying some mystery personages, we especially thank Cuban scholar Carlos Alzugaray Treto. In some cases we were not able to make firm identifications, and will be grateful for any further assistance (or correction) from readers, which may be reflected in the copies of the translations posted on the CWIHP website in its Digital Archive. - James G. Hershberg, Sergey Radchenko, Zhang Qian.



Document No.1

Excerpts of the Memorandum of the Conversation between Mao Zedong & Blas Roca Calderio, the Party Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba, 28 April 1960

Time: 12 - 18:30 [Noon-6:30 pm], 28 April 1960

Venue: On a train resting in the suburbs of Tianjin

Present: [Mao Zedong, Blas Roca Calderio,] Deng Xiaoping, Yang Shangkun, Wu Xiuquan, Li Qixin

Interpreter: Cai Tongkuo

Recorder: Deng Lanzhen

Roca [in the original, “abbreviated as Luo below,” not abbreviated here]: My situation this time is better than four years ago.

Chairman Mao (abbreviated as Chairman below): Good, [you] have notable changes. [I] couldn't have a good discussion with you back in 1956, too many people that time.

Roca: Your health is better than before.

Chairman: So so.

Roca: This bag is made of crocodile skin. I'm now presenting it as a gift to you in the name of the Central Committee of the Popular Socialist Party [PSP] of Cuba. It might be useful since you often travel.

Chairman: Thanks very much. We have nothing to give you in return. What could I do? Please, Comrade Wu Xiuquan, help me out on this.

Roca: The second matter is that I'm now greeting you, in the name of Fidel Castro and other revolutionary leaders [of Cuba]. Fidel particularly asked me to greet you on his individual behalf.

Chairman: Thank him. On my own behalf as well as in the name of the entire Chinese people and the Central Committee, I'm saluting Cuba's revolution. We very much welcome Cuba's revolution. Cuba's revolution is a great revolution, a revolution of global significance. The Cuban people do not fear imperialists, [they are] a brave people. Being next to a huge tiger without paying the slightest attention to it, you just break down the superstition. There is a Chinese idiom, "see no people in one's eyes" [*muzhong wuren*]: in your eyes, there is no American imperialism, no tiger. To you the US can do nothing. The Cuban revolution has been victorious for 15 months.

Roca: The revolution keeps advancing, for which American imperialism feels loathing. It exhausts all sorts of measures to launch attacks upon our revolution. In the past, it was American newspapers, journalists, agents, and capitalist monopolies who made a fuss against Cuba. Now, [US President Dwight D.] Eisenhower himself comes out to oppose the Cuban revolution.

Chairman: What else could he do? [He is] a paper tiger. The South Korean people support you. There is a large US army contingent there, Syngman Rhee had 25 divisions, and atomic bombs are also there. Who could predict that Syngman Rhee would have been defeated within days?⁵⁷ The problem is that people were left nowhere to go, just like you. Batista killed 20 thousand Cubans, Syngman Rhee likewise claimed lives of nearly 10 thousand people. Lao Tzu, the Chinese philosopher, observed, "How could one intimidate people with death while people fear no death?" Your past 30-year struggle steels you, two-and-half-year guerrilla warfare steels you, and the past year of the revolutionary regime steels you. They [counter-revolutionaries] could do nothing but kill. Yet [they] could

not kill all people. If one group of people are shot down, another group comes up.

I have read your documents which say [Cuba] is facing many difficulties, such as economic embargo, sabotage, Trujillo of the Dominican [Republic] attempting to attack, and the US equipping Batistianists. All of these [difficulties] were expected by you. [These difficulties,] in the worst scenario, would kill a few people, or drive you out of cities. The most important thing is that [these difficulties] would help make you better by steeling you.

In 1957, Castro was left with only 82 individuals, the number then suddenly dropped to 8—some say it should be 12—which is firmer, the group of 8 people, or the group of 82? It seems 8 people are more resolute, because they acquire experience. Your guns were not given by socialist countries, nor any Latin American country. It is Batista who gave you them.

[...] [sic]

Now imperialism and the bourgeoisie are also adopting a two-faced policy.

Roca: Imperialism always relies on two-faced policy.

Chairman: Yes, on one hand, [imperialism] deceives people by [promising] peace, on the other hand, [it] prepares for war. Not only does imperialism prepare to annihilate the Cuban revolution, it also plans to destroy the entire socialist camp.

Deng Xiaoping: [Imperialism] also wants to repress national independence movements.

Chairman: To national independence movements [imperialism] represses on one hand and deceives on the other. To Asia, Africa, and Latin America it too strikes on the one hand, and offers a carrot on the other [*yimianda yimianla*].

Roca: We have accumulated much experience regarding imperialism's two-faced policy. In April of 1898, the American Congress passed a resolution [the Teller Amendment] declaring that Cuba should become an independent and free country, but afterwards the US occupied Cuba with troops for as long as 4 years. Meanwhile, Puerto Rico became an American colony, and so did the Philippines. Now they still wish to occupy Cuba.

Chairman: They can't do it anymore.

Roca: In 1898, the US occupied Cuba in the name of helping Cuba gain independence, and cooked up the Platt Amendment [in 1901] which stipulated that the US could return to Cuba whenever it wishes. Ever since then, the US has adopted a two-faced policy towards Cuba: on one hand, supporting the Cuban government while on the other hand backing anti-government parties. Once the [Cuban] government stops obeying the US, [the US] pressures Cuba with these parties. Eisenhower once said that he liked Fidel Castro...

Chairman: Last January [1959] the US recognized you and welcomed Fidel Castro's visit to the US.

Roca: At that moment, American imperialism told Fidel, "you are the [Alexander] Kerensky of Cuba. You are being encircled by communists who will kick you out. Communists are everywhere." The Americans demanded that he persecute communists. Fidel did not listen.

Chairman: When did the visit to the US take place?

Roca: [Fidel Castro] went to the US the end of last April [1959] and returned to Cuba on 19 May. Now Eisenhower said that towards Cuba he has always been patient and friendly and that while he loves Cuba, the Cuban government pays no attention to American interests and decides to go against the US. These words are unfair. Who sent flights to bomb Cuba?

[...] [sic]

Chairman: If the Americans were civilized and practiced one-faced tactics, you would have a more difficult time in organizing militias. The US has a military base in your country, it also has [bases] in our country. It burns sugarcane in your place while sending planes here to air-drop agents. So we too are developing [a system of using] militia; so far 240 million militia [members] have been raised. Because the central government could not provide that many weapons to militias, [we] charge each province with the responsibility for equipment, for finding machine guns, rifles, mortars, light cannons, etc. to arm them [militias]. I wish that you could produce light weapons on your own. We could help when necessary, as long as the Soviet Union could help transport [them] there. We would give as much as you want. It's all right with us whether you would pay for them or not. Perhaps [receiving] without paying wouldn't be good as far as your national prestige is

concerned, let's set a price. If [you] can't afford now, pay later, in 50 years or 100 years, either of which will do.

You support us and we support you. You drive in a nail near the US which assists the world revolution and the world including China. The way of assistance is bringing down Batista, realizing land reform, implementing a series of progressive policies, including organizing militias. By doing these, one has helped oneself and also the people of the world.

Roca: I think that our most important contribution is founding an independent, self-reliant, and sovereign government which does not listen to Washington's orders. Only by doing this could land reform and other progressive measures be realized

Chairman: This government is better than [Indian leader Jawaharlal] Nehru's. Nehru opposes China and the Indian communist party, refuses to implement land reform and to organize militia. The imperialist capital in India stays untouched.

Roca: Nehru still wants to reach a compromise with British imperialism.

Chairman: On top of it, he borrows a huge amount of money from the US, worth 2.2 billion USD. Is the figure of US investment in Cuba 1 billion USD?

Roca: The investment is 700 million, and shrinking gradually. Companies that used to serve the US now serve Cuba. The land reform has transformed the properties possessed by the US into ones possessed by the Cuban people.

Chairman: Brave steps. Imperialism does not dare to do anything.

Roca: Fidel Castro mentioned that he has one more mission to complete. Some foreign telephone and electricity companies are yet to be expropriated.

Chairman: Expropriated with compensation or not? Consider compensating by issuing bonds. The Americans are rich. You could have the compensation settled in 30 or 40 years.

Roca: We prepare [to complete compensation] in 20 years.

Deng Xiaoping: The price could be set lower.

Roca: The US demanded 3000 Pesos for every caballeria [ka]. We gave it only 300 Pesos. They didn't agree. They said that they should be paid in cash with fair price and couldn't wait for 20 years. [They said] who knows what would happen in 20 years. The Cuban revolution, as Comrade Mao Zedong observes, is of global significance and of an ever greater importance to Latin American countries. It has become a model, which is exactly what the US fears.

Chairman: In your opinion, aren't Venezuela, Columbia, and Mexico the friendliest countries towards Cuba?

Roca: [Rómulo] Betancourt of Venezuela is a rascal, declaring himself a revolutionary while in fact he is only a dog of the Americans. He betrays the revolution. Venezuelans are supporting the Cuban revolution whole-heartedly. In Caracas, every day we could sell 500 copies of *Hoy*. Betancourt said that Venezuela would not attend the meeting of underdeveloped countries held by Cuba. He opposed the meeting. Yet the Venezuela foreign minister publicly announced that Venezuela would participate in the meeting.

Chairman: What countries will attend this meeting?

Roca: India, Indonesia, Egypt, Iraq, Guinea, Morocco, Tunisia, Philippines, and other Asian-African countries, all accepted the invitation. The US pressured them very hard not to attend. Eisenhower's visit to South American countries aims not at discussing peace, but persuading these countries not to participate in this meeting.⁵⁸

Chairman: When will the meeting open? Are Cambodia and Nepal invited? These two countries are better than the Indian government.

Roca: The opinion of the Cuban government is that all underdeveloped countries which joined the United Nations shall attend.

Chairman: China did not join the United Nations. We were "aggressors."

Roca: It won't last long.

Chairman: [We should] better prepare for a long [struggle]. We shall join the UN after our production surpasses the US. When, for example, the annual steel production reaches 100 million tons, things will turn good. Now

the US holds us in contempt. World imperialism, many nationalist states, revisionists such as Tito, all hold us in contempt.

Roca: Yet some other countries are supporting us.

Chairman: I have made a calculation. The imperialists and revisionists combined, people who oppose us, account for less than one tenth of the global population, [which means] nine tenths of the global population support China.

Roca: As far Columbia is concerned, its present government is reactionary, listening to the US; it privately opposes Cuba while in public it does not. Because Mexico's people support the Cuban revolution, Mexican president [Adolfo López] Mateos is now preparing to visit Cuba in the hope of winning domestic support.

This is the situation of the three countries. In general, Latin America's people are friendly towards Cuba while each government holds an antagonistic view towards Cuba.

Chairman: What about the attitudes of Brazil, Chile, and Argentina?

Roca: Brazil and Chile are wavering. As to Argentina and Paraguay, they hate the Cuban revolution.

Chairman: But their people are friendly [towards Cuba].

Roca: All Latin American peoples are friendly towards the Cuban revolution. We received support from the Chilean [communist] party, for example, which mobilized the people and sent cadres specialized in economic management to help us. The people of Argentina bought Cuba a plane. Several thousand young men from Chile, Argentina, and Ecuador registered to protect the Cuban revolution as volunteers. Eighty-two senators from Brazil are prepared to [publicly] support Cuba. Panama, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, etc., from Central America, offered great help to us. In Puerto Rico, because of the success of the Cuban revolution, the movement of people striving for national independence re-emerged. The US now calls Puerto Rico [an] Associated Free State. Insurgencies also took place in the Dominican Republic.

Chairman: Is the revolutionary movement in the Dominican Republic also powerful?

Roca: [It] has made progresses, but is facing difficulties.

Chairman: Temporarily being suppressed, [the Dominican revolution] will rise again.

Roca: The problem [for the Dominican revolution] is that the domestic organization has yet to be established.

Chairman: A weak [communist] party?

Roca: Weak, and headquartered abroad.

Chairman: The place [the Dominican Republic] is comparatively small.

Roca: All countries [of Central America] are small.

Chairman: What about Haiti?

Roca: The people's struggle is firm. With a good tradition, the Haitian people's will to struggle is resolute. For the moment, the Haitian people are suffering from terrible repression.

Chairman: It seems to me that these countries are too occupied with their internal affairs and will not threaten Cuba in terms of mounting attacks.

Roca: No. The US might attack us via Guatemala and Honduras. It could instruct the troops of these countries, via the peace committee of the Organization of American States, to join the intervention against Cuba. The US itself could send troops.

Chairman: Imperialism says that it's willing to tackle the problem by peaceful measures rather than by war.

Roca: But in Cuba, it will turn to war to solve the problem.

Chairman: This year Eisenhower won't [attack].

Roca: It's uncertain. Many say that he won't, because the US will hold an election and a meeting of world leaders. It is reasonable for the US not to attack Cuba. Yet American imperialism is unreasonable: whether it's going to be an election or a meeting, the US always wants to put down Cuba. Neither the election nor the leaders' meeting will bother them [the US], the question [for them] is that Cuban people have a resolute will.

Chairman: That is the basic question.

[...] [sic]

Chairman: Cuba is not a small country, but a big one, with over 100 thousand square kilometers, larger than China's Zhejiang Province, and with mountains everywhere.

Roca: There are three mountainous areas: Las Villas Province, Oriente Province, and Pinar del Rio Province. But on the plain war could also be waged, which we have learned.

I wish to stress the contribution of Fidel Castro, which is important. Tactically, we don't give too much publicity to the contributions of Fidel Castro. But it is he who initiated the struggle. When there were only 8 people left, he still refused to surrender. People worship him. He is a revolutionary, anti-imperialist soldier.

Chairman: Is there any possibility that he could accept communism?

Roca: Possibly. He was born in a small bourgeois family and now is leaning leftward. He could become a great communist leader among us, which is important.

Chairman: He is different from [Iraqi Prime Minister Abd al-Karim] Qasim who is an anti-communist.

Roca: Entirely different. He is also different from ordinary bourgeois politicians of Latin America. He is not obsessed with wealth nor does he indulge himself. He seeks only to fight gloriously to the last moment. In March, he made a 4-hour speech criticizing the anti-communists. He said "anti-communism" serves basically as a tool for imperialism to divide the country and suppress revolution.

Eisenhower attacked Fidel Castro's government saying that this government had betrayed the revolution. Fidel responded, "if we were true traitors of the revolution, Eisenhower would have embraced us in the same way one embraces [Spanish leader Francisco] Franco."

Now Fidel Castro has developed a good relationship with our communist party [of Cuba]. He often talks to us and is willing to foster a Marxist-Leninist position. A revolutionary should study Marxism-Leninism, he says. The [Communist] Party has a notable power. The minister of the Armed Forces [Raúl Castro] is one of us. Party members are in charge of the military leadership in Oriente and Mantanzas, and also participate in the leadership of Las Villas Province. In other words, three provinces out of six are in our hands.

Chairman: What about other provinces? [You] should keep working [to promote communism], and try to control the army. What does regime mean? A regime means army.

Roca: Camaguey Province is led by a person with backward political thoughts. The head of Pinar del Rio has a changeable character, sometimes for us and sometimes against. Three government ministers, along with the military force minister, are our men.

Chairman: In form, this is not a communist force. But in fact the major part is under communist leadership; it is under the joint leadership of the communist party and the 26th of July Movement.

Roca: It works by cooperation. The leader of the Air Force is also one of us. The problem is that [Cuba] has no planes.

Chairman: Not one?

Roca: There are few. I have raised this issue with Comrade Deng Xiaoping. Within the 26th of July Movement, the Head of National Coordination (head of the organizational department) is our man. Many other people of the Movement are too, for example, director of the National Land Reform Committee in which many important offices are taken by our party members. The National Bank is responsible for the industrialization of the country, the head of which [Ernesto “Che”] Guevara is also our man.

Chairman: When did Guevara join the Party?

Roca: He developed some connection with the Youth League while in Argentina, but he did not participate. Later in Guatemala, when [Jacobo] Arbenz [Guzman] was the president, he worked there and applied to join the communist party but was not permitted. In 1957, he applied again and was admitted by us. He isn't quite a cultivated member. His mind is yet in confusion. We patiently teach and persuade him, in the hope of enabling him to become a true [communist] party member, mature in thought.

Chairman: [He] should have a clear world outlook.

Roca: His world outlook is Marxist-Leninist. He has merit, is very loyal and loves the Party. Although sometimes he struggles to find the right way to work things out, he does try to do things properly.

Chairman: How old is he? And what about Raúl [Modesto Castro]?

Roca: Guevara is 30, Raúl 28, Fidel 32.

Chairman: Fidel Castro was 32 last year. Isn't he 33 this year?

Roca: I don't know if he is fully 33. [Fidel Castro was born 13 August 1926, so he was then 33—ed.]

Chairman: Your program does not confer much real power to the president. Is Castro happy or not?

Roca: He is the prime minister. The president is [Osvaldo] Dorticos. The president does not have much power.

Chairman: Nor does the chairman [of government] in our country. I was a chairman of no power, and now it is Comrade Liu Shaoqi. As the chairman of the Party, theoretically, I don't have power but in practice I do. Comrade [Liu] Shaoqi is the deputy chairman [of the Party]. Fidel Castro is the leader of 26th of July Movement, and meanwhile the Party and Revolutionary Guidance Committee are also supporting him.

I have read the report from the organization secretary of Las Villas Province, Comrade Peña's report, the draft program of your party, and the material composed by our own comrades on the situation and problems Cuba faces after its successful revolution. Short of time, I have read them only once, but I read them earnestly. Your [draft] program will not only make a difference in Cuba, but on other countries in the world it will also have an effect. Countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America all need to work out a program, one that fits their own circumstances. This program, in the case of China, is a combination of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of the Chinese revolution. [We must] take hold of this, the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, and then adjust it to [the] peculiarity of our own circumstances. I very much agree with your document which is a document of the revolution. At the present, [people] are scared by imperialism, and by the revolution; [but] you are not scared by imperialism or by the revolution. This thing [fearlessness] can combat revisionism.

Roca: Many things were written so as to combat revisionism, though they were not presented explicitly. Our party prepares to open up the representative assembly on 14 June. We have sent our invitation to you.

Roca [sic]: Thanks very much. Still I wish to learn about your opinion on our party program.

Chairman: I have read it only once. As far as our opinion is concerned, Comrade Deng Xiaoping later could discuss

it with you. My opinion is entirely individual and for your reference only.

Roca: We have discussed this program with Fidel Castro.

Chairman: Was he in favor?

Roca: [He had] different views on two issues: one, the socialist transition problem, and the other, the bank nationalization problem.

Chairman: What did he make of the transition to socialism?

Roca: He thought this kind of phrasing was simply too blatant, better to be a bit implicit. With respect to bank nationalization, Fidel believed that there are alternatives to putting [the term] nationalization, into the program. For example, transfer banks into state ownership through [the purchase by] the National Bank.

Chairman: In your program, you should also mention national bourgeoisie and other Latin American countries. When it comes to factors favorable to Cuba, you should emphasize that peasants, accounting for 90 percent of the Cuban population, workers and the middle class, are on the side of the revolution and support the revolution; every country within the socialist bloc is behind you; the American people also support you. [...] [sic] How about revising it? First comes the support of the Cuban people, then the sympathy of people from other Latin American countries, third the support and sympathy of Asian and African countries, and fourth the support from the socialist bloc. Put the socialist bloc after the people of Latin American countries and Asian-African countries, and then mention the support of the American people. In this way, all are included. Please think about it.

[...] [sic]

Roca: Let me begin by thanking Comrade Mao Zedong and other comrades of the Central Committee for spending so much time in discussions with us. This is a tremendous help and support. Thank you all.

Chairman: Thank you.

Roca: I would love to express my views on these problems.

The view of paying more heed to national bourgeoisie and Latin American countries is correct. The program does not fully reflect our policy. We attach a great importance to

this area and have made lots of efforts in this regard. Now there is a Cuban delegation visiting Latin American countries. Most of its members are from the party, representing Cuban intellectuals, workers, etc. They have received a great welcome in places like Argentina. Although the Argentine government banned people assembling to support Cuba, Argentine people still held a big meeting in support [of the delegation]. Tomorrow, on 23 April, Havana will host a big meeting of Latin American countries supporting the Cuban revolution. Participants are mostly professors, intellectuals, students, union leaders, peasants, etc. They made a statement in advance. Those who signed the statement were all important figures. Our ambassador to Mexico was a relatively leftist party member. For the sake of the work, we have replaced him with another person, more suitable for the ambassadorship.

Chairman: You should talk a bit more about Latin America in the program. Because it goes beyond being Cuba's program, it is the first socialist program among Latin American countries. It will become the reference document for all Latin American communist parties.

Deng [Xiaoping]: In particular it should stress that Cuba must ally with other Latin American countries to fight against imperialism.

Roca: Not enough attention has been given to the problem of the national bourgeoisie, which was also mentioned by Latin American comrades. They told me: when reflecting on problems, one's mind should not dwell on domestic circumstances alone. One should ponder issues of other Latin American countries. Therefore, reasonable emphasis on the problem of the national bourgeoisie is necessary. The problem is that under the current circumstances, many of us couldn't agree with this, and some people's views differ from ours sharply.

Chairman: It is not easy to convince Cuban leftists.

Roca: Nor is it easy to convince the bourgeoisie. Their political representatives, such as [Roberto Daniel] Agramonte [y Pichardo] in the past, hold a hostile attitude towards us. We are left no choice but to suppress them.

Chairman: They were bound to oppose you. There are no bourgeoisie who would not oppose you. So you also should have two means at your disposal [*yaoyou liangshou*]: carrot and stick [*yoyao da, yoyao la*].

Roca: Guevara gathered industrialists for a meeting. The industrialists were very happy, saying that Guevara spoke

particularly clearly. Guevara said that they could contribute to the economy but shall not set foot in heavy industry. He also showed them which sectors are open for their investment and which are not.

Chairman: Did the bourgeoisie read your party program? Had the program been put on record?

Roca: They read, and this is a published document, though only a draft so far. We need to explain this program to the bourgeoisie, peasants, workers, and people, and to ask for their comments.

Chairman: Good.

Roca: With respect to the suggestion that workers should not raise excessive demands, we will ponder it. [In fact,] we paid attention to this problem when drafting the program. For example, we chose not to mention the idea of subsidizing the unemployed, because Cuba has 600 thousand jobless workers, and the economy could not bear it anymore. The only way left to eliminate unemployment is to increase employment opportunities. During the course of program-drafting, union leaders advanced a proposal requesting that the minimum wage be stipulated. The situation facing Cuba is like this: because some sectors generate high profits, a few workers therefore earn more. For example, in the electricity sector, telephone companies, tobacco industry, and brewage industry, workers receive higher salaries and could live a decent petty bourgeois lifestyle. Their salaries could be over ten times more than that of sugar industry workers, hence the present inequality. We could not bring down the present wage levels, because this is expected to meet with tremendous resistance. But we must reduce the gap between different wage levels.

Chairman: Our policy is similar: don't reduce the higher wage levels, but increase the lower ones.

Roca: It also has to do with the development of production. Improvement in the living standard depends on an increase in production and production efficiency. Cuban people know this point only too well. They donate their income to purchase airplanes and to develop industry, also aware that excessive demands shall not be raised so as not to cause loss to the revolution. [They understand that] with revolution [developing], life will become better day by day; in order to obtain a better life, [one] has to defend revolution and prepare to sacrifice for it. This is acknowledged in the program.

As far as the 8-hour workday system is concerned, there are differences between urban and rural areas, between

agriculture and industry, which should be taken into account. Although the 1933 revolution failed, the 8-hour workday system has become popular ever since. Before 1933, sugar industry workers had to work for nearly 12 hours [per day]; later an 8-hour workday system was implemented nation-wide. In 1964 [sic], between 8 thousand and 10 thousand workers in transportation followed a 6-hour workday system. When Batista assumed power, [he] demanded an increase in working hours regardless of the 8-hour workday system. Most workers did not obey him though. Therefore we must not retreat on this point [8-hour workday system]; instead, we shall go along with it, and be realistic. [After all, the] 8-hour workday system has been instituted for 26 years.

Chairman: Given that it has been instituted for 26 years, I agree that [you] do not abolish it. But does it have to be like this to all, be it a small firm or a big one, in agriculture or in the industry sector?

Roca: Normally it should be 8 hours. But it is not always the case for agricultural workers, who sometimes work 5 hours a day, sometimes 10 hours—in general, it is still 8 hours a day. Some workers work 9 hours which means providing 1 hour free labor to the government.

Chairman: The law stipulates an 8-hour workday system while workers voluntarily work one extra hour. This is good. Workers are willing to work for themselves. [You] must pay attention to the problem of consumption and accumulation. Let the people know the truth: production must surpass consumption.

Roca: The problem concerning the patriotic united front is a serious question. What form of political organization should be is under study. Castro's attitude is to oppose [holding] an election. He will embrace it only when social and economic reforms have reached an appropriate juncture but there is great pressure from Latin American countries.

Chairman: Will the election bring about disadvantages?

Roca: No, only advantages: we will win. Our party, the 26th of July Movement, and the Revolutionary Guidance Committee together could reap over 80 percent of the votes. Castro is not worried on this score. He only worries that the 26th of July Movement isn't quite an organized party, politically unconsolidated. Castro maintains that those bad elements in the revolution shall be eliminated first. Elections will become safer with the exposure of the

bad elements. Castro told us to prepare the election. We will have further discussions on this problem. Castro's idea is that all leftist forces, including our party, the leftists of the 26th of July Movement, and the Revolution Guidance Committee, unite and establish a party. This is a question worth exploring. I have written articles in Cuba introducing China's Political Consultative Committee, with which Cuba is now familiar.

Chairman: Chinese democratic parties have no masses, be they workers, peasants, or students. The two organizations in your case are different: behind the Revolutionary Guidance Committee are students, and also the 26th of July Movement is backed by some people and the army. Our larger democratic parties have, at most, 20 or 30 thousand members, while smaller ones have only a few thousand. So we have an easy task here, but yours is difficult.

Roca: Ours is far more difficult. You made a very good point regarding the problem of peasants. The program is targeted against Batista, which is why all peasants are treated as part of the anti-Batista force. Yet there is a hierarchy within peasants, which was mentioned by Lenin. Our party, too, has noticed this problem; yet we didn't put it in an explicit manner in the program. This is my responsibility.

About [exercising] double ownership under the socialist system, this program is not yet a socialist program. It is only a program of transition to socialism, aiming at socialism, but its current tasks are national liberation and land reform. Its present tasks contains the seeds for the next stage, but it's again still in stage one.

Chairman: When you raise [the subject of] anti-individualism, you should have better tactics.

Roca: Naturally. We meant it to be against rural individual economy.

Chairman: Are there kulak households among the peasants?

Roca: Yes. But [we] won't touch the kulaks' properties, only the landlords'.

Chairman: Distributing land among peasants is a practice of bourgeois democratic revolution. Napoleon [Bonaparte] did this in the 18th century and gained support from peasants. Later the bourgeoisie did it again.

Roca: We didn't call the Cuban revolution a revolution of bourgeois democracy. But it could also be named this way.

Chairman: The enemies are: imperialism, feudalism, and comprador capitalists.

Roca: And a part of the bourgeoisie.

Chairman: The bourgeoisie that colluded with imperialism.

Roca: The bourgeoisie that colluded with imperialism and the tyrant.

Chairman: The tyrant is comprador government, a regime standing for imperialism and feudalism, while in the industry sector [the tyrant] is bureaucratic capital.

Roca: In China it is bureaucratic capital. For the sake of tactics, we prefer the Cuban revolution to be called a patriotic democratic revolution, national liberation revolution, or land revolution.

Chairman: Fine, just don't mention the word bourgeoisie.

Roca: [The Cuban revolution] should also be called a progressive revolution, not simply bourgeois revolution, because the vanguard [of the revolution] has never been the bourgeoisie. About putting on the top [Cuba's] relationship with Latin American countries, I have no objection. Yet when it comes to foreign trade, by no means should Latin American countries take the lead. Because, more or less, every Latin American country produces the same stuff. We don't need coffee from Brazil, sugar from Peru, copper from Chile, bananas from Columbia, or coconuts from Costa Rica, for we could produce them all ourselves. What we need is oil from Venezuela, but Venezuelan oil is controlled by the US.

Chairman: Putting trading countries ahead, [I can] agree.

Roca: The Soviet Union purchased 1 million tons of sugar, China purchased 80 thousand tons which is very important, for no one in Latin America bought 80 thousand tons from us.

Chairman: Well said.

Roca: As far as the bourgeoisie's profits are concerned, we agree that they take a certain percentage of profits, but extra profits must go to the State.

Chairman: Our views are for your reference only, and you may weigh and consider the reality when putting them into practice. There is only one problem left, i.e. the 700 million

USD in American capital [in Cuba]. If it were all confiscated, the possibility of the [American] intervention would be greater. The Americans are pragmatic. We didn't confiscate their investment in China; instead, we only froze their 400 million USD worth of capital, which are electricity companies, water-supply companies, telephone companies, such as those in Shanghai that they cannot manage now, as we manage them. You have 700 million USD worth of [American] capital while we have only 400 million, which is a practical issue. Were the US a defeated country, like Germany, Italy, or Japan, it would be easy, because they were the defeated. But towards the US, Britain, France, Belgium, and Holland, it had to be different. [We] made ways to elbow them away, meaning that if they were unwilling to leave, they would begin losing money the moment they started to produce things. In the end, they were left no choice but to ask us to take over their factories. This is the practice we followed with the British. We only requisitioned American properties, the ownership problem of which however is still pending.

Deng [Xiaoping]: The problem was in fact solved.

Chairman: Your country is small and there is 700 million USD in American capital. What can you do? To return it?—[you] can't afford it. Suppose [you decide to] confiscate them all; you have no reason for it, [because] it is not a defeated country.

Roca: During the land reform, it doesn't matter if the land belonged to a Cuban, an American, or a Briton, all lands are taken and redistributed. Therefore [the state has already got] a part of the 700 USD million [in] American properties. With regard to American power plants, and telephone companies, we hold down the prices, which makes the telephone companies feel they are running an unprofitable business. A representative has been sent by the government to see if they have really become unprofitable. Ten months since then, no conclusion has been reached as to whether the business is now profitable or not. The Cuban government is constructing power plants which will mount pressure on American power plants. All land and cross-ties, used by American-invested railway in Cuba, belong to Cuba, except they are registered under American names. The government has promulgated mining taxes. Some mines reported that they could barely pay the taxes, while not being allowed to suspend production, so they invited government representatives. The US has a huge nickel mine in Cuba but the nickel smelting is conducted in the US. A successful production depends on the cooperation of two sides. [So] Cuba is inviting the Soviet Union to help smelt the

nickel, while still cooperating with the US in smelting which won't last though.

Chairman: The land of Cuba is good. Is Cuba a subtropical country?

Roca: South of the Tropic of Cancer, good climate, having sea wind, neither too hot nor too cold, two crops every year.

Chairman: The Americans fear you. They bully the weak and fear the strong.

Roca: At least hate us, if not fear.

Chairman: Because of your resolve, and your strategy.

Roca: China has been a great help for us. Before 1933 we had a very favorable situation. But we made a "leftist" mistake: we wanted to establish a Soviet right away. Not only did the Party make mistakes, but others did too. [All these mistakes] failed the revolution and isolated us.

Chairman: We, too, made mistakes between 1930 and 1934.

Roca: It was between 1933 and 1935 that we made mistakes.

Chairman: Wang Ming was then working in the Comintern. It is no good to draft a program for foreign communist parties. The Comintern imposed their program upon us which made us lose base-areas in the south [of China], caused us to run for 12.5 thousand kilometers, and cost nine-tenths of [our] revolutionary force with only one tenth left. But this is a good thing, for it taught us a lesson.

Roca: We lost one-tenth [of our force]. We made both "leftist" and rightist mistakes.

Chairman: An even better [lesson].

Roca: These mistakes promote the development of the Cuban revolution. In the end, I thank you in the name of the Cuban communist party and the Cuban people.

Chairman: Cheers for your victory and for Castro.

Roca: I shall tell Castro, after I return, that Chairman Mao toasted to him.

Chairman: This is because you got a job done which is of global significance.

[Source: Excerpts of the Memorandum of the Conversation between Mao Zedong and the Party Secretary of Popular Socialist Party of Cuba, Blas Roca Calderio, 28 April 1960, translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.2

Memorandum of the Conversation between Premier Zhou Enlai and Cuban Revolutionary Government Economic Delegation, 18 November 1960

Secret

Time: 18 November 1960, 4:50-7pm

Venue: Fujian Hall, the Great Hall of the People

Present:

Chinese Side: Premier Zhou Enlai, Vice-Premier Chen Yi, Vice-Premier Li Xiannian, Ye Jizhuang, Li Qiang, Lu Xuzhang, Geng Biao, Song Yangchu, Shen Jian, Lin Ping

Cuban Side: Maj. Ernesto Guevara & all members of Cuban Revolutionary Government Economic Delegation

Interpreters: Cai Tongguo, Liu Xiliang

Recorders: Li Shude, Zhang Zai

Premier Zhou (Abbreviated as Premier below): Welcome to you.

Guevara ["abbreviated as Ge" in the original, not abbreviated below]: The wish to visit China, carried for years, is finally realized. Charged with the mission given by our government, we come to discuss some issues. We are very happy that we are the first country in Latin America to establish diplomatic relations with China [on 28 September 1960].

Premier: How is the health of His Excellency, the Premier [Fidel Castro]?

Guevara: He did not feel well, because there was an epidemic in Latin America not long ago.

Premier: Has it become well now?

Guevara: [It] has become good.

Premier: Has every friend come to China for the first time?

(All replied with yes.)

Premier: Welcome to you. Many our delegations went to Cuba and received a warm welcome from Premier Castro and the Cuban people, for which I thank you again. (Speaking to Guevara) could you please introduce each member [to me]?

(Guevara presented all members of the delegation.)

Premier: [I] heard that [you] could stay in China for two weeks.

Guevara: Two weeks indeed.

Premier: [Then you] should organize your schedule well. [This is] our ambassador to Cuba, Shen Jian. [He] has already been presented, hasn't he? Have you already known all these people (referred to leaders on our side)?

Vice-Premier Li Xiannian: All were presented yesterday.

Premier: What do you want to see?

Guevara: We want to see too many [things], but the time [we have] is just too little. Besides, [we] also need to discuss [issues].

Premier: [You] could do these in parallel: discussing while visiting.

Guevara: Does the schedule contain a plan to visit Guangzhou?

Premier: It should have. [Guangzhou] is also close to a tropical area, similar to yours.

Guevara: Because Chinese descendents in Cuba all come from Guangzhou, [we] are very curious.

Premier: Is your sugarcane used for papermaking?

Guevara: Ramos [Lamosi]⁵⁹ is an expert, specialized in researching this problem.

Premier: Even we haven't fully solved this problem. How much paper can you produce every day?

Guevara: Fifty tons for each day.

Premier: It appears that [you] have solved the problem.

Guevara: Yes, [we] have. We are now conducting research about adding other raw materials so to strengthen the paper.

Premier: Do you add wood pulp?

Ramos: In making newsprint paper, 100 percent raw material is sugarcane. To make blueprinting and writing papers, wood pulp is needed. Now [we] want to add a species of a plant that exists only in Cuba as another raw material.

Premier: You have solved all technological problems.

Ramos: Only the technological problem of making newsprint paper is solved.

Premier: Can you produce the equipment for [a] papermaking factory?

Ramos: Not yet. Machines are all imported.

Premier: You have iron but no coal.

Guevara: Yes.

Premier: Do you produce iron or steel yourself?

Guevara: [We] only produce some.

Premier: How much can [you] produce?

Guevara: We can produce forty thousand tons of iron annually. The Soviet Union is prepared to help us expand it to two hundred thousand tons. Other than that, [we] are setting up equipment [to produce] two hundred thousand tons. This is on our five-year plan.

Premier: What about coal?

Guevara: It still relies on import. We could produce anthracite, but coking coal needs to be imported.

Premier: Where do you import from? Latin America?

Guevara: Now we are importing from socialist countries, because imports from Latin American countries need to be paid for in US dollars.

Premier: So your machinery industry is not quite developed.

Guevara: Not developed at all. We plan to develop industries of automobiles, trucks, farming equipments, tractors, steel & iron, mining, basic chemicals, and agricultural products processing. Regarding the papermaking industry, [we] wish

China could help. The textile industry belongs to the light industry in general.

Premier: How about the light industry?

Guevara: We have light industry on a small scale. More equipment is needed.

Premier: Do you sell sugar to Mexico?

Guevara: Mexico is a country that also produces sugar, [and it] now supplies the US.

Premier: In which case you can no longer buy cotton from Mexico.

Guevara: [We can,] as long as we pay in cash, indeed, in US dollars.

Premier: How do you solve the problem of fertilizers?

Guevara: There is now a chemical factory producing fertilizers, which processes domestic raw materials. Apart from it, [we] need to import fertilizers from the Soviet Union.

Premier: Are these ammonia fertilizers?

Guevara: Ammonia and potassic fertilizers can be produced by us. Yet the phosphatic fertilizers—one is calcium superphosphate and the other, triple superphosphate—need to be imported.

Premier: How much to you import annually?

Guevara: The imports of all kinds of fertilizers add up to one hundred thousand tons. In the five-year plan, we are prepared to expand the fertilizer producing capacity, by consolidating existing factories, and [to try to] establish an associated company.

Premier: How much [fertilizers] is it expected to produce?

Guevara: The multi-fertilizer producing company should produce two hundred thousand tons [annually], for our population is merely 6 million. Our ambassador will arrive within the following two days.

Premier: It is said that [he's] already in Moscow.

Guevara: When we left Moscow yesterday, [he] hadn't arrived yet.

Premier: Chairman Liu [Shaoqi], whom you have already met, is still in Moscow, and will be unable to accept the letter of credentials. Vice-Chairman Sun Qingling, i.e. the wife of Sun Zhongshan [Sun Yat-sen], is prepared to accept the letter of credentials from the Ambassador. Do you know her?

Guevara: I know the name.

Premier: She is the wife of Sun Zhongshan. Sun Zhongshan, the pioneer of Chinese democratic revolution, staged the Revolution in 1911, overthrew the feudalist monarchy and founded the Republic. But he failed in the end. Revolution has to go through constant failures before it succeeds. After the October Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party [CCP] was founded. Sun Zhongshan proposed that the Guomindang [GMD] and the Communist Party cooperate with each other. The GMD-CCP cooperation of 1924 advanced revolution, which happened during the period of the First Great Revolution, also known as the New Democratic Revolution. Thanks to the participation of the CCP, Dr. Sun Zhongshan's influence among the people became huge. Although one year and a half after the start of the GMD-CCP cooperation, he died, our present deputy head of the state, the Vice-Chairman, is his wife. At the death of Sun Zhongshan, Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] seized the power. The GMD-CCP cooperation then dissolved. We have fought for 22 years. The GMD suppressed and forced some CCP [members] to work underground. We learned the military way to deal with him. If we did not resist then, the heads of comrades present would have gone. At last, we drove away Jiang Jieshi in 1949. He was backed by the US, just like the tyrant [Fulgencio] Batista, the one you toppled. Given this fact, our anti-imperialist sentiments are the same. We drove away a representative of the US imperialists, you, too, drove away another. Without the military [approach], they wouldn't have left; without the military [approach], both of us wouldn't have been able to meet each other today.

Guevara: We have paid constant attention to learning from the Chinese experience. There were not so many Chinese books in Latin America. But not long ago, [we] came across two volumes of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong* [Mao Zedong xuanji]. We carefully studied them and conducted a discussion. To our surprise, we found that China and Cuba share many things: China is a big country, Cuba is a small one, but both were colonies. There is so much in common.

Premier: This is the result of imperialist oppression. Our villages are extremely poor; cities have been colonized, which is discernible in Beijing, and most conspicuous in Shanghai. Let's talk about detailed issues. Will everyone participate?

(Note from recorders: On [the] evening of 17th [of November], Guevara once told our reception staff that after the meeting, only 6 people will stay and join the discussion).

Guevara: Any form will do. If [we] will discuss trade issues only, then trade specialists could stay; if [we] will discuss all sorts of issues, then it will be also all right for everyone to stay. These people all could be trusted, even this journalist, who is not the kind of journalists in Western countries.

Premier: All right. Regarding the meeting of economic cooperation between socialist countries, because we did not join the Council of Eight Countries' Economic Mutual Assistance [COMECON], we were present only as an observer. Yet we do know the content of the meeting.

Guevara: In this meeting, [the eight countries] mainly discussed the price of sugar and the issue of socialist countries purchasing our sugar. Because sugar is our main product, if sugar is not discussed, no deal could be possibly made.

During the meeting, we mentioned conditions that the US gave for purchasing our sugar, which were generous; [we ask] now socialist countries buy sugar at a price of four US cents for one pound, a price that is slightly higher than in the international market. This [proposal] is not tenable from the economic point of view, but we raised it from the political point of view. We have already put forth this idea in the meeting, and also discussed [it] with Chairman Liu Shaoqi. We don't know if there is a need to go through it again.

Premier: No more need to discuss. We all understand.

Guevara: Socialist countries in Eastern Europe will purchase three hundred thousand tons [of sugar], and the Soviet Union agrees to buy two million and seven hundred thousand tons; both prices are four US cents for each pound. All together there are three million tons. China, according to the agreement, will buy five hundred and fifty thousand tons. But we wish that the total could add up to four million tons.

Premier: On top of the three hundred thousand tons, could socialist countries in Eastern Europe buy an extra amount?

Guevara: They are almost all sugar-exporting countries.

Premier: How much sugar do you produce?

Guevara: Nearly six million. More sugar could be produced, but it is constrained by quota.

No more sugar should be produced. This is the first problem. The second problem is that [we] wish the sugar price could be set at four US cents per pound. The third problem is about purchasing German equipment in complete for a factory, which is raised based on the trade agreement established with the Vice-Minister of trade back in Havana. Also, [there is] the issue of repaying loans. Papermaking machines from China will help us a lot. We are not yet familiar with China's economy, which [we] could have a look at before making decisions. This is the focus of my speech.

The issue of technological aid is less important. Could you send agricultural specialists to Cuba to help us? Besides, we will send some students [to China] to learn Chinese, engineering, sciences and agriculture. Problems in this regard [of technological aid] have been solved in Europe, but [we] also hope that China could help [solve] a part [of the problems].

Premier: Other than papermaking machines, what else [do you] want?

Guevara: We want many things. [We] could let him (pointed to [Chilean economist Albán] Lataste) talk about it.

Lataste: Fertilizer equipment; [equipment] for factories of the automobile industry, such as a tire factory; a bulb factory; after these is equipment for the food processing industry, for example, for canning and agricultural product processing.

Premier: Do [you] have textile equipment?

Guevara: Machines [we have] were bought.

Premier: How many spindles?

Guevara: Two hundred thousand spindles. Besides, there will be another fifteen thousand spindle put into operation next May. The Democratic Germany [i.e., the German Democratic Republic; East Germany] will help us establish fifty thousand spindles.

Premier: Where did the cotton come from?

Guevara: From the US.

Premier: But now it is banned [by the US].

Guevara: The Soviet Union and Egypt could supply.

Premier: How about Pakistan? Could it supply [cotton]?

Guevara: [Pakistan] has no trade relationship with us.

Premier: The questions that [we] just discussed have already been discussed with you by Chairman Liu Shaoqi in Moscow. Cuba's situation was very difficult. [It] was of a colonial economy under complete US control, producing sugar only; the food produced by itself was not much; [its] industry was incompetent. Now new difficulties arrived. The US imperialists imposed an embargo, and perhaps a military blockade. Recently Eisenhower of the US ordered five warships from the reactionary governments of Guatemala and Nicaragua and one aircraft carrier to show off [its] muscle. Standing at the forefront of anti-US-imperialism, you are confronting these difficulties. Being on the same front, the Chinese people have a duty to support you. The problem now is not a question of whether the aid should be given or not, but a question of the possibility [of realizing the aid]. Indeed, any possibility [of giving the aid] should be exploited.

The first problem is the sugar price. Your demand is not unreasonable. On the contrary, it's reasonable. Because the international sugar price was manipulated by imperialism: the US bought your sugar at a slightly higher price, which made it possible [for the US] to sell goods back to you at high prices. Besides, these sugar factories, after all, were invested by them. With one hand, they gave, with the other hand, they took.

Guevara: What they took away was more [than they gave].

Premier: Now you are in charge. You have the power to propose the price. We don't oppose your price of four cents per pound [of sugar]. As long as other socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, agree, we will surely follow suit. Indeed, if he [the Soviet Union] does not approve whereas we do, that won't be good. Because he is the bigger patron, purchasing two million and seven hundred thousand tons [of sugar]. For us the [price] problem is no problem.

The problem now is the one regarding the quantity of sugar procurement: how much [we] could buy. In terms of China's population, this [one million tons of sugar] is not much, which means less than two kilograms on average for each person, or some one kilogram and half. But this is not the problem. The problem lies in the Chinese people's purchasing power and China's foreign reserve for international trade. Compared to Europe, America, or even some Latin American cities, the liv-

ing standard of the Chinese people is still low. Meanwhile, the Chinese people are not used to consuming much sugar. For example, you need sugar when drinking tea, we don't. I heard that [personally], you don't have this habit, either. I knew this secret of yours. (The Premier smiled). Of course, habits could be changed too. Consuming sugar also has benefits, such as adding calories. The problem is the foreign reserves. The international market does not accept China's Renminbi. We therefore have to use our foreign reserves.

Guevara: We did not mention foreign currency.

Premier: This is [what we propose]: when we buy your sugar, you should buy goods from us of the same value which will be huge: 1 million tons [of sugar] means 88 million USD, and becomes more than 100 million with freight added.

Guevara: The delivery should be made at Cuban docks, because we don't have the ability to ship sugar to China. We are facing a blockade.

Premier: We are, too, facing a blockade. We share the same fate. We have the same difficulty. Of course, we will buy as we can, and underwrite the transportation expense. Paying freight also requires foreign currency, because we don't have our own ocean-going ships. Let's just temporarily leave the matter aside. With reference to the sugar procurement alone, i.e. 88 million USD, the problem then is whether China is able, or not, to provide the goods you need. I wish you could put forth a list of goods. We will examine the feasibility in practice, only by doing so could we ultimately decide the amount of sugar we buy from you.

Guevara: We are not familiar with China's possibilities, for example, variety, standard, and quality.

Premier: [You] could have a discussion with departments concerning foreign trade. Take a look at samples.

Guevara: The order of goods we need has already been raised back in Havana. We raise the same order of goods to all socialist countries.

Premier: In this case, given that [we] have already received something from you, will you please raise another list? Foreign trade minister, Lu Xuzhang, could discuss it with you. Who will be [in the discussion] on your side?

Guevara: [Alberto] Mora [Becerra], [Ramiro Fernando] Maldonado [Secretary-General, Revolutionary Social Party of

Ecuador], Molei [sic]. When will the discussion take place? We would love to participate, if we have time, as observers.

Premier: Tomorrow could be the date of the discussion. This is about the problem of quantity and price of sugar.

The second problem is about the loan and equipment. You said that the Soviet Union has helped [solve] part [of the problem]. As to what China could provide, you are not clear. I suggest that you go to the industrial exhibition tomorrow, to see those suitable small and medium [pieces of] equipment. After the visit, [we] could speak of the feasibility and calculate the amount of money.

Guevara: Agree. When it comes to machines about to be purchased, [they] could not be included to be items paid by loans, instead, be put in the list for trade.

Premier: Those machines in no need of special design could be considered. Who are in charge of this on your part?

Guevara: Lateste, Ramos, Piniela⁶⁰ [sic].

Premier: On our side, Vice-Minister Li Qiang is responsible.

The third is the technological problem. Regarding the demands you raised for technological materials and learning [opportunities] of technological staff, we will help as we can. When the industrial exhibition is visited, [you] could raise detailed demands.

Guevara: Agree.

Premier: Fourth, about transportation problems, which you did not mention but it is a problem that exists.

Guevara: The Soviet Union has promised that transportation problems that other countries cannot solve could be left to them. The Soviet Union will help Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria solve transportation problems. But in the [COMECON] meeting, [the Soviet Union] did not mention China's transportation problem, because China is not in the Council of Eight Countries' Economic Mutual Assistance.

Premier: The transportation of over one million tons [of sugar] is a big task. We are facing a blockade here, and there is also a blockade in your [place]. In the future, there will probably be a total blockade. This year's situation is comparatively good. We have transported to you two hundred thousand tons of sugar. Thirty-one ships have been chartered. From September onwards, cargoes of over twenty ships have been

transported. Things have gone relatively well. How are the warehouses of your docks?

Guevara: Do you refer to the number of warehouses, or the condition of equipment?

Premier: [I refer to] the problem of storage.

Guevara: [We] have warehouses. Besides, we are constructing special warehouses for oil and ammonia. If you could sell oil depots, we want [them] too.

Premier: We don't have enough [depots] ourselves, and can't export and provide [you]. Does your oil come from the Soviet Union, or is imported from Romania?

Guevara: All is imported from the Soviet Union.

Premier: Can't Venezuela provide [you]?

Guevara: The oil of Venezuela means the oil of Mobil and Shell, etc.

Premier: The discussion of several detailed problems could stop where it is now. [We] can't reach conclusion today. [Let's] leave them to individuals specialized [in respective fields] who will discuss separately.

I want to talk, again, about our situation. Although China has been liberated for eleven years, its basis [for development] remains very backward. Industrialization was one hundred years later than the West. Out of eleven years [since 1949], the first three years went to recovery, after which [we] spent time on construction. Some accomplishments have been attained, which however become a very few when such a big population is considered. The Chinese people are in desperate hope to get rid of the backward situation and have built up the country at a high speed. Over the last three years, construction has been accelerated. Despite these, [what we can provide] is not remotely close to what the people need. Both the heavy industry and the light industry could not provide the products needed by the domestic market. Therefore, no matter what happens, [we] have to squeeze out a part of agricultural and mining products and a fraction of industrial products (mainly agricultural and mining products) for exportation, and trade back mechanical equipment. It's impossible for our imports and exports not be influenced by agriculture. Sometimes we have a good harvest, other times a bad harvest. If counted in terms of rubles, the values of our imports and exports reach seven billion for each. The value of the ruble here is not estimated with reference to its

exchange rate with the US dollar, but based on other [references]. If counted in terms of US dollars, the value of exports is approximately between two and three billion, the value of imports is [also] two and three billion. Our major trade is the one with the Soviet Union, accounting for 50 percent; nearly 25 percent goes to the trade with other socialist countries; the remaining one quarter goes to the trade with places beyond socialist countries, which does not exceed 600 million.

This is our situation. [The reason why] the trade with the Soviet Union accounts for half [of our international trade] is to repay loans. From 1950 to 1955, we received loans all together of five billion and six hundred million ruble. 60 percent of them is the expense for [purchasing] arms and ammunition to resist the US and aid Korea. Now [we] have to repay [the loans]. Along with interests, we have repaid over two thirds [of loans], with the remaining to be cleared within the next five years. On top of these, there has been a temporary incident: last year we encountered a natural disaster. Our food production this year will shrink by 30 percent of the planned [total]. This will affect a string of agricultural products, and the processing of them, such as tea, cotton, tobacco, and raw materials for industry. Our trade with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries is unable to be carried out as the original contracts stipulated. [We] will have outstanding balances, reduction in agricultural production, [adverse] impact on industry. It's impossible to recover within one year from natural disasters of two years. Only by 1961 or 1962 could [we] recover. Despite these, as long as [they] are friendly countries, with difficulties bigger than ours, we will always do our best to help. Chairman Liu said you wanted rice. We could help you just by each person having one less bite of rice [*meiren jian yikoufan*]. You raised two figures: one is one hundred and twenty thousand tons of rice, and another, one hundred and eight thousand tons. Which is the figure [you ultimately want]?

(At this moment, Guevara left his seat for some reason. The Premier turned to Cuban deputy foreign minister, [Arnold] Rodriguez [Camps], for a word.)

Premier: Have you and your foreign minister [Raúl] Roa [García] attended the UN General Assembly?

Rodriguez: No, we have two deputy [foreign] ministers: one went with the foreign minister to the UN General Assembly, and I stayed.

Premier: So the foreign minister is now still at the UN.

Rodriguez: Yes, he is still. The struggle in the UN is difficult. It will become easier if China gets into the UN.

Premier: Even if we get in, [we] will only be part of the minority. But gradually the minority will turn into a majority. When you start to lead Latin America, and twenty [Latin American] countries change, the situation will be different.

(At this moment, Guevara returned to his seat, and resumed the conversation with the Premier.)

Mora: The two hundred thousand tons of rice we proposed earlier was based on the calculation of our production capacity and demand. Later on production capacity turned out to be bad, we proposed one hundred and eight thousand tons, which is not an accurate figure, either.

Premier: Your harvest this year is not good.

Guevara: The bad harvest this year is not due to a natural disaster. It is because [we] drove away bad elements. When the technological staff was gone, the production of pesticide dropped, and the production of rice also dropped. Nobody could be blamed for this.

Premier: This is only a temporary problem. No matter whether it's one hundred and twenty thousand tons, or one hundred and eight thousand tons, it's not much against China's population. [We] will be able to provide you [with rice] when everyone squeezes out a half a kilogram [of rice]. I just talked about China's production and trade situation. But as long as [we] could supply you, we will do our best to supply.

Guevara: We know our needs, and [we] also know the efforts made by China, although not quite thoroughly. Our demands are not going to exceed the possibilities. (The translation of this sentence might not be accurate. There might be an error.) [sic].

Premier: Concrete possibilities should be found.

Guevara: It's estimated that by 1961, we could be self-sufficient in rice, less so in soybeans and maize. We can't produce wheat, which is one of our problems.

Premier: Is rice your staple food?

Guevara: Yes, it's rice. [We] eat it every day.

Premier: Then [you are] the same as we are.

Guevara: Is eating rice China's tradition?

Premier: This mainly refers to the south of China. But in the north, [people] also eat rice, along with wheat and maize. What's the size of Cuba's cultivated arable land?

Guevara: [It] is impossible to estimate. There are no statistics. It's reckoned that 80 percent of territory is arable land.

Premier: Is the figure nation-wide?

Guevara: Yes.

Premier: That is large. I'm afraid that the cultivated arable land is far less, isn't it?

Guevara: [Yes,] it's far less. Some big sugar factories purchase land for sugarcane planting, but there is land, three or four times more [in size than the one for sugarcane planting], not for cultivation but for livestock raising. The US United Fruit Company has seven thousand caballeria [*ka*] land, out of which only two thousand have been cultivated.

(At this moment, Lataste, official of the Industrial Division of Land Reform Commission of Cuba, produced the figure for the number of Cuba's arable land.)

Maj. Lataste said that Cuba has about nine million hectare [of] arable land. The cultivated arable land is about a million hectares.

Premier: That's a lot. On average, everyone has one hectare and a half.

Guevara: True.

Vice-Premier Chen Yi: Then you are the richest country.

Premier: We have only a hectare of arable land for five persons.

Guevara: If counting in terms of Cuba's rural population, everyone has three hectares of arable land.

Premier: The rural area has a population of three million.

Guevara: The rural population accounts for 42 percent of total population.

Premier: Less than three million.

Guevara: [Yes,] a bit less [than three million.]

Premier: [Your cultivation] relies mainly on machines or livestock?

Guevara: Cultivation relies mainly on machines.

Premier: How many tractors?

Guevara: [We have] twenty-three thousand tractors, while we use livestock to grow tobacco.

Premier: [You are using] mixed tractors [sic].

Guevara: 50 percent of the tractors have between thirty and forty horsepower, of various brands.

Premier: Are they mainly US tractors?

Guevara: [Yes, they are] mainly from the US, and then from Britain. Now we buy tractors from the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the Democratic Germany [German Democratic Republic; East Germany—ed.].

Premier: Are there tractor repairing factories?

Guevara: The Soviet Union helped us build a repairing factory.

Premier: You didn't have one in the past?

Guevara: No.

Premier: When components broke, [you] shipped [replacements] from the US.

Guevara: Yes.

Premier: It's entirely a US colonialist solution, the pain that we all suffered. China is politically independent, not entirely economically independent yet. [We] are yet to be self-sufficient in main items. This needs time and this is why [we] said that we need construction and a peaceful international environment. You do understand this thinking of ours? A peaceful environment is good for construction. With ten years, or twenty years, given to us, we will construct the country well, and imperialism will in part dare not bully us. Modern imperialism describes China as militant. You could judge by yourself to see if China is really militant. If [we are]

militant, for what did we build this auditorium? It would be gone with one bomb. All newly independent countries invariably need a peaceful environment. When construction is done, imperialism no longer dares to bully [us]. Imperialism refuses to let us develop, and bullies [us], saying that we are militant. Eisenhower recently ordered troops deployed in the Caribbean Sea, saying you were conducting subversive activities against Guatemala and Nicaragua. In fact, they wanted to encourage people to occupy your Binuo Island [Isle of Pines], just as they did to our Taiwan.

Guevara: They are pressuring us, and we bring troubles to them in return.

Premier: [You] gave them very big troubles. You are the vanguard. It's not that you are overthrowing Guatemala and Nicaragua, but that their people should learn from you and people of the world should all learn from you. Fire can't be snuffed out.

Guevara: In fact, we haven't done anything bad. They come to learn voluntarily.

Premier: Certainly [they] should learn. All are facing the oppression of US imperialism. [This situation] is created by the US. Let's call it a day. We will continue the discussion after [your] visits.

Foreign Ministry
19 November 1960

[Source: The Memorandum of the Conversation between Premier Zhou Enlai and Cuban Revolutionary Government Economic Delegation, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: 204-00098-02, pp.1-16. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No. 3

Memorandum of Conversation between Mao Zedong and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, 19 November 1960

Time: 4:20 PM – 6:30PM, 19 November, 1960

Venue: Qingzhen Hall in Zhongnanhai

Participants: Cuban Side – Head of Delegation and President of National Development Bank, Major Ernesto Che Guevara,

and All Other Members of Delegation; Chinese Side – Zhou Enlai, Li Xiannian, Geng Biao, Shen Jian, Lin Ping.
Interpreters: Cai Tongguo, Liu Xiliang
Recorder: Zhang Zai

Chairman: Cuban Delegation, welcome.

Guevara [“abbreviated as Ge” in the original, not abbreviated here]: It is a great pleasure [for us] to have this opportunity of greeting Chairman Mao [in person]. We have always venerated Chairman Mao in our struggle. We are an official delegation, representing Cuba, but members of our delegation were born in four nations.

Chairman: You are an Argentinean.

Guevara: Born in Argentina.

Chairman: Where else were people in the delegation born?

Guevara: [Ramiro Fernando] Maldonado [Secretary-General, Revolutionary Social Party of Ecuador] is an Ecuadorian, [economist Albán] Lataste a Chilean, I was born in Argentina, all the rest [were] born in Cuba. Although some of us were not born in Cuba, the Cuban people do not resent us by saying we were not born in Cuba. We actually defend the Cuban revolution. Fidel [Castro] represents the will of all Latin Americans.

Chairman: You are internationalists.

Guevara: The internationalists of Latin America.

Chairman: Asian people, African people, and the entire socialist camp support you. Last year you visited a few Asian countries, [didn't you]?

Guevara: A few countries, such as India, Siam [Thailand], Indonesia, Burma, Japan, Pakistan.

Chairman: Except for China, [you] have you been to all major Asian countries.

Guevara: That's why I am now in China.

Chairman: Welcome to you.

Guevara: Our internal situation had yet to stabilize when I left Cuba last year, which was why we dealt carefully with the outside world, unlike now. [Now] the domestic situation is consolidated and we can be firmer.

Chairman: The present international situation is better than last year.

Guevara: The entire nation is united, but every day the imperialists are expecting us to split.

Chairman: Apart from workers and peasants, who else have you united with?

Guevara: Our government represents workers and peasants. Our country still has a petite bourgeoisie which has a friendly relationship and cooperates with us.

Chairman: [Are there] no national bourgeoisie?

Guevara: The national bourgeoisie were basically importers. Their interests were entangled with imperialism and they were against us. [This is why] we destroyed them, both economically and politically.

Chairman: They were comprador bourgeoisie. [They should] not be counted as national bourgeoisie.

Guevara: Some people depended entirely on imperialism. Imperialism gave them capital, technology, patents, and markets. Although they lived in their own country, their interests were entangled with imperialism, for example, sugar traders.

Chairman: Sugar entrepreneurs.

Guevara: They were. Now the sugar business has been nationalized.

Chairman: You have basically expropriated all US capital.

Guevara: Not basically, but all. Perhaps some capital escaped [from expropriation]. But it is not that we do not want [to expropriate it].

Chairman: Did you offer compensation after expropriation?

Guevara: If [a sugar company] purchased over three million tons of sugar from us [before expropriation], [we] would offer a compensation of 5 percent-25 percent [of the value of sugar purchased]. [People] unfamiliar with the situation in Cuba would find it difficult to comprehend the irony embedded in this policy.

Chairman: According to the press, you returned the capital and profits on a 47-caballeria per year basis with an annual interest rate of 1 percent.

Guevara: Only [the companies] that purchased over 3 million tons of sugar would be compensated. No procurement, no compensation. There were two Canadian banks, relatively big. We did not nationalize them, which is consistent with our domestic and foreign policies.

Chairman: To temporarily tolerate the presence of some imperialist companies is strategically acceptable. We too have a few [imperialist companies] here.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: Just like the HSBC [Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation], whose presence is just symbolic.

Guevara: These Canadian banks in Cuba are the same as the HSBC here.

Chairman: You [should] unite workers and peasants, namely, the majority.

Guevara: Some people from the bourgeoisie went against us and joined the enemy's camp.

Chairman: Those who go against you are your enemies. You have done a great job in suppressing counter-revolutionaries.

Guevara: Counter-revolutionaries conducted aggressive activities. [For example,] sometimes [they] occupied a few islands, [in which case] they would be annihilated soon afterwards. Nothing to worry about. [We] executed their leader by shooting whenever [we] captured them. Their equipment was parachuted, all from the US.

Chairman: You have also captured several Americans [didn't you?]

Guevara: [They were] tried immediately and executed by shooting.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: The American government protested and you responded.

Chairman: You are firm. Be firm to the end, this is the hope [of the revolution], and imperialism will find itself in greater difficulty. But waver and compromise, and imperialism will find it easier [to deal with you].

Guevara: In the first stage of our revolution, Fidel proposed a way to solve the public housing problem, because the government bears the responsibility to make everyone own a house. We confiscated properties of big house owners and distributed them among the people. Small house owners keep their properties as usual.

Chairman: And then?

Guevara: Now we are in the second stage of the revolution, i.e. to end the phenomenon of one man exploiting another. With close reference to the domestic and international situation, we are working on consolidating our regime: eradicating illiteracy and unemployment (which is in a particularly grave situation), developing the industrial sector, and furthering land reform.

Chairman: Excellent. You have influenced Latin America, and even Asia and Africa. They will be influenced as long as you do well.

Guevara: Particularly Latin America.

Chairman: Latin American petite bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie are afraid of socialism. For a substantial period, you should not rush on the social reform. This approach will do good to win over Latin American small bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. After victory, Jiang Jieshi's [Chiang Kai-shek's] businesses and those businesses previously owned by Germany, Italy, and Japan but later converted into Jiang's assets were all nationalized, which enabled state-owned capital to account for 80 percent of all industrial capital. Although national bourgeoisie occupied only 20 percent [of all industrial capital], they employed more than 1 million workers and controlled the entire commercial network. It took us nearly 7 years to solve this problem. [We] gave them jobs, voting rights, joint private-and-public management and interest buy-outs, in the hope of solving this problem. This [combined] solution made them satisfied and delivered a relatively good effect abroad. After looking at this solution, although the Asian bourgeoisie were not entirely happy, they agreed that it was an acceptable way to unite them, and it was fine to use the policy of buy-outs. The problem of the urban handicraft sector and petite bourgeoisie was tackled, likewise, by means of cooperatives.

Guevara: We should borrow experience from other countries, including China and other socialist countries. As for the bourgeoisie, we give them respect, jobs, and money, wishing they do not go abroad. We also give wages to technicians. Traditionally, we do not have a handicraft industry; therefore

no problem appears in this regard. We have united the unemployed into cooperatives which in return gave them jobs.

Chairman: The US does not want Cuba to have national bourgeoisie. This is the same case for Japan in Korea and China's Northeast [i.e. Manchuria], and for France in Vietnam. They did not allow local people to build bigger plants.

Guevara: This phenomenon resembles [what happened in] Latin America. In order to destroy feudal forces, imperialism fostered the national bourgeoisie. The national bourgeoisie may have also asked for a higher import tax. But they did not stand for national interests; they were, in fact, colluding with imperialism.

Chairman: I have a question. Is the Brazilian steel industry connected with the US in terms of capital?

Guevara: Major Brazilian metallurgical factories were founded with American capital.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: What's the percentage of American capital? Brazil produces 1.6 million tons of steel [annually].

Guevara: The overall amount of capital for the largest Brazilian factory is not quite clear. But technologically, it entirely depends on the US. Brazil is a big country, yet there is actually no substantial difference between it and other Latin American countries.

Chairman: I have another question. It took more than two years for you from initially landing on Cuba to the moment of ultimate victory. You united peasants and won a victory. Is there any possibility that other Latin American countries could follow this model?

Guevara: This question cannot be answered in one way [*yigai-erlun*]. Indeed, you have more experience and more insightful analysis [than us]. In my opinion, Cuba faced a more difficult setting for revolution than other Latin American countries. There was, however, only one favorable factor: we gained victory by exploiting the negligence of the imperialists. The imperialists did not concentrate their forces on dealing with us. They thought Fidel would ask for loans after victory and cooperate with them. [By contrast,] initiating revolution in other Latin American countries would face the same danger as Guatemala—the US interfering by dispatching marines.⁶¹

Chairman: Are there any differences [among these Latin American countries] in terms of the domestic situation?

Guevara: Politically, there are [differences]. But socially speaking, [all these countries] fall into only two or three categories. Three countries have [an ongoing] military struggle. They are Paraguay, Nicaragua, and Guatemala.

Chairman: The US now has turned its spear [*duifu*] on Guatemala and Nicaragua.

Guevara: In Columbia and Peru, the possibility for a great people's revolution movement emerges.

Chairman: In Peru, as I said, the majority of the people need land. Also in Columbia.

Guevara: The case of Peru is interesting. It has always had a custom of primitive communism. The Spanish during their reign brought in feudalism and slavery. But primitive communism did not die out due to that. On the contrary, it survives until now. The communist party won the election in Cuzco. This struggle [for communist victory in election] is entwined with racial struggle. Many native Indians live in Peru, but only the white people and the white/Indian mestizos could own land and be landlords.

Chairman: The local people have a population of from 9 million to 10 million, whereas the Spanish population there is measured only at ten thousand.

Guevara: These figures might have been exaggerated. Peru has 12 million people, of which 10 million are native and 2 million are whites.

Chairman: [Peru is] similar to South Africa. South Africa has only 3 million British.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: There are 3 million British, 1 million Dutch, 1 million half-bloods, 8 million Blacks, and half a million Indians. People of the latter two categories live in the most miserable situation of all. Only the white people have voting rights.

Guevara: Peru still has slavery. Land is normally sold with humans.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: Like Tibet in the past.

Guevara: In those backward areas, inhabitants do not use money. When it comes to selling, [the seller] puts the goods for sale and copper coins on each side of a balance as to measure them. Notes are not used there.

Chairman: The situation in Columbia is somewhat different [, isn't it]?

Guevara: Columbia has weaker feudalism but faces a far stronger Catholic presence. Landlords and the Catholic Church gang up with the US. The native Indians are poor but not slaves. Guerilla forces used to be present in Columbia, but now they have stopped fighting.

Chairman: Does Cuba have diplomatic relations with other Latin American countries?

Guevara: Several countries colluded with each other and severed their relations with Cuba. These countries are Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala. Columbia, El Salvador, Honduras together declared the Cuban ambassador persona non grata. Brazil withdrew its ambassador, which however was for another reason.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: So together there are 7 countries.

Chairman: In that case, [Cuba] has relations with most countries: 19 [Latin American countries] minus 7 equals 12.

Guevara: [Cuba] has no relations with the first 3 [i.e. Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala]. In the latter 4 countries [Columbia, El Salvador, Honduras and Brazil], there are Cuban chargé d'affaires, though no Cuban ambassador. For Cubans going to Brazil, it is just like going to the other side of the so-called Iron Curtain.

Chairman: What are the natures of the wars in Guatemala and Nicaragua? Are they people's wars?

Guevara: I cannot provide an accurate answer. My impression is that [the war in] Guatemala is [people's war] while [the war in] in Nicaragua is just one of the normal kind. [They are] distant [from Cuba]. I have no idea [of the nature of their wars]. [What I said] is just a subjective answer.

Chairman: Is what happened in Guatemala connected to [Jacobo] Arbenz [Guzman]?

Guevara: I have only seen the declaration of Arbenz on this issue before I left for China. The revolution [there] is perhaps of a popular nature.

Chairman: So Arbenz is now in Cuba?

Guevara: Yes, in Cuba.

Chairman: He has been to China and the Soviet Union. A nice person.

Guevara: We trust him. He made mistakes before, but he is upright, firm, and could be trusted.
(Chairman invited all members of the delegation for dinner, during which they also had the following conversation)

Guevara: Between China and Cuba there are two things almost identical which very much impress me. When you were waging revolution, Jiang Jieshi's attack upon you was [called] encirclement and suppression [*weijiao*], two words that were also used by reactionaries in our place. The strategies [used by them] are the same.

Chairman: When alien entities enter the body, white cells will encircle and suppress them. Jiang Jieshi treated us as bacteria and wanted to destroy us. We've fought against him off and on for 22 years, with two cooperations and two break-ups which naturally prolonged the time. In the first cooperation, we committed [the mistake of following] rightist opportunism. Within the party the rightist group emerged. The result was that Jiang Jieshi purged the party, opposed communism, and suppressed with war, which happened during the Northern Expedition. The second period, from 1924 to 1927, was of nothing but war. We were left with no way, just like Batista not leaving you any way out but killing people. Jiang Jieshi taught us and also, the Chinese people, just like Batista taught you and the Cuban people alike: besides picking up arms and fighting, there is no other way out. We all did not know how to fight, nor did we prepare to fight. The Premier and I are intellectuals; he (referring to Li Xiannian, Vice-Premier) was a worker. But what other choice were [we] left with? He [Jiang Jieshi] wanted to kill.

(Chairman raised a glass to propose a toast to the success of the Cuban people's revolution and the health of all member of the delegation)

Chairman: Once the war broke out, it continued for the following ten years. We built up base-areas, but committed [the mistake of following] rightist opportunism; when the policy leaned excessively to the left, [we] lost the base-area consequently, and were forced to go away, which was the Long March. These errors taught us—basically we made two errors, one rightist and another leftist—and a lesson was learned. When Japan broke into China with a war, we again cooperated with Jiang Jieshi, an episode you didn't have.

Guevara: It's lucky that [we] did not have [it].

Chairman: You didn't have the possibility of cooperating with Batista.

Guevara: Batista had no conflict with the Americans.

Chairman: Jiang Jieshi is the dog of Britain and the US. When Japan invaded [China], Jiang Jieshi did not approve. In the third period, [which lasted for] 8 years [1937-45], [we] cooperated with Jiang Jieshi to fight against Japan. The cooperation was not a good one, [for] Jiang Jieshi represented the comprador capitalist class, being the comprador of Britain and the US. In the fourth period, arriving after Japan was repelled, Jiang Jieshi attacked; we spent one year on defending [against him] and then struck back, which all together cost three years and a half; in 1949, [we] achieved overall success and Jiang Jieshi fled to Taiwan. You don't have Taiwan Island.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: You have Binuo Island [the Isle of Pines]. But before Batista had the time to flee to this island, they captured the Isle of Pines.

Chairman: It's very good to capture it.

Guevara: The possibility of a US attack remains.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: The Americans attempted to attack the Isle of Pines.

Chairman: So American imperialism is our shared enemy, also the shared enemy of people of the world. You all look very young.

Guevara: We hadn't even been born when you started to wage revolution, except him (referred to Maj. Suñol) having already been born. He, 35 years old, is the old man among us.

Chairman: In the past, we struggled in war. Now [we] should struggle in construction.

Suñol: Defend the revolution.

Guevara: China also shares another thing with Cuba. The situation evaluation [produced in] the 1945 CCP party congress reads: some urban people despised villages; our struggle was divided into two parts: one was to conduct guerrilla warfare in mountainous areas and the other was to strike in cities; people who promoted striking held in contempt those who fought guerrilla warfare in mountainous areas. In the end, those who promoted strikes failed.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: Very similar.

Chairman: Gaining comfort from squandering forces—this is adventurism. [When they are] unable to pay attention to villages, it is not at all easy for urban people to ally with peasants.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: It dawned on me after I read your article of October 5 (referred to Guevara's note published in the magazine Verde Olivo about research on Cuba's revolutionary ideology⁶²). I read the abstract of this article and the issues that you raised. [You] could be regarded as an intellectual.

Guevara: [I'm] yet to reach the stage of being an intellectual.

Chairman: [You have] become an author. I, too, read the abstract of this article, and very much agree with your points. [The article] could possibly influence Latin America.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: Have you brought the full text with you?

Guevara: [I] would try to find out.

Chairman: You raised three principles in your articles. People could defeat reactionaries. [They] don't have to wait for all conditions to become matured so as to start revolution. What was the third principle?

Guevara: The third principle is that in Latin America, the main task lies in rural areas.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: It's very important to connect [revolution] with rural areas.

Guevara: We very much stick to this point.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: Some Latin American friends did not heed peasants, whereas you very much heeded this point and succeeded. The Chinese revolution is the same: many people did not attach importance to the contribution of peasants, whereas Comrade Mao Zedong very much heeded this point.

Chairman: The enemy taught us, not allowing us to exist in cities. He [Jiang Jieshi] wanted to kill people. What else could you do?

Guevara: A point in Chairman Mao's works is found by Fidel [Castro] to be very important, which I failed to notice at the beginning. That is to treat war prisoners generously: to cure

their wounds and send them back. [We] realized this point which helped very much [in our struggle].

Chairman: This is the way to disintegrate enemy troops.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: Your article also touched on this point.

Guevara: This [point] was later added. Originally, we took away shoes and clothes from prisoners, because our soldiers did not have [any shoes or clothes]. Yet later Fidel forbade us from doing this.

(Chairman raised his glass and proposed a toast to the health of Fidel).

Guevara: [People] couldn't eat well when waging guerrilla warfare. [We] were also short of spiritual food. [We] couldn't read materials.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: When Chairman Mao fought guerrilla warfare, he often sent people for newspapers.

Chairman: Treat newspapers as information. The enemy's newspapers often leaked enemy's moves, which was one source of information. We began the revolution with several thousand people; [the size of troops] then became over ten thousand, and later grew into three hundred thousand, at which point [we] committed the leftist mistake. After the Long March, three hundred thousand shrank to twenty five thousand. The enemy became less afraid of us. When the Japanese invaded [China], we wanted to cooperate with Jiang Jieshi. He said that we could [cooperate with him], because given [that there were] so few [of us], he did not fear us. The purpose of Jiang Jieshi was to let the Japanese annihilate us. But [he] did not expect us, after we fought with Japan, to grow from twenty thousand to one million and several hundred thousand. When Jiang Jieshi's four million troops, after the Japanese surrendered, began to attack us, we had one million troops, and base-areas had a population of one hundred million. Within three and a half years, we defeated Jiang Jieshi. That [warfare over these years] was not guerrilla warfare anymore; that was large-scale warfare. Planes, cannons, tanks, as mentioned in your article, all failed to play any critical role. Back then, Jiang Jieshi had them all, while we had none of them. Only later on [we] captured some cannons.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: In the late period, [we] even captured tanks.

Chairman: The main [type of weaponry we captured] was artillery, which enabled us to set up artillery divisions, artillery brigades, or artillery regiments. They were all US equipment.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: After Beijing was liberated, we had a parade. All were US equipment. Back then, the American hadn't left. The US Consulate General and military attaché also came and watched.

Guevara: In my early time in war, the people I led barely exceeded a company. Once, a tank was captured and we were then filled with extreme joy. But Fidel wanted to take it away. I was unhappy, and agreed to submit only after a bazooka was brought to me for exchange.

Chairman: Although planes fly in the sky every day, they could hardly make any casualties. [People] could dress in camouflage. Green clothes could be used to change one's appearance. You are all wearing uniforms. You were all soldiers.

Guevara: Rodriguez (Deputy Foreign Minister) was not. He was then suffering in jail.

Chairman: You (referring to Rodriguez) look very young.

Rodriguez: 25 years old.

Chairman: You (referring to Mora and Suñol) were soldiers.

Guevara: Mora's father was shot dead in war. Suñol has been wounded three times, in 6 parts [of his body]. I myself have been wounded two times. Rodriguez has been tortured in prison. We had very few men at first. Fidel even fought with his own gun. [We were] only twelve people.

Chairman: Weren't there eighty something people?

Guevara: The size decreased gradually, with only twelve people left in the end.

Chairman: These twelve people are seeds. The temperature in your place is good.

Guevara: [Cuba is] at 22 degrees north.

Chairman: Your lands are also good.

Guevara: All lands could be cultivated. Coconut trees could be planted in areas of sand. But it's difficult to grow crops in the mountains.

Chairman: So [the population of] your country could at least grow to 30 million.

Guevara: Indonesia's Java Island has as many as 50 million [people].

Chairman: You should thank [General Rubén Fulgencio] Batista [y Zaldívar], in the same way we thank Jiang Jieshi. He offered us lessons by killing people.

[Alberto] Mora [Becerra]: We are grateful to Batista also because he drove more people to our side.

Chairman: We have another teacher, which is imperialism. It is our long-term educator. The best teacher is American imperialism. You too have two teachers, Batista and American imperialism. [As far as I know,] Batista is now in the US. Is he thinking of a restoration?

Guevara: Batista's followers are now split into 5 factions, which have together elected 5 presidential candidates. These candidates have views different from each other. Some oppose Batista while others behave like Batista more or less.

Chairman: They all are no match for Batista. How old is Batista?

Guevara: 60 years old.

Chairman: Our Jiang Jieshi is now 74 years old, craving to return to Beijing every day.

Mora: These 5 candidates were all party leaders. People know their names and they too crave to return to Cuba every day.

Guevara: They departed from Central America, four-five days after our victory, and planned to land in Cuba. They said they came to overthrow Batista without being informed that we have already obtained the victory for the revolution.

Chairman: There are many Central American countries. In my opinion, the Dominican Republic is promising, for people there all rally against [Rafael Leonidas] Trujillo [Molina].

Guevara: It is difficult to say. Trujillo is the most mature [chengshu] dictator in Latin America. The Americans are thinking to get rid of him.

Chairman: The Americans do not like Trujillo?

Guevara: Everybody opposes him, therefore he has to be replaced.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: Like [South Vietnamese leader] Ngo Dinh Diem and [South Korean leader] Syngman Rhee.

Chairman: Ngo Dinh Diem is now whining the most [*dafalaosao*].

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: The life of a client is not easy.

Chairman: The Americans now do not like Jiang Jieshi. We become fonder of him. Those who are 100 percent pro-American are worse than Jiang, who is just 99 percent pro-American. He still wants to retain his own influence.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: This is dialectical.

[Commandante Eddy] Suñol: I think you are expecting Jiang Jieshi to come back.

Chairman: As long as he disconnects himself from the US, we shall provide him a place in our government.

Premier [Zhou Enlai]: Better if he could bring back Taiwan along with him.

Chairman: It seems that he is not interested in coming back though.

[Source: Memorandum of the Conversation between Mao Zedong and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Beijing, 19 November 1960, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: 202-00098-01, pp. 1-14. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.4

Memorandum of Conversation between Vice-Chairman Zhou Enlai, Party Secretary of the Cuban Popular Socialist Party Manuel Lizardo, and Member of National Directory Ernesto Che Guevara, 21 November 1960

(without review of Vice-Chairman Zhou Enlai)
Top Secret

Venue: Xihua Hall of Zhongnanhai
Time: 11:20-2:45 hours
Accompanied by: Li Xiannian, Wu Xiuquan
Interpreter: Cai Tongkuo
Recorder: Zhang Zai

Lu[zardo]: Good health to the Premier.

Zhou: Thanks (introduced comrade Wu Xiuquan).

Lu: He joined our Congress of Representatives.

Zhou: Thank you for your treatment of him.

Lu: We were glad to treat him, only afraid of having not treated well.

Zhou: You were so busy.

Lu: It was our first time treating so many comrades from fraternal parties. Although we did want to treat them well, there many things that [we] didn't do well.

Zhou: [It's all right] as long as the meeting was good.

Lu: This [the meeting] is the major [thing].

Zhou: When did you leave Moscow?

Lu: Four days ago.

Zhou: Comrade [Blas] Roca [Calderio] is still in Havana. How is his health?

Lu: He's getting better. You know that not long ago he felt a bit uncomfortable.

Zhou: [I] know. He's been to China.

Lu: Twice. [His] health is now not bad.

Zhou: [Let's] begin with detailed issues and then move to discussion of the situation. Comrade Guevara is about to leave [Beijing] for other places. This afternoon there is a People's Congress. Detailed issues have been discussed with comrade Guevara, [but] today [let's] go through them again.

You [referring to Lu] are very concerned about this thing: the first thing we will discuss is about sugar. The price for sugar is four US cents per pound. We will agree to the price that the Soviet Union gave you. You know that we advocate

following the Soviet Union. The amount of sugar, i.e. one million tons, is no problem for us. The problem is whether you could buy our goods worth one million [tons of] sugar, because we could only barter with you, which was made clear to you that day. Comrade Li Xiannian told me that this morning [we] could give you a list of our goods [for bartering]. We have proposed a list of goods worth over one hundred million USD for your reference. If after selecting from this list, the value [of goods you picked] is still unable to square with the cost of sugar, i.e. 88 million USD, you will find more industrial products during Comrade Guevara and other comrades' visit to Shanghai, and complement the list by proposing more [items]. We don't know what sort of industrial products you need. Shanghai, in this regard, offers many options. The second thing is about aid. What you mentioned in Moscow is that within the period of the Five Year Plan, between 50 and 100 million USD is needed. The problem now is not the amount. The problem is about what projects you want, including technological materials and equipment installation, such as a paper-making factory and a textile factory. If you cannot come up [with a list of what you need], you could complement it when in Shanghai. Shanghai has more goods. Watching the industrial and transportation exhibition here alone is not enough. When items are fixed, [we] could be able to estimate a value, and then draft an agreement. As to other detailed issues, we will send people to Havana to estimate the scale and speed of construction in accordance with your raw resources and materials. In helping your construction, one principle is to enable factories to produce earlier [in order to] meet demands quickly. In line with this, developing medium and small scale projects is more beneficial. For example, doing a big [project] is less [wise] than dividing it and developing two smaller ones which are adjustable with regards to raw materials and labor, quick and dispersed. The third is technological aid. With regard to technological materials (including industry, transportation and the handicraft industry), technological staff and service men, if you need [them], we could help you, or send people [to Cuba], or you could send people to China to learn, either way will do. Categories and numbers [of them] are up to you to decide. Fourth, transportation, which we have studied. Whether it's shipping sugar [to China] or transporting goods [to Cuba], we charter ships and pay them in foreign currencies; as to freight, two sides calculate [and share]. Based on current situation, it's estimated that [we] will still be able to charter ships. Recently we shipped sugar back; in the future, [we] could have long-term chartering and [more] shuttles could be expected. Comrade Guevara said that Cuba has more than one harbor, and that only one place [for loading and unloading] is not enough, and loading and unloading could be done somewhere else. Fifth, produc-

ing some documents. Comrade Li Xiannian and Comrade Guevara could [try] publishing some communiqués or other documents. The delegation could study this with our side. Within the delegation, you (referring to Guevara) could also study with your deputy foreign minister.

Guevara: I want to talk about our opinion of your talk. We agree to each point you mentioned. But I must stress one thing: Cuba is now in an extremely difficult period. We need aid from socialist countries, but don't want ourselves to turn into your heavy burden. China is a big country that has a spirit of helping others. But [we] don't want to create difficulties for you because of [you] helping us. [We] don't want to let this sort of aid become [something] imposed by us upon you.

Zhou: It won't be an imposition, but of course, there are difficulties. That day I talked about the problem of disasters, but this is only a temporary phenomenon which could be solved within two years. As long as it is on our list, it means that we could supply you and it is for you to choose. In case that [the value of] selected agricultural and handicraft products is still yet to reach 88 million USD, you could select industrial products and go to Shanghai for selection. Normally, our industrial production can meet the schedule, while some projects can actually produce more than the planned [amount]. The fact that the light industry could not meet the plan is because of the reduction in raw materials. But the heavy industry has overfilled the quota. The reason why we did not, on our initiative, give our opinions when in Moscow is that we're not part of the European Eight Countries' Economic Cooperation Organization [COMECON]; we have no [experience regarding] multilateral payment agreements; we also don't have multilateral trade; our [economic] relationship with every socialist country has always been bilateral. Both of you know this point as Chairman Liu has mentioned it.

Lu: He did mention it.

Guevara: About the problem of [purchasing] complete sets of equipment, I wish that our demands don't disturb your plan. It's all right for Cuba to wait for a while. Cuba's living standard is higher than China's. Although China has the ability [to provide equipment to us], we don't have the right to damage the Chinese people's life. The technical staff of our delegation are all representatives of the capitalist class, filled with capitalist thoughts. Please be patient when you are discussing with them.

Zhou: Our plan won't be disturbed in terms of the industry. Medium or small products, be it from light industry, heavy

industry, or handicraft industry, [we] will produce based on raw materials that you have (instead of importing raw materials), which is beneficial for the development of one country's national economy, helpful to you, but of no [adverse] influence on us. We know that you gained independence not long ago, and [now] need technical experts whose performance we understand. Giving you technical materials is in accordance with socialist countries' practice, i.e. no patent rights and you only pay the cost of printing and paper. When [our] technical staff go to your place, [they] should receive the same treatment as your workers have, instead of excessive [treatment]. These are our rules. Their families at home will be looked after by us. They eat what your technical staff eat, and live where your technical staff live. [The treatment] should not be the same as our cultural delegation had who went to your place and received very good treatment. Were this practice to continue, you couldn't afford [it]. Regarding commodity prices, as long as there are prices [for the same commodities] in international markets, we follow international market prices; if there are none of these prices, the two sides should discuss and decide.

Guevara: About [purchasing] complete sets of equipment, one point has to be made clear: Cuba's situation differs from China's. Cuban workers' wages are very high, which is due to being close to the US and therefore influenced by the US and also because workers struggled against US factory owners for higher wages. We prefer factories that are big and produce multiple goods, which is different from China. I wish that at least one complete [replica] of a Chinese company could be taken and put into production within a relatively short period, as a model.

Zhou: What we supply is a complete solution. [We] will be responsible for technical materials, design, equipment, installation, and transportation.

Guevara: [I] want to be clearer about the problem of transportation. Does each side share half of foreign currency costs?

Zhou: It depends on your foreign reserves. If purchasing sugar, we pay the freight and price you received is FOB [Free On Board]; when it comes to the procurement of our goods, if freight has to be taken into account, [we] could discuss [the sharing percentage]. In one word, [we] will not create difficulties for you.

Guevara: Then my mission is completed.

Lu: I very much want to point out that his (referring to Guevara's) mission is the same as [my] mission.

Zhou: Have you seen the recent interfering activities of the US in the Caribbean Sea? [How is] the situation? [sic; the original is unclear. Furthermore, it's followed by an abrupt change of topic—trans.]

Lu: When I was about to come here, [I] just thought that it would be great if there could be a discussion between one party member and another party member.

Zhou: Correct.

Lu: The delegation is [in the name] of the Cuban government, which I didn't participate in. But I came to work this thing out with Comrade Guevara. Last time I told Chairman Liu: in front of the Chinese Communist Party, I could describe Comrade Guevara as a party member and also the member of our national directory, which I also said back in Moscow. This is off the record.

Zhou: We [also] keep it off record, which is why in the public speech I addressed Guevara as Your Excellency Major. (Everybody laughed.)

Lu: The approach we're adopting is the one of seeking close cooperation between us—Comrade Guevara and the Party Secretary (referring to Lu himself)—and you—comrades of the Chinese [Communist] Party. You also understand that many things could be done in this way, but couldn't be spoken of as such.

Zhou: Yes, this approach is good, also beneficial to obtain the solidarity of the Latin American people.

Lu: This is to say: this talk is a discussion between the delegation of the Cuban [Communist] Party and the representatives of the Chinese [Communist] Party. Comrade Roca came this summer, and [he] has already explained the nature and problems of the Cuban revolution. I don't want to discuss the details any more. I think you have understood.

Zhou: Yes, today the *People's Daily* publishes the article written by Comrade Guevara for the Verde Olivo magazine on 5 October.

Lu: Of course, we could take this opportunity to talk about other things. The Cuban revolution was deepened recently: US banks have now all been nationalized.

Zhou: [I] know [it].

Lu: The remaining banks that haven't been nationalized are only Canadian banks.

Zhou: Two [banks].

Lu: This is why Canada does not follow the US, and impose an embargo. We should exploit the conflict between them.

Zhou: We should exploit all conflicts that could be exploited.

Lu: The experience of the Chinese [Communist] Party is useful in this regard.

Zhou: Comrade Mao Zedong has told Comrade Guevara that in Shanghai we still have British banks.

Lu: US sugar factories and companies together worth over one billion USD have all been nationalized.

Now the US has only a Guantanamo Base in Cuba. On top of other work, land reform and cooperatives [are almost finished]. We could agree with what Fidel Castro said that the first period of revolution is completed.

Zhou: This is a democratic revolutionary period, [to be precise,] an anti-imperialist, nationalist democratic revolutionary period.

Lu: True, but we do not always say so. Just like what Fidel Castro said, our agenda is, as the Havana Declaration proposed, to constrain the phenomenon of one person exploiting another, which explains the way ahead for the development of revolution. Between you and me, [I] could speak of it: The Cuban regime is one based on the alliance between workers and peasants. We didn't publically say so. When we spoke to the public, [we] talked about four classes, which are classes of workers, peasants, small capitalists, and big capitalists. The major leadership goes to the workers' with citizens and radical small capitalists participating. Revolution is striding forward. I didn't expect it to be so quick; at that moment, I wanted to make the process of nationalization slower. But facing the aggression of US imperialism and resistance of the big capitalist class (although their power is weak), we were left with no other choice. Naturally, it's impossible not to provoke deep hostility from the US imperialists. Not only because what Cuba confiscated was US capital worth nearly one billion USD, it's also because the Cuban revolution made an example for all other Latin American countries, which

[became more significant] given Cuba's proximity to the US, only 90 miles. This revolution is profound, constantly developing and deepening. Therefore, the US imperialists use all sorts of measures to defeat the Cuban revolution. You know that Cuba [had] an oil problem. Thanks to Soviet help, we thwarted the US attack on this front. The US has effectively stopped buying Cuban sugar, but the Soviet Union helped us, buying lots of sugar. Because of this, [we] also thwarted this attack. We're continuously thwarting all forms of aggression against us. Under this circumstance, the US is prepared to deal with us with military interference. Although they [the Americans] have many plans, the Latin American people support us, and people of the world, principally people of socialist countries, support us. Comrade [Nikita] Khrushchev issued a warning: whoever attacks Cuba, [the Soviet Union] will prepare to support us. Now the US implements an overall economic blockade of us, while [it] does not abandon the idea of military attack. It's training Cuban war criminals and mercenaries in Guatemala and other Central American countries, and preparing [them] to launch an attack upon Cuba when conditions become mature, which makes such attacks look as if [they are] not from the US.

Zhou: How many people are being trained overseas?

Lu: It's estimated that there are 5,000 persons. But it's really hard to calculate. Rich people all do not want to die.

The US capitalist class even uses Spanish Falangists and German Fascists to create all sorts of provocations. [It] relies on Guatemala in particular which has submitted to the US. The US also wants to put Guatemala and other Latin American countries in conflict with Cuba. [It] could then convene a meeting of the Organization of American States [OAS] and rule that Cuba is aggressive. As Guatemala is impotent in terms of combating aggression, in accordance with the verdict of the Organization of American States, it's up to the US to provide troops to wage a small-scale war in the Caribbean Sea; meanwhile, the US will maintain the economic blockade, throttling revolution economically as well as militarily. The war activities of the US in the Caribbean Sea are shamelessly open: [it] wants to occupy islands near the island of Cuba, for example, the Isle of Pines, create a puppet regime on these islands, like a small Taiwan, establish diplomatic relations with the puppet regime, give them weapons, and [send war] ships to besiege the island of Cuba. Thus, we can imagine the danger Cuba is facing. Now Cuba is developing its internal strength. The Cuban people are invincible, and they fully support the revolutionary government. The insurgent troops are the army of workers and peasants, becoming better day by day and having been consolidated

and developed day after day. It's a brand new army, being guerrillas in the past but now regular troops. He (referring to Guevara) is one of the men in charge. Nominally, he is the head of the National Bank [of Cuba]; he's, in fact, one of the men in charge of military troops. We have organized revolutionary militias, rank-and-file militias, with a total between 250 thousand and 300 thousand militias of workers, peasants, and students. They are militarily vigilant, being trained, and divided into regiments, battalions, and companies. Now there are schools specialized in training militias. Insurgents, militias, and people are all highly mobilized. They have good morale, ready to protect the revolution and the homeland. We have weapons, relatively good weapons; we are learning to use weapons. Our weakness is the absence of an air force. [We] are short of pilots. More efforts should be made in this regard. Popular organizations have been increasingly united: youth organizations have merged into one; women's organizations have merged into one.

Zhou: How many people does the youth organization have?

Lu: Over 100 thousand. This figure could hardly be described as accurate though. Because organizations have just merged, there are communists, people of the 26th of July Movement, and organizations of other natures. The leadership of this [youth] organization is good. Women's organizations have also merged. The trade union at first encountered these difficulties [caused by miscellaneous sources of members], but now has become better and more consolidated.

Zhou: How many workers?

Lu: If one takes into account agricultural workers who joined the trade union, there are over one million. Within the trade union, there are *muhachi* [sic] people (referring to traitors among workers [or workers helping factory owners]) and opportunists. Peasants' organizations have also merged. Now [we] are adopting a critical measure: merging the 26th of July Movement and the Party into a united political organization. This is a major activity. [We] don't want a rush for quick results; [we] will do so when conditions are mature.

Zhou: That's correct.

Lu: The important thing is that the 26th of July Movement is consistent with us in terms of strategy and aggression resistance. Both sides agree that the new organization should be founded on a Marxist-Leninist base. Its organizational principle should also be a Marxist-Leninist principle. Every element within us has all been actively mobilized. You know

that the representative assembly of our party proposed four slogans: strengthen the unity of the nation, strengthen national defense and protect revolution, improve production, raise awareness.

Zhou: [Those are] very good.

Lu: These four slogans are anti-imperialist slogans. We know that the development of revolution has received support from people within the country, from people of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, from socialist countries, among which [support] from the Soviet Union and China have been the most important. We're confident to say that although we have difficulties, [such as] economic blockade, military provocation, being only 90 miles away from the US, the Cuban revolution will not fail, in the same way that the Soviet Union, China, and the entire socialist camp will not fail. Therefore, aid from socialist countries is particularly important, and the meeting today of our two parties is significant. Honestly speaking, helping the Cuban revolution develop is an investment in the global socialist movement; it's a political investment. We destroyed one link of the imperialist chain in Latin America, and hope that other links will break and fall too.

Zhou: [That's] right.

Lu: We're very grateful for the aid of China.

Zhou: [We] should do so. This is our responsibility.

Lu: We are also grateful for the [Chinese] efforts [to provide] aid in the future. Comrade Guevara understands your difficulties in construction. But as a comrade, [he] requested that you meet our wishes as fully as you can, to prevent Cuba's living standard from dropping. As Comrade Guevara said, this living standard has reached a certain degree. The aim of the Cuban revolution is not to reduce but to increase it. We need support from socialist countries, mainly [in the form of] buying sugar. [We] wish that socialist countries could buy 4 million tons, at no less than 4 [US] cents per pound. If China could buy 1 million tons, it would be of tremendous help. Comrade Zhou Enlai's suggestions could be considered, while our needs should also be pondered. Both sides should be taken into account. [We] wish that by exploiting this opportunity, [we] strengthen the fraternal contact between [our] two parties.

Zhou: [I] Agree.

Lu: [Confronting the fact of] the people of Cuba and the people of China establishing a relationship, imperialism and monopoly capital are not happy. They want to break down this relationship. But other Latin American countries, in the near future, will consider establishing relations with China. When Fidel Castro announced in the Havana meeting that [Cuba would] sever diplomatic relationship with Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] and establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, people were in a buoyant spirit.

Zhou: Thank you for your brave and just act.

Lu: I'm indebted to the Chinese people.

Zhou: Why?

Lu: Cuba established contact with Jiang Jieshi.

Zhou: That was so in the past. It's not your responsibility.

Lu: Driving away imperialism and tyranny opens up the door for establishing relations with [the People's Republic of] China.

Zhou: Correct.

Lu: The friendship between the people of two countries is growing day by day.

Zhou: Correct.

Lu: The friendship between two parties, too, is developing, on which Comrade Roca has been insisting. His proposal was correct and [we] should follow [it].

Zhou: Thanks for explaining these problems. Indeed, the Cuban people cracked a gap [in the wall] of the US backyard. The fact that [the Cuban people are] standing in the front-line of [the] anti-US [struggle] is what the Chinese people as well as people of the world admire the most. We believe that once there appears one gap, other gaps will follow. Once one link breaks off, there will be other links following. Once the Latin American people wake up, [they] will sleep no more. While we pin down US military forces around Taiwan, you pin down even larger [US troops]. Therefore we have a duty to support you. You don't have to thank [us]. We have the duty to help. People of two countries stand together on the path of struggling and oppose the same enemy. Now our two countries have diplomatic relations and [our] two parties have a closer tie, which are all happy things. Latin American

people respect you; the entire world, principally the people of socialist countries, respects you. These are all good aspects, favorable aspects. The US imperialists refuse to submit [to these developments]. It does what it can to intervene. We keep a close eye on the two approaches you mentioned. One is to provoke the conflict between you and Central American countries, and then let the Organization of American States make further efforts to intervene. Another is to operate a puppet regime on the Isle of Pines. Not only does Eisenhower once again attempt this, the newly elected President [John F.] Kennedy also speaks of waging a partial war. Around him, diplomatic experts, papers, and other mass mediums are all selling [the idea of] limited warfare, forest [or "brush"] fire warfare. The *New York Times* recently published five articles; they advocate that limiting the war to a region, in which case the Soviet Union will be unable to use missiles. This is a very important point. Because using missiles means [starting] a world war, which is identical to what Khrushchev lays out in the five points. First, the two countries [the US and the Soviet Union] both reduce military expenditure; second, [the two countries] do not allow nuclear weapons to destroy the two countries' civilizations; [the two countries] do not let the atmospheres above the two countries [become] polluted [with radioactive fallout]; fourth, both agree not to put nuclear weapons in the hands of more countries, which [specifically] include China and France, and what's worth attention is that West Germany and Japan are not mentioned; fifth, the two countries could promote the exchange of culture, science, and trade. In the past trade [as a term] was not raised, but he [this time] adds trade. Khrushchev said that missiles are symbolic, and [the Soviet Union] does not want war. Kennedy captures this sentence; he [chooses] not to wage a big war, or a missile war, instead, he plots a partial war and non-nuclear war. In the way you said, Guatemala and Nicaragua [first] create provocations, and the US then steps out, intervening and reconciling. Or [the US] founds a puppet regime on the Island of Pines, the possibility of which should be looked into. In other words, the US imperialists won't stand on the frontline. Cuban comrades should study this situation. [If] the US stays in the dark in the shadows, how should the Soviet Union respond? How should China respond? How should socialist countries and Latin American people respond? You are close to the US, and it's easy for the US to exploit certain Latin American countries and operate puppet regimes. [When] the US uses Latin American countries to fight Latin American countries, [they] could say that Europeans and Asians should mind their own business. [You] need to think of your response if this situation emerged. Has Premier Castro considered it yet? Has the Popular Socialist Party considered it yet?

Lu: These are precisely problems we are thinking of. Fidel Castro recently said that the first priority should be given to strengthening the internal power. [We should] make ourselves capable of repulsing any attack, and therefore make it unnecessary for the Soviet Union to aid [us] with missiles. Because just as what Comrade Zhou Enlai said, that would start a world war and entail huge sacrifice. No fantasy should be given to the Soviet missiles. Because the foundation of protecting Cuba should [not] be placed on a world war. Therefore, [we] should consolidate internally as much as you can and seek aid from other countries. The fact that you tell me about Kennedy's words makes me very happy. I only knew the basic content, while what you said is detailed. In his campaign Kennedy indicates that he is an implacable foe of the Cuban revolution.

Zhou: Very correct.

Lu: Kennedy stresses only one aspect of Khrushchev's speech.

Zhou: Of course, he is an imperialist.

Lu: Khrushchev said that the aid of missiles is symbolic, but the US attacks are not symbolic. Kennedy only wants one side of Khrushchev's speech, we want both sides. You have the duty to continue exposing imperialism, seeking the support of Latin American people. It's difficult for the US to obtain agreement [among Latin American countries]. You are versed in these problems. Your analysis must be more incisive.

Zhou: You are more familiar with Latin American problems.

Lu: You know the UN voting results of the proposal concerning Cuba. Some Latin American countries abstained, including Mexico, Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, [and the] Dominica[n Republic]. It's not entirely a walk in the park [*yifanfengshun*] for the US to realize its goal within the Organization of American States. We will carefully study the problems raised by Comrade Zhou Enlai. As we have discussed above, we should , as much as we can, expose the US and exploit the conflict between the US and Latin American countries.

Zhou: Correct.

Lu: Doing so is good for thwarting US plans.

Zhou: Does Comrade Guevara have his own opinion? You are a strategist.

Lu: And also a statesman.

Guevara: As Comrade Lu has explained, Cuba's situation is unique. The US does not know in practice what to do and how to attack. Waging a large-scale [war] will provoke a world war. We have two duties: one is to protect the lives of Cuban people, and another is to defend world peace.

Zhou: Correct.

Guevara: We know the degree of danger.

Zhou: This is the [present] situation. As you two have said, [you] should expose the US, exploit conflicts, mobilize nationals, seek [external] aid. All these are correct. As [a communist] comrade, with experience in lasting warfare, [I] provide one point for your reference: based on our party's experience, one should prepare for the bad scenario while striving for the good one. The direction of our efforts should be to strive for the best, but [we] should [also] prepare [for] the worst. Assuming that we have those preparations done, it will be difficult for the US to intervene. This is good. We'll strive [for the best] and try to push for [it]. But in case two conspiracies were to be realized, what [should we] do then? [We] have to prepare in advance. Assuming that the blockade starts off, ships of the Soviet Union and other countries could not reach Cuba, the US declares regional war, Cuba is then bound to stand up and resist and Castro will lead, which we firmly believe. But [we] need time: to defeat the US in the war, to push for changes in Latin America, and to push people of the world [to respond to] the US military intervention, all need time and preparation. Perhaps you are already prepared.

Guevara: What preparation are you referring to?

Zhou: Could weapons, manpower, militias be expanded? Weapons need to be added and stored. You should yourself build weapons-making and repairing factories. In particular, there should be preparations for explosives, food, [and also] solid food and gasoline that could be stored over a long period of time. [With them] one could still resist with supplies when external aid is cut off. [We] don't know if you are prepared.

Guevara: We agree to strive for the best, but [should] prepare for any possible situation. We've made achievements internally in developing [our] economy, cooperatives, and increasing production.

Zhou: I know.

Lu: We are overcoming difficulties, promoting cooperatives, and accelerating plans in this regard. As you said, [we] must think of what people will eat once that kind of situation [occurs]. Enemies will not rest, nor should we rest. [We] believe that Fidel Castro will fight to the end. He is a genuine revolutionary, firm, competent, and wise. His position is becoming closer to ours every day. Sometimes we can't even distinguish who is who. As to the problem of weapons, his [referring to Guevara's] will be more correct.

Guevara: Preparation is being made in every aspect. First, preparing for the enemy's raid. [The US plans] to finish us within two days, before Soviet aid arrives. The enemy could send paratroopers to Havana. They are familiar with Havana. Although Havana is not yet fully prepared, it's under preparation. Without relying on reinforcement from others, when paratroopers land, [we] could vanquish them immediately. We have made preparation for long-term resistance both in mountainous and urban areas. As the Premier said, we are storing weapons and explosives, building hospitals, transportation lines, telephone [facilities], modern war forts, training peasants who will wage guerrilla warfare. We have learned a lot from the Korean War. Some preparation work is not going fast, but it's heading in this direction. Could you send experts to our mountainous areas to establish explosive factories?

Zhou: We could. How about raw materials?

Guevara: [We] have glycerinum and sulfur, concluded a contract with Czechoslovakia buying a cartridge-making factory which has a big effect, [products] of which could be used for multiple purposes, bombing attacking targets, conglomerated units, beachheads, and targets in the way of advancing. [We] should prepare for the absence of foreign aid, and for a lasting [war].

Lu: This is how it is.

Zhou: [You] should think [these issues] over. We have fought against the US in Korea. When you visit Korea, you could even talk to them, to see what secret defensive works could be constructed in mountainous areas. It's these defensive works that the Chinese Volunteer Army and Korean People's Army relied on. The US spent several ten thousand tons of explosives, [only to find] that they couldn't take even one mountain top. With these defensive works, he [the US] was on the hill-top, while we were within the hill. They couldn't capture [our positions] in any way. Because of this, the US imperialists are unhappy with the Koreans and the Chinese the most. Now it's the Cubans whom the US becomes unhappy with.

Lu: We have expanded your force [of communism].

Zhou: Everything should be considered on a long-term basis. It's better for the war not to come. In case it comes, peasants are capable of bearing suffering. [You] should educate workers, employees, and intellectuals in advance, your article (referred to Guevara's article) mentioned this point. [You] are striving for their life becoming better; but in case it turns bitter, [you are striving] for national independence, [for the sake of which they] must also bear [hardships]. Fidel, Raúl [Castro], and Comrade Guevara are all strong persons. [You] should turn your strong will into the one of all Cuban people. This problem has been discussed by Comrade [Deng] Xiaoping and Comrade Roca. Chairman has also discussed with him for one day.

(The Premier invited Comrade Lu and Comrade Guevara for lunch, during which [they] also had the following conversation.)

Zhou: [You] should visit several communes outside Beijing and compare them.

Guevara: [We] have a somewhat different situation. We can't have large-scale collective employment. Our salaries are high. But the combination of agriculture and industry could be learned.

Zhou: How high are the salaries?

Guevara: 120 US dollars per month.

Zhou: Do peasants have a low living standard?

Guevara: Peasants' lives are improving gradually. Peasant workers earn 2.65 US dollars per day with 25 days a month.

Lu: [They] don't have work all year around. If [we] count by year, [peasants'] salaries are low.

Zhou: What is the unemployment?

Guevara: 300 thousand, and [another] 300 thousand seasonal unemployed people. The complete estimate is approximately over 500 thousand. This is not an accurate figure.

Zhou: Does it include urban and rural unemployed people?

Guevara: All are included. After the revolution 100 thousand people have found jobs.

Zhou: Has land in rural areas all been [re-]distributed?

Guevara: No. [People] with over 30 caballeria [*ka*] should hand out extra land. People with less 30 caballeria don't have to. But there are people who colluded with US reactionaries. We then gave them [a quota of] 20 caballeria or even less.

Zhou: Don't owners of land as such still need to hire agricultural workers?

Guevara: Yes.

Zhou: Are there restrictions?

Guevara: No.

Zhou: Do landlords have machines?

Guevara: They do.

Zhou: How many of the 4 million hectares of arable land you mentioned in our last conversation (referring to the meeting with Guevara on the 18th [of November]) could be distributed among peasants?

Guevara: Half [of the 4 million hectares].

Zhou: Peasants will be relieved once [they] are given land certificates.

Guevara: We are promoting [the idea of] joining cooperatives, in which case land becomes useless.

Zhou: According to China's experience, [you] should also not take back land certificates.

Guevara: Compared to Chinese peasants, Cuban peasants have a different perception towards land. Cuban peasants, for the time being, are not in a hurry to have their own land. They're willing to hand them over.

Zhou: What's the political attitude of landlords?

Guevara: [People] with more land hold a bad attitude. [People] with some 30 caballeria are relatively better.

Zhou: When you were fighting guerrilla warfare, did landlords and the urban capitalist class help you or empathize with you?

Guevara: If they had, they would have made a mistake.

Zhou: Why? Was the help not good?

Guevara: [Consider that they] help us and [later] we take away their lands.

Zhou: Have you given them jobs and political treatment?

Guevara: We let them do the [old] jobs, but with lower salaries.

Zhou: Have they been given political treatment?

Lu: They will be given [political treatment] if [they] don't oppose the revolution.

Zhou: Do [they] have voting rights?

Guevara: [They] have, but whom could they vote for?

Zhou: China's experience: a few capitalists, who supported or sympathized with us, have [not only been given] voting rights, we also select them at different levels of government as representatives, although very few [of them get selected]. Do you have a congress?

Guevara: No, [we] mainly [have a] people's congress. [We] don't have time for elections.

Zhou: Yes, it's [now] an era of revolution. Other than the small capitalist class, are there also private companies?

Lu: [We] have small ones.

Zhou: Do [you] have medium-size ones for the time being?

Lu: We have [companies] of several dozen people.

Guevara: Certain small factories, while not having big investments, have over one hundred [employees], such as sewing factories.

Zhou: Are these people supporting the revolutionary government?

Guevara: [They] are [behaving] better than before.

Zhou: Your wholesale business is in the charge of the government. Do you leave the retail business to small businessmen?

Guevara: It's the case in cities. In villages, most of the retail business is also in the hands of the government.

Zhou: Via state-run stores?

Guevara: They're called People's Stores.

Zhou: Is it because most commodities are imported [that] the government places tight control [over them]?

Guevara: Domestic commodities are also all purchased by the government and sold.

Zhou: Their raw materials are up to themselves to buy or for the government to distribute?

Guevara: [As to] domestic [raw materials], [they] buy themselves; [as to] foreign [raw materials], [they] buy via the government.

Zhou: You've managed foreign trade well. Our first thing after the revolution was to manage foreign trade, by doing these [we] cut off the connection with imperialism. Do you have enough intellectuals?

Guevara: Not enough. Their thoughts are backward. Every day there are people among them going to the US.

Zhou: Are there many among college students receiving US education?

Guevara: The class background of college student is not good. Most are the offspring of the rich people.

Zhou: Our [college students] weren't good either in the early period after liberation [of 1949]. They changed later.

Guevara: Like in Berlin of East Germany, we have people here every day running for foreign countries.

Zhou: Do [you] have enough military academies?

Guevara: Trainers were old, very bad. Recently a group of militia officers graduated.

Zhou: What's the [attitude] of old intellectuals towards you?

Guevara: [They are] very annoying.

Lu: This kind of people could only write stuff that imperialism likes. They wrote about Cuban history only in the hope to create a counterfeit Cuban history. The geography books they wrote are correct though.

Guevara: Our director of the Land Reform Committee has written a book about the geography of Cuba. These people became unhappy. They burned his book. They consider the land reform as a considerable sin.

Lu: Thank you very much for your opinions and questions you raised today.

Zhou: For your reference.

Lu: China's revolutionary experience is worth learning.

Zhou: We share similarities. But each country has its own features. Foreign countries' experience could only be seen as a reference. [You] must [act] according to the detailed situation.

Lu: This [learning from others] is the only way to find the correct explanation.

Guevara: The book written by [Israel] Epstein [covering the period] from the Opium War to China's liberation, recounts the thirty year period of the Chinese Communist Party. [He] spoke of the necessary integration with peasants and [the idea of] armed revolution against armed counterrevolution, which fits entirely, that is, word by word, the situation of Cuba.

[Source: Memorandum of Conversation between Vice-Chairman Zhou Enlai, the Party Secretary of Cuban Popular Socialist Party Manuel Luzardo, and Member of National Directory Ernesto Che Guevara, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.204-00098-03, pp. 1-19. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.5

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, Memorandum of Conversation between China's Ambassador to Cuba, Shen Jian, and Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro, 11 February 1961

Secret

Should be destroyed when finished

Time: 4 PM

Venue: Chinese Embassy in Cuba

(For the matter of [realizing] Prime Minister Zhou Enlai's [idea of] inviting Castro to visit China, Ambassador Shen asked the Protocol Department to arrange a visit for Castro. Prime Minister Castro, however, insisted on coming to see the Ambassador and [subsequently] had close to a one-hour long discussion with Ambassador Shen. After the talk, Ambassador Shen, Attaché Huang [Wenyou], and Attaché Fang, accompanied by Prime Minister Castro, visited several training classes held by the Cuban government.)

Castro: [I'm sorry that] I was busy and therefore unable to attend the reception dinner you held for the Chinese delegation (referring to the delegation led by Deputy Commissioner Guo Moruo [a prominent Chinese author as well as government official]).

Shen: I knew you were busy. In accordance with the protocol, I should visit you first.

Castro: We are friends and don't need those diplomatic protocols.

Shen: Now I'm presenting to you a letter from Prime Minister Zhou Enlai who invites you to visit China. The Chinese government and Chinese people all look forward to your visit to our country. This is a copy, and the original will arrive soon.

Castro: (Reading the transcript of the invitation) Thank you very much. I should find a separate occasion to reply. I have [always] hoped to know the People's Republic of China. The Cubans who have been to China all think that China is wonderful. Will those Chinese agricultural experts whom I requested arrive soon?

Shen: Six agricultural experts will soon depart. Two rice transplanters will also arrive before long.

Castro: When will the Chinese magazines arrive in Cuba according to [our] agreement?

Shen: It's mainly a transportation problem, because Cuba is distant from China. If [Cuba] has special needs, [we] could try making technological improvement [sic]. If there are

magazines in particular you want to read, please tell me the names of the books, and I could try using other quicker ways to transport them to Cuba.

Castro: I'm very interested in the Chinese magazines, in particular, on planting and the achievements of China in this regard, etc. I once read these in a magazine given by Bei people [sic]. I'm [also] interested in China's Spanish publications.

Shen: Our Spanish publications are not many, because our translation staff is very few.

Castro: A few days ago, I received a book on modern Chinese history. Now I'm reading it.

Shen: There is one thing I want to tell Maj. Raúl Castro. As I'm seeing you today, I should take this opportunity to tell you about it. Regarding Cuba sending 125 persons to China to learn piloting, our country has everything ready now and wishes to know when the Cuban personnel will depart [for China].

Castro: We are still selecting people, picking only the best people, young and with good eyesight. We are making selections in a pool of several hundred people, which makes [the selection process] slow. It's reckoned that [we] are half way through now. Among those selected, some people are from the Volunteering Youth Guards [*zhiyuan qingnian dui*] who have received rigorous tests. We want to send the best selected people to learn piloting and let the rest [of the selected] learn mechanics. We plan to send people who have already been on the short list to China. [We're] trying to send the first group this month. What route to China will these people take?

Shen: We have no plane to Cuba, therefore it has to be solved by Cuba.

Castro: Then [they] should take the way via Prague.

Shen: We have no problem [with this]. We have always given our full support to the Cuban revolution. We would love to do our best to hand technologies to Cuban friends.

Castro: I thank China for all it has done in the past for us.

Shen: This is what we should have done. The Cuban revolution is a great support to China and also a big encouragement to the entire world.

Castro: In a few years, Latin America will have big changes and things that occurred in China will also take place here. Recently we faced many problems. Every time Latin America had a revolution, they then blamed Cuba. We're facing all

sorts of aggression from imperialism. Some Latin American governments, when having an internal crisis, will invade Cuba at any time. We must be prepared at every minute. In a period between the next six and eight years, we will often take up arms.

Shen: This is very important. There is a lot in common between the Cuban revolution and the Chinese revolution, accordingly, there will be similarities in problems we encounter and face. What you said is exactly our situation in Asia. China will be blamed for every revolution that happens in an Asian country. We don't care about these kinds of accusations. [After all,] people will wage revolution [sooner or later]. It's a good thing for people to rise and wage revolution.

Castro: For Cuba, [US President John F.] Kennedy's speech is extremely aggressive. He has attacked Cuba five times within twenty days [since becoming president on 20 January]. This is good because he exposes the US opposition to Cuba and proves that the US is the one that provokes, not Cuba. The mask of Kennedy's policies is being torn apart day by day. They [the Americans] have great [intrinsic] conflict: on one hand, they want to earn sympathy from Latin America; on the other hand, his [Kennedy's] position towards Cuba stands in the way of achieving the above-mentioned aim. The US could not solve [its] problems in Latin America by economic means, [because] primarily, it is not willing, and secondly, it can't. Kennedy talked a lot about private investment, whereas Latin America has no interests at all in it. His 500 million US dollars couldn't even solve ones Latin American country's problems. Kennedy chose the worst way. In fact, if he wants to play shabby tricks, he should have eased relations with Cuba. [On the contrary], he uses money to raise Cuban counter-revolutionaries. [Likewise,] we could also give help to political exiles of each country.

Shen: The US gave six billion US dollars to Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek], but didn't save him from his destiny.

Castro: At that time, the US was richer than it is now. Back then socialism hadn't acquired global power as it has now, therefore [was] unable to help [international socialist] revolutions.

Shen: The Cuban revolution is a significant event in the world. When Maj. [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara was in China [in November 1960], we were arguing, partially, about a problem: when discussing [the content of the] communiqué, Maj. Guevara's opinion was to describe [China's support] as China's unselfish aid to Cuba, we didn't agree and [believed] it should

be written down as mutual aid instead of unselfish aid. Later we brought this issue to Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. Prime Minister Zhou Enlai also advocated that it should be not written as unselfish aid, but mutual aid.

Castro: Yes, both our countries share things of common interest. Both China and Cuba are firmly opposing imperialism. When imperialism hasn't disappeared, China, Cuba, and Latin America all are at the risk of war. The entire world has the same interests in the disappearance of imperialism.

Shen: The success of the Cuban revolution is a great strike against the US imperialists. The US imperialists have even occupied our country's Taiwan. Across the Taiwan Strait, we're also facing the military threat from the US imperialists. The Cuban revolution's success drags the US' feet on the other side of the world, which is support for us. Our aid to Cuba is very limited. Our economic foundation was in bad shape. From the success of [the Chinese] revolution, it's been only 11 years. We will possibly give greater help than before. Cuba is revolutionary, and China is revolutionary, too. China's success of revolution was several years earlier than Cuba's, therefore [we] have the duty to support the Cuban revolution. With the success of revolution being several years later than China's, Cuba also has the right to demand aid from countries that succeeded earlier. This is internationalism.

Castro: When revolution happens to another Latin American country, we will also give it aid. I'm speaking in full confidence that there will be anti-imperialist revolution in Latin America which could be stopped by no one. Because we are the first country that achieved the success [of revolution], all sins are thrown up at us. But we are happy. Between [the scenario of] Latin America having revolutions with Cuba facing attack and [the scenario of] Cuba being in peaceful environment yet with no revolution in Latin American, we choose the former. We're facing the encirclement of hostile governments. Pirate planes often fly in our territorial space; we don't know where they come from, perhaps from Guatemala, Nicaragua, Miami, or any airfield in a country that participates in this encirclement. We're encircled by enemies' bases.

Shen: I and my Cuban friends once came to a topic: Is the US more afraid of Cuba, or is Cuba more afraid of the US? Of course, Cuba is also afraid of the US, because the US is as yet a powerful imperialist. But your revolution is advancing to victory and you are happy. And the success and development of the Cuban revolution is bound to push the development of revolution in other Latin American countries. More Latin American countries will march to victory, which means

imperialism increasingly approaching its death. Eisenhower and Kennedy both see the Cuba problem as one of their headaches. Judging from the fact that Kennedy [rhetorically] attacked Cuba five times after he assumed office, he is more afraid of Cuba. The US will create some difficulties for Cuba, but the Cuban revolution will receive support from the world. The rapid development of the Cuban revolution accelerates the arrival of the doomsday of imperialism.

Castro: In modern history, the first strike upon the US imperialists was delivered by China.

Shen: Then the second strike to the US imperialists was [from] Cuba.

Castro: (speaking with a smile and gesticulating) our strike is very small but with strength. More powerful strikes will [fall] upon the US imperialists and lead to its downfall.

Shen: Cuba's revolutionary success also solves a problem in some people's mind. Some people thought that China succeeded only because China is distant from the US, with a vast territory and a huge population. A wrong theory they held is that one country, small and close to the US, will be unable to attain revolutionary success. [But] Cuba's revolution succeeded, and this absurd theory then perished.

Castro: This is how I think: if it was 15 or 20 years ago, that sort of argument might have been possible. At that time, the socialist world was not as powerful as it is now. Without the support of the socialist world, the US imperialists might have created severe difficulties, and Cuba's revolutionary success would have become much harder. If it was in the [19]30s, I believe that the US [would have] already directly sent their troops. The US now is being forced against a wall. I'm certain that revolution will develop in Latin America.

Shen: The presence of the socialist world amounts to the support of Cuba, which is very important. But mainly you have to rely on your own force. You landed with over 80 people; then about a dozen people moved to the mountains and fought guerrilla war; in the end, [you] enlarged your army, toppled a reactionary government, [and] kept developing until now. This [achievement] is mainly attributed to your own strength. Without one's own efforts and strength, others' support won't have an effect.

Castro: There would have been no Cuban revolution in the absence of the Soviet revolution and China's revolution. We have expended tremendous effort, which was in line with the law of historical development. Our tasks are just part of

the development of history. Imperialism was also working hard, but [their efforts] were made in the opposite direction of the law of historical development. There are many kinds of efforts, but only those that share the same direction with historical development will find their way to victory.

Shen: This explains why the US imperialists, having squandered so much money and built so many bases, are still unable to save themselves from downfall.

Castro: Socialism doesn't need foreign bases.

Shen: Chairman Mao used to describe bases established by the US across the planet as nooses. The US imperialists put their head into the noose, one end of which has been handed to the people of each country. Taiwan is a noose. Guantanamo is a noose, too. When people of the world all rise to oppose imperialism and tighten these nooses together, the US imperialists will be dead.

Castro: This moment is approaching. About the problem of the Guantanamo base, I'm looking forward to asking, one by one, Britain, Italy, West Germany, Spain, and other countries and governments that have connections to US bases, in the UN General Assembly: does the US have the right to occupy another country's territory? If they say [the US] does, then it will amount to selling their own sovereignty which leads to internal conflicts.

Shen: In the Sino-American Ambassadorial Meeting in Warsaw—of course, as you know, we conduct tit-for-tat struggle with the US in parallel to the Sino-American meeting—our ambassador raised the difficult question to the US representatives on the spot: is Taiwan Chinese territory or US territory? The US dare not say that Taiwan was theirs. So they only said that they have a diplomatic relationship with Jiang Jieshi. We said that Jiang Jieshi had already been overthrown.

Castro: [You] could also stress: [Is] Jiang Jieshi Chinese or American? The US finds their way into all others' houses across the world. I'm looking forward to meeting Chairman Mao in person. I admire him very much. To meet him will be my honor. We also hope that he could visit which would be a big event in the world.

Shen: Chairman Mao speaks highly of Cuba's revolution. I'm sure that Chairman Mao will be happy to meet you. If you could have the chance to visit China, it will be a great hope to the party and government officials of our country and the Chinese people.

Castro: When our country's defense power becomes well established, improved and unlikely to have major problems, I'll visit China.

(The following is about the three yachts that the Cuban government prepared for each friendly country.)

Castro: China's art delegation really impressed me. I could never forget. The Chinese art delegation has left behind in Cuba the admiration [of the Cuban people].

Shen: You mentioned that you wished us to send a circus, which we're preparing and it will come when it is ready.

Castro: The art delegation has made a great contribution to the friendship and fraternity of the two countries. I wish I could have the opportunity to see China's arts. Our country's people all agree that the performance of the Chinese art delegation was marvelous.

Shen: In line with Chairman Mao's instructions, China's arts should serve workers, peasants, and soldiers, and should not be the stuff of the ivory tower. Watching [the performance] of China's arts not only gives pleasure to people, it also boosts people's revolutionary spirit. In this sense, China's arts are also a form of education.

Castro: The Chinese art delegation once performed for the children in the Maersitela Mountain area [sic]. That was the first time for these peasant's children to watch an artist performance. We are also prepared to raise three thousand dancing, music, and drama teachers, let them work in those village schools across the country and deliver arts to people, making the life of our peasants and workers happier and more joyful. We established music schools at the houses of rich people who fled to foreign countries. We wish that you could visit these places. We also bring the off-spring of Xiyanaru's [sic] peasants to Havana, and let them receive education in rich people's houses. Even the children of US millionaires would envy [them]!

Shen: I'm looking forward to visiting them, but don't know where and whom I should contact.

Castro: If you want, we could visit them right now.

Shen: Good.

[Source: *Memorandum of the Conversation between China's Ambassador to Cuba, Shen Jian, and Cuban Prime Minister [Fidel] Castro, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00612-01, pp.4-11. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.*]



Document No.6

Memorandum of Chairman Mao Zedong & Cuban Cultural Delegation, 19 April 1961

(Not Reviewed by Chairman Mao)

19 April 1961

Top Secret

Should be destroyed when finished

Date: 19 April 1961

Venue: Nanchang [Capital of Jiangxi Province]

Companions: Shao Shiping [first governor of Jiangxi Province], Chu Tunan [President of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries], Chen Zhongjing [senior official from Foreign Cultural Liaison Department of State Council]

Interpreter: Wang Huaizu

Recorder: Zhang Aizhu

Head of the Cuban Cultural Delegation, Education Minister, Armando Hart Dávalos: It's been our great pleasure to meet you in person.

Chairman Mao: How are you?

Hart: Very good.

Chairman Mao: We are two friendly countries. We help each other, and support each other. We share the same goal of struggle: opposing imperialism and constructing socialism. There is only one imperialism, US imperialism. It oppresses not only us, but it oppresses you as well. It's the largest one among imperialist [countries]. It oppresses people of the world. It also controls second-tier and third-tier imperialist [countries] to oppress people of the world [with it]. Among countries that are not imperialist, there are ones that support and minister to imperialism, such as Batista and Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek]. It has their running dogs in all countries, which is why we also oppose their running dogs. Imperialism

could not survive without their running dogs. There are big running dogs and small running dogs. Batista is a big running dog, while there also exist small running dogs. Not only are big plantation owners running dogs, some capitalists are also running dogs. In the cultural realm, imperialism also has running dogs. We should strive for [the support of] intellectuals of the old society. If we don't strive for them, we could no longer continue our enterprise. [Without them,] there will be no teachers in schools, no professors in colleges, no technological experts, no artists, no people singing, no painters, no football players, no bands, and no engineers. Therefore we must strive for these old intellectuals. But old intellectuals have old world perspectives. As a result, we should reform them. We should not adopt the same way as how we deal with Batista's and Jiang Jieshi's to treat old intellectuals. We should not reform them by forced labor. [Rather,] we should talk to them. On one hand, [we] talk to them, and on the other hand, [we] let them work. We'd better not rush. [Because] if we rush, they will defy us.

How long have you been here?

Hart: I have arrived quite a few days ago.

Chairman Mao: How's your health?

Hart: Very good.

Chairman Mao: You're all people who deal with cultural and educational affairs?

Hart: We are all dealing with cultural and educational affairs. Some [of us] are university professors.

Chairman Mao: (Counting the number of people.) You have ten people. Are you all coming to China for the first time?

Hart: Yes, it's been our first time to visit China.

Chairman Mao: I've seen many Cuban friends.

Hart: Your reception impressed many Cubans. A lot of people know you. You're quite famous among us.

Chairman Mao: Many people recognize me, but very few are familiar with me. We were co-workers.

Hart: Co-workers in a philosophical sense. We're happy and proud of this. We're genuinely happy to have been able to learn from the experiences you have accumulated.

Chairman Mao: I said we were co-workers, because I was a teacher, too.

Hart: We know well that you are a great Chinese educator.

Chairman Mao: I just taught for four or five years, then imperialism refused to let me teach and forced us, educated people, to march on the road of revolution. I also studied in the capitalist class' school, before which I even taught in *sisbu* [old-style private schools popular in rural areas]! [In *sisbu*,] I studied feudalist philosophies, virtues and principles such as those of Confucius. Later [I] went to a capitalist normal [teachers] school, studying capitalist philosophies, at which time, [I] had no idea of the existence of Marxist-Leninist thought, [and was] also not prepared to conduct revolution, or to organize the communist party. Later the general situation of society oppressed us, feudalism and capitalism pushed us, [we] then rose to the stage of the revolution and started the drama of the revolution.

I think you also came to touch revolution in the same way: first, eradicated the feudalist and capitalist world perspective; [later] in the course of revolution, you achieved self-remolding.

You know China's revolution took a long time. From 1921 when the Chinese Communist Party was founded to 1949, it took 28 years. Out of 28 years, 22 years were in war. It is not easy to re-mold intellectuals. It is not easy to transform the old world perspective into the proletarian world perspective. [Friedrich] Engels said that to be an educator one has to receive education first. If there are no old intellectuals, there would be no intellectuals, no professors, no teachers, no journalists, most importantly, no engineers. So we must go and unite with them. China, the Soviet Union, and your country's experiences all prove this point. But fraternity is just one part of policy. The other part is to re-mold them. Because they are old intellectuals, [they] have to be re-molded. Speaking of re-molding, it's mainly about transforming old world perspective into workers' world perspective. This task should not be rushed. [It] should be done by persuasion, instead of coercive means. Only by making them observe by themselves in the course of struggle and letting them become uncomfortable with the old [world perspective] and feel that it's useless, will [re-molding] [succeed]. In our country, we accept Marxism and Leninism. But relying on Marxism-Leninism is not enough. Reading Marxist-Leninist books alone does not mean accepting Marxism-Leninism. It has to be married to one country's own peculiar circumstances.

Hart: As to this point, it has been universal around the world. We, Cuba, are the same. We knew that Cuba is under the

feet of imperialism, and understand how to struggle under these circumstances. This is why our revolution came to success. Our revolution implemented this theory [of marrying Marxism-Leninism to a country's peculiar circumstances].

Chairman Mao: It's dogmatism if one is not marrying Marxism-Leninism into one's own country's peculiar circumstances.

Hart: That violates dialectics.

Chairman Mao: But if [one] stresses only one's country's own circumstances and experience and does not accept Marxism-Leninism, [that becomes] right-leaning opportunism. We had right-leaning opportunism, Chen Duxiu [first party secretary of the Chinese Communist Party], and also left-leaning dogmatism. Our party has committed both kinds of mistakes in the course of the revolution. Making mistakes such as these is unavoidable for countries like ours. The failure of the grand revolution of 1927 derived from Chen Duxiu's right-leaning opportunist mistake. Do you know the Long March of 1935? It was of 25,000 li [12,500 km].

Hart: (and all other people on the scene) all of us on the scene all know about this Long March.

Chairman Mao: We made a 25,000-li Long March. Why did [we] take such a long route? This is the result of Jiang Jieshi who made us do so. Why did Jiang Jieshi have us walk? It's because we committed a right-leaning opportunist mistake. We had to go. We should not blame Jiang Jieshi; on the contrary, we should blame ourselves. Prior to 1927, we cooperated with Jiang Jieshi. Due to [our] lack of experience, we didn't expect that Jiang Jieshi would betray us. They [the Guomindang] knocked us down with a sudden strike. After that, we obtained experience and came to know why [they] could knock us down. It's because they had guns in their hands. We also had two hands, so we also looked for guns. But we didn't have [guns back then]. As a result, we began to try capturing guns. You have experience in this regard.

Hart: The Cuban insurgents' weapons were mostly captured [from Batista's forces].

Chairman Mao: The US gave [them] to Batista, and Batista handed [them] to you.

Hart: This was also the case recently. Out of the rifles that the US dropped by parachute to counter-revolutionaries, many have been captured by us. No doubt, most weapons that the

US imperialists will drop by parachute to Cuban counter-revolutionaries are also going to find their way into our hands.

Chairman Mao: Do you have recent news of [the US attempt to] bomb Cuba?⁶³

Hart: Yes. Rumors go that enemies would take the Isle of Pines [renamed the Isle of Youth (“Isle de a Juventud”) in 1978]. The fact that the US imperialists want to occupy the Isle of Pines is because [the US] wants to establish a puppet government and separate it from Cuba, which is a common practice of [the US] dealing with other countries. It’s just like [what the US did to] China’s Taiwan. Its polices in [other parts of] the world are the same.

Chairman Mao: How large is the Isle of Pines?

Hart: The entire Cuban Island is over 114,000 square km. The Isle of Pines is 3,500 square km.

Chairman Mao: Are there residents?

Hart: There are [residents], especially because it has an important prison.

Chairman Mao: Can you swap? Move [the prison] to the homeland, and convert [the island] into a base.

Hart: We are doing this. Our military presence in the Isle of Pines is strong. Enemies wanted to capture [it], but failed.

Chairman Mao: That is a relief. This is different from our Taiwan. Your Isle of Pines still has time for fortification, [the success of which] will depend on your preparation.

Hart: We believe in the solidarity of the Cuban people, and are also moved by the aid offered by each [socialist] country. Our people very much appreciate Prime Minister Zhou Enlai’s statement.

Chairman Mao: Yes, I knew that, although I haven’t seen it (referring to the telegram sent by Prime Minister Zhou Enlai to Castro).

Hart: We understand that in major Chinese cities, such as Beijing, there were grand demonstrations [in support of Cuba].

Chairman Mao: There should be. We hope that places in which a revolutionary party is present should all support Cuba. I only came to know yesterday, when I just arrived

here from Changsha [the capital of Hunan Province], that your departure has been put ahead of schedule. This is why I invited you to come and have a meeting. Do you still plan to visit the Soviet Union?

Hart: We are very interested in the visit to China, whereas Cuba wants us to go back earlier, and to visit the Soviet Union on our way back. Projects left in the Soviet Union also need to be accelerated. But before we leave, we are determined to sign the cultural implementation plan of 1961.

Chairman Mao: Good. We approve this plan. Come back again in the future when you have opportunities.

Hart: I wish to present you these friends present.

Chairman Mao: Please.

(The head of the delegation presented people one by one.)

Chairman Mao asked Aerdeluosi [sic]: Will [you] go back to Spain? You should definitely knock down the Falange.

Aerdeluosi: I’m not prepared to go back yet. The Falange will be toppled. I’ll go back when it’s down.

Chairman Mao asked Kaerbendiai [sic]: Your job is to supervise cultural activities.

Kaerbendiai: Yes. I have always wanted to buy your works, and always fail to find them in France. [But now] I find them in China.

Chairman Mao: For your reference.

Kaerbendiai: These are this century’s greatest reference [works].

Hart pointed at Aerqiulaier [sic] and said: He is on the Intellectuals’ Committee and the University Reform Committee. Cuba is having a discussion about the tasks with regard to intellectuals. Aerqiulaier is very much one of those who defend your opinion.

Chairman Mao: In this venue of ours, the Cubans are in advantage where the Chinese are in disadvantage.

Hart: In terms of quality [of interlocutors], you are far ahead of us.

Chairman Mao: That's not entirely correct. Among us there is a big intellectual, that is, Governor Shao [Shiping], who has gone to college [attending Beijing Normal University in 1923]. (Then [Mao turned to and] asked Comrade Chu Tunan and Comrade Chen Zhongjing, after which he continued.) They are all big intellectuals. They [are people] who [could have] taught me. They began to teach in middle school after finishing college studies. They could teach me. I could teach in primary school. Our country also has intellectuals, several million intellectuals.

Hart: We're also trying to enlarge the group of intellectuals. One good way is to expand primary education, to raise intellectuals of the future. Based on a series of educational reforms, [they] will be well raised and grow.

Chairman Mao: There is one thing you should bear in mind to which we paid not enough attention. Out of people graduating from primary school, [you] should not let an excessive part go to middle school; [similarly,] out of those graduating from middle school, [you] should not let an excessive part go to college. If all go to middle school and college, instead of into farming, there will be a shortage in the supply of labor. As our machines are few, we badly need labor now. This is a point you may be unable to feel now, but will in the future.

Hart: Cuba has begun to feel a shortage of labor in the sugarcane harvest season. [But] this problem will [genuinely] arrive only several years later, for we still have unemployment. We're prepared to eliminate unemployment, which relies on industrial development. In Czechoslovakia and Poland, we saw that industrial development hinges on educational development.

Chairman Mao: [Education] should develop proportionally. Primary education is education of the foundation. In its popularization process, [you] should also look into the problem of labor distribution. How many universities do you have?

Hart: Three. Our university organizations are different from those here. Our every university includes various colleges, such as industries and humanities. We are reforming our universities. Because the present teaching system is only ministering to imperialism and therefore, should have a thorough reform. This is our combat with intellectuals. In Cuba, had intellectuals openly adopted positions the same as the enemies', we would do what you said.

Chairman Mao: Among Chinese intellectuals, there are also people who disagree with the Chinese revolution, or are

counter-revolutionary. They are not friends, but enemies. To them the policy I just mentioned becomes inapplicable. They should be treated the same as enemies. As to those openly opposing revolution, put them in jail. This is what you did, isn't it?

Hart: Yes. [Some] Cuban intellectuals created obstacles to revolution. Some fled from Cuba. Some have now come back. There people are not working in the realm of education. They're freelancers.

Chairman Mao: Are they agents?

Hart: Some are [agents].

Chairman Mao: What did they come back for? To work [for socialism] or to sabotage?

Hart: Some came back because [they] have a difficult time abroad. As to [people] who are doing harmless jobs such as being doctors, we let them live on.

Chairman Mao: Correct management.

Hart: There are a couple of gifts [we] would like to offer you, as our souvenirs to you. The gifts are not at all glamorous, but they embody our best wishes. (Among the gifts there were copper figurine and national flags.)

Chairman Mao: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Hart: This painting [portrays] a significant event in our history: the proclamation of the Havana Statement by our people.

Chairman Mao: Were there one million people?

Hart: Yes. In that assembly, Prime Minister Castro asked the mass if they were willing to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. People demonstrated their approval by all raising their hands and hailing. Now our relationship becomes closer.

Chairman Mao: True.

([All] took photographs.)

Hart: Thanks very much for receiving us and [your] treatment.

Chairman Mao: [I] wish Cuba success in the struggle. Greet the Cuban leader, Prime Minister Castro [for me].

Hart: Thanks.

(Chairman Mao walked down the steps, saw foreign guests into their cars, and waved farewell.)

[Source: Memorandum of [talk between] Chairman Mao Zedong & the Cuban Cultural Delegation, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00586-01, pp.1-10. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.7

Memorandum of Conversation between Mao Zedong and Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos, 28 September 1961 (Excerpts)

Time: 9:30PM -11 PM, 28 September 1961

Venue: Qingzhen Hall in Zhongnanhai

Present: Cuban Side: Head of the Delegation of Representatives of Integrated Revolutionary Organization Maj. Sanchez, Ambassador to China Pino Santos, Ambassador to Mexico [Jose Antonio] Portuono, Ambassador to Czechoslovakia Raúl Roa Kouri.

Chinese Side: Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Chen Yi, Luo Ruiqing, Zeng Yongquan, Shen Jian, Li Qixin

Interpreter: Chen Yongyi

Recorder: Chen Guang, Liu Xiliang

[...] [sic]

Mao: The Brazilian vice-president [João Goulart] told me, the US demanded an intervention in Cuba by the Organization of American States who, however, failed to carry it out. He raised an example. Between Brazil and Argentina there is Paraguay. The Paraguayan government made tremendous efforts in organizing an anti-Cuban demonstration, only to assemble ten thousand people in the end. However, the next day, 100 thousand people voluntarily walked in the streets and demonstrated in support of Cuba. This is the story from the Brazilian vice-president.

Do you know this?

Dorticos: We were informed, more or less.

Mao: Vice-president Goulart has now become the president of Brazil.

Dorticos: Brazil has undergone a serious crisis which left the people's movement in a grave situation.

Mao: What is the situation now?

Dorticos: As far as we know, Brazil has seized victory from the struggle against imperialism and counter-revolutionaries. Yet this victory is inconclusive. People should stay vigilant.

Zhou Enlai: [...] [sic] The heads of the army, the navy, and the air force of Brazil were all replaced. It appears [that Goulart employed a] step-by-step strategy.

Mao: Ah! It seems that Goulart does have a trick up his sleeve. Very good tactics.

Dorticos: We believe that after the counter-revolutionary forces within the Brazilian military made certain gains, they had to retreat in the face of the resistance of the Brazilian people and the Latin American people's vocal support of the Brazilian people.

Mao: What about the congress?

Zhou Enlai: The Brazilian congress appears to be on Goulart's side.

Mao: The situation favors you. Brazil is such a big country, and then there is Mexico. Perhaps there are other countries friendly to you?

Dorticos: The imperialist conspiracy to isolate us has failed, but the imperialists do not give up.

Mao: [They will try to] isolate you again. To them, the struggle hasn't stopped. Neither has it to us.

Dorticos: This is a long-term struggle.

[...] [sic]

Dorticos: Cuba is inexperienced.

Mao: You have not had as much time. But you have more intellectuals, which means that you would perhaps achieve more in a few years.

Dorticos: We have the aid of the socialist camp, and could draw on the lessons of the socialist countries. But we are in

dire need of intellectuals, professors, architects, and other professionals.

On top of it, another headache for us is that many doctors, architects, intellectuals—some had the daylight scared out of them by imperialists and others surrendered to the imperialist bribery—abandon our country. In Cuba, in fact, there are no national bourgeoisie intellectuals who could be counted upon now.

The national bourgeoisie is closely connected to imperialism. Because of the direct imperialist pressure, our efforts to win over the national bourgeoisie were compromised.

Mao: [Are there] people from the national bourgeoisie staying in Cuba?

Dorticos: Yes. But they did not participate in the management work, nor did they play any coordinating roles. The national bourgeoisie in exile are now dwelling on an illusion, hoping American imperialists would sooner or later restore their control of Cuba. At the same time, the imperialists are sustaining this illusion, indeed, for their own sake.

Mao: Therefore you will face an ever more difficult situation in construction. You too need to train your own intellectuals.

Dorticos: This is indeed one of the immediate goals on which we are putting tremendous efforts. Because we understand that without a sufficient number of intellectuals, no progress will be achieved in socialist construction.

In our land reform, particularly in its early stage, officers among the insurgents took the full responsibility. They were firm adherents of the revolution, but none of them know agriculture.

Mao: The same case here: [our officers are] capable of conducting revolution but incapable of construction.

Dorticos: They [officers among insurgents] are skilled in confiscating properties from imperialists and landlords, but just incompetent in construction. They need to be replaced. We are training agricultural technicians and cadres for people's farms and cooperatives. Besides, Cuba is a country of mono-agriculture. We are short of experts to diversify our agriculture.

Mao: A new phenomenon. It is entirely a new question.

Dorticos: We are specialized in raising sugarcane, and also tobacco, of very high quality.

Mao: Take your time in learning other things. You will master them. Setbacks in the process of learning are expected. But setbacks could also be good. They are like setbacks in your revolution. No setbacks, no successes. If it comes to the topic of setbacks in our revolution, there are plenty. Experience comes from nowhere but setbacks. Construction is also like that. No success arrives in this world without the companion of setbacks. But the general trend is that we are advancing and the enemy is falling behind. Isn't [Fulgencio] Batista an obvious case of falling behind? Isn't Jiang Jieshi too? All things in the world share the same logic of development: that which is new advances, that which is reactionary in general falls behind.

I have met many Cuban friends with whom the conversation was a pleasure for me. They were vigorous. Indeed, they were just the people you mentioned in the land reform. Although they do not know how to construct now, they will one day. Enthusiasm is the first must-have. It just cannot be done without enthusiasm. With enthusiasm, people always find their way to understand things that they don't know now. Why shouldn't one master the economic construction when one could master the revolution? I just don't believe it. But with 12 years passed we still could not master it, but you only have had two years.

Dorticos: Two years plus a few months. Sometimes, economic construction was interrupted by foreign intervention, and meanwhile we also had to learn to defend ourselves. Revolutionary government did not know how to run a country at the very beginning!

Mao: True! How to run a country, how to be a president, how to be an ambassador, and how to be a labor minister – we did not have any experience! Once you do it, you get the experience.

Dorticos: During revolution, people, highly self-motivated and acting at their best, proved to be fast learners.

[...] [sic]

Mao: Fraternal countries shall be less diplomatic and more sincere [towards each other].

Dorticos: Good point.

Chen Yi: We too actually don't know how to practice diplomacy.

Dorticos: We don't know either.

Mao: (smiling) No idea of diplomacy. One ought to be diplomatic towards Western countries, for they don't speak to you sincerely.

Dorticos: Our intercourse with the People's Republic of China is comradely.

Mao: Therefore, Comrade Shen Jian shall train the staff of our embassy to act friendly towards Cuba.

Dorticos: Our relationship with Ambassador [Shen] resembles the one between comrades or friends. This could be guaranteed.

Mao: Excellent. I feel relieved. An embassy, so far away, with several oceans [separating it from the homeland].

One more thing, did you invite Britain's Marshal [Bernard Law] Montgomery?

Dorticos: Yes. It is for this reason that our ambassador visited Montgomery in Beijing.

Mao: Did he agree?

Santos: He accepted the invitation. But [we are] not sure [if he will come]. [Even if he comes, he] won't stay long.

Mao: He asked me twice whether it is appropriate for him to visit to Cuba. I asked him: have you agreed yet? He said that he agreed. I asked him: when will you set off? He said next year.

Santos: He told me that [he would come] this December.

Mao: Next year, according to what he told me. But it is also all right with me if you try persuading him to go next year. I'm supporting him in visiting Cuba. I said, "What will you lose if you visit Cuba? You will upset the US, no matter whether you choose to visit or not. After all, the US does not like you. It's therefore better to visit Cuba."

Dorticos: How did he respond?

Mao: He concurred that, of course, the US would not like him anyway. I said: it is not a question concerning Cuba alone, but Latin America as a whole. Cuba does not oppose you the British.

Last year, [on 19 November 1960,] I talked with Comrade [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara who mentioned that the way you confiscated foreign companies from Canada and the UK differed from that of the United States.

Dorticos: Yes, we treated different countries differently.

Mao: Right. Even to imperialist countries, we should be differentiating.

Dorticos: For example, on confiscating foreign banks, we gave no redemption to American banks. But we negotiated with Canadian banks and paid for [their losses].

Mao: Good! Differentiate between them.

Dorticos: We have both diplomatic and trade relations [with Canada].

Mao: What about Britain?

Dorticos: [We] have diplomatic relations.

Mao: This is good! With Britain, France, West Germany, and Japan, [Cuba] could develop diplomatic relations. Are you trading with Japan?

Dorticos: Yes. Apart from socialist countries, Japan is one of the major importers of Cuban sugar. The US pressured Canada, Britain, and Japan. The US pressured particularly Britain and Japan to oppose us. In spite of this, we keep our trade relations.

Mao: Pressure alone never works. Pressure is not persuasive. Didn't [the US] rely on pressure alone in the case of Brazil? [I] don't believe it [will work].

Montgomery [belonged to] one faction within the British Conservative Party. I asked him: Do you belong to the Conservative Party? He said yes. I said: Do you have anyone within the Party listen to your ideas? He said that he has. I said: You are probably the leftist within the Party. He said: yes. I said: I wish for your faction to grow big. He responded that he would have to work on it when he goes back. I asked: Do you stand a chance to be prime minister? He said: no.

Dorticos: Did he speak from his heart?

Mao: I'm afraid so. He is a soldier, he criticizes politicians, and he treats [British Prime Minister Harold] Macmillan as a politician to criticize. He said that the Western world is chaotic and with no leader. He said that disarmament will not succeed, but war is also not worth fighting. Britain has neither the atomic bomb nor the hydrogen bomb, and it would not dare to fight [sic; Britain actually detonated its first atomic bomb in 1952 and its first hydrogen bomb in 1957—ed.] It would not obtain peace, even if it dared to fight—[this scenario] is dangerous—so it cannot fight. How to solve the problem then? [According to Montgomery,] one solution is to recognize East Germany, which means to recognize the existence of two Germanies; the second solution concerns China, to be more precise, Beijing; the third approach is for all countries to withdraw their military bases abroad.

Dorticos: These ideas are bound to make the US dislike him anyway, even without a visit to Cuba.

Mao: There is one of his ideas that could be exploited to your advantage, helping you reclaim Guantanamo [from the United States]. Therefore, you could make further contact with him via your embassy in London when he returns to Britain.

Dorticos: Some contact will surely do good.

Mao: He is a member of the Upper House, a lord, and also with the title of marshal.

Santos: He told me that he will be on a business tour to Central America this December, in which case he will drop by Cuba, though only for 24 hours.

Mao: He said that it will be next year.

Zhou Enlai: He also told me that he would visit Cuba next year. He said that he would go to Japan, then to Canada, afterwards to the Central American and Latin American countries, and next year to Cuba.

[...] [sic]

[Source: Excerpts from a Memorandum of Conversation between Mao Zedong and Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos, Beijing, 28 September 1961, translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No. 8

Memorandum of Conversation between Mao Zedong and Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos, Beijing, 2 October 1961 (Excerpts)

Time: 4PM - 5:30 PM, 2 October 1961

Venue: Building Six, Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

Present: Chinese Side: Zhou Enlai, Shen Jian; Cuban Side: Ambassador to China Pino Santos, Ambassador to Mexico [Jose Antonio] Portuono, Ambassador to Czechoslovakia Raúl Roa Kouri

Interpreter: Chen Yongyi

Recorder: Wu Mingqi

[...] [sic]

Chairman Mao: What is the situation in Venezuela?

Dorticos: Very bad. The Venezuelan government is leaning, day by day, towards reactionaries and imperialists. The leftists—the communists and the Revolutionary Left Movement split from the ruling party, the Democratic Action Party—are politically influential, but often have to operate underground. President [Romulo Ernesto] Betancourt [Bello] relies mainly on American financial support. Because of the political inexperience of Venezuelan peasants, President Betancourt has gained some popularity from the peasants in the rural areas. In cities, particularly in Caracas, there emerge people's resistance towards government and the presidency which escalates and compels Betancourt to look for measures of suppressions.

Chairman Mao: Have you seen Venezuela's [Carlos Román] Delgado [Chalbaud Gómez]? I've seen him. He is over 60, a man of curiosity. Do you know him?

Dorticos: Not personally. [But I do] know he belongs to the leftists of the Democratic Action Party. The leader of the leftist revolutionary movement is Domingo [Alberto] Rangel. He used to lead the Youth Movement of the Democratic Action Party. He has maintained an agreeable relationship with the Venezuelan communist party.

Chairman Mao: Could the Revolutionary Left Movement operate only underground?

Dorticos: No, it is legal, except some of its activities do have to go underground due to government suppression. Venezuela is on the verge of revolution. Uprisings of a revolutionary

nature could be expected at any minute in Venezuela which is the country where Latin American communist parties call for uprisings to take place. Venezuela is preparing for this scenario. Besides, Venezuela is also facing the problem of reactionary military personnel.

Chairman Mao: A government like Batista's.

Dorticos: But it wears a democratic face, also talking about land reform. Betancourt was a Marxist, but now he is regretting having been a Marxist. When young, he was a member of the Venezuelan communist party.

Roa: He is a founder of the Costa Rican communist party.

Dorticos: It couldn't be worse than to be a regretful communist.

During my visit to Latin American countries one year ago, I went to Venezuela. Some incidents occurred on my arrival in Caracas. Betancourt could not come to receive us, because the airport was filled with slogans against him chanted by people, all terrible slogans. I and foreign minister [Raúl] Roa together met Betancourt in his presidential compound. At the time we could hear chanting through the window: "long live the Cuban Revolution; down with Betancourt." I felt sorry. Betancourt said: you come to create troubles for us. This is not my fault, I replied. Betancourt continued: this situation only happens in Caracas; elsewhere in the country, people still support me.

Now, [Maros Perez] Jimenez retains some influence in the army, attempting to stage a coup d'état to overthrow Betancourt. He [Betancourt] is facing challenges on two fronts, which is why he looks to Washington for help.

Chairman Mao: What is the situation of Peru?

Dorticos: Very bad.

Chairman Mao: Is Peru going to put up with a Cuban exile government set up inside their country?

Dorticos: This is what [Jorge Antonio Fernandez] Pereda proclaimed in the US.

Chairman Mao: Where is the exile government now?

Dorticos: It is said that [the exile government] will be established within the next few days. But no news of its establishment has yet arrived. Each faction is scrambling [for power]

at the other's expense, unable to reach an agreement. One major reason, among many, is that everyone wants to be the president. Recently the imperialists have intensified their propaganda activities in America, which, especially after I left Cuba, have become ever more ruthless.

Chairman Mao: The purpose of establishing an exile government is to sabotage [Cuba] and to unite all reactionaries. Have all Latin American countries recognized you?

Dorticos: Many countries severed their relations with us. Almost all Central American countries did this. Peru of South America severed diplomatic relations with us, so did Paraguay. Imperialism forced puppet governments to break off relations with us.

The Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti, Peru, and Paraguay—we have no diplomatic relations with them anymore.

Chairman Mao: But you still have relations with big countries, Mexico, Brazil, and with Panama too.

Dorticos: We have relations with Panama, but only strained relations. We have very good relations with Mexico. We have relations with Venezuela, but again, strained ones. We have relations with Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and etc., to some extent. We also have relations with Canada.

There is information that the Philippines government is preparing for a severance of relations with us. The US pressured it.

Chairman Mao: They listen to the US. Some countries, for instance, Central American countries, could possibly recognize the exile government.

Zhou Enlai: The same strategy has been used [by the US] in Asia. The US hides itself in the dark and forced some countries [to recognize exile governments].

Dorticos: This is what the US wants. Consider the Bay of Pigs Incident, in which the plan was to first occupy a region in the south of Cuba, then separate it from the rest of the country, and finally establish a government which would receive recognition from the US and other countries. We seized from invaders the documents that had all details of the plan.

The Giron Beach and Long Beach are in an area of quagmires. Only two highways and one, perhaps two, lanes lead to that place. They wished to secure the foothold by concentrating their force at the two highways, therefore, holding us off and

fortifying the place. With supplies from sea and air, [they planned to] construct the runway right away after they had landed.

Chairman Mao: But their construction proved not fast enough.

Dorticos: Within 72 hours they were vanquished. Under the personal command of Fidel [Castro], a counter-attack was soon organized and no chance was given to them to retain their foothold.

Chairman Mao: Were there inhabitants?

Dorticos: There were. Some were captured [by invaders].

Chairman Mao: Were there also militias?

Dorticos: Near [the landing area] was only a platoon from Cienfuegos City. They were the first to initiate the resistance, only with some light weapons though.

News [of the invasion] came to us at 3 o'clock in the morning. Militias of Matanzas were then all dispatched. The air force started to attack at the first light of dawn, which was of decisive significance. They had one battalion ready for landing; yet under attack from the air, landing became hopeless and [they could] only run for their lives. Some of their ships were armed with cannons targeting the highway and ready to block us. We had a small air force while the enemy's was large, but our men fought gallantly. We lost many men. If the tactical plan had been better prepared, our sacrifice could have been less. Nevertheless, we expected the battle would be ended as soon as possible, and many of us were inexperienced.

Chairman Mao: This time many people acquired experience.

Did you sink any enemy warships?

Dorticos: [We] sank one, but the rest escaped. Both our pilots and anti-aircraft units shot enemy planes. Next day, the US air force sent down 'Sabre' fighters, attempting to cover [the invading force], but soon flew away before the real battle started. Based on the bickering within the US Congress and [John F.] Kennedy's own words, later [we realized that the withdrawal of 'Sabre' fighters] was because Kennedy at the last minute called off the idea of direct involvement of the US air force.

Now we need to cope with a [possible] new and ever bigger invasion.

Chairman Mao: True. It seems that the US did have extra worries. It was afraid of an entrenched war in which you tended not to yield anyway. Meanwhile, it also sensed that the international situation was turning to its disadvantage.

Dorticos: We believe the real reason for the US not daring to publicly invade us was that it could not conquer our country within a short time, making it an established fact.

[Source: Excerpts from a Memorandum of the Conversation between Mao Zedong and Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos, 2 October 1961. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.9

Memorandum of the Conversation between China's Ambassador to Cuba Shen Jian and Cuban Finance Minister Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Havana, 13 October 1962

Top secret

Foreign Ministry Documents

Conversation between Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Ambassador Shen Jian

Date: 13 October 1962

Venue: Ministry of Industry of Cuba

Ambassador Shen began by offering maps of the strategic situations of several major campaigns of the Chinese Liberation War, as requested earlier by Guevara. Shen explained them one by one. Guevara enquired about Indonesia, Nepal, and the Sino-Indian border issues.

Ambassador Shen: Since I'm leaving for China for holiday on the 15th [of this month], any message you expect me to carry for you?

Guevara: Nothing in particular. Please forward my greetings to Chairman Mao [Zedong], Chairman Liu [Shaoqi], Prime Minister Zhou [Enlai] and other comrades. And please let me, again, point out that it is important that China publish Spanish editions of books [as soon as possible]. The Peking Review so far, still hasn't had its Spanish edition. I'm very much interested in this magazine, because it has many valuable articles.

Ambassador Shen: [The continuing absence of the Spanish edition] is due to the shortage of translation personnel. For the moment, we have only 18 Chinese students studying Spanish in Cuba.

Guevara: 18 are too few. Translating to Spanish is far easier from English than from Chinese. Any possibility that we could translate the English version of the Peking Review into the Spanish one right here in Cuba? By no means am I advising you.

Ambassador Shen: Good idea.

Guevara: We have invited Comrade Anna Louise Strong to visit us. She replied with a letter saying she would, as soon as she finishes her ongoing tasks in China. What do you make of this?

Ambassador Shen: I have not quite been informed of this issue.

Guevara: Please say hello to her for me when you meet her back in China. Let her know that she is always welcome in Cuba and could come whenever suitable. I'm afraid I will be too busy to write her a reply. Her book on people's communes has already been published.⁶⁴ The rest of her books, however, will not. They are not quite the cup of tea for the local readers.

Ambassador Shen: When will the Cuban Socialist Party of Revolution and Unification be set up?

Guevara: Early next year. [We are] recruiting members. It is estimated that only some 50,000 people will enter the short list. Indeed, not many, but it's meant to be selective.

Ambassador Shen: What's the situation of the Cuban economy?

Guevara: The Soviet Union has given lots of aid. We could cope with some basic problems by ourselves, but the overall situation is far from good. We have an agricultural sector that is poorly organized and an industry without its own basis.

Ambassador Shen: Recently the US has pressured other nations not to send their merchant ships to Cuba. Has this had an impact on the Cuban economy?

Guevara: There will definitely be some difficulties in one way or another. But it won't last. The British, for example, didn't

yield [to the Americans]. We once expected the arrival of bearings for the sugarcane-reaping machine, after we had made all other components ready for assembly. But in the end, we only found ships which carried these bearings, no more willing to reach Cuba, to unload in Panama.

Ambassador Shen: Apart from the embargo, what other measures would the US turn to?

Guevara: The Americans have always wanted to attack us directly. But this view has yet to gain popularity. They, for the moment, prefer political isolation and sabotage of Cuba, which indeed won't cause any great losses on our part.

Ambassador Shen: What's the view of the ruling class of the US towards the statement of the Soviet Union in support of Cuba?

Guevara: We think the ruling class has been divided into two factions. One is the Pentagon and the other the group rallying behind Kennedy. Both parties have decisive influence on US foreign policy. The Kennedy [faction] appears less arrogant whereas the Pentagon does look more aggressive. The Kennedy [faction] demonstrates their moderation on the issue of POWs exchange [i.e., anti-Castro Cubans held prisoner after the Bay of Pigs invasion]. They promised to offer cargoes worth 50 million.

Ambassador Shen: [The US] used to say that the amount was 62 million. So on top of the cargoes worth 50 million, was there a cash payment of 12 million?

Guevara: Only 2 million cash and the total was 52 million. The bargain is inseparable from negotiation. Indeed, it [the negotiation] is nothing but a deal.

Ambassador Shen: Any possibility to reach a deal?

Guevara: The lawyer said that [reaching a deal] wouldn't be a problem. They, of course, attempted to deceive us by proposing unfairly high priced goods. We turned down their proposal, flatly.

Ambassador Shen: Were those mercenaries released, would they pick up arms and turn against you once more?

Guevara: We couldn't fear them less.

Ambassador Shen: Any other moves on the American part?

Guevara: No idea. Perhaps they would send a neighboring country to attack us, which, of course, won't solve the problem.

Ambassador Shen: What's the motive behind the American recruitment of Cuban counter-revolutionaries?

Guevara: I am not really sure. The rumor goes that these new recruits will be sent to Latin American countries. The Americans expect to symbolize, with this measure, their support to counter-revolutionaries. We are well equipped to crush them however.

Ambassador Shen: Will a world war, do you think, break out as a result of a direct US invasion?

Guevara: I believe so.

Ambassador Shen: Any American moves on this matter?

Guevara: They publicly reject the idea of a possible US attack on Cuba touching off a new world war. In my opinion, they in fact know that a world war could break out. The attitude of the Soviet Union towards us is very clear.

Ambassador Shen: This is a result of your trip [in late August/early September 1962] to Moscow?

Guevara: On the contrary, we [Cuba and the Soviet Union] discussed Soviet backing, and I went to Moscow only with all Soviet support already in hand.

Ambassador Shen: The press says that you and Soviet comrades have exchanged views on certain international issues. Have you reached any agreements yet?

Guevara: There is one point we haven't settled on: in what specific form will the Soviet support be, in the event of a US invasion? At least, we haven't put this point in written form. Anyhow, we are so convinced, by what the Soviet Union told us, that there's going to be a world war. Also there are other issues that Soviet comrades believe are worth discussing at another time.

We understand the attitude of the Chinese comrades. Some Latin American parties act meanly, in the name of the Soviet Union who, on contrary, is very nice towards us. For instance, the Brazilian communist party said that they didn't want war, because peace was of paramount importance. The Soviet Union knew that we are training new recruits; they, in fact, helped us.

Still there is something we don't quite understand, even as Marxist-Leninists, probably because we need communication

of a higher level. For instance, which is confidential, I sent a delegation to a youth meeting (probably in Warsaw). Their performance there turned out to be disappointing. The theme of their speech fell mainly on peace rather than national liberation. They even crossed swords with the Chinese delegation. On hearing this, we replaced the delegation with another in the charge of Liweilong [sic; perhaps the José Rebellón—ed.], the chairman of the College Students Association of Cuba. Now the point is: it is the Soviet Union that released this information – the disappointing performance of the Cuban delegation in Warsaw – to us.

We are distressed at the split of our [socialist] camp, which is why we requested the polemic between the Soviet Union and Albania to be extended no more. The Soviet Union agreed. Albanian comrades, however, published and distributed an anti-Soviet Union statement. We as leaders had the rights and were obligated to see this statement, but again, public distribution was wrong. The problem won't be solved unless both sides admit their faults. At the end of the day, time will solve this problem.

Ambassador Shen: I have not seen that document of Albania. So far Albania has been the smallest fraternal country in the socialist camp, beleaguered by imperialism and capitalism. Never has it stopped fighting against imperialism, feudalism, socialism, and revisionism. On certain issues, Albania admittedly has fundamental disagreement with the Soviet Union, but the disagreement should only be discussed and solved within the framework of proletarian internationalism and egalitarianism. No one would seriously believe that Albania was bullying the Soviet Union, a powerful country. Indeed, as a giant and powerful country, the Soviet Union should take the initiative to promote inter-party and inter-state relationships. Sadly, it is the Soviet Union that touched off the polemic with Albania. The Soviet Union escalated criticism in their party meeting, and furthermore, initiated the termination of the diplomatic relationship between the two countries. Comrade Zhou Enlai made a speech in the 22th party [CPSU] Congress of the Soviet Union [in Moscow in October 1961], as you know, [which indicated that] we don't agree to the attitude held by our Soviet comrades.

Guevara: Neither do we. The problem is that we don't want to be the arbitrator between them. It's because we are weak and have made little contribution to the development of Marxism-Leninism. The Soviets used to say bad things about Albania. They no longer do so because we reminded them. But [recently] there occurred an incident. Among our military instructors, there was a Soviet. One day he discovered his trainees circulating a book from the Albanians, named "The

Clique of Khrushchevite Revisionism,” which was, of course, considered [by this officer] as a negative attitude towards the Soviet Union. Although we didn’t mention this to Albania, we think this is bad.

The Soviet Union has given us great support, indeed, support that enables us to survive. But we act independently on the Albania problem. Between Albania and Cuba, we have maintained an amicable relationship; we, for example, send exchange students to each other. This is a true practice of proletarian internationalism. We, however, are unwilling to see Cuba pushed onto the battlefield of the [Albania] problem.

Ambassador Shen: I have published the Communiqué of the tenth plenum of the central committee of the Communist Party of China [in September 1962], which re-states our strict adherence to our statements and declarations made in Moscow in 1957 and 1960. We welcome the solidarity between socialist countries to be achieved under the framework of proletarian internationalism. To strengthen the bond [between socialist states], we have made many efforts and will continue doing so. We, of course, never mentioned our losses and difficulties because of our constant attempts to promote [socialist solidarity]. We believe in the principles of the Moscow Declaration. We are still the enemy of revisionism. The Yugoslavian revisionism now becomes ever more rampant. Tito even dared to openly feed American imperialists, via the American journalist, Drew Pearson, advice that aimed to infiltrate and sabotage socialist countries. 250 Americans newspapers have published Tito’s speech.⁶⁵ It has been made clear in the [Moscow] Statement of Eighty-one Parties of 1960 that Yugoslavia betrayed socialism. Against the Moscow Declaration of 1957, it developed a revisionist agenda. It received mountains of US dollars from the Americans, sabotaged socialist solidarity, and stood in the way of the national liberation movement. To expose and criticize Yugoslavian modern revisionism is the shared duty for each Marxist-Leninist.

Guevara: I have been to Yugoslavia. That is not, in my opinion, a socialist country. My position is to avoid arguing with it. An OK relationship is just enough. During my visit to Yugoslavia, I was asked for my opinion towards this country’s political system. I said that the country was in danger, because the seeds of capitalism had been scattered everywhere. My speech touched off a grand debate.

However, the adverse impact of Yugoslavia has been diminishing. For example, when we had just taken control of Cuba, there were people flirting with the ideas of following the Yugoslav model and factory self-management. Now, such ideas have long disappeared. So I don’t think there is any reason for Yugoslavia to remain a serious issue. Of course, by no means am I suggesting that Fidel visit Yugoslavia, or we

upgrade our relations with it. In the future, in international meetings, if everyone condemns Yugoslavia, we also will agree to this. I don’t understand why Yugoslavia still continues to be a problem. Yugoslavia has become history now.

Ambassador Shen: Admittedly, the influence of Yugoslav revisionism is diminishing, thanks to the efforts made by every Marxist-Leninist to expose and criticize it. But it is far from being in the past. On the contrary, Tito’s thoughts remain influential to some extent. It stood in the way of socialist solidarity and tried to undermine the anti-imperialist movement of nationalist countries. Yugoslav revisionism is both alive and active, isn’t it? Consider the case of Latin America in which many communist parties are demanding a peaceful transition to socialism. Isn’t this the footnote to Tito’s lingering adverse impact on socialism?

Guevara: Poland has received more money than Yugoslavia from the Americans. But we still see it as a people’s democratic republic, a Marxist-Leninist country.

Ambassador Shen: Tito published a separate modern revisionist agenda. He refused to join the Moscow Declaration of 1957 and the Moscow Statement of 1960—he attacked our socialist camp. Of course, we [China and Cuba] have a fundamental agreement on whether it is good or bad to receive money from imperialists.

Guevara: Didn’t one of Jiang Jieshi’s [Chiang Kai-shek’s] generals end up being the minister of water conservation [of the People’s Republic of China]? Sometimes, things turn good from bad, sometimes the other way around. It is dialectics, as we know. So far as I know, within Yugoslavia there are factions. [Leading Yugoslav communist and Tito associate] Edvard Kardelj, for example, is slightly leaning towards the right. This is a circumstance which we shall study, to see if change will be made in the future. Anyhow, we don’t speak more than we should.

Ambassador Shen: [I agree] both people and things are changing, all the time, either from bad to good, or the other way around. Yet the reason Fu Zuoyi became our minister was because he surrendered his army, cut off his relations with the Jiang Jieshi Clique, and was willing to serve his people. The peaceful liberation of Beijing was indeed a great achievement. However, the fact that some bad people became good does not necessarily mean that other [bad] people would also succeed. Kennedy will not. Imperialists will not. So change is conditional.

Guevara: I agree that change is conditional. Revisionism is a kind of degradation in mind. France is an imperialist coun-

try. But while we fight imperialism, the one we target is not France but the US.

Ambassador Shen: Yugoslavia now is the leader of revisionists. Their ultimate demise lies in our constant efforts to fight against them. Marxism-Leninism has proven to grow along with its war on left-leaning and right-leaning thoughts. The principal danger facing us is the right-leaning thoughts, the modern revisionist thought.

Anything new in Latin America?

Guevara: Almost the same as in our last conversation. [Argentine leader] Juan Peron appears left-leaning, seemingly wishing to join the revolution.

Ambassador Shen: The rumor goes that the Argentine communist party wished to form a unified front by cooperating with the Peronist [party].

Guevara: A unified front in election season. The Argentine communist party speaks against Tito while in action it supports Yugoslavia.

It's said that a communist set up a guerrilla force after being expelled by the Columbian communist party. [Ironically,] the Party then condemned him by publishing his name. Furthermore, the Party sent another party member to the police department, releasing the poor man's name as well as his location in the mountains. Thanks to their comrades, all communist guerrillas were killed in the end.

Guevara: The Guatemalan revolution is developing, and [Marco Antonio] Yon Sosa is currently in Cuba which is entirely confidential. A son of an Indian person and a Chinese immigrant, he was an army officer of little education or understanding of Marxism-Leninism. He is, however, a sincere person, willing to listen and learn. I believe that he will make a splash in the world.

Ambassador Shen: What is the present situation of their guerrilla area?

Guevara: They have no area for guerrilla warfare. They are urban fighters, operating in cities. We are suggesting that they should open a guerrilla battlefield [in the countryside].

Cc: Chairman (MAO Zedong), Shaoqi (LIU Shaoqi), Enlai (ZHOU Enlai), ZHU De, CHEN Yun, LIN Biao, Xiaoping (Deng Xiaoping), PENG Zhen, Fuchun (LI Fuchun),

Xiannian (LI Xiannian), HE Long, Dinyi (LU Dinyi), Boda (CHEN Boda), KANG Sheng, Jiaxiang (WANG Jiaxiang), Shangkun (YANG Shangkun), Qiaomu (HU Qiaomu), Ruiqing (LUO Ruiqing), KONG Yuan, FANG Yi, LI Tao (4), Central Confidential Office, Party Foreign Office (5), Central Propaganda Office (2), Central Liaison Office (5), Central Investigation Office (4), Military Intelligence Office (4), Ministry of Public Security (2), Literature Commission (2), Headquarters of the General Staff (9), Lengxi (WU Lengxi), Muzhi (ZHU Muzhi)

CHEN, ZHANG, JI, ZENG, GENG, HUANG, MENG, QIAO, HAN, LIU, Admin Office of Foreign Ministry (3), Research Office, Soviet-European Office of Foreign Ministry, American-Australian Office of Foreign Ministry, Ambassador SHEN, Ambassador, Archive (3) --- Total copies (84)

[Source: Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 109-03157-01, pp 15-24. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.10

A Report of the Conversation with Cuban Interior Minister Binianyiluo, 24 October 1962

Foreign Ministry and Military Intelligence Department,

This afternoon, [Cuban] Interior Minister Binianyiluo [sic] visited [us] and talked about the following items:

On the morning of the 22nd [of October], Cuba received the information that Washington had been actively deploying, and the US would take strong measures. In the afternoon, combat readiness was ordered by the Americans. But Cuba did not expect those measures that appeared in [John] Kennedy's speech. Now Cuba has adopted all necessary measures. Raúl [Castro] has left for Oriente Province.

Yesterday, a US airplane crashed in the Guantanamo Base. Both sides are on alert now. The most dangerous military gathering point of US is Puerto Rico—there are two aircraft carriers, ships on which helicopters could land, and amphibious vessels that could transport fifteen thousand troops—socialist countries' ships normally all come from that direction.

The US navy commander made an order, thanking Latin American countries (such as Argentina) for faithful assistance. The US demands that between naval units, the radio contact, for the purpose of confidentiality, should be used as little

as possible. This is a practice that is only adopted when the situation is tense. The US force involved in the blockade is estimated to be of between 30 and 40 thousand personnel.

At 9 o'clock this morning, two ships arrived. No accidents occurred. Now several other Soviet ships are heading towards Cuba. The situation will definitely become tense if Soviet ships and US warships meet each other head on. [Let's] see what, in the end, the US will do. The development of the situation and which strategy the enemy will adopt will be clearer within next 48 hours.

Special report.

Embassy in Cuba
24 October 1962

[Source: *Embassy in Cuba: A Report of the Conversation with Cuban Interior Minister Binianyiluo*, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-05, pp.5-6. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.11

Chinese Embassy in Havana, Report on the Meeting between Huang Wenyong, Chinese Chargé d'Affaires in Cuba, and Joaquín Ordoqui, Member of the National Leadership Committee of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations of Cuba, Havana, 24 October 1962

Foreign Ministry and Military Intelligence Department,

On the night of 24 October, Counselor Huang [Wenyong] had a meeting with Ordoqui, member of the national leadership committee of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (IRO). Ordoqui said that the present situation in Cuba was good. Over the past few months [the IRO] has, as to buy time [for war preparation], made arrangements in all sectors. More than forty brigades have been raised with both civil defense and militias having started to be mobilized. In Havana, 96 million rifles, as long as they could still shoot, have been distributed among soldiers. On top of these, thirteen anti-amphibious battalions have been established, which were small in number of personnel but very strong in firepower. Settlements have been made on industrial and agricultural productions. Because of the war and mobilization, industrial production will shrink and perhaps even stagnate.

By contrast, the agricultural sector will be different. [Cubans] will not starve to death; [they are] estimated to hold out for some year and half. The oil supply is a headache. [The IRO] has drafted a proposal for restricting petrol consumption which will be promulgated soon. The people worked in a high spirit, ready to engage [the enemy] at any minute, which in Ordoqui's opinion is critical. He added that Fidel Castro's speech yesterday is correct, [and] has received positive reactions from the people.

On a [possible] American invasion, he reckoned that by the end of this week, the US would have mobilized four divisions. An American aircraft carrier has already anchored in the water not far from Cuba. Today near the Mariel Harbor an American aircraft [was detected] which flew towards Cuba and at about 300 meters off the Cuban coast, rose quickly to a level as high as 3000 meters. The American air force has frequently intruded into Mariel, Matanzas, Oriente, and the hinterland of Havana Province. Their provocation and intrusion into Cuban territorial sky have proved increasingly blatant. The General Staff has ordered to shoot down [invading American aircraft], on the only condition that the wreckage could be collected on Cuban territory.

He also mentioned the meeting [on 18 October] between John F. Kennedy and [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko, which appeared not good. Kennedy demonstrated a hard line. Kennedy said: "We have evidence to prove that Cuba has already obtained the aggressive weaponry. Why do you say that the weaponry is defensive?" "Why do you bother asking if you [already] have the evidence?" Gromyko answered.

Embassy to Cuba
25 October 1962

[Source: *Report on the Meeting between Huang Wenyong, Chinese chargé d'affaires in Cuba, and Ordoqui, member of the national leadership committee of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations of Cuba, Havana, 24 October 1962*, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-05, pp.1-2. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.12

Chinese Embassy, Havana, A Brief Report of Recent Activities in Cuba, 24 October 1962

Foreign Ministry:

Prime Minister Fidel Castro made a speech which was broadcast nation-wide by television. In his speech, he criticized [John] Kennedy's statement published the day before yesterday and rejected unreasonable demands from the US On issues such as the so-called aggressive weaponry and defensive weaponry, disarmament, enquiries into Cuba by UN-assigned delegates, his attitude was clear and resolute. He expressed firmly that [Cuba] will resist a comprehensive embargo from the US and a direct American invasion. At the end of his speech, he touched on the statement issued by the Soviet Union; instead of stressing Soviet support, he emphasized that the Cubans knew how to defend their motherland. Cuban people responded, "Fidel's speech is brave. Cuban people are surely brave."

Fidel spoke with dignity and calmness, instead of appearing agitated as he used to be. On the other hand, he seemingly also spoke with a heavy heart, as his facial expression couldn't help betray his fatigue. The present audience, including the President, members of the United Revolutionary Leadership Committee, and the Interior Minister, all wore arms. Raúl [Modesto Castro] and [Ernesto Che] Guevara were absent. Within the Leadership Committee, the deputy Defense Minister, the commander of the west military region, the Labor Minister (also as the commander of Civil Defense), too, were absent. Presumably they were all in their war positions.

Following the Soviet Union issuing their statement yesterday afternoon, [the newspaper] *Hoy* [*Today*] produced a supplement and the TV station also broadcast [the statement] several times. But, the Cuban people's reaction wasn't quite welcoming. One journalist from the Latin American Press Association told me, "the Soviet statement isn't quite what I expected." Some Havana University students even commented, "this statement is very bad"; [they] indicated that they were very unhappy [with it].

Havana is the same as usual. Gas stations are restored to normality but there is less traffic and fewer pedestrians than before. Businesses operate as usual, with no sign of panic buying. In the downtown, propaganda squads, filled by female militias, work with a high spirit. The mobilization of the masses remains ongoing. Outpatient services have already been suspended by hospitals, and patients with minor illnesses have been sent back to their homes. In line with Guevara's instruction, every mine is still working, trying to answer the call to "continue and improve production." Our oil prospecting group is also working. Quite a few students, from the engineer training class offered by our technical staff here, have enlisted themselves, but the rest keep studying. On the whole, the people are calm, and

there is confidence towards the revolutionary government and Castro.

An American warship was reported early this morning to have been seen off the Havana coast. A cargo ship was expected to arrive this morning but it has not arrived even this afternoon. The Cuban revolutionary government has informed two airlines, the United Arab Airlines [*Alian*] and Holland Airlines [i.e., KLM Royal Dutch Airlines], that no passenger plane shall land in Cuban airports, until a new notice [to be given from Cuban government]. However, Czechoslovakia and Cuba are still connected by an airline.

Special report.

China's Embassy in Cuba
24 October 1962

[Source: *China's Embassy In Cuba: A Brief Report Of Recent Activities In Cuba, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-07, pp.1-2. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.*]



Document No.13

Chinese Foreign Ministry, Internal memorandum,
Request to Issue a Government Statement on the
Cuban Crisis, 24 October 1962

Extremely urgent

In accordance with Premier's [Zhou Enlai's] instruction, we have drafted a government statement in support of Cuba. This statement is planned to be broadcast on the morning of the 25th of October, and to appear in the newspaper of the day. Prior to the broadcast, it is planned that copies of the statement, in Chinese and in foreign languages, will be distributed by the news division [of the foreign ministry] among journalists of each country in Beijing, and handed by the American-Australian division [of the foreign ministry] to the Cuban embassy in China. Please examine and instruct whether [this plan] is feasible.

Foreign Ministry
24 October, 1962

Comments by Qiao Guanhua, 24 October 1962:
Please send [copies] to Geng [Biao], Zhang [Hanfu], Marshal Chen [Yi], and Premier [Zhou Enlai] for examination.

Comments by Zhou Enlai, 25 October 1962:
Send [copies] to the Foreign Ministry and the office of
Xinhua News Agency

*[Source: The Request from Chinese Foreign Ministry to issue
a government statement on the Cuban crisis, Chinese Foreign
Ministry Archive: No.111-00595-08, p.1. Translated for
CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]*



Document No.14

Chinese Embassy, Havana, Report on
Conversation with Cuban Official Joaquín
Ordoqui, 27 October 1962

Foreign Ministry:

This morning [27 October 1962], Ordoqui told us:

The US continues to clamor for war. Yesterday in particular, they proposed to carry out an invasion; Cuba estimated, it could get underway early this morning. Cuba has everything prepared, with 500 thousand people mobilized. The US was estimated to have gathered in Florida 500 thousand people; this number might well have been exaggerated. But [the US] urgently built up a series of rocket launch platforms in Florida. Over 100 aircrafts were deployed nearby. American aircraft carriers were operating in an area 14 nautical miles off Cuban territorial waters.

Yesterday the US demanded the removal of Cuban missile bases, which seemingly indicates an increasing American appetite: they wish to push the Soviet Union aside and start to deal with Cuba with no holds barred. Someone in the US clamored that the US's military base in Turkey was built up openly, yet the Soviet Union set up [their base in Cuba] in a sneaky way. "What sort of policy is it?" they asked. [They] even insisted that the Cuban-Soviet agreement should be published, and added that Artemisa base was again reinforced. It appears the US is plotting an invasion.

Soviet ships that arrived recently were, in fact, not hindered, nor investigated [by the US]. [The rumor of Soviet ships being stopped or inspected] might have been propaganda on the radio. It is reported that [US warships] only asked by signals about the nature of cargoes. Ships replied that these are cargoes of oil, and nothing [serious] ensued.

[Fidel] Castro is firm. Even if Cuba were be wiped out by a possible nuclear war, as Castro said, imperialism would be closer to facing its demise and global socialism would arrive sooner. Ordoqui said to Castro that [earlier] they didn't expect to see the victory of the revolution, but they do now; therefore, [they] were convinced that they could even see imperialism being toppled. Castro replied, "both of us will see the arrival of this moment."

Chinese Embassy in Cuba
27 October 1962

*[Source: Ordoqui Talking about American Aggression, Chinese
Foreign Ministry Archive; No. 111-00342-09, pp.5-6.
Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]*



Document No.15

Chinese Embassy, Accra, Ghana, Report on
Conversation with the Third Secretary of Cuban
Embassy, 27 October 1962

Foreign Ministry,

The Cuban Embassy's third secretary visited our embassy at 3 PM on 27 October, acknowledging Chargé d'Affaires Wang: the director secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Ghana, Akui [sic] under the order of [Kwame] Nkrumah this morning visited and informed the Cuban chargé d'affaires of the following news:

Ghana proposed a delegation, which shall be filled by 40 people from African-Asian countries of the UN, to inspect Cuban military establishments.

The US is going to attack Cuba at half past nine tonight, or tomorrow. American warships are on their way to Cuba. (Akui however did not identify the source of [this] information.)

Special report.

China's Embassy in Ghana
27 October 1962

*[Source: The Third Secretary of Cuban Embassy Delivered
Information regarding Cuba, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive:
No. 111-00342-09, p3. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]*



Document No.16

Chinese Embassy, Havana, Report of Conversation between Chargé d'Affaires Huang Wenyou and Chilean Economic Advisor Jaime Barrios, 28 October 1962

Foreign Ministry,

The Chilean economic advisor, Jaime [Barrios] (now serving in the president's compound), told to Chargé d'Affaires Huang,

Yesterday, Cuban troops shot down an American airplane in Pinar del Rio.

Three proposals have so far been put forth, respectively from [Nikita] Khrushchev, [John] Kennedy and Fidel [Castro]. But our attitude is firm: Fidel's second declaration was reflected well among the masses, and today's statement (referring to the five conditions) is also very important, to which the detailed reactions are yet to emerge. Cuba's sovereignty must be guaranteed, and the Cuban people have the right to decide their own matters. Yet we also need to be discreet and firm in practice.

The danger of a US invasion remains, but the US wanted to realize its goal by negotiating, which is clearly shown in the US declaration. Khrushchev, too, expressed the wish to negotiate. Therefore, if the rocket weapons are to be withdrawn, it should be traded for the withdrawal of the missile bases in Turkey and the return of Guantanamo. This is, if the negotiation succeeds, a good thing. But the US will not agree. The United States will bomb the Soviet Union base, and after that it will say that it has achieved its goal, and claim [to be the] winner itself. It is a good opportunity for the US to invade Cuba; the situation depends on the development of events in the next few days.

He said he did not know the news of Khrushchev with respect to the unconditional withdrawal of bases. He said, if the withdrawal is conditional, our government will not be shocked; but if it was a surrender-like withdrawal, then it becomes a blow to the Cuban people, Latin American people, the socialist camp and the strength of the people of the world, while feeding the arrogance of imperialism.

The world's people are standing with Cuba. But the present development of the people's movement is slow in some countries, such as in Chile which still needs the masses to take actions. Some countries' declarations remain on paper, with no sign of struggle. What the Cuban people need is active support, such as mass mobilization; because if there is no action, the crime of those who hold power will not be stopped.

He spoke with considerable discretion today.
Special Report.

Embassy in Cuba.

28 October 1962

[Source: *Embassy in Cuba: A Report of the Conversation between Chargé d'Affaires Huang Wenyou and the Chilean Economic Advisor, Jaime [Barrios]*, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-05, pp.7-8. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.17

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, A Report on a Conversation with Two Deputy Department Heads of Cuban General Staff, 30 October 1962

Foreign Ministry and the 2nd Department of the General Staff,

On the 30th [of October], two deputy department heads of the Cuban General Staff, respectively from the revolutionary education department and the film department, talked to our military attaché. They said that [Cuban] troops were in a high spirit and on constant alarm, and that [Cuban troops] would not believe the so-called guarantee from American imperialism; instead, they believe in their own strength, the strength of the people and the support of socialist countries and all people of the world. We enquired about the response of the troops towards Fidel [Castro]'s statement, letters from [Nikita] Khrushchev and [John F.] Kennedy, and [UN Secretary-General] U Thant's visit to Cuba. The deputy director of revolutionary education said that the general response is that [the troops] believe Fidel's statement, believe our leader's words. The troops were discussing Fidel's statement, during which they did not mention Khrushchev or the Soviet Union alone, [they] instead only spoke of socialist countries; [Cuban troops] paid close heed to our country's [China's] statement, popular assemblies in Beijing and Tianjin metropolises.

Besides, [we] heard that on the 28th [of October] [sic] an American airplane was shot down by anti-aircraft rockets, exploded immediately with the wreckage spreading across an area of 12 square kilometers.⁶⁶

Embassy in Cuba

30 October 1962

[Source: *Chinese Embassy in Cuba: Report on a Conversation with Two Deputy Directors From Cuban General Staff*, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-05, p.11. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.18

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, A Summary of the Conversation between Huang Wenyu and the head of Socialist Country Division of the Cuban Foreign Ministry José Fuxá, and others, 31 October 1962

Foreign Ministry,

[We're] now presenting you the summary of the conversation between comrade Huang Wenyu, the head of the socialist country division of the Cuban foreign ministry, [José] Fuxá, and the head of US-Canadian division, [Cecilio] Martinez (previously the first secretary of the Embassy in China):

As to the [Cuban] reaction to China's support, Fuxá said, "China's support to Cuba via prompt organization of demonstrations has been a great encouragement to us. We feel very grateful." Martinez said, "China's statement has increased our strength. The Chinese government and people are, indeed, a government of revolution and people of revolution."

With respect to the present situation, Martinez commented, "last week the world experienced an unparalleled, unprecedented peril. Now the perilous situation has gone, though a few questions are left and we need to continue the struggle. That [Cuba's] foreign minister, [Raúl] Roa, went to the UN to open a new front is a mere change of form [of struggle], and the revolution will continue progressing. He also said, "This is the victory of peace, because the attempt of imperialists was to start a war, but now war has been prevented. At least for the time being, [imperialists] haven't started the war. This incident proves that the peaceful forces have the upper hand, and peace comes not at the mercy of imperialism, but by active striving. It is because of the Cuban people, the development of Soviet technology, and socialist countries who not only have atomic bombs but also people, such as the Chinese people, etc., that the war was avoided. Fuxá said, "The situation is developing fast: [we are] not finished with reading one [piece of] information when another reply has already come in. One week ago, [we] could not think about the possibility of negotiation; [but now] we hope that this negotiation will generate productive results. Imperialism will

not easily abandon their attempt, and we should maintain the mobilization status and be vigilant. American imperialism should give more than words, they should act."

One attendant of the protocol department said, "The situation is developing fast. Although it did not exactly follow what we expected, this happened for a reason: because the affair was specific; it could not be solved by alternatives; it should be either this way, or the other way, there is no way in between.

Special report.

Embassy in Cuba
31 October 1962

[Source: A Summary of the Conversation between Huang Wenyu and [the head of Socialist Country Division of Cuban Foreign Ministry] Fuxá, and others, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-05, pp.13-14. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian]



Document No.19

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, Report on Conversation with Joaquín Ordoqui, 31 October 1962

Foreign Ministry,

Tonight Ordoqui said:

"Someone (referring to the Soviet Union) does not agree to the five conditions we raised."

2) "When negotiating with [UN Secretary-General] U Thant, we made Cuba's position crystal clear. Fidel [Castro] told him [U Thant] that an inspection, regardless of its form, would not be approved [by Cuban leaders], nor would it be approved by the Cuban people. We already have the experience of Congo. The basis of negotiation will be these five points; no other issues could be discussed. This time U Thant's attendants, too, have returned with disappointment."

Fidel said that we would not back down, not to mention conceding, and that [we] should be firm; if not, [we] will bring immeasurable loss to Latin American people.

3) Ordoqui said: The Brazilian president [João Goulart] sent [his aide, Gen. Albino] da Silva to Cuba, indicating that the Brazilian government is willing to mediate in the hopes of solving the Cuban problem, that the US is also willing to maintain relations with Cuba, and that [the Brazilian government] wants Cuba to return to the Organization of American States. Fidel thanked them for their efforts, indicating to him [Silva] that Cuba approves [the Brazilian government's initiative to] do so. Regarding the issue of joining the Organization [of American States], it would not be approved, but we also know the direction to which [we] should march. [Fidel] maintained that Cuba will defend its own endeavor in a resolute manner.

Embassy in Cuba
31 October 1962

[Source: *Chinese Embassy in Cuba: A Report on a conversation with Ordoqui, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-05, pp. 15-16. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.*]



Document No.20

Chinese Embassy in Moscow, "Khrushchev's Reconciliation with the United States on the Question of the Cuban Missile Crisis,"
31 October 1962

Foreign Ministry:

Khrushchev's reconciliation and submission to American imperialism constitutes a fiasco in the diplomatic struggle of the Soviet Union. Its influence on future development is bound to be extremely negative. Our preliminary views are as follows:

A development, extremely favoring the struggle against American imperialism, emerged at the moment when the American imperialists declared a blockade against Cuba. But just when the people were being mobilized and about to take action and the contradiction within imperialism was deepening, Khrushchev did not take advantage of the development, [which was at the time] extremely unfavorable to the US. He did not conduct a tit-for-tat struggle and push the development of the crisis [in the direction favoring anti-imperialism]. Instead, after performing [a few] gestures of struggle, he gradually backed down, and started to make a series of con-

cessions, in the name of [being] cautious, calm, and rational, to the point of agreeing to dismantle and retrieve missiles previously deployed to Cuba, under United Nations supervision. This way, the Soviet Union had turned from initiative to passivity. From being a plaintiff condemning the US for threatening and invading Cuba, [it has now become] a defendant, admitting smuggling strategic weaponry and threatening US security. [The Soviet Union] abandoned the advantage [which resulted from] supporting Cuba, a sovereign country, in conducting a just struggle; it, instead, disadvantaged itself by deserting Cuba and accepting all American conditions which were compensated by a guarantee of empty words. [By contrast,] the US has risen, from a pirate, condemned by the world with one voice, to a savior, defending the security of the Western Hemisphere and the peace of the world as a whole. The very situation encourages the arrogance of American imperialists while discouraging the global anti-American movement, indeed, to an unprecedented degree. [However, this situation] also further exposes the true face of revisionists and their weakness.

The reason why Khrushchev squandered the favorable situation of anti-imperialism, even at the expense of revolutionary interests, was his fear of war blackmail from American imperialists. He miscalculated the situation, [thinking] that the world had already slipped to the verge of a nuclear war, and unless concessions were made, all [countries] would perish together. Pravda says that the past week has been the most difficult week since the end of World War II, with the entire humanity lingering on the verge of a nuclear disaster. In the cable sent to [Bertrand A. W.] Russell, Khrushchev also repeatedly emphasized that once the war erupts, it will be a total world war with nuclear weapons being used. This fear could also be read from his letter to Kennedy. Meanwhile, the Soviet support to Cuba proved far from sincere, it was carried out in line with the general strategy of promoting peaceful Soviet-American co-existence. Because of this, [the Soviet Union] sacrificed the interests of the Cuban and world revolution when danger approached. When American imperialists encircled Cuba with its troops, ready to attack at any minute, and charged the Soviet Union with deploying aggressive weaponry, Khrushchev sent messages to John Kennedy, yet, not to defend Cuba's sovereignty and its legitimate right to weaponry of any form. Rather, he reassured Kennedy by repeatedly highlighting the fact that those weapons were in the hands of Soviet troops and any worry would be therefore unnecessary. In the end, he yielded to American bidding [zhijiyi] by retrieving those weapons [from Cuba], giving not even the slightest attention to Cuba's opinion. Khrushchev even allowed, on Cuba's behalf, for the UN to send officials to conduct inspections on Cuban territory. By doing all these,

the Soviet Union avoided being Cuba's protector. These activities have caused damage to Cuba's pride and sovereignty, and are also considerably harmful to Cuba's revolutionary struggle.

By conceding on the issue of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Khrushchev's calculation was to ingratiate and trade with Kennedy for a general improvement of Soviet-American relations which would lead to the settlement of other international disputes. On the part of Kennedy, his basic objective [in negotiations with the Soviet Union] was to remove Cuba, this nail in the eye. [He, then,] exploited the illusions of Khrushchev by releasing empty bait, and then demanded further concessions from the Soviet Union on the Cuba question. Khrushchev exhausted his words to exculpate Kennedy. Repeatedly, he expressed his understanding, satisfaction, confidence, respect, and gratitude towards Kennedy, saying that Kennedy had made rational decisions and demonstrated the will of peace. [All these gestures] invariably stemmed from the concern to arrange a Cuba deal as a starting point, with the ultimate goal to push for reconciliations to be reached on other questions. These topics are disarmament, prohibiting nuclear tests, nuclear non-proliferation, mutual non-aggression between the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the WTO (Warsaw Treaty Organization).

Khrushchev's behavior will inevitably generate extremely bitter fruits. First, it feeds the arrogance of American imperialists. The counter-revolutionaries in the world will hail it in one voice. The prestige of Kennedy has been considerably enhanced, which will enable him to demand more concessions in future bargains. Second, Khrushchev's activities amounted to a bowl of cold water, poured right over the Cuban people who have been fighting on the front line of the battle against the Americans. Because of Khrushchev, those who sit on the fence have now leaned rightward. However, this incident [i.e. the Soviet-American reconciliation] has again exposed to the world the true face of the modern revisionists. The people of the world have been offered an ever more unforgettable lesson: imperialism should be fought against on one's feet and in this struggle, revisionists can by no means be counted on.

From now on, American imperialists will, under the banner of the UN, create troubles for Cuba. Modern revisionists will, regardless of Cuba's interests, continue to seek the opportunity to reconcile with the US, or even the possibility of opening high-level meetings by imitating the model generated from the Cuba Missile Crisis management. In the latter case, the development of the situation will become more complicated.

Embassy to the Soviet Union
31 October 1962

[Source: Chinese Embassy in Moscow Report, "Khrushchev's Reconciliation with the United States on the Question of the Cuban Missile Crisis," Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-12, pp.1-3. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.21

Chinese Embassy, Havana, A Report on Fidel Castro's Televised Address, 1 November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

Tonight Castro delivered a televised nationwide speech and talked about the following issues:

- 1) Word by word, [Castro] read the published part of the memorandum of the conversation between Cuba and [UN Secretary-General] U Thant.
- 2) [He] reiterated the five points that Cuba insisted [on].
- 3) During the course of the Cuban crisis, Cuba and the Soviet Government had a disagreement. But this is not the right place for discussing it, for the situation could be exploited by [their] enemies. We are all Marxist-Leninists, and we could sit and talk between two parties and between two governments. We are not happy with particular facts and details. But we shall also bear in mind, especially at this moment, the generous aid from the Soviet Union. [Castro] demanded that people be disciplined.
- 4) [Castro] explained that the weaponry shipped away by the Soviet Union did not belong to Cuba.
- 5) [Castro] praised the fighting spirit demonstrated by [the Cuban] people during this period. The long-range missile in our minds could never be shipped away.

We hold that this speech was well written with a correct attitude. With close reference to the confusion in people's minds, [the speech] delivered a powerful blow to imperialism and revisionism.

Embassy in Havana
1 November 1962

[Source: Fidel Castro Delivered a Televised Address, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-07, p. 3. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.22

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, A Report of the Conversation between Chargé d'Affaires Huang Wenyou and Cuban Foreign Trade Minister, Alberto Mora Becerra, 1 November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

Today during comrade Huang Wenyou's official visit to Cuban foreign trade minister, Mora, the latter spoke [as follows]:

The Cuban people unite around the leader and support the five conditions. Without these conditions, nothing will be guaranteed.

We have noticed the *People's Daily's* editorial about supporting Cuba. [We] feel grateful as well as satisfied towards the support from the Chinese people. The Chinese people are our real brothers and comrades.

We understand that Chinese comrades struggled with the Norwegian ship owners and forced it to go to Cuba, for which we feel deeply grateful. Yet on the other hand, I think you will also understand that this [i.e. the incident of forcing the Norwegian ship to go to Cuba] was regrettable, for it not only affected us, but also the global endeavor. We feel very uncomfortable [with this incident]. But our position is firm and serious; peace could not be begged for.

The situation of previous days was very tense: at any minute an invasion and a nuclear war could occur. Our people were calm and vigilant, guarding as usual their combat and production positions.

Finally, he [Mora] asked Charge d'Affaires Huang to forward to the Chinese people the gratitude of the Cuban people.

Embassy in Cuba
1 November 1962

[Source: Embassy in Cuba: A Report of the Conversation between Charge d'Affaires Huang Wenyou and Cuban Foreign Trade Minister, Mora, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-05, p.19. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.23

Chinese Embassy, Havana, A Complementary Report of the Conversation with Joaquin Ordoqui, 1 November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

A complementary report of the conversation with Ordoqui:

1) Before [he] arrived in Cuba, [UN Secretary-General] U Thant had indicated that he would bring over 100 journalists with him. Fidel decided not to let them in; Cuba rejected [U Thant's proposal] by expressing the inability of Cuba to host so many people.

2) Someone (referring to the Soviet Union) observed that the five conditions raised by Cuba made the situation more complicated. But Fidel [Castro] indicated that the Cubans too wish the problem could be simpler, [asking] why would [people] want things to become complicated? [Fidel said,] the problem now is that it is no longer a military question, but a political one.

3) Insurgents and militias are both in a high spirit. Cuba shot down a U-2 [on 27 October], but did not announce it. The [body of] pilot Maj. [Rudolf] Anderson was found after [the] crash with his corpse divided into two. Cuba was prepared to ship it back to the US. Out of [the wreckage] of the airplane Cuba found some documents. The US took more aerial photographs of Cuba than there are [pictures] of the American film star, Marilyn Monroe. The US also tries to find information everywhere, probing if Cuba has had atomic bombs. Rumor goes that they [the US] asked 6 countries' ambassadors, including the Japanese ambassador who answered, "perhaps not."

4) The US is still preparing for war. Along the coast of Key West anti-aircraft missiles have been deployed, and troops are still under mobilization. The danger of an invasion remains, but it is less imminent. If the US did want a war, they would have blown up the Soviet missile bases a long time ago. A nuclear war does not at all need an announcement. [The US]

did not make an announcement before they dropped atomic bombs in Japan, whereas this time Kennedy is kicking up a fuss by making many statements, which looks like deceit and blackmail. The US is not prepared for a big war. So far it could only mobilize 6 divisions, one airborne unit. If a war against Cuba is to start, these troops are far from enough. Unless [the US] uses nuclear weapons to destroy Cuba, there is nothing to be feared. Fidel has a clear vision: even if Cuba is to be completely destroyed, socialism will prevail anyway. Fidel said, "If the US wants a war, we will give them one. [*yaoda jiuda*] Once the war begins, the US too won't have a good time." Cuba could attack the US fleet with the weapons it now has. Of course, we [the Cubans] are unable to destroy their entire fleet, but we could shatter a part of it. The Guantanamo base is now being besieged by us, completely.

5) We understand well that [if we were to] be weaker towards imperialism, it would immediately be bloated with pride. [Therefore, we] should be firm and knock down its arrogance. Cuba needs military and political aid, in particular, from socialist countries, without which Cuba's survival is impossible.

Embassy in Cuba
1 November 1962

[Source: *Embassy in Cuba: A Complementary report of the conversation with Ordoqui, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-05, pp.17-18. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.*]



Document No.24

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, The Problem of How to Express a Position on the Cuban-Soviet Relationship, 2 November 1962

Special Urgency & Priority Demanded

Foreign Ministry,

In recent dealing with foreigners [we] felt that Cuban government officials spoke very discreetly, avoiding mentioning the Soviet Union. Among the masses, some were very careful, others harshly criticized [Nikita] Khrushchev. In view of the above-mentioned circumstance, the party committee of the embassy decided that when dealing with foreigners, embassy staff, exchange students, etc., [we] should not, at our initiative, mention the Cuban-Soviet relationship, and all should, in accor-

dance to editorials from the homeland and leaders' speeches, positively indicate our support for the Cuban people. Because of [these measures we] haven't encountered any problem in dealing with foreigners. Last night Fidel [Castro]'s report pointed out in particular that the Cuban-Soviet disagreement ought to be left to the party and government to solve, and requested that people not discuss it everywhere. [Anastas] Mikoyan arrived in Cuba this afternoon. The Cuban-Soviet relationship is very complex. We should be very cautious when dealing with foreigners: not only should we express our full support for the correct position of Cuba, but also avoid being misunderstood that we have deep interest in the Cuban-Soviet relationship. For this reason we are prepared to abide by the following several principles when dealing with foreigners in the near future:

- to continue referring to editorials published in the past and speeches of leaders and positively indicate our support for the Cuban people

- to indicate clearly that Fidel's speech on 1 [November 1962] is absolutely correct, and that we fully support it.

On the Cuban-Soviet relationship, we do not mention [it] at our initiative. If our counterpart first mentions it, we should express our support for Fidel's position on the Cuban-Soviet relationship as indicated in the report on the night of 1 [November 1962]. We [should] always uphold the principle of proletarian internationalism as stipulated in the Moscow Declaration: based on genuine equality and independence, problems between fraternal parties and socialist countries should be dealt via negotiations in the form of notifying.

Please instruct [us] if the above ideas are suitable or not.

Embassy in Cuba
2 November 1962

[Source: *Embassy in Cuba: The Problem of How to Express Position when It Comes to the Cuban-Soviet Relationship, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00601-05, pp.3-4. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian*]



Document No.25

Chinese Embassy in the Soviet Union, The Soviet Union Continued a Reconciliatory Approach to the Cuban Problem, 2 November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

The Soviet Union continued a reconciliatory and submissive approach to the situation in Cuba:

In external propaganda, [the Soviet Union] strove to defend and boast about its policy. [It] published one after another cables from individual pacifists in the world to [Nikita] Khrushchev, extolling his achievement of saving peace and humanity.’

Until now the government still hasn’t publicly expressed its support for the five conditions stipulated in Cuba’s statement [of 28 October].

The Soviet Union] did not dare report the real situation of the negotiation between [UN Secretary-General] U Thant and [Fidel] Castro. It merely commented that the contact [between U Thant and Castro] is beneficial. It did not mention at all that no agreement was reached.

On the US blockade and aerial surveillance of Cuba, and [the US] clamoring for enlarging the scope of embargo, [the Soviet Union] only reported objectively but dared not condemn. Some Soviet media even argued that these measures of American imperialism were [the result of] the proposals from American militant groups, whereas the White House was comparatively cautious. They even said something like that the US was in a contest between rationality and militant groups.

[The Soviet Union] avoided reporting our country’s important editorials and speeches in support of Cuba. Instead, [it] adopted an approach of raping the people’s will: under the title of “the entire world supporting and thanking the wise policy of the Soviet Union,” it published the news on rallies in support of Cuba [being organized] in many places of our country.

[It] did not at all report any news on the Cuban people actively preparing to strike back at the American imperialist invasion; regarding Raúl Castro’s speech, [it] reported just the nice words on the Soviet Union, instead of the parts which defended revolution and opposed American imperialist invasion.

Although the Soviet Union strove to decorate the picture as the measures of the Soviet Union had taken effect and saved [the world] from the Cuban crisis, the situation was developing in the opposite direction. The US assumed their [old] attitude, which is now more arrogant, and the process [aiming at] invading Cuba was accelerated. Cuba then became even more resolute, opposing firmly the Soviet Union’s selling its sovereignty. Under these circumstances, the Soviet Union was very worried, which was why [Anastas] Mikoyan left ahead of schedule for Havana to mediate.

Judging from the fact that Mikoyan stopped in New York in the middle of his rush to Havana, the mission of Mikoyan’s trip is to suppress Cuba along with the US [The plan might

be:] first, make some contacts with the US; [then,] further the demonstration of the good will from the Soviet Union; request that the US honor its own promise; and afterwards, compel Cuba to abandon some demands and to cooperate with the US

However, in order to consolidate the first victory of its aggression on Cuba, the US will not give much capital to the Soviet Union. On the contrary, [the US] will probably exploit this opportunity and throw more pressure on the Soviet Union, compelling it to make ever bigger concessions and meanwhile exaggerating the conflict between the Soviet Union and Cuba, while Cuba will not yield, in which case Mikoyan will hardly complete his mission. To let the Soviet Union break the deadlock, Khrushchev is very likely to propose another advanced meeting with Kennedy.

Embassy in the Soviet Union

2 November 1962

[Source: Embassy in the Soviet Union: The Soviet Union Continues a Reconciliatory Approach to the Cuban Problem, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00601-07, pp.11-12. Translated from Chinese for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.26

Chinese Embassy, Havana, The Situation of the American Blockade of Cuba, 2 November 1962

Military Intelligence Department,

The head of the 2nd division of Cuban military intelligence department, Yitulinuo [sic], described the situation of the American blockade of Cuba as follows:

From 22 to 29 October, [in the area stretching] from Cabanas of Pinar del Rio Province, to Bahia de Santa Clara of Matanzas Province, every day there were some 170 sorties of American airplanes conducting scouting and blockading (at heights between 5,000 to 10,000 meters); the American aircraft carrier, Independence, was operating in these waters; it constantly sent and received airplanes, scouting and taking photography [over an area stretching] from Havana Province, Bay of Pigs Cuban air-fields, all the way to Oriente Province. In the Florida Channel, there were often 40 to 50 warships. The American aircraft carrier, Enterprise, C.V.A.N.-65, appearing in the waters to the east end of the Bahamas

[Panamas in text] and near the Turks, constantly received and sent airplanes, conducting operations of scouting and blockading along the Oriente Province, Jamaica island, and Haiti. In the waters north of Jamaica island, was an American aircraft carrier with several medium and small warships. The US is transferring troops, weapons, and tanks to Guantanamo via warships.

Between the 30th and the 31st of October, when the UN general secretary U Thant visited Cuba, American warships were 500 kilometers off the Cuban coast with reduced activities of warships and airplanes. After U Thant left Cuba, American warships advanced to the waters 200 kilometers from Cuba or even closer. Besides blockading, [they] also conducted scouting, intercepting (with radio and radar) with increased activities of warships and airplanes.

The American U-2, shot down last week, is in the area near Nipe, Oriente Province.

Now Cuba is planning to establish frontline headquarters (not based in Havana). Most chiefs [of departments] of the general staff [are expected to] go to the front line, while second-to-chiefs or deputy chiefs will chair routine works.

Military Attaché of the Embassy in Cuba
2 November 1962

[Source: The Situation of the American blockade of Cuba, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-09, pp.7-8. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.27

Chinese Embassy, Havana, "The Reactions of Cuban Society to Fidel Castro's Address," 2 November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

A continuing report [on Castro's televised address on 1 November],

Reactions to Castro's address on the 1st [of November]:

According to the mayor of Havana, the salient point of Fidel's address is that [Cuba] will not trade for peace by mak-

ing concessions to imperialism. Cuba is willing to negotiate, but it will not sacrifice its people's interests.

A [teaching] instructor at the Embassy observed that Fidel is a man of dignity. He is a great leader, braver than Khrushchev. Khrushchev allowed the UN to send personnel to supervise [the removal of the Soviet missiles] and the Red Cross to investigate. But Castro said no, with an extremely resolute attitude. Cuba is not commanded by the Soviet Union; it is commanded by the Cuban people. Soviet support, also acknowledged by Fidel, is crucial. Had [Anastas] Mikoyan's visit preceded Fidel's address, Mikoyan would have become very unpopular [with the Cubans]. Now it is good because Fidel has made it clear.

2) On withdrawing bases:

As the mayor of Havana claimed, the difficult moment is a good test for friendship with, and support for Cuba [by other countries].

One writer maintained that Soviet Union not only has committed a mistake on the Yugoslavia problem, but it did too on the Cuba problem. Khrushchev worked at the command of Kennedy.

3) Reactions towards China's support:

As the mayor of Havana said, from [the moment of] the Cuban revolution succeeding until now, China has consistently supported Cuba. This help is unselfish. Just like what [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara said, China sacrificed itself to help Cuba.

The head of one department of the President's compound said, "Not just now, I said it a long time ago that [I] am for Mao Zedong."

4) On war preparation:

A director from the education ministry said, "The major target of this mobilization of war preparation is militias and government officials. But middle school students are also required to participate, on which the education ministry has made a lot of efforts."

A composer said, "The literature and art front of Cuba is normally filled by endless arguments and disagreements, but facing a possible American invasion, it is now in an unprecedented solidarity and unity. Many writers, poets, painters, and musicians, all go deep to the front to boost the spirit of troops."

Embassy in Cuba
2 November 1962

[Source: The reactions of Cuban society towards Fidel Castro's Address, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-07, pp.9-10. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian]



Document No.28

Chinese Embassy to the Soviet Union, Information on the report delivered by Maj. Boris Gelibusiji from the defense department of the Soviet Union in the Moscow Engineering and Physics College, 2 November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

On the 30th of October, in the Moscow Engineering and Physics College, a report of current events was delivered. The reporter was Maj. Boris Gelibusiji [sic] from the Defense Ministry of the Soviet Union. When it came to the Sino-Indian border problem, the reporter said, "The Sino-Indian border has never been demarcated. Prior to 1961, the position adopted by the Chinese government was wrong. For China, with a large population, wanted more territory, we [therefore] supported India. Now some changes have occurred in the policy of Chinese government, so we now support China." When our exchange students expressed their disagreement to the way the reporter spoke of [the situation], [the reporter] added, "In the associated meeting of socialist countries, all nations condemned China." He continued, "It is wrong to terminate the trading between China and India. Could China's present policy be wiser, like the attitude the Soviet government adopted towards the Cuba problem, i.e., avoiding war?" With reference to the reporter twisting our country's policy, our exchange students lodged a protest to the party secretary of the college.

Besides, when it came to the Cuban problem, the reporter said, "The major reason behind the US blockade was that Cuba's possession of aggressive weapons posed a threat to the US. The Soviet Union declared that the weapons were in the hands of Soviet officers and would be withdrawn. By doing this, [the Soviet Union] took hold of the trump card of the US on this problem." [The reporter] added, "The benefit of associating the Cuba problem with [US] military bases in Turkey is that it would compel the US to ponder this point, and therefore remove Turkey's threat to the Soviet Union."

When it came to the Albania problem, the reporter said, "Albania originally wanted to form an alliance with Italy, but it was rejected. The difficulties they are facing are mount-

ing. Many have now changed their views towards the Soviet Union, except [Albanian Premier Mehmet] Shehu who remains stubborn."

Embassy to the Soviet Union

2 November 1962

[Source: Embassy to the Soviet Union: A Report of a Presentation delivered by Maj. Boris Gelibusiji from the Defense Ministry of the Soviet Union in the Moscow Engineering and Physics College, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-02, pp.5-6. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.29

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, A Report of the Conversation between Charge d'Affaires Huang Wenyou and Severo Aguirre del Cristo, Member of the National Leadership Committee of Cuban Integrated Revolutionary Organizations, 5 November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

Severo Aguirre [del Cristo], member of the national leadership committee of Cuban Integrated Revolutionary Organizations, told comrade Huang Wenyou on 2 November, "Cuba's party and government are determined to defend [Cuba's] sovereignty and independence at any cost, including sacrificing one's own life. The five demands raised by Fidel [Castro] are minimum ones. To realize them, we shall rely, above all, on our own determination and resolve, then on international support, for our own force alone is not enough and we need people to stand behind us."

Embassy in Cuba

5 November 1962

[Source: Chinese Embassy in Cuba: A Report of the Conversation between Chargé d'Affaires Huang Wenyou and Severo Aguirre, Member of the National Leadership Committee of Cuban Integrated Revolutionary Organizations, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-05, p. 21. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.30

Chinese Foreign Ministry Instruction to Diplomatic Posts on How to Express Attitude in Response to Khrushchev's Letters, 5 November 1962

Embassy in Yugoslavia along with all other embassies and consulates,

[We] have received the two cables, respectively sent on 29 October [1962] and 1 November [1962].

In our external activities, when asked for opinions towards two letters from [Nikita] Khrushchev, respectively on 27 October and 28 October, to [John F.] Kennedy, don't directly indicate the attitude. [You] could refer to our government statement on 25 October, Comrade Peng Zhen's speech on 28 October ([in] *Renmin Ribao*, 29 [October]), the note from Foreign Minister Chen [Yi] to the Cuban chargé d'affaires in China (in *Renmin Ribao*, 2 November), the spirit of the two editorials of *Renmin Ribao*, respectively 31 October and 5 November. Positively indicate our position of firmly supporting Cuba's struggle.

Foreign Ministry
5 November 1962

[Source: Foreign Ministry: Instruction on How to Express Attitude In Response to [Nikita] Khrushchev's Letter, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00601-05, pp.9-10. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.31

Foreign Ministry Instruction on How to Express Positions Regarding the Cuba-Soviet Relationship, 6 November 1962

Special Urgency

Embassy in Cuba along with all other embassies and consulates,

[We] have received the cable sent on 2 [November] regarding the external position on the question of supporting Cuba's struggle. In general, your ideas are approved. You could refer to the note from Foreign Minister Chen [Yi] to the Cuban chargé d'affaires in China, our government's statement on 25 October, etc., to positively indicate our position of supporting [Fidel] Castro's speech on the night of 1 [November]. With

respect to the Cuban-Soviet relationship, [you] should not speak but listen [*zhiting bushuo*].

Foreign Ministry

6 November 1962

[Source: Foreign Ministry: Instruction on How to Express Positions Regarding the Cuba-Soviet Relationship, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00601-05, p.5. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.32

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, Report on the Experience of the Soviet National Day Reception, 8 November 1962

Urgent

Foreign Ministry,

A brief report of what [we] heard from yesterday's Soviet national day reception is as follows:

1) Judging from the conversation between Cuban leaders and [Anastas] Mikoyan, [their] relationship remains strained. Mikoyan proposed a toast, "Khrushchev said, 'In our grandsons' generation, the US will be socialist.' I say, our sons' generation will be." Fidel [Castro] replied, "No matter which generation, in a nutshell, [the US] will become socialist." The Soviet ambassador [Aleksandr Alekseyev] suggested a toast to a notable power, [Emilio] Aragonés' party, which was answered back by Raúl [Castro], "This has nothing to do with Aragonés." Mikoyan said, "The party of Cuba is an interesting party. It's the only [party] in the world in which the old and the new are married to each other, being more than a simple mingling but a fusion. It [therefore] has more vitality, and [set] an example for Latin America." [Mikoyan] added, "You should work hard, otherwise we will criticize [you]." Raúl responded, "We [follow the] Leninist approach of party-building: not only do [we] listen to party members, [we] also listen to the masses of workers and farmers." Mikoyan said, "What I meant was criticisms between fraternal parties, friendly and comradely, in order to remove shortcomings."

2) [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara told Charge d'Affaires Huang that it was busy now and that at this moment [they] always

had to grind their machetes for sugarcane-cutting. [Guevara] requested the charge d'affaires bring back the Ambassador [Shen Jian] earlier [from China], for there were lots of things to do. Fidel's aide, Maj. Aisikaluona [sic] told us, "Chairman Mao is not only the leader of the Chinese people, he is also the leader of all oppressed peoples in the world. Let Chinese brothers and sisters know that if it emerges that Cuba has to fight alone, it will fight US aggression firmly to the end. Now there are people who describe a country, which has merely striven to defend itself, as a warmonger, because we did not approve people who violate Marxist-Leninist principles. Weapons all could be manipulated, but individuals with pride could not be manipulated."

3) After the president and prime minister left, Mikoyan spoke to Raúl [Castro], "There are always some disagreements [between socialist countries], like between brothers or between husband and wife, which are family affairs with solidarity being the basic." [Mikoyan] then initiated a toast to solidarity. [Emilio] Aragonés was also present, but kept silent. Mikoyan gave a good many compliments to Vilma [Espin] (wife of Raúl). It appeared that they had worked hard on Mr. and Mrs. Castro.

Towards us all walks of the Cuban society were cordial and friendly. [They] thanked [us] for our country's great support, yet with no exception did not touch on the topic of the Cuban-Soviet meeting.

Embassy in Cuba
8 November 1962

[Source: *Embassy in Cuba: Report on the Experience of the Soviet National Day Reception, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00601-05, pp.11-12. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.*]



Document No.33

Chinese Embassy in Cuba Investigation Group,
Guevara's Mother Talked About the Soviet-Cuban
Relationship, 8 November 1962

Central Investigation Department,

Guevara's mother [Celia de la Serna y Llosa], Madam Moke [sic], and Abraham Guillén [a Marxist author], three people visited our embassy at their initiative. After studying [the situation], [we] decided to designate Comrade Xiong You [...] [sic] to meet on our behalf. As to the content of the conversation, in accor-

dance with the instruction of the Foreign Ministry, [Xiong] did not speak but only listened regarding the Soviet-Cuban conflict.

According to Guevara's mother, [...] [sic] the leader of the Argentine national liberation movement [sic, sentence unclear], prior to [this conversation], we had met her twice by chance at Madam Moke's (details of which had been reported separately). When this time we came to the topic of supporting Cuba in defending its sovereignty, Guevara's mother spoke darkly, "I'm afraid Cuba is collapsing."

Madam Moke talked to Guevara on the night of 6 [November]. She said that [she] tried persuading Guevara to talk to Chinese comrades. Guevara replied, "[The situation] now is intense. Mikoyan is here. I have no time to see Chinese comrades. Between the Chinese comrades and us there is no conflict." Madam Moke also suggested that the Chinese comrades ought to look for Guevara and talk. [She] even mentioned that the blow to Guevara this time is considerable, to which we gave no comment.

Abraham claimed to be born in Spain, had participated in the Spanish civil war, [...] [sic] to be a military expert and economist, with works such as *Imperialism of the Dollar [and the Direct Inversions-Appendix]*, and *The Agony of Imperialism*. [He said to] give one copy of each to Chairman Mao. At the invitation of Cuban government [he] came in secrecy to Cuba to work as the staff of an Argentine secret academy which now has over 40 students. Abraham claimed to be a non-party Marxist-Leninist and a Maoist; China, [he said,] was his second homeland. In the conversation, he appeared to hate Khrushchev bitterly, holding that Khrushchev was afraid of war, not allowing Latin American people to wage revolution and saying that Khrushchev had thrown [Fidel] Castro into a river and drowned him. Marxist-Leninists should open a military revolution in Latin America and save Cuba. [He] also gave us a copy of their detailed plan to open military struggle in Argentina, which [was supposed to] symbolize their trust in Chinese comrades and wish for cooperation. In the conversation, [he] profusely praised Chairman Mao, saying that Chairman Mao was the leader of all oppressed peoples in the world, and that their plan was devised in accordance with the spirit of Chairman Mao's thought. [Abraham] wished China to accelerate the research on the hydrogen bomb, [saying that only by this would] world peace could be guaranteed and etc. Judging from the outcomes of this contact, Abraham is under the leadership of Madam Moke.

Regarding what issues should receive attention in future contacts, please instruct.

Investigative Group of Embassy in Cuba
8 November 1962

CC: Foreign Ministry, Investigation Department

Comment by Kong Yuan:
Please let Foreign Ministry read [this cable]

Cable Received by Machine
0356 Central Investigation Department

[Source: *Investigative Group of the Embassy in Cuba: Guevara's Mother Talked About the Soviet-Cuban Relationship, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00601-02, pp.3-4. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.*]



Document No.34

Chinese Embassy in Havana, A Brief Report of a Cuban Military Intelligence Official's Talk, 8 November 1962

Foreign Ministry and Military Intelligence Department,

According to Yitulinuo [sic], head of the second division of Cuban military intelligence department, the situation has been calm from the 4th of this month until now. Two American aircraft carriers, once deployed near Cuba, have now reached the waters relatively distant from Cuba in the Gulf of Mexico. Although American airplanes continue scouting, surveillance, and intruding into [Cuban] territorial airspace along the Cuban coast, it has become less frequent. Today air intrusion has reached 23 sorties (including U-2), [but] yesterday's was more than today's.

Military Attaché of Embassy in Cuba
8 November 1962

[Source: *A Brief Report of Cuban Military Intelligence Official's Talk, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-09, p.9. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.*]



Document No.35

Chinese Embassy in Iraq, Report on Mercenaries Used by United States to Invade Cuba, 9 November 1962

Military Intelligence Department,

According to the third secretary of the Cuban [Embassy], mercenaries used by the US to invade Cuba are mainly recruited from Cuban counter-revolutionaries; [the US] also enlisted some ordinary refugees and counter-revolutionaries from other Latin American countries. These mercenaries, unified under the command of the American Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], are divided into two groups. One group is the regular army, which, stationed in Florida, the US, is commanded and trained by American troops. They are armed with light weapons and wear uniforms with a badge on their chest which reads, "C.R.C.", referring to the "Cuban Revolutionary Council." This army has some 15,000 men, with a backbone of between 3,000 to 4,000 people, including American commanders, all speaking Spanish. The other group is special agents committed to sabotage and subversion operations. It has many organizations, not unified yet; the major one is "Ai'er famao" [sic]. They were dispatched to different states of the US, received different training, and then [were] sent to West Germany, Japan, and Latin American countries, to engage in various professions there. [They are expected to] exploit appropriate situations, in the disguise of refugees, infiltrate into Cuba to conduct operations as special agents. [On top of these two groups,] there is another group of people, based in the US, assaulting and harassing Cuba's coastal cities from the high sea, and conducting sabotage.

Military Attaché of Embassy in Iraq
9 November 1962

[Source: *Mercenaries used by the US to invade Cuba, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-09. Translated for CWIHP from Chinese by Zhang Qian.*]



Document No.36

Chinese Embassy to the Soviet Union, A Report of the Speech Given By the Chief Editor of the Soviet Weekly *Za Rubezhom*, 10 November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

According to our overseas students, on the 31st of October, the chief editor of the Soviet weekly, *Za Rubezhom* delivered a report on current events in the Moscow Agriculture College.

Regarding the Cuba problem and the Sino-Indian border problem, he expressed the following views:

When speaking of the Cuba problem, he did not try advertising the wisdom of the Soviet policy. Instead, he began by reminding the audience, “The situation remains grave; the Cuban crisis has yet to pass away.” [He] quoted information from Western news agencies, saying “that the primary task of the West is to eliminate the [Fidel] Castro’s regime, to eliminate Castro and aggressive weapons altogether so as to curb the communist influence on [Latin] America.” The reporter claimed, “Although a contribution has been made on our part, Western countries did not budge accordingly. They treated our activities as the projection of weakness. Now Washington is having celebratory parties, to congratulate their victory and to praise Kennedy’s wisdom and resolve. [Harry] Truman, this imperialist of the old brand, also took the opportunity and stepped out of the dark, saying that to the Russians [the US] ought to be tough. Once being threatened, they [the Russians] are bound to back down. On the West Berlin problem, too, [the US] should be tough.” The reporter rarely expressed his own opinion. [He] mainly introduced the situation of the Cuban crisis by referring to a plethora of news from foreign news agencies, and requested the audience to keep a close eye on the further development.

Regarding the Sino-India border, he commented, “The Sino-Indian border incident is not in the interests of world peace, nor was it expected by both countries [Indian and China]. Imperialism wants to exploit it. China is a socialist country and India is a capitalist one. India looked to the US for military aid which has already been promised by the US” He added, “Interestingly, in earlier years in the Senate, [John F.] Kennedy already said that to contain the communist movement in Asia, India will play a significant role.” The reporter also referred to the declaration made by China on 24 October—China raised its proposals but the Indian government turned them down—[he] quoted a paragraph from a Vietnamese newspaper and expressed the wish that the Sino-Indian border problem could be peacefully resolved.

Embassy to the Soviet Union
10 November 1962

[Source: Embassy to the Soviet Union: a Report of the Speech Given by the Chief Editor of the Soviet Weekly Za Rubezhom: Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-03, pp.7-8. Translated for CWIHP from Chinese by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.37

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, A Report of the Conversation with the Deputy Editor of [*Noticias de Hoy*], [Raúl Valdes] Vivo, 12 November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

According to Vivo, the deputy editor of *Hoy*, the possibility of Paraguay severing diplomatic relations with Cuba is higher than that of Chile [severing relations with Cuba]. [If both are going to sever relationships with Cuba,] Chile may do so earlier than Paraguay; Paraguay won’t sever the relationship before the general election. The rightist Peronist [government] of Argentina also opposes Cuba.

The present threat to Cuba has become less imminent, but remains. The US now wants to invade Cuba via the Organization of American States. Recently, two Argentine warships and two Dominican [Republic] warships, along with three thousand Argentine soldiers, arrived in Panama.

It is difficult for the US to maintain the naval blockade. [But] it wants to intensify the economic blockade and to make ships from capitalist countries not go to Cuba. The present number of vessels coming to Cuba is less than before. This problem is going to become worse during sugar season.

The [North] Vietnamese ambassador holds that the reason for the leaders of Latin American fraternal parties, who were previously in Cuba, to return home at the Soviet Union announcement of withdrawing missile bases, is mainly to pacify those confused minds within their parties as well as countries.

Embassy in Cuba
12 November 1962

[Source: Embassy in Cuba: A Report of the Conversation with the Deputy Editor of Hoy, Vivo, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-05, p.26. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.38

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, A Report of the Conversation between Chargé d’Affaires Huang

Wenyou, and Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister
Pelegrin Torras, 13 November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

Chargé d'Affaires Huang [Wenyou] visited [Cuban] Deputy Foreign Minister Torras. The content of conversation is presented as follows:

On Cuba's situation. He said that Cuba's situation has yet to stabilize. In the UN, all sorts of proposals are under discussion (including ones from Latin American and Asia-African countries). One thing is critical, which is the coordinated and collective position of the Soviet Union and Cuba. This will place American imperialism in a political difficulty. We [i.e. the Cubans] know that imperialism will not abandon its aggressive attempt, and [we] also understand that this struggle is a long-lasting one. We [i.e. Cubans] wish, via the discussion of various proposals and especially via the Soviet Union and Cuba adopting a shared position, to expose to the world the true attempt [of imperialism], even if [we] cannot make imperialism honor its promise. We believe that this is also a political victory over imperialism.

The Sino-Indian problem. He said that I [i.e., Torras], along with other [Cuban] leaders, have kept a close eye on it. With respect to the Sino-Indian conflict, we [Cubans] understand the proposals put forth by the Chinese government in the hope to peacefully solve the border problem, agreed that these proposals could serve as the basis of negotiation. What is regrettable is that the Indian government repeatedly turned them down. A continuation of the Sino-Indian border conflict will do no good for the Indian people; [it] will only serve Indian counterrevolutionaries and imperialism. The reason why Indian counterrevolutionaries are doing these [presumably referring to accusations against China for invading Indian territory] is to arouse a deviating nationalistic sentiment, and to split the Indian people's power. By doing so, Nehru is to gain his personal interests and the interests of the class he represents. I [i.e. Torras] speak of this as a comrade, because Cuba has diplomatic relationships with both countries. When expressing opinions as deputy Foreign Minister, [I] have to take into account the fact of Cuba having a relationship with India. When being asked if Cuba has received the petition letter from [Indian leader Jawaharlal] Nehru, he said that the Cuban government hasn't.

Chargé d'Affaires Huang indicated that [China] feels grateful to Cuba which supports China's proposals in the aim to peacefully solve the Sino-Indian border conflict, and that we [i.e. China] understand Cuba's present situation.

Embassy in Cuba
13 November 1962

[Source: *Embassy in Cuba: A Report of the Conversation between Chargé d'Affaires Huang Wenyou, and Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Torras, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-05, pp.28-29. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.*]



Document No.39

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, Report on Fidel Castro's
letter to UN Secretary-General U Thant, 15
November 1962

Foreign Ministry,

This afternoon, Castro sent [UN Secretary-General] U Thant a letter, once again rejecting any country or international organization conducting inspections on Cuban territory and reiterating that the five points raised by Cuba are the basics. This letter reveals that the US recently continued sending airplanes into Cuban airspace, and indicates that Cuba has the right to retaliate by shooting. It firmly expresses that Cuba is determined to defend its sovereignty and rights, and will never beg for survival on its knees.

Embassy in Cuba
15 November 1962

[Source: *Fidel Castro's Letter to U Thant, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-07, p.11. Translated for CWIHP from Chinese by ZHANG Qian.*]



Document No.40

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, Report of Military
Intelligence Department of Cuban General
Staff's Talking about American Air Intrusion,
20 November 1962

Foreign Ministry and Military Intelligence Department,

On the morning of the 20th [of November] the head of the military intelligence department of the Cuban general staff [perhaps Pedro Luis Rodríguez—ed.] talked about [the following]:

From the 1st until the 15th of this month, American air intrusion reached 247 sorties. In some cases, [intruding] height was merely 2,000 meters. Often [American airplanes] traverse Cuba, either from east to west, or from south to north. After the publication of [Fidel] Castro's letter to [UN Secretary-General] U Thant on the 15th [of November], American air intrusion has apparently decreased, with only two or three sorties a day. At an altitude between ten thousand and twenty thousand [meters], [American airplanes] (mainly U-2) dare not go further and hide near Mariel Harbor, Pinar del Rio Province, conducting scouting. On the 19th [of November], an American F-8U intruded into San Diego's airspace but was driven away by anti-aircraft forces.

Guantanamo has now 15,000 American troops. No substantial change appears with respect to the maritime blockade. Argentina, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, have all sent warships to participate [in the blockade]. American naval maneuvers are mainly maintenance and supply operations.

The present concern is that American imperialism [will] invade [Cuba] with the Latin American puppet countries' troops and Cuban counter-revolutionary mercenaries, which will be politically beneficial to American imperialism.

Castro's two letters to U Thant are historical documents, standing for the Cuban people's current will and the firm position to defend revolution: as long as American planes make intrusions into [Cuba's] territorial air [space], [Cuban people] will shoot them down. Today, Americans could claim that missiles and bombers are aggressive weapons; tomorrow, they too could say that cannons, even submachine guns, are aggressive weapons. Cuban people improve quickly in terms of their understanding, capable of identifying the right from the wrong: it is not missiles that American imperialism fears; it is the Cuban revolutionary model that [it] fears.

He is very concerned about the Sino-Indian border problem. He said that this time once again, [Indian leader Jawaharlal] Nehru's mask of peace and neutrality was stripped off. Like [Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel] Nasser, the lips say one thing, while the heart thinks another.

On the 14th of November, the Cuban armed force sent an instruction, requiring that troops and civilians all keep military secrets. It is now conducting education via papers, magazines, television stations, and radios.

Military Attaché of Embassy in Cuba
20 November 1962

[Source: Military Intelligence Department of Cuban General Staff Talking about American Air Intrusion, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00342-09, pp.11-12. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.41

Chinese Embassy in Cuba, A Brief Report of the Conversation with a Cuban Artillery Commander, 22 November 1962

Foreign Ministry and Military Intelligence Department,

On the 21st [of November], a Cuban artillery commander expressed [his opinions as follows]: [John] Kennedy could not be trusted: now he demanded the Soviet Union remove [IL-28] bombers; later he will perhaps invade [Cuba] right away, or perhaps invade with an army knocked together with mercenaries and [soldiers from] puppet countries. On one hand, our side should continue preparing, on the other hand, [we] should beware of constructing defenses secretly ([he] referred to secrecy and camouflage). On the 19th and 20th [of November], [we] conducted shooting at invading US naval airplanes. Because national defense needs to be strengthened, industry development is accordingly going to be slowed down. With respect to Sino-Indian border conflict, he believed that [the conflict] was created by [Jawaharlal] Nehru, whereas Indian people were still good.

Military attaché office of embassy in Cuba
22 November 1962

[Source: Embassy in Cuba, A Brief Report of the Conversation with a Cuban Artillery Commander, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00342-05, p. 34. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.42

Chinese Foreign Ministry, Reply to Chinese Embassy in Havana Regarding the Visit of Ernesto "Che" Guevara's Mother, 27 November 1962

Embassy in Cuba,

The cable sent on 8 November was received. Things informed by Guevara's mother, et al., deserve our attention. After Ambassador Shen [Jian] returned to the embassy, [we] could continue to visit Cuban leaders, conduct discussions, with reference to the spirit of the homeland's policies, and listen to their reactions earnestly. Please bring the materials, the ones handed to you by Abraham [Guillén], to the country, ASAP. When dealing with Guevara's mother, et al., [you] should still listen more while speaking less [*duoting shaoshuo*].

Investigation Department of Foreign Ministry
27 November 1962

[Source: *Reply Regarding the Visit of Ernesto Che Guevara's Mother, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No.111-00601-02, p.8. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.*]



Document No.43

Chinese Embassy in Havana, Memorandum of Conversation between Shen Jian, China's Ambassador to Cuba, and Raúl Roa García, Cuba's Foreign Minister, 30 November 1962

Shen: When I was about to return to China from Cuba, you asked me to bring back the fourth volume of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. This is what I bring from Beijing.

Roa: Thank you very much. This is a generous gift. Many comrades will envy me because of it.

Shen: This is a copy of the statement issued by our government on 30 November in support of the IRO [Integrated Revolutionary Organizations] and the statement of the council of ministers. The master copy hasn't arrived yet though.

Roa: Thank you. I want to take this opportunity, on behalf of our government, to thank the Chinese people. The Chinese government, at the difficult moment of a possible imminent invasion, expressed support to Cuba, in particular, the support for the Five Demands, for our activities at the UN, and for our position adopted in the negotiation in the US. We want to take this opportunity to tell Comrade Ambassador, which Comrade Ambassador may probably have already known, that we have proposed a draft of trilateral parties

which stipulates three countries' duties and also includes our Five Demands. Without spending more words, as Comrade Ambassador is bound to know, the US will not accept it.

Besides, we also expressed that we agree to multiple inspections, including the one from the US. But this is in line with the overall solution to the Caribbean Crisis; in other words, the [US] has to accept Cuba's Five Demands. This is the current situation. It's likely, or almost certain, that Cuba will issue a statement by itself [i.e., and not jointly with the US and Soviet Union—ed.]. The reason for it is that the development of the situation leaves Cuba with no other choices. This independent statement will express our point of view and our assessment of the crisis from the beginning to the end; will point out that the only solution to the Caribbean Crisis is to accept Cuba's Five Demands; [and] will also point out that although war is temporarily avoided, peace is not achieved since the US is still implementing its aggressive policies; Cuba is ready to participate in all sorts of negotiations, but it will not sell its sovereignty, or yield, nor will it agree to any solution that would damage its sovereignty. We hold that peace could not be achieved by handing over our power; [we] must stand up to aggressors with dignity and be firm. We said many times that Cuba would not fail. The fact of this period proves that Cuba, indeed, did not fail. This is the brief report of the current situation and the prospect for the Security Council due in the early next week.

Shen: It is on 17 October that I left Havana. On my arrival in Beijing, the situation in Cuba became tense. Being absent at the most tense moment of the situation in Cuba is a regret. But a redeeming feature is to see how our government, party, and people spared no efforts in supporting Cuba: we adopted the Marxist-Leninist approach. We noticed that the Cuban people in difficulty were so united that they resembled one person, uniting around the leadership with Premier Fidel [Castro] as the head. Our government issued statements several times in support of Cuba, and people voluntarily rallied in both cities and villages, demonstrated and assembled. In Beijing alone, demonstrations lasted four days, from dawn until dark, [occurring] in front of the Cuban embassy with one million participants. Over those days, the comrades of your embassy, especially the chargé d'affaires, Comrade Bide Luosuo [sic], chanted slogans and condemned US imperialism. I bring a documentary film this time and you could watch it when [you are] free. We are prepared to give as a present one [such film] to the Cuban government. We believe that Cuba has made great achievements in this struggle. Cuba's struggle is not just for Cuba, but also for the Latin American people and for the people of the world. This struggle proves that a people, or a nation, could defend its sovereignty or

dignity only by relying on its own strength. I have been away from Cuba for one month, during which [I] was receiving news only from papers. There are many things I don't know. Perhaps [I] will ask you to talk about them sometime.

Roa: All right, when I get rid of the busy tasks here. You know, over these days, apart from our soldiers and our people, this department is the center of all these tasks. Perhaps I shall go to your embassy sometime, or invite you to come to my home for a quiet talk. In this period, there are many extraordinarily interesting things to do.

Shen: Yes. The struggle of the Cuban people is very complex, in which there is not only the problem of imperialism; there is also a problem of another aspect.

Roa: Yes, very complex. The experience we acquired from this struggle is: when the people of a country faces a grave danger, if it could put up a sturdy fight against aggressors and dare to pay whatever cost, this people will win sooner or later. This is how Comrade Fidel told us. In order to [achieve] victory and stick to principles, [one] has to prepare for all sorts of sacrifices. When you are ready as such, you will be victorious. It is true, indeed. Now our people's awareness becomes higher. [They] band with each other more closely, with firmer resolve and clearer vision. Not only is revolutionary Cuba saved, its prestige is also increased. The truth is: none of these atomic bombs, whatever their sorts are, is able to affect the Cuban island or the Cuban revolution. This is our experience. As Comrade Ambassador must know, Fidel said in his speech that although missiles were withdrawn [from Cuba], our moral missile will never ever be withdrawn.

Shen: Nobody could ever move such missiles. The strategic weapon of the Cuban people is the people themselves.

Roa: Indeed it is true. Naturally when it comes to these problems, more time will be needed [for discussion]. I prefer to talk to you at another opportunity. Now I would like to briefly tell you that over this period, our people behaved extraordinarily well, very calmly. Nobody was afraid. Unlike some European countries, there was no event, such as panic buying of fuel or bread.

When [UN Secretary-General] U Thant arrived, I went to meet him at the airport, and came back with him via downtown. He said that he was surprised at [seeing] such a calm communist life on our streets. He told me that the people's calmness and sufficient supply really surprised him and that our people's behavior was truly moving. In those days, the presence of Western ambassadors could barely be noticed at

the foreign ministry; it was them, the only [group of] people, who rushed to buy food. But the day after Fidel's television speech, the Italian ambassador came to see me, [saying] that [he] had no other important things, which was apparently an excuse. He told me, "I am already an old person. [I] have seen many things in the world. Few things could now still move me. But I did shed tears when Fidel was giving his speech last night. The Cuban people's behavior is a good lesson for me, and also a fine example. This speech of mine is, diplomatically, of no value; it's entirely a statement of individual opinion." You see, even an ambassador from a country that has conflicting interests with us is also moved [by us].

Shen: I bring some materials and maps concerning the Sino-Indian border problem. I want to present you briefly this problem.

Roa: Good. We have kept a close eye on this issue, and conducted several discussions. I also read the letter, delivered by your embassy, from Premier Zhou Enlai to Asian-African countries. It was well written, giving a comprehensive and detailed presentation of the Sino-Indian border problem

Shen: (presented briefly the course of the Sino-Indian border problem in accordance with Premier Zhou Enlai's letter to Asian-African country leaders.)

Our general policy towards the Sino-Indian border problem is: our people's main enemy is US imperialism, rather than reactionary Indian nationalism. We advocate solving the Sino-Indian problem by peaceful and friendly negotiations. But we both had the experience that when facing capitalists [we] should not always make concessions; sometimes, necessary struggle should be conducted. We fought back, at the moment [we] were [imposed with] the unbearable and [left with] nowhere to retreat [*renwukeren, tuiwuketui*]. We wish that Asian-African friendly countries will exert influence and prompt [Jawaharlal] Nehru to go back to the negotiation table.

Roa: I want to ask Comrade Ambassador: what is the prospect of a Sino-Indian meeting?

Shen: From our part, we wish to negotiate.

Roa: I meant that from the Indian part, how is the possibility [of the Sino-Indian negotiation]?

Shen: This issue is complex. It depends on how the Indians will act, and also on the imperialist attitude.

Roa: Yes, this issue is complex. Behind Nehru, there are imperialists, in particular, US imperialists, and also British imperialists, which obviously complicates the issue.

Shen: The fact that imperialist countries and capitalist countries support Nehru does not surprise us. But there are some fraternal countries saying that Nehru is peace-loving. Nehru sent troops to attack us; Nehru is the representative of the big capitalist class; Nehru colluded closely with imperialism. How can he be described as a peace-loving person? They, at the point of [a] socialist country having conflict with [a] reactionary nationalist country, adopted an incorrect position. The fundamental problem is that [they did not] evaluate Nehru in terms of the class interests that Nehru represents. Comrade Minister [certainly] knows well this point, [since] you have conducted face-to-face struggle with Nehru.

Roa: Yes, Nehru is by no means a peace-loving person. From a long time ago, he has begun to play a reactionary role. From a long time ago, he has turned to imperialism. Just as Comrade Ambassador said, view him in terms of the interests he represents. Personally, I have never trusted him. He is a man of hypocrisy, pretense, and braggadocio. He is self-convinced that he speaks better English than George Williamson [transliteration; not further identified]. True, [he] does speak better English than Williamson, because he also speaks the political language of imperialism.

Shen: We know that the fraternal country Cuba is backing us on the Sino-Indian border problem.

Roa: We are very concerned with this problem. I will forward these materials and maps to the comrades of the Socialist Country Division and Asian Research Division who study this problem. To let them further the study and discussion on this problem [now] does not mean that they were wrong. The assessment of this problem has never been wrong. But in the past, [they] were devoid of tools, such as maps, which help [people] gain straight-forward information from knowledge and impression from maps.

Embassy in Cuba
30 November 1962

[Source: Memorandum of Conversation between Shen Jian, China's Ambassador to Cuba, and Raúl Roa García, Cuba's Foreign Minister, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 111-00361-04, pp.1-6. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.44

Memorandum of Conversation between Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Chinese Ambassador Shen Jian, Havana, 1 December 1962

Guevara: (on sitting down) please forgive what I said in our last conversation, the one taking place [on 13 October 1962] just before you returned to China.

Ambassador Shen: What happened in Cuba was a bad thing, which, however, could also turn into a good one. The Cuban people and the Cuban leadership have insisted upon a correct position, and carried out victorious struggle. Not only is it a good experience from the standpoint of the Cuban people, but also it provides the world as a whole a valuable experiment which gives it global significance.

Guevara: [The evaluation of this incident] should be carried out in close connection to Latin America. Indeed, to Latin America, it is genuinely a defeat. We are facing a grim situation in which some countries are going to shift their attitudes towards us. Although we were very careful when we expressed our disagreement with the Soviet Union, some countries have initiated corresponding economic measures. We have been determined, even if we were to be pulverized by nuclear bombs; after all, our lives are God-given. In Bulgaria, we had a very interesting discussion with brother parties. Comrade [Blas] Roca explained to Latin American fraternal parties the reasons behind Cuba's position. Representatives of a few fraternal parties—[I] don't know what countries exactly they were from—responded by saying that the overarching priority should have been to preserve peace. One of them even said: We are more concerned with Cuba's honor than with Cuba's statement. Venezuela did not turn up because they disagree with our position, but Uruguayan party representatives did take a conciliatory position. Anyhow, the rest are very bad. Perhaps this defeat could lead to victory in the future, yet the division [among Latin American communist parties], the division within the progressive movement, is inevitable. This would check the growth of people's power, or reduce it.

Ambassador Shen: This division at the moment, again, is a good thing as well as a bad thing. In fact, it is natural for Marxist-Leninist party members to stand up to some party leaders who subscribe themselves to Revisionism. This division between the Marxist-Leninist communists and the revisionist communists is to be expected. Consider the time

when the Second International, after the death of Marx and Engels, found its way to Revisionism. At this moment, the disagreement between Marxist-Leninist communist parties and revisionist ones became an explicit division. Lenin, however, adhering to Marxism-Leninism, took over the people's revolution and in the end united all communist parties under the Third International. Cuba's revolutionary acts have been a great contribution to the enlargement of the global Marxist-Leninist camp.

Guevara: This is true. But that division also restricts the development of people's power. Instead of promoting and facilitating revolution, some parties were effectively suppressing it. When they were doing so, they even cited terms such as peace, the leading power of the socialist bloc. Do you remember that in our last conversation, I told you that there was something I could not understand[?]*—that is because I was so deeply convinced by what Soviet top leaders told me (continuing eating).*

Guevara: Among the people who supported the Cuban revolution, some did so only because they thought the Cuban revolution was a nationalist movement. So soon after we declared that we were Marxist-Leninists, they wavered, and after the withdrawal of Soviet missiles they vowed to initiate their own revolution which, in their vocabulary, basically means the abandonment of the proletarian revolution. However, these people actually could be won over by a determined Leftist force.

Shen: Better to see these people [i.e., the Soviets] having removed their disguise earlier. Even without that operation of the Soviet Union, there are still people, in America or the world as a whole, who don't necessarily carry out the revolution in the interests of the proletariat. In the circumstance when there is disarray and people don't see clearly, the Leftists should act and raise their distinct flag. Otherwise, our [socialist] camp would fall into disarray.

Guevara: Before, facing the American aggression, we had firm support from the world. Not only did the world in general stand firmly behind us, but also Latin America in particular offered unwavering support. The Soviet Union even promised to help us with missiles. But now the Soviet missiles are gone and our international prestige weakened.

Shen: This is, however, a great exposure of the revisionists.

Guevara: Some revisionist countries remain unexposed.

Shen: Did the Soviet missiles come to Cuba as a result of the negotiations you and Comrade [Emilio] Aragonés had in Moscow [in late August/early September 1962]?

Guevara: They [the Soviets] proposed it [i.e. the deployment of missiles in Cuba]. We went to Moscow only to discuss the details of this proposal. Our side said that we don't have this sort of need. Yet on second thought, we felt guilty given the fact that such a radical proposal might actually drag them [the Soviet Union] into war whereas we remained undecided on whether we should provide them with missile bases. We accepted their proposal only in the hope of helping them [the Soviets]. We suggested the Soviet Union issue with Cuba a joint statement condemning the US, and publicizing their support to us. They said this was unnecessary and what Kennedy had done was merely orchestrated to win the presidential [i.e., mid-term Congressional] election. Still we felt that the equivocal promise was dangerous, particularly because it did not touch on the extent of the Soviet aid to Cuba. They can change, and they did. Later they kept blathering, for example, that they would send their Baltic Fleet. They also told us that they preferred actions to hollow statements, and that the mighty Soviet Union would deliver a destructive strike upon anyone who dared to invade Cuba, etc. At the time we believed their words were true.

Shen: I remember I asked you in our last conversation wondering if a possible American invasion would inevitably provoke another world war. In other words, I was asking if the Soviet Union would support Cuba with its missiles. The reason why I asked such a question was that I'm quite suspicious [about the promise of the Soviet Union].

Guevara: Now they have left. Though they promised to continue their support, only the naïve would keep buying their empty words. The treaty between Cuba and the Soviet Union, which has never been publicized, has been violated by the Soviet Union, and became ineffective.

Shen: Did the Soviet government consult with you and obtain your approval before they withdrew their missiles?

Guevara: They did at the beginning, but ceased when Khrushchev made a promise to the Americans. Fidel had written a letter to Khrushchev, bidding Khrushchev farewell. Because the Americans were expected to attack us the next day, the letter was not short of agitated words. This is probably why Khrushchev, in his reply to Fidel, said he could tell anxiety from Fidel's text. The Soviet Union withdrew their missiles on the grounds that they did not wish to feed the US

with an excuse for war. This is itself an excuse. In his secret letter to Kennedy, Khrushchev had already made a promise to the Americans that the Soviet Union would back down. On hearing this decision, some Soviet military specialists burst into tears.

Shen: China had a similar experience earlier. It took merely one month from the moment of the Soviet Union deciding on withdrawing all of their experts [18 July 1960], to the point of the last Soviet specialist leaving China. We proposed that some of them stay until contracts were fully implemented. The Soviet Union withdrew them anyhow. When they were being withdrawn, some Soviet experts cried too. Admittedly, the sudden departure of so many experts caused some difficulties in our economy. But it, again, encouraged us to rely on our own strength in resolving problems.

Other than missiles and IL-28 [medium-range bombers], what else had the Soviet Union left with? Were surface-to-air missiles also withdrawn? Are they in Soviet hands?

Guevara: [The Soviet Union] took away the missiles and IL-28s. Some tactical weapons have been transferred to us and our personnel will be trained to operate them. Yet surface-to-air missiles are in their hands. Now we could not shoot any invading American planes because we don't control any anti-aircraft missiles. But these surface-to-air missiles will not leave, they will stay.

Shen: In other words, only missiles and IL-28s have gone. Do the rest, including surface-to-air missiles and MiG-21 [jet fighters], stay?

Guevara: Yes, at least for the time being. They say [these weapons] will stay.

Shen: Are MiG-21s also in their hands?

Guevara: Yes. But they will stay and be operated by our own pilots.

Shen: What else will the Soviet Union take away? Will the fishing harbor be closed for maintenance [sic]?

Guevara: The fishing harbor won't. But another harbor has already been closed.

Shen: Is it of military nature?

Guevara: Yes, in a word, fear [not clear in text what "fear" refers to—trans.].

Shen: What further concessions do you think will the Soviet Union make to the US?

Guevara: The biggest concession I could imagine is that the Soviet Union chooses not to support us when the Americans attack us. As to what political concessions would be, we don't know. Anyhow, it's just a discussion between you and me. Perhaps the biggest mistake Kennedy has ever committed is that he chose not to support mercenaries and directly attack us in La Batalla de Giron [Battle of Giron, i.e., the Bay of Pigs]. Our equipment then was no match for ours today.

Shen: How did [Anastas] Mikoyan feel about the result of the negotiation with Cuba? Is he satisfied? Was his mission in Cuba aimed at implementing [overall] Soviet policy?

Guevara: We have no idea of his mission's purpose. He has undergone a difficult period. His wife died during his stay in Cuba. One day he said he would leave immediately, but the next day he changed his mind saying that this was because a new government order arrived. In another case, he originally assured us that [the stay of] IL-28s would not be a problem, but some four or five days later, [he said that the] IL-28 bombers had to be removed [from Cuba]. I don't know what sort of policy this is. He also mentioned that he would not leave Cuba until the moment he completed his mission. But never had he said what the purpose of his mission here was, as I see it. Now, I'm asking you why they [also] left China with their missiles?

Shen: Never in China have Soviet missiles been deployed. Where did you get this idea?

Guevara: From Soviet officers.

Shen: As one frank comrade to another, I believe you have already noticed two formal notes from us to the Soviet Union, on avoiding nuclear proliferation. [In these two notes], [we] made clear that the Soviet Union would not, from 1959 onwards, provide us with any ordinary nuclear materials, let alone missiles.

Guevara: Did China once have nuclear warheads?

Shen: No. As for the classified things the Soviet Union has always refused to give us them. I tell you what, they didn't even give us certain key components of the MiG-21, which is why we cannot use our MiG-21s.

Guevara: Did they give [these] to India?

Shen: As Khrushchev promised, this December they will.

Guevara: Including these key components?

Shen: All of them. And it is Soviet helicopters that delivered Indian weaponry and troops to the Sino-Indian border.

Guevara: Was it in the past, or has it continued until now?

Shen: Until now. Be nasty to true Marxist-Leninists while being nice to enemies, imperialists, and the anti-revolutionary. This is their nature.

Guevara: Soviet policies are no policies of Khrushchev alone, but of many. When I was talking to Khrushchev, [Mikhail] Suslov also joined us. We were told that [Leonid] Brezhnev would visit Yugoslavia. We expressed no opinion. They said Tito attempted to foster a conciliatory position and he was now fighting against the Rightists within the party. They also said some bad things about Albania. The plain fact is, Suslov finally concluded, Yugoslavia has a population of between 17 million and 18 million people but Albania has only [slightly] more than one million.

Shen: Instead of adopting a Marxist-Leninist attitude to analyze [phenomena], [they] evaluate [them] in terms of the population. But China did not receive any better treatment, even though we have a population of 650 million.

Guevara: [They are people] of no principle. I believe that in the future they will treat us as roses that have become infected and stink. Or [they will label us] Trotskyists or anarchists. Has the Chinese economic situation improved?

Shen: (Speaking in accordance with the communiqué of the Tenth Plenary Session.) Have you been informed of the details of Mikoyan's negotiation with Kennedy and Rusk?

Guevara: No, not yet. Soviet action in the United Nations was weak. When Mikoyan visited me, I said, "Victory is victory; defeat is defeat. To call defeat a victory is just wrong." Mikoyan said, "The Americans will not dare to examine Soviet ships, because [they] are afraid." I laughed at his words. He then became infuriated.

Shen: Presumably this is why, as I saw from the television, he did not give you a hug on leaving.

Guevara: Personally, I do respect him. But is this important?

Shen: Any move on the Americans' part?

Guevara: No. They have not been willing to give any concrete guarantee. They [say] if there is no supervision, there will be no guarantee of non-invasion of Cuba. And the Soviets tend to go along [with this practice].

Shen: Cuba is surely having a difficult time. We fully understand because we have been through that before. But bear in mind, in the most difficult period of the past, you had only 12 persons and 7 guns. Yet in the end, you succeeded in toppling the US-imperialist-backed Batista regime and obtaining nation-wide victory. And now you are far stronger than before; the general international situation has, too, become better.

Guevara: We were determined: the enemy may wipe us out but as long as [we have] one man remaining, we will still kill them. Now it is still the same: the enemy can wipe us all out, but if there is one man left, we will still kill the Americans.

(After the meal)

Shen: (Having briefed on the Sino-Indian conflict.) Do you have any questions?

Guevara: Did the Communist Party of India (CPI) split after its statement of condemnation of the Chinese aggression?

Shen: It had already been divided before the publication of the statement. The CPI's central committee divided into three factions during the discussion of whether China should be condemned. The Leftists, who opposed following Nehru's policy and refused to condemn China, accounted for one third of the members. The Rightists, rallying behind the party leader [Shripad Amrit] Dange, accounted for another third. It was they who initiated this statement. The remaining one third were people sitting on the fence.

Guevara: [They are the] Nehru faction within the Party.

Shen: Many Leftists have been arrested. Some 500 Leftist party members have now been arrested.

Guevara: No rightists have been arrested?

Shen: Not [a single rightist].

Guevara: Pathetic. As to the people on the borderland [of China and India], do they tend to sympathize with China or are they influenced more by [Indian] chauvinism?

Shen: As far as people within our border are concerned, they are either Tibetan or belonging to ethnic groups that have kinship with the Tibetans. They believe in Lamaism. Slavery used to prevail in Tibet. In 1950, the People's Liberation Army liberated Tibet and initiated democratic reforms. Although the upper Tibetan slave owners rebelled in the first half of 1959, we squashed it quickly. Democratic reforms were furthered and became quicker and more thorough. A vast number of people began to support us. The influence of these democratic reforms on neighboring areas is considerable. Therefore, people are leaning towards our side, which is feared by Nehru.

Guevara: Perhaps this topic is somewhat distant [from the theme of our conversation]. Will the Xinjiang-Tibetan highway be connected to the one between China and Nepal?

Shen: No. (Points at the map.) This is the Xingjian-Tibetan highway. And that is the scheduled Sino-Nepalese highway. Do you have any other questions?

Guevara: Not now.

Shen: If, after you check the map and the materials, you still have questions, I'm happy to answer them. About your proposal of publishing a Spanish version of Peking Review, the homeland has already pondered the idea and will try to begin publication next March.

Guevara: This is important. (Starting to watch movie, "Protecting Cuba")

CC: permanent members of the Politburo, all comrades of the Secretariat, Biwu (DONG Biwu), HE Long, Boda (CHEN Boda), Fuzhi (XIE Fuzhi), KONG Yuan, FANG Yi, Central Secrecy Office, Foreign Liaison Office (4), Central Propaganda Office (2), Central Liaison Office (5), Central Investigation Office (4), Military Intelligence Office (2), Headquarters of the General Staff

CHEN, ZHANG, JI, ZENG, GENG, HUANG, MENG, QIAO, HAN, LIU, Admin Office of Foreign Ministry (3), Research Office, Division of the Soviet Union and Europe Office [of Foreign Ministry], American-Australian Office [of Foreign Ministry], Ambassador, Archive (3) --- Total copies (63)

Received on 29 December 1962

Copied on 30 December 1962

Printed by Admin Office of Foreign Ministry

4 January 1963

[Source. Memorandum of the Conversation between Ernesto Guevara and Chinese Ambassador Shen Jian, 1 December 1962, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive: No. 109-03157-01, pp.1-10. Translated for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.]



Document No.45

Chinese Communist Party Central Committee
Document Notification on the Situation of Cuba's
Anti-American Struggle, 4 December 1962

No. 652

Top Secret

Various central bureaus, party committees in various provinces, municipalities, and autonomous zones, and party working committee in Tibet; party leadership groups (party committee) at various central ministries, commissions, government agencies, and people's organizations, and the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army; leading members of embassies and other agencies abroad (via the Foreign Ministry and Central Committee Foreign Liaison Department):

The great victory our people have achieved in repulsing the Indian reactionaries and the great victory of the Cuban people's struggle against the US imperialists and their lackeys are the two most outstanding events in the international struggle at present. The two events happened simultaneously during the past month. The serious struggle during the past month has examined and tested various political forces in the world. The imperialists, reactionary nationalists, and modern revisionists have all fully exposed their true faces in front of the people of the whole world. The Marxist-Leninists and the revolutionary people in various countries have fully demonstrated their strength in the struggle. More and more people in the world have raised their consciousness and ability to tell the truth through these two struggles. All of this will produce profound impact upon the international struggle in the future.

Concerning the Cuban people's anti-American struggle, the CC has the following opinions, which are now conveyed to you. Please orally relay these opinions to county-level Party secretaries or responsible Party cadres equal or above the level of county secretary (above cadre class 17):

(1) We must fully understand the great significance of the Cuban people's victory in this struggle. First, after more than one month's resolute struggle, the Cuban people have maintained their sovereignty and have defended the revolution, while at the same time giving a powerful blow to the intervention and serious war provocation by the US imperialists. Second, Comrade Fidel Castro and the revolutionary forces in Cuba have stood against the huge pressure from the modern revisionists, have adhered to a correct revolutionary line of Marxism-Leninism, and have persisted in a correct stance of mobilizing the people and the masses in conducting a revolutionary struggle. Third, during this struggle, the revolutionary Cuban people have experienced a test, and the Cuban revolutionary leadership represented by Comrade Fidel Castro have greatly increased its prestige, and their experience of struggling against the imperialists and modern revisionists has been greatly enriched. After winning this valuable experience, the revolutionary forces in Cuba have not been weakened but rather have been further strengthened. The pessimistic views that the revolutionary struggle by the Cuban people has suffered a serious defeat and that Cuba's people's revolution has been sold out are not compatible with the reality and, therefore, are not correct.

The great victory won by the Cuban people symbolizes that Marxism-Leninism has developed an unshakable deep root in Latin America. This is an extremely important development of the international communist movement. The rich experience of the Cuban people is invaluable for the people in Latin America. The revolutionary cause of Latin America has a very bright future.

(2) The victory of the Cuban people's struggle once again has proved that US imperialism is strong in appearance but weak in essence, and can only bully the weak but will fear the strong. First, the Cuban incident makes it clear that Kennedy has done all kinds of bad things. Therefore, we should not have any unrealistic illusion about this representative of the American monopoly capitalist class. Second, now Kennedy dares not fight a nuclear war. The United States faces great difficulty if it is to fight a nuclear war. The people of the whole world, including the American people, are against a nuclear war. Under the current situation that a nuclear stalemate has actually existed in the world, the monopoly capitalist class in the United States is unwilling to conduct

a nuclear war on their own soil. Kennedy seemed to be rampant, showing a gesture as if he were to fight a nuclear [war], [but] this is no more than nuclear bluffing toward the Soviet Union. Third, only by conducting a tit-for-tat struggle will we force the US imperialists to retreat in the face of difficulty. Concessions with no principle and accompanied by humiliation will only increase the aggressor's ambition, making him ask for a foot after gaining an inch with a bigger and bigger appetite. Fourth, what Kennedy fears the most are the revolutionary struggles by the Cuban people and the revolutionary struggles by the people in Latin America and all over the world. Only by depending upon the struggle of the people in various countries will the war and aggressive plans of the imperialists be smashed. This is the only correct way to defend world peace.

In the face of such a ferocious yet crafty enemy as Kennedy, we must follow the policy-line set up by Comrade Mao Zedong, "in a strategic sense we must despise the enemy, in a tactical sense, we must carefully study the enemy," and then we will win victory in this struggle. The victorious struggle by the Cuban people has once again proven that this is the truth.

(3) The modern revisionists have been frightened to death in the face of Kennedy's nuclear bluffing. Instead of "despising the enemy in a strategic sense while carefully dealing with the enemy in a tactical sense," they carried out a policy of adventurism, using missiles and nuclear weapons as bargaining chips to engage in a game of speculation. When Kennedy used nuclear war to threaten them, they were panic-stricken and did not know what to do. They made one concession after another and fell into passivity completely. The performance of the modern revisionists during the Cuban incident represents an unprecedented humiliation and insult in the history of socialist countries.

That the Soviet Union has withdrawn missiles and bombers from Cuba is not a bad thing for the Cuban revolution. In the first place, it was a mistake that the modern revisionists decided to establish missile bases in Cuba. Their true intention was not to support the Cuban people, but to control the Cuban revolution through violating Cuba's sovereignty. They were there not for the purpose of supporting the Cuban people in struggling against imperialism, but using Cuba as a bargaining chip in dealing with the US imperialists. If their plots were allowed to prevail, that would be extremely disadvantageous for the Cuban revolution and the revolution in Latin America. Cuba has learned a profound lesson in this incident. The most effective weapon that can be used in opposing US imperialism is not the missiles and strategic bombers that the modern revisionists have boasted [about], but the correct

policy line of firmly depending upon the peoples and masses and making everyone a soldier that the Cuban revolutionary forces have consistently carried out in the past.

(4) We should sufficiently consider the difficulties facing Cuba's revolutionary cause, and should sufficiently understand the circumstances of the Cuban comrades. The US imperialists are determined to eliminate Socialist Cuba. The tension between the United States and Cuba will continue for a long period—sometimes more tense, and sometimes less tense. Sometimes the Cuban side will even face very serious difficulties. For a certain period, Cuba still needs to depend upon Soviet support in production, trade, transportation, and arms and ammunition supply. The Cuban comrades, while sticking to revolutionary principles, have to make necessary compromises, which will not harm their sovereignty and independence, from time to time. In the struggle against imperialism, modern revisionism, and reactionary nationalism, it is inevitable that some of their policies may differ from those of ours. It is our internationalist duty to wholeheartedly support the Cuban revolution. When the Cuban comrades are persistently carrying out their revolutionary struggle, that is their biggest internationalist support to us. We should not make excessive demands on the Cuban comrades.

(5) In the past month or so, the whole [Chinese Communist] Party and the people in the whole country [of China] have received the most vivid and profound patriotic and internationalist education in the two huge mass movements—supporting Cuba's revolutionary struggle and repulsing the Indian reactionaries. All members of the Party, and the workers, peasants, People's Liberation Army soldiers, revolutionary and patriotic intellectuals and all other patriotic figures should tightly unite together, and should warmly embrace the Marxist-Leninist lines of the Party Central Committee and Comrade Mao Zedong. The shining greatness of Mao Zedong's thought has been fully demonstrated in these two struggles. Under the wise leadership of Comrade Mao Zedong, we have been able to command the initiative, catch the right timing, fully realize our potential and capacity, and influence the whole situation in the external struggles of our country, thus creating a new and more advantageous environment. We must continue to study diligently Mao Zedong's thought in practice and struggle, and raise the standard of our consciousness. Party committees at all levels should be good at directing the enthusiasm of the masses to production, daily work and study. We must hold high the three banners of the General Line, Great Leap Forward, and People's Commune, and continue to march forward victoriously, so that we will win even greater successes on all fronts.

The above notice is internal and should be restricted to leading cadres of the Party. In external propaganda and contacts, the tone of the open statements made by Central leaders and central newspapers should be followed. It should particularly be emphasized that certainly statements of this notice should not be made openly, and please pay attention to this.

The Central Committee

4 December 1962

(This is a top secret document. It will only be distributed to the level of provincial Party committee, and in no circumstances should copies be made. After use the document should be returned to the Confidential Department of the Administrative Office of the Central Committee and should then be destroyed.)

[Source: Obtained and translated by Chen Jian.]



Document No.46

Memorandum of the Conversation between Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticós and Chinese Ambassador to Cuba Shen Jian, undated [c. 6 December 1962]

Top Secret

Foreign Ministry Documents

Dorticós: Glad to see you go back here again.

Ambassador Shen: Before I left China to return to Cuba, Chairman Mao, Chairman Liu Shaoqi, and Prime Minister Zhou Enlai asked me to forward their greetings to Comrade President.

Dorticós: Thanks very much. How are Comrade Mao Zedong, Comrade Liu Shaoqi and Comrade Zhou Enlai?

Ambassador Shen: Very well. Our 10th plenum of the our party's central committee, which they [Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai] started to prepare and direct a long time ago, successfully opened this September. Now the issue at stake has become how to implement those policies produced at this meeting.

Dorticós: I have been keeping an eye on this meeting and read quite a few relevant documents and reports. What is the general situation of China?

Ambassador Shen: Now China's economic situation is very good. As Comrade President knows, China has been hit, intermittently over recent years, by natural disasters. But the harvest of 1961 was better than that of 1960, and this year's turns out to be even more encouraging than last year's. One can say the darkest period of economic difficulty due to natural disasters has now passed. The fact that within such a short period we gradually overcame difficulties proves the righteousness of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Comrade Mao Zedong. Opting for a socialist construction blueprint, the Great Leap Forward, the institution of People's Communes, is undoubtedly correct. Based on lessons and experiences of the past, our central committee now has devised a detailed implementation plan. With a correct direction and a series of fitting general policies already in position, the Chinese people feel that there is no reason that they won't do better in future socialist constructions. Naturally, because of China's vastness, it is an arduous way ahead, before we reach the stage of total electrification, mechanization, and modernization. Being a big country has a lot of advantages but also has some difficulties.

Dorticós: I'm happy to learn that the Chinese comrades overcame difficulties and are making progress. I know that the darkest period of China's economic difficulty is now over. We are quite concerned about the Sino-Indian conflict, on which we have kept a close eye. I have finished your booklet (On Nehru's Philosophy based on the Sino-Indian Conflict) and a copy of Prime Minister Zhou Enlai's letter, the one of 15 November 1962. In fact, I have read all the materials you have sent to me.

Ambassador Shen: I remember that before I left Cuba, Comrade President expressed his wish to discuss with me the Sino-Indian border problems on my future arrival. I am prepared to introduce this topic now, if Comrade President has the time today.

Dorticós: Of course I have time, and I am very much looking forward to it.

Ambassador Shen: This is the 4th volume of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, which I brought from Beijing as a gift to you.

Dorticós: This is a very precious gift. I will definitely read it. It is well decorated. So when did this volume start and end?

Ambassador Shen: From 1945 to 1949, prior to the over-all national liberation.

Dorticós: Comrade Mao Zedong's works are the ones that we often read. I have personally collected almost all of Comrade Mao Zedong's works published in Spanish. I also have the Spanish edition of the 1st and 2nd volumes of *The Selected Works of Mao Zedong*.

Ambassador Shen: These are the contribution of Argentine comrades [who translated them]. We plan to translate and publish, by ourselves, the Spanish version of volumes 1, 2 and 3.

Dorticós: In that case, Comrade Ambassador owes me a debt. Do send me a copy of volumes 1, 2 and 3 after publication.

Ambassador Shen: This is the Chinese version of Prime Minister Fidel Castro's work, recently published by us, which of course Comrade President would find incomprehensible. We present you [this copy] as a gift. This is "History Will Absolve Me." These are... (ten volumes all together).

Dorticós: I have learnt this news [of the PRC publishing Castro's works in Chinese] from the newspaper. This is a great gift. You have made an excellent choice. These are all Comrade Fidel's most important works.

Ambassador Shen: To make them reader-friendly, we have published these works in the form of booklets. Circulated nation-wide, they have gained popularity from the people. This is Comrade Fidel's television speech on 1 November, this year. On the very night of this speech being broadcast, our people chose to walk to the street, rallying and demonstrating, to express their support for Cuba.

Dorticós: We have seen the news knowing that China organized a large number of marches and demonstrations. We thank you for your support, the significance of which is very much understood.

Ambassador Shen: This was our internationalist duty. Now I'm ready to brief you the situation along the Sino-Indian border.

(Briefing on the Sino-Indian border problems)

Dorticós: Was [Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal] Nehru behind the Tibetan rebellion?

Ambassador Shen: It was hatched by Nehru and American imperialism. And I could share with Comrade President [the secret] that Nehru played a major role, because only via India could American imperialists conduct their subversive activities in Tibet. Via its consulate consul located in Tibet, India has managed to collude with Tibetan slave-holders. This [collusion] has now been proven by the following fact that the Dalai Lama, the major boss of the rebels, fled to India after the rebellion was vanquished. Until now, Nehru uses them to conduct his sabotage activities. On one hand, Nehru voted for us in the United Nations, supporting [the proposal of] admitting us into the UN, on the other hand, he tried to sell the [the idea of] so-called "Tibetan Independence." By this practice Nehru has confused many people, which was in fact his plot. (Continuing the presentation on the Sino-Indian border dispute.) This is a brief introduction to the Sino-Indian border dispute. I'm happy to answer, by exhausting my knowledge, any question from Comrade President, if you have [any].

Dorticós: I have been listening carefully to your introduction. Thanks very much, for your presentation gives me a more complete understanding of the Sino-Indian border problems. In general, I have absolutely no doubt of the righteousness of China's position in the Sino-Indian border dispute. Only one thing concerns me: Would this border conflict lead to a war of a wider scale? Naturally we understand that China is not to blame. But since India is [because of this conflict] receiving more military aid from the Americans, it is entirely probable for it to lean, totally, to the imperialists.

Ambassador Shen: Recently Pakistan has publicized a document. Since it has a military treaty with the US, Pakistan protested against the American military aid to India. In response, the Americans showed Pakistan a secret military treaty, which was signed by Nehru and the US in 1951. Pakistan, then, released it to the press. So Nehru has fallen for the imperialists for a long time. At the heart of the complexity of the Sino-Indian border dispute is the fact that British and American imperialists together have thrown their weight behind Nehru.

Dorticós: I fully understand.

Ambassador Shen: We have done our utmost to strive for the possibility of the Sino-Indian border dispute being solved peacefully. Our [military] retaliation, therefore, came only after we were pushed [by Nehru] into the last corner. This

[military retaliation] is the minimum action that a sovereign country would take. Otherwise we could only hand over [to Nehru] a huge chunk of territory. But [we're confident that] once he obtained one [chunk of territory], he would ask for another. No one could twist the arms of capitalists as to make them part of the imperialist camp. In fact, they would submit to imperialism, whatever concessions [that we] made to them. In contrast, revolutionaries would never, regardless of being pushed or not, lean to the imperialists. Cuba, for example, faced an extremely difficult situation in which it had to stand up to the powerful American imperialists, [and] at the same time resist pressures from the other side [i.e., the Soviet Union]. But sticking to its five demands, Cuba flatly rejected any inspection that might damage Cuba's prestige, sovereignty, and independence. Therefore, revolutionaries are revolutionaries. Those, who wish to submit to the imperialists, would submit to the imperialists anyway. This is not because of being pushed by someone. [Nor is it the case that,] had we offered more concessions, they would have not submitted to imperialism. Comrade President attended the meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement [in Belgrade in September 1961], at which time the Sino-Indian border dispute had yet to become a serious issues. But in fact, he [Nehru] had already defected to imperialism. Comrade President had a face-to-face struggle with him, of which I should speak no more.

Of course, it does not mean that we shall abandon proper tactics in this struggle. Still we should separate him from imperialism. Furthermore, fighting in this complex and intricate battle will bring the Indian people to the truth, raise their consciousness.

Dorticós: I understand perfectly all these concerns. We hope that the Sino-Indian border problem could be resolved peacefully. Naturally, to reach this goal depends, not at all, on Chinese leading comrades' good will.

Comrade Ambassador mentioned that I have met Nehru in person. In fact, not only have I met him, I have also come to know his character from his actions. His tactic in the Belgrade meeting [of the Non-Aligned Movement] failed due to the firm position of the Cuban delegation. In that meeting, we noticed that Nehru's position of neutrality appeared dubious. And the reality has brought us to the [true] nature of his position.

I would love to talk to Comrade Ambassador about Cuba's situation. There is not much I wish to tell the Ambassador about, because I'm sure that you must have mastered Cuba's situation, though you weren't in Cuba at that time [of the missile crisis].

We once thought that an American invasion would come at any minute. Now the threat of direct military intervention has become less imminent, though the possibility remains. To secure Cuba and the peace of the Caribbean Sea, the five demands raised by Castro [on 28 October] are in fact the minimum conditions. The US, judging from the current negotiation in New York, appears not in a position to accept Cuba's five demands. Also in this crisis emerged the conflict between us and the Soviet Union. Indeed, we [always try to] maintain friendship with the Soviet Union. We appreciate [the USSR] very much for its economic, military, and technological aid. I have talked with the Soviet Union, but the division between us continues. What divided us is the fact that the Soviet Union decided to withdraw, without prior consultation with Cuba in the first place, its missiles deployed in Cuba as stipulated by the Soviet Union-Cuban military treaty. Furthermore, it permitted the on-site inspection of the missiles' removal without obtaining our agreement. In this struggle, Cuba did not adopt small bourgeoisies' romantic attitude; on the contrary, we have insisted on the correct Marxist-Leninist revolutionary position and defended Cuba's sovereignty. In the course of the Cuban-Soviet negotiations, we made the opinion extremely clear and firm to Anastas Mikoyan, the representative of the Soviet Union. Cuba firmly insists on its five demands, and stands against any attempt to conduct unilateral inspection in Cuba. Not even an inch would Cuba budge from this position.

Now the Soviet Union expresses its respect towards our position. In the Security Council, the US and the Soviet Union have reached an agreement. They together have published a statement, in which the Soviet Union confirmed the withdrawal of its missiles from Cuba and a guarantee of no deliberate attempt in the future to transfer weapons of this kind into Cuba. In this statement, the US promised only not to invade [Cuba].

Our side sees no value in this hollow promise; nor do we trust Kennedy's words. The American guarantee applies only to a circumstance in which Cuba ceases to act as a missile base. It could still invade us with the excuse of Cuba remaining a base for subversive activities targeted at the United States. Such a guarantee, besides, will not stand in the way of the US pressuring other countries to economically blockade and politically isolate Cuba, devising diplomatic conspiracy, conducting infiltration and espionage, operating pirate-like naval assaults alongside the Cuban coast like the one that happened the day before yesterday.

Our willingness to negotiate is unquestionable, but we need concrete evidence of a guarantee. We actually do not feel so optimistic towards the ongoing New York negotiations.

Ambassador Shen: Has Cuba acquired any information on the negotiation between Mikoyan, Kennedy, and [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk?

Dorticós: Yes, we have. As far as we know, the Soviet Union did try to defend Cuba's five demands, which were dismissed and refused by the Americans to be included in discussion. Until now no agreement has been reached. We are very much doubtful that it will be reached any moment in the future. Had this consensus emerged between the US and the Soviet Union, Cuba would express its willingness to participate [in the negotiations], for we have our independent position on this matter. This agreement, highly limited in a sense that it confined its content only to issues appearing in the correspondence between Khrushchev and Kennedy, would not include Cuba's five demands. Cuba will issue an independent statement in the Security Council, in order to express Cuba's own view towards development of the entire crisis. The Soviet Union is expected to support Cuba by issuing a separate statement and publicizing the agreement with the Americans—note, this is very confidential. In other words, the Cuban problem, the Soviets believe, could be solved via two stages: stage one, reaching the Soviet-American agreement as I have mentioned previously; stage two, opening a negotiation focusing on Cuba's five demands, in the hope of resolving the Caribbean crisis once for all.

Yet, according to our observation, there is no great hope for attaining the stage-one agreement. And such an agreement, even if being reached, still means nothing to Cuba.

Yesterday, we sent a delegation to the Soviet Union, to deal with economic and trade matters. After the negotiation with the Soviet Union, [Minister of Foreign Trade] Comrade [Alberto] Mora [Becerra] will lead another delegation to China. We wish to discuss economic and trade matters for the 1963 fiscal year, and economic relations between the two countries in the future. For the upcoming 1963 fiscal year, our export situation tends to be in extremely bad shape, with export income shrinking noticeably from the 1962 level. Because our foreign trade will not start to bounce back until 1964, we badly need foreign financial aid for the upcoming 1963 fiscal year. 1963 will see a great improvement in the supply of staple foods and other necessities. [On top of that] our export income is also expected to rise dramatically from 1964 onwards. It is because although we have expanded the area for sugarcane planting this year, we could not use it next year [to generate profits from exporting]. We could start to reap profits from it only in 1964.

We fully understand that the Chinese comrades are facing a difficult time, too. But we wish that the two countries should work hand-in-hand and to our utmost, to make the

1963 bilateral trade bring both sides the most profitable outcome. We are convinced that this negotiation will strengthen the friendship between the two peoples, two governments, as well as leaderships. As Comrade Ambassador knows, the friendship between us is true friendship.

Ambassador Shen: Thanks for all this information, Comrade President. As Comrade President is aware, the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese people and the Chinese government have a consistent policy of supporting Cuba's revolution. Recently, our government has issued a series of statements indicating our support to Cuba. [We] support the five demands raised by Prime Minister Fidel. We support Cuba in rejecting of any form of inspection that leads to the damage of Cuban independence, sovereignty, and prestige.

Cuba has followed a correct Marxist-Leninist position in this struggle. [Your performance in this struggle] provides a shining example, not only to the Cuban people but also to the people of Latin America and of the world as a whole, of how a nation defends its independence.

Our friendship has grown with the collective struggle [against imperialism] and in the joint efforts [to pursue socialism]. I fully understand Cuba's situation in general and fully understand the several difficulties that Cuba faces. I'm expecting an upgrading of our relations, both economic and political, to be realized by mutual assistance. After all, this is the target of all my efforts as an ambassador.

Dorticós: Your efforts have already made very valuable achievements. You know how much we cherish all these efforts!

Ambassador Shen: We have a delegation to set off for Cuba within days. They will attend a cultural congress and activities intended to celebrate the anniversary of the victory of the revolution. The delegation is headed by comrade Zhou Yang. As an alternate member of the central committee and deputy minister of central propaganda department, comrade Zhou Yang has carried out a lot of work in the area of cultural and ideological struggle. The delegation also includes comrade Lin Mohan, who is the deputy minister of both the Propaganda Department and Cultural Department.

Dorticós: We are happy to receive this delegation. Their presence will be our honor. I wish to meet and greet them in person.

Ambassador Shen: One could also exchange experiences and learn from each other. Please forward my greeting to the President's wife.

Dorticós: Please also say hello for me to your wife.

Cc: member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, comrades of the Secretariat, Biwu (Dong Biwu) He Long, Dinyi (Lu Dinyi), Boda (Chen Boda), Kong Yuan, FANG Yi, Li Tao (4), Central Secrecy Office, Party Foreign Office (5), Central Propaganda Office (2), Central Liaison Office (5), Central Investigation Office (4), Military Intelligence Office (2), Ministry of Public Security (2), Ministry of Foreign Trade, Headquarters of the General Staff (9)

CHEN, ZHANG, JI, ZENG, GENG, HUANG, MENG, QIAO, HAN, LIU, Administration Office [of Foreign Ministry] (3), Research Office, Soviet-European Office [of Foreign Ministry], First Asian Office [of Foreign Ministry] (1), Second Asian Office [of the Foreign Ministry], Western European Office [of the Foreign Ministry], American-Australian Office [of the Foreign Ministry] (2), Asian-African Office [of the Foreign Ministry], Press Office [of the Foreign Ministry], Ambassador, Archive (3) --- Total copies (71)

[Source: *Memorandum of the Conversation between Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticós and Chinese Ambassador to Cuba SHEN Jian*, Archive No.109-03157-01, pp.29-38. *Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive, Translated from Chinese for CWIHP by Zhang Qian.*]

Notes

1 Yinghong Cheng, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9:3 (Summer 2007): 78-114 (quotation on 102).

2 John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 181

3 Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* (New York: Random House, 1994), p. 261.

4 During a summer 1959 visit to neutral countries such as Morocco, Egypt, and Indonesia, Che "secretly contacted the Chinese diplomats in these countries and expressed the hope of developing relations with China," also urging Beijing to buy sugar from Cuba if the United States cut off purchases. Zhou Enlai passed such reports to Mao Zedong, who approved a positive response. Yinghong Cheng, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," p. 82.

5 Jorge I. Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 27.

6 That said, Mao proved himself remarkably ignorant in some respects, i.e. when he claimed that the UK was not a nuclear power.

7 See the Hungarian Embassy in Havana's report on Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód's talks with political leaders in Cuba, 9 January 1962, in the collection of translated Hungarian documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

8 Ibid.

9 See Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"—Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: Norton, 1997), pp. 160-65.

10 See the Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), report on a meeting with Yugoslav Ambassador Boško Vidaković, 19 March 1962, in the collection of translated Hungarian documents in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

11 Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, p. 168.

12 See Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, chap. 9, and Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2006), pp. 427-29.

13 James G. Blight, Philip Brenner, *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba's Struggle with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), p. 261 (note 118)

14 On Che's philosophical and ideological orientation, see such biographies as Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (Grove Press, 1997); Jorge Castaneda, *Compañero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara* (New York: Knopf, 1997); and Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Guevara, Also Known as Che* (Macmillan, 1999). On Che's ongoing close contacts with Chinese diplomats in Havana and pro-Chinese inclinations, see Cheng, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," esp. pp. 82 (1959 contacts), 88, 94-95 (November 1960 visit), 99, 103-107, 114.

15 Yinghong Cheng, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," p. 102.

16 See records of such conversations in translated Brazilian and Yugoslav documents printed elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

17 Nor did the Americans entirely forget about the Chinese in Havana during the missile crisis—China's embassy in Havana was secretly selected for a grenade attack by anti-Castro Cuban exiles as part of Operation Mongoose on a list of targets approved by a covert overseeing committee chaired by Robert F. Kennedy—the Special Group (Augmented)—at a meeting on the afternoon of 16 October 1962, only a few hours after President Kennedy was informed that the Soviets were emplacing nuclear missiles in Cuba; JFK's approval was relayed the next day. However, having second thoughts, on 26 October Bobby Kennedy reversed his earlier decision and revoked authority to conduct "major acts of sabotage" while tensions were so high, and there is no indication that such an assault on China's embassy in Havana was actually carried out or attempted. Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Knopf, 2008), pp. 8-9, 17, 151-2, 285.

18 On the intersection of multiple crises in Soviet foreign policy, see Mikhail Prozumenshikov, "The Sino-Indian Conflict, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Sino-Soviet Split, October 1962: New Evidence from Russian Archives," *CWIHP Bulletin*, no. 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 251-257; Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns*

in the Heavens: the Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967 (Washington D.C. & Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Press & Stanford University Press, 2009), pp. 30-41.

19 See, e.g., Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, pp. 495-96.

20 See Soviet Embassy in Havana (Alekseev) to CPSU CC, telegram nos. 1717-1722, 2 November 1962, translation printed elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*. Relaying gossip on the latest meeting of Cuban leaders, Alekseev identified Guillermo Garcia Frias, Haydée Santamaría Cuadrado, Raúl Curbelo Morales, Ramiro Valdés Menéndez, and President Osvaldo Dorticos as openly critical of Khrushchev's decision; Joaquín Ordoqui and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez as defending it; and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Emilio Aragones, and Raul Castro as either silent or absent; and he noted that Fidel Castro let others speak and "apparently has not drawn any conclusions."

21 See the translated excerpt of the Czech record of the 30 October 1962 Khrushchev-Novotný conversation printed elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

22 Nikita Khrushchev's speech at the November 1962 Party Plenum, 23 November 1962, Russian State Archive of Current History (RGANI): fond 2, opis 1, delo 603, list 152.

23 See cable from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana, 8 November 1962, in the collection of translated Czechoslovak documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

24 For the Soviet records on Mikoyan's mission, see Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC: Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 2012).

25 See telegram from the Brazilian ambassador in Belgrade, Bux Ribeiro Courto, 19 November 1962, in the collection of translated Brazilian documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis printed elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

26 See Hungarian Embassy, Prague, Report on Czechoslovak-Cuban Relations, 25 June 1963, translation printed in the "Czechoslovakia and Cuba, 1963" feature elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

27 Yinghong Cheng, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," p. 100.

28 See cables from the Yugoslav ambassador to Cuba, Boško Vidaković, 29 and 30 October 1962, printed in the collection of Yugoslav translated documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

29 Soviet embassy in Havana (Alekseev), telegram no. 1643-1644, 23 October 1962, translation printed elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

30 See the cable from the Polish Embassy in Havana, 12 November 1962, printed in the collection of Polish translated documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*. The notion that China might have shelled the Nationalist-controlled offshore islands in order to distract the Americans was not entirely far-fetched. In fact, Mao Zedong had, in internal Chinese documents, attributed his decision to shell Matsu and Quemoy four years earlier,

in August 1958, to a comparable calculation, to provide indirect aid to anti-imperialist Iraqi forces who had just seized power in Baghdad by compelling Washington to focus its military attention elsewhere. See, e.g., Chinese documents in *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996).

31 Mikoyan cable to Khrushchev re 20 November 1962 talk with Fidel Castro, reproduced in the appendix to Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Savranskaya.

32 See the 3 December 1962 cable from the Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck) reporting on Mikoyan's 20 November meeting with socialist ambassadors in Havana, reproduced in the collection of translated Hungarian documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

33 See the report by the Hungarian chargé in Washington, János Radványi, on Mikoyan's visit to Washington, 5 December 1962, in the collection of Hungarian documents printed elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

34 See the report on Mikoyan's 29 November 1962 by the Czechoslovak Ambassador to the United States, Miloslav Ruzek, in the collection of translated Czechoslovak documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

35 Ibid.

36 See the Cuban record of the talk between Rodriguez and Khrushchev (with Mikoyan present) in Moscow on 11 December 1962 in the collection of translated Cuban documents (obtained by the National Security Archive at the 2002 conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis in Havana) published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

37 See cable from the veteran Dutch ambassador in Washington, J. Herman van Roijen, on his 27 December 1962 conversation with Rusk, included in the collection of translated Dutch documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

38 See the cable from Roger Robert du Gardier, French Ambassador in Havana, to Maurice Couve de Murville, French Foreign Minister, 15 November 1962, in the collection of French documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis printed elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

39 See Mikoyan cable from Havana re talks with Cubans, 26 November 1962, in the appendices to Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Savranskaya.

40 See the Cuban record of the Rodriguez-Khrushchev 11 December 1962 conversation cited above.

41 See the 24 and 28 January 1963 reports of the Hungarian ambassador in Havana, which appear in the collection of translated Hungarian documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

42 For an English translation of Khrushchev's 31 January 1963 letter to Fidel Castro, released in 1992, see Lawrence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (New York: New Press, 1992), pp. 319-29.

43 Khrushchev to Castro, 31 January 1963, Russian original, copy in Russian and Eastern European Archival Documents Database (REEADD), National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

44 Khrushchev to Castro, 31 January 1963, in Chang and Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis*, p. 320.

45 Transcript of a CC CPSU Presidium Meeting on 7 June 1963. Aleksandr Fursenko, ed., *Prezidium TsK KPSS, 1954-1964, Vol. 1* (Moscow: Rosspen, 2003), p. 721.

46 Cable from the Foreign Ministry of the PRC to the Chinese Embassy in Algeria, 4 July 1963, and Memorandum of conversation between Zeng Tao and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, 6 July 1963. CMFA: 111-00362-06, pp. 1-10.

47 Hungarian Embassy in Sofia, Report on Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 29 August 1963, translation printed elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

48 See Hungarian Embassy, Prague, Report on Czechoslovak-Cuban Relations, 25 June 1963, cited above.

49 Cuban rejection of treaty: Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution*, pp. 67-68; Czech document: record of conversation between Carlos Rafael Rodríguez and Vladimir Koucky, Prague, 12 December 1963, translation printed in the "Czechoslovakia and Cuba, 1963" feature elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

50 On the downturn in Sino-Cuban relations, see, e.g., Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution*, pp. 66-69; and Yinghong Cheng, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," esp. pp. 102-112.

51 Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution*, p. 68.

52 See the translated Polish record of the 20 March 1965 conversation between Gomulka and Raúl Castro, published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

53 Fidel Castro comments in translated report of Czechoslovak military delegation (led by Defense Minister Bohumir Lomsky) to Cuba, 30 March-9 April 1965, which appears elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

54 See James G. Blight and Philip Brenner, *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba's Struggles with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); and Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution*, pp. 72-77.

55 By the late 1970s, the Cubans had even joined a secret Soviet-led Sinological coordinating group ("Interkit") of its closest allies (i.e., the Warsaw Pact minus Albania and Romania, plus such countries as Mongolia, Vietnam, and Laos) to pool and analyze intelligence and plot strategy against the Chinese, and in December 1979 Fidel Castro himself hosted a meeting of the group in Havana. See James Hershberg, Sergey Radchenko, Péter Vámos, and David Wolff, "The Interkit Story: A Window into the Final Decades of the Sino-Soviet Relationship," *CWIHP Working Paper* no. 63 (April 2011).

56 Fidel Castro comments (as recollected by Hershberg) during lunch with visiting historians during Bay of Pigs conference in Havana, March 2001.

57 Ed. Note: After ruling South Korea since the end of World War II, Rhee was forced to resign on 26 April following student-led demonstrations, and flew into exile two days later, the same day Mao and Roca met.

58 Ed. Note: On a trip to South America from 22 February-7 March 1960, Eisenhower visited Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay.

59 Ed Note: Possibly Claudio Ramos, later Cuba's ambassador to Algeria—thanks to Carlos Alzergaray for help on this identification.

60 Ed Note: Possibly Comandante Manuel Piñero Losada, the well-known Barbarroja (Redbeard). Ministry of the Interior Vice Minister in charge of the National Liberation Directorate. Thanks to Carlos Alzugaray for this speculation.

61 An evident allusion to the CIA-backed overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz in 1954.

62 A reference to Ernesto Guevara, "Notes for the Study of the Ideology of the Cuban Revolution," *Verde Olivo* (magazine of the Cuban armed forces), 8 October 1960.

63 Ed note: Mao here evidently alludes to aerial attacks on 15 April that were precursors to the Bay of Pigs invasion which began two days later.

64 Anna Louise Strong, *The Rise of the People's Communes in China* (Peking: New World Press, 1959).

65 Ed. Note: An apparent allusion to three columns released by the widely syndicated columnist in his "Washington-Merry-Go-Round" column on 13-15 August, 1962, based on his interview with the Yugoslav leader at his home on the island of Brioni.

66 Ed. Note: The US U-2 plan was actually downed over Cuba on the afternoon of Saturday, 27 October, not 28 October.

Japan and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Documents obtained, introduced, and translated by Masaki Hirata¹

At the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, in October 1962, Japan still had an embassy in Cuba, although its largest ally, the United States, had broken off relations with Cuba nearly two years earlier (Japanese-Cuban diplomatic ties had been maintained since 1929, with the exception of a hiatus from 1941 to 1952). Cuba had no particular strategic interest for Japan, but Japan was a significant trading partner for Havana because it imported a considerable amount of Cuban sugar. About 500 Japanese also lived on the island, engaging in agriculture, fishery, and housekeeping. The Japanese cables here were declassified in 2008 at the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (“Cuban Domestic Policies and Situation: 1959-1975” file) as part of a larger opening of Japanese diplomatic records. The records capture well the domestic moods of Cuba and the Soviet Union during this critical period.



DOCUMENT No. 1

Cable from the Japanese Embassy, Moscow, 24 October 1962

Transmitted from Moscow 10/24/1962 19:53
Received in Tokyo 10/25/1962 05:31

To Foreign Minister [Masayoshi] Ohira from Chargés d'affaires ad interim [Akira] Shigemitsu

Re: The Situation in Moscow on the Cuban Blockade

The following is a report on the overall atmosphere in Moscow:

1. Several dozen policemen have been dispatched to guard the US Embassy since the afternoon of the 24th of October.
2. There were people on the street in front of the Embassy (about 230 at approximately 17:30) who seemed to be just spectators. On the trees on the street, we observed many leaflets which criticized US actions against Cuba. More people gathered with placards in their hands. They mentioned that “the US should keep away from Cuba” or that “Cuban freedom is our freedom.”

According to what one of the persons said, Lumumba University students would stage a demonstration soon.

3. A person who looked like a radio reporter was recording the voices of people with a recorder around the Embassy.

[Source: Japanese Foreign Ministry Archives (“Cuban Domestic Policies and Situation: 1959-1975” file), Tokyo. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Masaki Hirata.]



DOCUMENT No. 2

Cable from Japanese Embassy, Havana, 25 October 1962

Transmitting from Havana 10/25/1962 13:58
Received in Tokyo 10/26/11:54

To Foreign Minister Ohira from Chargés d'affaires ad interim Kataoka

Re: The Cuban Reaction to the Announcement of the US blockad

1. The Cuban press briefly reported the content of President Kennedy’s announcement and then called this an act of unreasonable aggression by the US imperialists in a very critical tone. The revolutionary government put the entire county on wartime alert and moved on to take defensive measures by mobilizing the revolutionary army and parts of the militia and placing them where they should be.
2. On the night of the 23rd [of October], Prime Minister Castro made a public speech on TV. He concluded that the US naval blockade was piracy and a clear violation of international law. Cuba is firmly opposed this action and if the US decides to embark on military intervention in this country, they would make an all-out effort to beat it. For this, all people should become united under the revolutionary government. He did not say anything about Soviet assistance, but declared that any inspections of Cuban bases by outsiders

should not be allowed because it ignored Cuba's sovereignty as an independent nation.

3. The entire city looked a bit tense and threatening because of the increased number of armed militiamen on alert in the streets and the incessant loud radio broadcasts to uplift the morale of the nation through public speakers. The public here has stayed calm as usual and the Japanese here are living a normal life so far. International airlines have been suspended, with the exception of the Cuba-Soviet line, since the 23rd [of October].

This cable has been also transferred to the [Japan's] Embassies in the US and Mexico.

[Source: Japanese Foreign Ministry archives ("Cuban Domestic Policies and Situation: 1959-1975" file), Tokyo. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Masaki Hirata.]



DOCUMENT No. 3

Cable from Japanese Embassy, Havana, 26 October 1962

Transmitting from Havana 10/26/1962 20:06
Received in Tokyo 10/27/14:21

To Foreign Minister Ohira from Chargés d'affaires ad interim Kataoka

Re: The Situation in Cuba facing the US blockade

1. The Cuban press harshly condemns the US naval blockade on a daily basis and highly appreciates Soviet support. It also reported how widespread the pro-Cuban demonstrations in the world have been and blamed the pro-US attitude by NATO and the Latin American governments as means of evidence showing that they were giving in to the US imperialists. They have not reported the Japanese policy on this issue and have only mentioned that the Japanese Communist Party was appealing to the nation that people should try to keep the [Hayato] Ikeda administration from taking a pro-US stance.

2. The existence of a mediation proposal by UN Secretariat U Thant was reported. But the Cuban government's position on this has not been made public because it might have not yet received detailed information on the entire proposal.

However, it is estimated that they are covertly expecting more hawkish measures from the Soviet side.

3. The domestic wartime alert system has been strengthened and the revolutionary armed militias are keeping close watch on crucial places in Havana. Street broadcasting and street demonstrations by communist youth groups are trying to boost the people's morale.

This cable has been also sent out to [Japan's] Embassies in the US and Mexico.

[Source: Japanese Foreign Ministry archives ("Cuban Domestic Policies and Situation: 1959-1975" file), Tokyo. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Masaki Hirata.]



DOCUMENT No. 4

Cable from Japanese Embassy, Moscow, 2 November 1962

Transmitted from Moscow 11/2/1962 19:55
Received in Tokyo 11/3/1962 07:66

To Foreign Minister Ohira from Chargé d'affaires ad interim Shigemitsu

Re: Moscow's Reaction to the Cuban Issue

The following items are what we found on the domestic reaction to the Cuban issue.

1. When the Soviet government issued a statement on the Cuban issue on the 24th [of October], one Soviet intellectual working at a newspaper company made the following argument which reflected suspicion and anxiety shared by others. "It's hard to understand why we had to build a military base in Cuba in the first place. It was an absurd decision. Kennedy looks gentle and timid. However, once he gets furious, he bites you hard and never leaves you even if he loses all of his teeth like an Irish bulldog. We are being bitten by such an outrageous guy."

2. On the 30th [of October], a young foreign language teacher had a conversation with one of our Embassy staff. Responding to the staffer's comment that he felt little sense of crisis by reading newspapers or watching the people in Moscow, the teacher

countered that people felt so relieved just after the crisis was over, which meant that a real sense of crisis had been widespread in the society. He also said that there was much tension in the workplace meetings he attended and that you could not feel that atmosphere just by reading the papers. At one point, he really felt threatened by the immediate possibility of the occurrence of a nuclear warfare. As an apparent example to show such feelings, he talked about some mothers he knew who had vivid wartime memories. They rushed to the nearby stores to buy large amounts of salt. He heard that salt disappeared from stores temporarily because of these excessive behaviors.

[Source: Japanese Foreign Ministry archives ("Cuban Domestic Policies and Situation: 1959-1975" file), Tokyo. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Masaki Hirata.]



DOCUMENT NO. 5

Cable from Japanese Embassy, Havana, 16 November 1962

Transmitted from Havana 11/16/1962 16:25
Received in Tokyo 11/17/1962 09:49

To Foreign Minister Ohira from Ambassador [Rokuzo] Yaguchi

1. [. . .] [sic]
2. [. . .] [sic]
3. After the incident, most Soviet soldiers have disappeared from the streets and the outstanding activities by the Chinese communists have also not been spotted.
4. Inside the local stores, you can see only small amounts of commodities available. They are made in Communist China, Czechoslovakia, or Hungary. Large amounts of food, other than weapons, used to be imported from the Soviet[s]. But it seems now that there are only a few items available, such as salted fish.
5. Because of the suspension of exit application procedures, applicants cannot find a hopeful way out [of Cuba]. (Before the incident the number of official emigrants with government permission reached five or six thousand. They were to be stripped of all their possessions in defecting.)

6. The following are the findings of military importance on the situation on the Isle of Pines. They are provided by some influential Japanese coming from the island.

- a. The island had been placed under a strict wartime system since the outbreak of the incident. Checkpoint gates were established all over the town. Various kinds of arms and ammunition were brought in from outside. The volume was unbelievably huge. But for the last few days, the system has seemed to loosen slightly.
- b. The population of the island has reached nearly 20,000, which is twice the number as before the incident.
- c. Around 2,000 prisoners, except for political offenders, have been released and joined the lowest class militias. The jailhouses are all packed with political offenders brought from other states.

7. There is only one means of transportation available connecting this country to foreign ones: Cubana Airlines offers one flight a week between Mexico City and here. (Departure schedules are not been publicly announced until the eve of the departure. The reason is said to be that they suffer from severe shortage of components and the maintenance of the aircrafts takes time.)

This cable has been also transferred to [Japan's] Embassies in the US and Mexico.

[Source: Japanese Foreign Ministry archives ("Cuban Domestic Policies and Situation: 1959-1975" file), Tokyo. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Masaki Hirata.]



DOCUMENT No. 6

Cable from the Japanese Embassy, Havana, 21 November 1962

Transmitting from Havana 11/21/1962 11:51
Received in Tokyo 11/22/1962 07:20

To Foreign Minister Ohira from Ambassador Yaguchi

Re: The Cuban Situation

1. The reason why the Mikoyan-Castro talks are making slow progress is possibly related to Castro's feeling betrayed by the Soviets, which bypassed Cuba in negotiating with the US regarding the incident. (This situation can be said to be a massive debacle for Soviet diplomacy.) Mikoyan's efforts to persuade Castro will bear fruit sooner or later because the Soviets intend to tide over this crisis by all means and they hold the oil supply route which is so vital for the Cuban economy.

2. According to other diplomatic sources, there seems to be a bitter discrepancy inside the revolutionary government. On one side are far right wing people you might call "neo-communists" who worship Stalinism and tend to have a way of thinking similar to the Chinese communists. The Castro brothers belong to this group. On the other side are people who tend to take Moscow's leadership philosophy as a model. Secretary General of the Communist Party [Blas] Roca, Director of Agricultural Reform Bureau [Lazaro] Pena, and the Secretary General of the Central Labor Association belong to this faction. They are old-type Communists who are in an ideological confrontation with the former group. Yet there is little likelihood of the break-up of the revolutionary government or Castro turning pro-Soviet because of this in-house discord. At a dinner party on the 18th [of November] hosted by Mikoyan, the Castro brothers didn't show up, although Foreign Minister [Raul] Roa, Industry Minister [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara, and Chief of the Militia Army [Emilio] Aragones attended. Some view this as a clear proof of ill feelings that the Castro brothers keep [toward the Soviets].

3. The whole nation is totally exhausted after a series of tense events over the last four and a half years (the revolution, its failure, and this crisis).

4. Castro will oppose any kind of base inspections. He may accept it on the condition of the normalization of the US-Cuban economic relations. Even in that case, the US side would not accept the demand, which means it is unlikely to realize base inspections after all.

This cable has been transferred to the [Japanese] Embassy in the US. Please pass this to the [Japanese] Embassy in the Soviet Union if necessary.

[Source: Japanese Foreign Ministry archives ("Cuban Domestic Policies and Situation: 1959-1975" file), Tokyo. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Masaki Hirata.]



DOCUMENT No. 7

Cable from Japanese Embassy, Havana, 28
November 1962

Transmitting from Havana 11/28/1962 11:00
Received in Tokyo 11/29/1962 05:14

To Foreign Minister Ohira from Ambassador Yaguchi

Re: The Situation in Cuba

1. There is much speculation over the reason and purpose of Mikoyan's long 24 day stay in Cuba. But the truth over the visit remains unclear. If the purpose of Mikoyan's visit was to persuade Cuba to accept UN base inspections in accordance with Khrushchev's pledge to the UN, you might say it turned out to be perfect failure for the moment. There is a perspective that the purpose of Mikoyan's long stay was to reexamine the value of Cuba as a strategic beachhead and the prospects of the revolutionary government. This view sounds closer to reality. Whether this is right or not all depends on how the Soviets will provide assistance to Cuba from now on.

2. Regarding the reasons why Castro reportedly refused to accept Mikoyan's offer, there is the possibility that Castro may be considering the current domestic situation as dangerous as when he entered Cuba with his army five or six years ago. He might really be afraid of the breakdown of the revolutionary government as the result of loosening the current defense system because the measures would let overseas anti-government people return to the country and regain a beachhead. Castro might need the possibility of a US invasion because he wants to crack down on the anti-government movements by stirring an excessive crisis mentality among the nation. That's why he cannot accept the base inspections offer. This view seems plausible. (Castro believes that [the danger of] invasion by overseas anti-government people will never stop despite the US non-invasion pledge.)

The cable has been transferred to [Japan's] Embassies in the US and Mexico.

[Source: Japanese Foreign Ministry archives ("Cuban Domestic Policies and Situation: 1959-1975" file), Tokyo. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Masaki Hirata.]

Notes

1 Associate Professor, Nagoya City University.



The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Origins of North Korea's Policy of Self-Reliance in National Defense

Introduction by James F. Person¹

The trajectory of North Korea's foreign relations and economic and military planning dramatically shifted in the early 1960s in response to two events. The first was a May 1961 coup d'état in South Korea that brought to power an anti-communist military junta led by General Park Chung Hee. The second event occurred much further from Korea's borders—thousands of miles away on an island nation in the Caribbean. Combined, the Park Chung Hee coup d'état and the Cuban Missile Crisis transformed North Korea's relations with Moscow and Beijing and nudged the country down a path of unsustainable military buildup that, in part, resulted in a nuclear weapons program and was responsible for the country's economic difficulties in later decades.

North Korean leaders greeted the 1960s with optimism. The country continued its phoenix-like rise from the ashes of the devastating Korean War (1950-1953) by successfully completing, ahead of schedule, a Three-Year Plan for national reconstruction and a Five-Year Plan for comprehensive industrialization. Premier Kim Il Sung had also survived the most serious political challenge of his long tenure in 1956.² The toll of the social change at breakneck speeds that accompanied North Korea's post-war economic and political developments had not gone entirely unnoticed, and the leadership of the country had designated 1960 as a "buffer year" during which the pace of development would be slowed down before launching into an ambitious Seven-Year Plan.³ Conditions on the divided peninsula also appeared more favorable to North Korea. In April 1960, South Korean president Syngman Rhee was forced from office following a series of massive student-led demonstrations. The North Korean leadership identified in this an opportunity for unification, and proposed the establishment of a Korean Confederation that would allow for both regimes to temporarily maintain their social systems as they transitioned to a unified system of government.⁴

All of this changed on 16 May 1961 when Park Chung Hee led a coup against the democratically elected government of President Yun Po Sun and Prime Minister Chang Myong, who had been in power for less than a year after President Syngman Rhee was forced from office. Although there was some initial confusion about Park's political orientation, given a brief dalliance with communism, North Korea soon determined that the coup leader was in fact anti-communist. On 18 May, the Standing Committee of the ruling Korean Worker's Party called for measures to be taken to drasti-

cally militarize the state. According to Chinese reports of the meeting, the Standing Committee decided to "enhance our vigilance, concentrate forces on strengthening national defense, and delay the original Seven-Year Plan until 1963. Otherwise economic construction and the national defense industry would be held up."⁵ North Korea began to take such measures without delay. A month after the coup, on 19 June, a North Korean diplomat in Budapest reported to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry that Pyongyang had issued an order for the army to enhance vigilance and reduce the number of workers in industry and reassign them to the national defense industry and defensive fortifications to prepare for an emergency situation.⁶

Within two months of the South Korean military coup, North Korea signed a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union. Within days, Pyongyang signed a similar agreement with Beijing. With the inclusion of mutual defense clauses that committed both parties to aid one another if attacked, both agreements provided North Korea with a greater sense of security.

Yet, the road to getting this agreement with the Soviet Union in particular was long and not without its challenges. The treaty with Moscow therefore did not instill in Kim Il Sung a sense of confidence in Moscow's security commitment to the DPRK. In fact, Kim had been trying to get such an agreement from the Soviets for over two years. A few months after the withdrawal in October 1958 of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (which had entered North Korea in late 1950 to fight the Americans), Kim Il Sung traveled to Moscow in late January 1959 to attend the CPSU XXI Congress. During this trip, Kim proposed the signing of a mutual cooperation treaty with the Soviet Union, Pyongyang's chief supplier of advanced weaponry and machinery. Though Khrushchev acceded to his request, and agreed to visit Pyongyang later that year to sign the agreement, for over two years, the Kremlin leader found reasons to postpone his trip. Khrushchev finally signed the agreement in July 1961 when Kim traveled to Moscow.

The North Korean leadership believed that their suspicions of Moscow's unreliability were confirmed in October 1962 when Khrushchev "betrayed Cuba at the time of the Caribbean crisis."⁷ What the North Koreans viewed as Soviet capitulation in the face of pressure from the Kennedy Administration demonstrated that Khrushchev was more concerned about peaceful coexistence, and being, in the

words of Kim Il Sung, “buddy-buddy with Eisenhower and Kennedy” than he was in aiding smaller socialist countries that, in the eyes of the North Koreans, were vulnerable to being picked off, one by one, by the United States.⁸ During a tense exchange in January 1965, North Korean Vice Premier Kim Il explained to Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin that as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the North Korean leadership felt that it “could not count that the Soviet government would keep the obligations related to the defense of Korea it assumed in the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance.”⁹

This mistrust of Moscow was reinforced when the Soviets did not grant a request from Pyongyang for military aid in December 1962. In the immediate wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis, on 1 November Kim Il Sung expressed his concern to Soviet Ambassador Vasily Moskovsky that the North’s air and coastal defenses were in poor shape. Major cities, such as Pyongyang, Wonsan, Chongjin, and Hamheung, were poorly protected from air raids. He therefore requested permission to send a delegation to Moscow to discuss military aid.¹⁰ Kim requested that the Soviet Union deliver—on credit—over 100 million rubles in military aid to North Korea. Specifically, to enhance coastal defenses, he asked for submarines. For air defenses, Kim requested an unspecified number of MIG-21s and twelve surface-to-air missile batteries.¹¹ In a 14 November conversation with Ambassador Moskovsky, Kim Il Sung played up the threat to North Korea, remarking “I know that [First Secretary Khrushchev and Second Secretary Frol Kozlov] are no less concerned than I about the defense of the Far Eastern forward post...it provides a convenient platform for the enemy’s landing.”¹² Yet, Deputy Premier Kim Gwanhyeop’s 29 November to 5 December visit to Moscow ended in failure. Moscow would sell the weapons to Pyongyang, but not give them on credit.¹³ Without delay, the North Korea regime escalated its efforts to achieve self-reliance in national defense. One week later, the Fifth Plenum of the Fourth KWP Central Committee formally adopted what it referred to as the equal emphasis policy, initially launched in the wake of the May 1960 military coup in South Korea, which called for simultaneous development of heavy industry and defense capabilities. The Plenum also declared Four Military Guidelines: to arm the entire population; to fortify the entire country; to train the entire army as a “cadre army”; and to modernize weaponry, doctrine, and tactics under the principle of self-reliance in national defense. Hungarian diplomats reported that by February 1963 “large-scale work [was] going on throughout the country; not only entrenchments but also air-raid shelters for the population [were] being built in the mountains.”¹⁴

This policy of keeping the country in a state of mobilization had drastic effects on the North Korean economy. As Vice Premier Kim Il would later describe, because of the lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis, North Korea was “compelled to keep an army of 700,000 and a police force of 200,000. These huge armed forces constituted enormous expenses for the national economy of the DPRK, and this is why neither industry nor agriculture had made headway.”¹⁵ Kim Il Sung elaborated on the tremendous economic cost to Kosygin:

We had to look for financing exclusively within our own country, and we could get it only at the expense of other sectors. I am sure I don’t have to tell you how large amounts of money it involved. That is why we are currently falling behind in completing the 7-year plan by one year, and we still need 3 to 5 years in order to fulfill the seven year plan at least in basic parameters. However, 4 years and 2 months have passed and we have fulfilled less than half of the 7-year plan’s goals.¹⁶

The Cuban Missile Crisis also led to a major shift in North Korea’s foreign policy orientation. Despite long-standing disagreements between Moscow and Pyongyang over North Korea’s autarkic development strategy, relations remained cordial through 1962. In the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis, however, North Korea publicly sided with the Chinese in the Sino-Soviet split, and expressed opposition to Khrushchev’s purported revisionism, particularly his policy of peaceful coexistence with the United States. Both Pyongyang and Beijing advocated for a far more militant policy of anti-imperialist struggle.

The Soviet-North Korean rift lasted from the fall of 1962 through the end of 1964. During this period, North Korea drew closer to the People’s Republic of China than at any point in the history of Sino-DPRK relations. The fear of losing their freedom of action due to long term exclusive orientation toward the PRC eventually forced North Korean leaders to change their approach to developing international contacts with the USSR and European socialist countries. This change coincided with Khrushchev’s involuntary departure, in October 1964, from the leadership of the CPSU and USSR. In January 1965, North Korean Vice Premier Kim Il went to Moscow where he met with Kosygin. The two held very frank talks in which Kim Il revealed North Korea’s thinking on the Cuban Missile Crisis and the actions Pyongyang was forced to take in light of the perceived betrayal to the smaller countries in the socialist camp. Kim accused the Soviets of having betrayed the Cubans, and two years later the (North) Vietnamese by not responding fittingly to the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident.¹⁷

The next month, in February 1965, while returning from a trip to Hanoi and then Beijing, Kosygin visited the DPRK where he met twice with Kim Il Sung. The North Korean leader echoed many of comments which Kim Il had made in Moscow the previous month. Kosygin defended Moscow's response to the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and, turning Pyongyang's own rhetoric on Kim, admonished the North Korean leader for not doing enough in the anti-imperialist struggle.¹⁸ The Soviet Union, Kosygin argued, was in fact fighting imperialism. During their second conversation, Kim elaborated on the tremendous economic difficulties the DPRK faced as a result of measures to strengthen national defense that were adopted in December 1962 because of the perceived unwillingness of Moscow to live up to its security commitments to Pyongyang. The February 1965 Kosygin visit became an important catalyst of the favorable change in Pyongyang's attitude toward the Moscow.

While the shift in North Korea's foreign relations after the Cuban Missile Crisis was short-term and relations with Moscow once again improved, Pyongyang never abandoned its belief in bellicose anti-imperialism. Later in the 1960s, for a period of about three years, North Korea began to launch cross-border raids and engaged in other provocative acts against South Korea at a rate of nearly one a day.¹⁹ Other impacts of the Cuban Missile Crisis on North Korea were not so temporary. A careful reading of the available documentary evidence from the archives of Pyongyang's former communist allies suggests that Kim Il Sung never fully trusted the Soviets again. Moreover, the country remained in an uninterrupted state of mobilization for decades and escalated efforts to achieve self-reliance in national defense, particularly through the acquisition of a nuclear deterrent. This contributed in part to North Korea's eventual economic slowdown.



DOCUMENT No. 1

Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 8 January 1965

In mid-December [Soviet Ambassador] Comrade Moskovsky returned from Moscow, and [...] told me the following about the negotiations which had taken place between Comrade [Alexei] Kosygin, the chairman of the Soviet Union's Council of Ministers, and the Korean party and government delegation that went to Moscow on the occasion of the November 1964 celebrations:

In the presence of Comrade Kosygin, Kim Il, the head of the delegation, raised the issue of certain injuries (pretensions), which were the following:

1) The Korean leaders were distrustful of the CPSU and the Soviet government, they could not count on that the Soviet government would keep the obligations related to the defense of Korea it assumed in the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, Kim Il said, and therefore they were compelled to keep an army of 700,000 and a police force of 200,000. These huge armed forces constituted enormous expenses for the national economy of the DPRK, and this is why neither industry nor agriculture had made headway in the last two years, they [the KWP leaders] could not invest substantial sums in these [sectors].

Comrade Kosygin asked him what caused this distrust. In the view of Kim Il, the Soviet Union had betrayed Cuba at the time of the Caribbean crisis, and later it also betrayed the Vietnamese. For instance, it happened as late as 8 days after the Tonkin [Gulf] provocation [in August 1964] that the Soviet government made a mild pro-DRV statement.

Thereupon the chairman of the Council of Ministers replied the following: It was incomprehensible to him how could the Korean leaders be so uninformed, they had not the slightest idea of how costly it had been for the Soviet Union to protect the freedom and independence of Cuba. At the time of the Caribbean crisis, Comrade Kosygin said, the whole Soviet merchant fleet and several warships had been busy with shipments to Cuba. They shipped Cuba everything it needed. Before the crisis, Cuba had faced American imperialism, which was armed to the teeth, almost unarmed. Apart from the known missiles, the Soviet Union provided Cuba with all the modern arms, including the most up-to-date aircraft, tactical missiles, and other military equipment, that now enabled it to resist the pressure of American imperialism efficiently. He set forth in detail what sort of and how many aircraft, tanks, etc. had been shipped to Cuba as aid. Comrade Kosygin then added that at the time of the Caribbean crisis, it was neither China nor Korea but the Soviet Union that had stood on the brink of war, face to face with the United States.

As for the Tonkin provocation, Comrade Kosygin went on, for one thing, the Soviet government had assumed the Chinese and Korean military forces to be strong enough to protect the Democratic Republic of Vietnam against the American imperialist attacks, for these [countries] were closer to Vietnam than the Soviet Union. Secondly, the Korean leaders once again revealed their lack of information, for instance, they did not know that right after the Tonkin provocation, at the request of the government of the DRV the leaders of the Soviet state had paid particular attention to the situation in Vietnam, and decided that efficient modern arms should

be urgently given to the Vietnamese comrades as aid. As a consequence of this decision, various military equipment of an adequate quantity was launched for Vietnam. The Chinese government gave its consent to their transport via China by air and by rail. To his knowledge, Comrade Kosygin said, the airborne units had already arrived in Vietnam, while the trains transporting other military equipment were on their way. Then he enumerated everything that had been sent to Vietnam in recent weeks. After that, Comrade Kosygin said that he was sorry to see that the Korean comrades, due to their lack of information, raised the issue of distrust with regard to the Soviet Union for no reason.

In the view of Kim Il, the Soviet Union did not support the national liberation struggle of the Asian and African peoples. Thereupon Comrade Kosygin asked him whether the freedom fighters of Africa were not equipped with Soviet arms, whether it was not the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and other socialist countries that shipped these arms to the Africans.

[...].

[Source: MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1965, 73. doboz, IV-100, 001819/1965. Translated for CWIHP by Balázs Szalontai.]

DOCUMENT No. 2

Record of a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK Comrade V.P. Moskovsky about the negotiations between the Soviet delegation, led by the USSR Council of Ministers Chairman Kosygin, and the governing body of the Korean Workers Party, which took place at the USSR Embassy in Pyongyang on 16 February 1965.

Participants in the conversation: CSSR c. V. Moravec, PRH (Hungary) c. J. Kovacs, PRP (Poland) c. V. Napieraj, GDR c. H. Brie, PRMo c. D. Sharav, Cuba c. L. Vigoa, and the PRB chargé d'affaires a.i. c. L. Pavlov.

C. Moskovsky said at the beginning that the Korean side initiated the delegation's visit. During the delegation's stay in the PRV [sic; People's Republic of Vietnam, i.e., North Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam—ed.], the DPRK Minister of Foreign Affairs Deputy Kim Yong Nam originally invited him for a hunt on 8 February this year. On 6 February, this invitation was hastily changed to Sunday, 7 February. C. Moskovsky went with Kim Yong Nam to a remote district about 100 km from Pyongyang. Soon after their arrival, Kim Yong Nam relayed to him Kim Il Sung's

request that he finds out whether the delegation led by c. Kosygin would accept an invitation to visit the DPRK.

C. Moskovsky immediately promised to pass the request on but asked why it was necessary to discuss this matter at a hunt. Kim Yong Nam replied that they wanted to use this "common diplomatic way."

C. Gromyko and the delegation were informed about Kim Il Sung's wish the same evening. The delegation agreed if it could be only a two or three day excursion. The Korean side was informed about it. Then, on 10 February, the Soviet Embassy received a written invitation where the name of the delegation was not specified (a dotted line was in the place for the name), and the USSR titulary was asked to also relay to c. Kosygin that the Korean side was leaving it up to him to determine the character of the delegation (c. Moskovsky's impression: the Korean side was apparently concerned that if they chose an inappropriate name, the invitation might not be accepted). The format of the public announcement about the delegation's arrival was also finalized with c. Moskovsky. The delegation then decided to keep the same name it had in the PRV.

The whole time until the delegation's arrival in Beijing, the Korean side was trying to find out how long c. Kosygin would stay in the PRC. It was a bit disappointed when it learned that the delegation would leave the PRC for the DPRK as early as on 11 February. That is, it expected longer talks in Beijing.

Out of the delegation's stay in the DPRK, c. Moskovsky concentrated namely on the course of talks with the KWP leadership.

He said that the first meeting took place on 12 February. It was agreed at the opening of the talks that first c. Kosygin would make his presentation, and then c. Kim Il Sung would present the KWP position on the next day. During the initial conversation, a program for the delegation's stay in the DPRK was also approved in general. Among other things, c. Kosygin requested that the program include only usual mandatory protocol actions and no other, like excursions to factories and so on. He again pointed out that the delegation could stay in the DPRK 3 days at the most.

In his 4-hour presentation, c. Kosygin talked about following issues:

- The delegation's mission—to renew good friendly relations with the KWP and the DPRK.
- He informed the KWP leadership about the internal situation in the USSR.
- Foreign policy of the USSR.

- Actions of the CPSU CC after the October 1964 plenary session.

Right at the beginning he also pointed out that his presentation should not be taken as his subjective opinion; he was going to show in talks how the whole leadership of the CPSU views these issues and what is its position.

In the course of the conversation he then informed the KWP leadership about the situation and good results in USSR manufacturing and its successful planned development. When talking about agriculture, he pointed out a number of difficulties the CPSU faces and deals with. He said that as it appears, shortcomings of the USSR agriculture are not affecting only the USSR but are characteristic for all socialist countries. He said that practically all our countries must buy grain abroad these days. True, some countries, like Romania, sell grain after the harvest but have shortages of it soon after and must buy it back. "Even though we had a good harvest in the USSR this year, we had to buy again. Many of these difficulties were caused by Khrushchev's incorrect directive to substitute the shortage of bread in the population's diet with increased consumption of meat, that is, with increased slaughtering of livestock. As a result of that, we have today low numbers of livestock, and we will be able to achieve the level of 1962 only by middle of 1966."

While talking about foreign policy, c. Kosygin informed the KWP leadership about all the most complicated problems of current international relations, and also advised it about the CPSU CC position on these issues.

He first talked about the last session of the Warsaw Pact political consultative committee. He said that it was summoned at the request of the GDR [German Democratic Republic; East Germany] on concerns of growing danger from the FRG [Federal Republic Germany; West Germany]. Kim Il Sung immediately reacted to it with a question whether the PRA [People's Republic of Albania] was invited to this session as well. C. Kosygin said yes but at the same time pointed out that the Albanian leadership responded with an insulting letter. Therefore it was agreed not to discuss the letter. Nevertheless, Albania was still given a chance to return. In connection with Kim Il Sung's question, c. Kosygin informed the Korean side about the recent initiative of the USSR to renew mutual diplomatic representation between the USSR and the PRA, which the Albanian side completely ignored. That all illustrates, as c. Kosygin then commented, that the PRA is excluding itself from the socialist camp.

As for the Warsaw consultations, c. Kosygin again pointed out that it was summoned due to the German issue coming to a head, and that the meeting of the political consultative committee unanimously called for taking necessary measures

along the line of the Warsaw Pact Treaty. Among other things, a proposal was discussed there about setting up a Warsaw Pact Command Center that would be in charge of a permanent build-up of defenses. He also mentioned a negative position of the Romanian delegation, which so far prevented carrying out this measure. He further mentioned the Romanian delegation's initiative for abolishing all pacts, including the Warsaw Pact.

He further briefly touched upon meetings of [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko with [US President Lyndon B.] Johnson and [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk, about which the USSR Ambassador already informed c. Kim Il Sung earlier. In connection with that, Kim Il Sung again pointed out that during these meetings, the DPRK and its request of American troops' withdrawal from South Korea was not mentioned. C. Kosygin assured him again that the USSR identifies fully with support of the DPRK foreign policy. When talking about the USSR foreign policy, c. Kosygin said that until the October [1964] plenary of the CPSU CC, this part of the CPSU policy was also affected by number of Khrushchev's subjective influences that the CPSU CC does not agree with. Then c. Kim Il Sung interrupted him with a remark: "Yes, yes, we even thought that he would go to [Chancellor Ludwig] Erhard in the FRG in order to sell the GDR."

C. Kosygin did not react to this remark and continued that after the October [plenum], different relations prevailed in the CPSU CC, the evidence of which are also the delegation's talks with the KWP leadership. "We have reintroduced principles of collective decision making and collective reason. That is the fundamental pre-requisite for mutual relations among fraternal parties. This collective reason can better judge what unites us, what divides us, and what we do not agree with. It is best suited to prevent us from revealing openly what we do not agree with, and giving thus a chance to imperialists to use our disagreements against us." He said that every country has many special features, especially of national character. Khrushchev allegedly did not show any interest in considering these differences. That, of course, was not right. "Vietnam has special features; by the way, we delivered there a lot of weapons and ammunition recently; Cuba has special features; our aid there also represents a considerable contribution to the struggle of the Cuban people; every country has special features, and we have to take it into account. However, these special features must not override our common line. You were accusing us of many things. True, your own objections were restrained and dealt mostly with economic problems but you were bringing up and stressing many Chinese accusations." To that, Kim Il Sung retorted that the KWP line has always been independent and not Chinese. He said:

“We have always been for pure Marx-Leninism without any amendments.” and he repeated: “We apply the purest Marx-Leninism and condemn both the fabricated additions of the Chinese, and the mistakes of the USSR.”

Then he asked c. Kosygin three questions:

What is the USSR position on Indonesia leaving the UN?

How is the CPSU CC dealing with the problem of calling an international meeting of fraternal parties[?]; whether and how the USSR supports the liberation movement.

Whether the CPSU CC has any critical comments on the KWP.

C. Kosygin reacted to it immediately. About Indonesia leaving the UN, he said that they exchanged very nice letters with Mr. Sukarno. In his letter, Mr. Sukarno expressed a concern that this step by Indonesia might damage relations with the Soviet Union. The Soviet side assured him that the USSR policy towards Indonesia would not change and remains friendly. However, the Soviet government considered it necessary to mention to him that it would be more appropriate if Indonesia stayed within the UN. “True, we agree with his criticism of the UN but we believe it was not necessary to slam the door.” Sukarno allegedly replied with a nice letter where he expressed how glad he was that relations with the USSR would not change.

About consultations of fraternal parties, c. Kosygin said that the date March 1 for the meeting [in Moscow] of the editorial commission would be kept. He stated that the meetings would only be of consultative character, and no joint document is expected to be issued. There is also not supposed to be any request for future consultations, as it was with the last consultations of FP [sic]. “The objective of meetings will be similar consultations to those you regularly hold with the Chinese and that you held with 22 delegations from Latin America.” Kim Il Sung commented: “That’s bad. It will cause a discord in the ICWM [International Communist World Movement].” C. Kosygin replied that the position of the CPSU CC and all 60 fraternal parties is solid and unchangeable. “All 60 fraternal parties demand clarification of the situation. Should we now reject this requirement, we would get into a conflict with those 60 fraternal parties. If the meeting is organized, only 3 parties will be against it. It is thus up to you whether you participate or not. The date of the meeting is firmly set on March 1, and we have a final commitment from 19 fraternal countries. As for the agenda of the talks, you probably expect that we will mainly discuss polemics within the ICWM. That would be incorrect, though. The main topic at the talks will be how to achieve unification of the ICWM.”

As for the question of the CPSU attitude towards the KWP, c. Kosygin pointed out that he had talked about these issues briefly with c. Kim Il Sung during his stay in Moscow [in November 1964] for celebrations of the 47th anniversary of the GOSR [Great October Socialist Revolution]. “Our attitude towards you,” he said, “is the same as towards other fraternal parties and countries. We were glad in the past that our mutual friendship was flourishing. These relations, though not by our fault, deteriorated considerably in the last years. I would like to tell you that we are aware of your specificities, and therefore we visited you in order to talk with you about what unites us. However, you have many objections to us. You are accusing us that we do not fight with imperialism and that we even side with it. Do you really think that namely we would be capable to align ourselves with imperialism against communist parties?”

Here again c. Kim Il Sung interjected with a remark that Khrushchev was buddy-buddy with Eisenhower and Kennedy. C. Kosygin only replied that it is not appropriate to make remarks like that at a meeting of such a high level. “I did not meet with you in order to badmouth Khrushchev. Let us rather discuss how to further fight with imperialists. Let us establish a program for this struggle and reach a consensus about what method is better, whether yours and the Vietnamese, that is Chinese, or ours and that of other fraternal countries. By the way, that is one of the main issues we want to discuss at meetings.”

“You ask how we are helping the national liberation movement. For instance, take Indonesia. We provided all their military equipment. Indonesian aircraft, weapons for ground forces and navy, all of which is from us. Our military advisors are training the Indonesian army, and I think it is no secret to you that when Indonesians were not yet able to fight with these weapons, our people were doing it for them. And now you tell me how do you fight with imperialism?” C. Kim Il Sung replied that their main means are meetings and press. C. Kosygin remarked: “You see, you call this help but you have to understand that the time for meetings is behind us. Only actions count today. For instance Cuba. Where would she be if she did not have a well-equipped and armed army? And who provided both clothing and all weapons and organization of this army? Or how about the PRV, who was again bombarded in the last days by American planes?”

“I would like to tell you that I talked about it with Mao Zedong during our stopover in Beijing. I asked him what they were doing to support the PRV. I was told that they allegedly moved a large army to the Vietnamese border just in case there is a big war. But why wait for a big war, I asked, when Vietnam needs help now, immediately. We will give you immediately and free of charge as many planes and weapons

as you need; only help the PRV. If they destroy 100 of your planes, we will immediately give you other [planes], even 200, but help.

“Mao Zedong also talked about how 4 American cruisers operate in Vietnamese waters. I told him: Sink them! We will give you weapons even for that, our most modern submarines. Do you want ten of them? You will have them, and completely free of charge. Just sink those cruisers! Do you want to know how Mao Zedong took it? He turned away from me and changed the subject. He started to talk about the history of China. Despite of that, I was still calling on the Chinese comrades: Defend Vietnam! We will give you completely free of charge all the necessary weapons and planes and submarines. And if they destroy them, we are willing to give you new ones and twice as many. But help Vietnam. Are you not its close neighbors?” Kim Il Sung and all other members of the Korean delegation listened especially to this part of c. Kosygin’s talk. Kim Il Sung himself in no time asked c. Kosygin how he views the current situation in South Vietnam, and with an obvious concern he then asked whether American provocations would not lead to a “great war.”

In the ensuing conversation, c. Kosygin made the KWP leadership familiar in detail with the USSR aid to the National Liberation Movement [of South Vietnam] and with training of guerilla cadres in the Soviet Union, and he asked Kim Il Sung: “How can we write about it in the press? And you cry to the whole world that we do nothing.” C. Kim Il Sung replied: “Well, we are finally publishing in *The Truth* scathing articles against imperialism.” C. Kosygin: “But I told you already that writing in the press and calling names does not cut it anymore. Tell me though, which of these two ways of support of the National Liberation Movement is more effective?” C. Kim Il Sung did not answer that.

As c. Moskovsky, who was present at the talks, told us, it also became obvious during the conversation about Vietnam that the KWP leadership had no information at all either about the situation in South Vietnam or about the quantity, kinds, and strength of weapons that the USA deployed in South Korea.

C. Moskovsky told us about the second meeting on February 13 that it started at 10 o’clock and lasted till 2:30 pm. C. Kim Il Sung was talking and was occasionally interrupted by c. Kosygin’s questions. According to c. Moskovsky’s assessment, Kim Il Sung acted objectively and calmly. He first thanked C. Kosygin for accepting the invitation and for his presentation at the meeting in the Great Theatre. He said that this presentation was a remarkable contribution to Marx-Leninism, and it allegedly also contributed to the increased enthusiasm of the Korean people. He also thanked for the honest and open conversation at the first meeting that

he regarded as a significant contribution to strengthening of unity of the two countries. He then especially thanked for clarification of the situation in Vietnam and the Soviet Union. He therefore also wants to openly and honestly inform the Soviet delegation about the situation in the DPRK and about the KWP CC position on the discussed issues.

When talking about the DPRK, he said: “We are now struggling to fulfill the 7-year plan put forth by the IV Plenary of the KWP. However, I also have to tell you that we are in a bad shape.

When we were putting together this long term plan, we lacked most of all necessary experience for working it out. We used what we learned from the previous three and five year plans. That, of course, was the cause of our difficulties today, our complex situation. To make things worse, we suffered greatly because of disagreements with you and other socialist countries, and because of disagreements within the ICWM. That is, the goals of the 7-year plan presumed aid from and further broadening of cooperation with you and other socialist countries. We were counting on this aid but, unfortunately, it did not materialize. That was the main reason why we did not fulfill the plan.

Due to the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile] crisis and the American aggression in Vietnam, we were forced to quickly build up our defenses and especially our defense industry. We had to look for financing exclusively within our own country, and we could get it only at the expense of other sectors. I am sure I don’t have to tell you how large amounts of money it involved. That is why we are currently falling behind in completing the 7-year plan by one year, and we still need 3 to 5 years in order to fulfill the seven year plan at least in basic parameters. However, 4 years and 2 months have passed and we have fulfilled less than half of the 7-year plan’s goals.

[...].

[Source: Czech Foreign Ministry Archive. Translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.]



DOCUMENT No. 3

“Information on the Meeting of [Albanian] Comrade Piro Bitia with the [North] Korean Ambassador to Tirana,” 7 August 1967

On his request, I received the Korean ambassador. After I asked him about any news from Korea, he answered as follows:

[...]

“Comrade Kim Il Sung teaches us that we must not forget that the construction of socialism in our country is being done while imperialism, which is the enemy of socialism, continues to exist and that is why we need to achieve both the economic construction and the military construction. If we should overvalue one of them or undervalue the other, we would be going to the extreme, so we must combine the two. At the Party Conference of last year, comrade Kim Il Sung reiterated that neither of the two should have a one-sided character.

“Comrade Kim Il Sung teaches us that we must fight the belief that should the war start, the economy will be destroyed and that is why we must concentrate our forces into the military construction. At the same time we must fight the tendency to think that we are doing well and that is why we need to only pay attention to the economic construction and disregard the military one.

“Both these needs are undivided from each other, because while strengthening the economy, the life quality of the people and our defensive power are increased and we can show the world the supremacy of the socialist system. By getting stronger militarily, we will be able to withstand any aggression, and that is why our enemies will never dare to attack us. We must strengthen the defense of our country especially at the present when the American imperialism is waging in all the continents wars of an aggressive character, is threatening the socialist countries, and is following the strategy of leaving the large states alone while turning the blade of its weapons against the small or separated socialist countries to swallow them. In other words, the American imperialism is following the strategy of swallowing one by one the small socialist countries and leaving the larger ones for later. In [December] 1962, at the 5th Plenum of the party, comrade Kim Il Sung reiterated that we must take even further the course of the combination of the economic construction with the military one keeping in mind the events in the Caribbean and the incident at the Tonkin Bay.

“Today the situation is difficult due to the aggression against Vietnam, due to the aggression of Israel in the Middle East, and due to the provocations at the line of demarcation in Korea. Our party reiterates that in these moments we must strengthen the defensive power of the country. We have increased even more that before our defensive strength and the armament of the people. This is the policy that we have

also followed in the past, but recently we intensified it even more, because of the severity of the situation.

“We must:

Transform our popular military into a military of cadres, which means a strong military in terms of quality and which will be able to rise up to its feet immediately after being called upon.

Modernize our military. In other words, we must have a military which possesses modern technology and strategic capability.

Arm the entire people. We must use the course of the masses in the military, so that it may be able to face the present conditions. Because in the present conditions, should a war start, there will be no front and rear lines, the entire country will become the front. The entire people must defend the country. The workers must defend the factories and the peasants, their cooperatives.

Fortify the entire country. We must make sure that [North] Korea is turned into a gigantic bunker that can withstand rockets, tanks, chemical weapons, aviation, etc.

“It is possible that the Albanian military delegation that visited our country saw these preparations and construction. We have done this not only at the front line and in the shores, but also at every corner of our country. We are fully prepared that should the enemy dare to attack us, we will deliver sudden, death-spelling blows to him.

[...]

[Source: AQPPSH, *MPP Korese*, D 2, V. 1967. Translated for CWIHP by Enkel Daljani]

Notes

1 James F. Person is the Senior Program Associate for the History and Public Policy Program and coordinator of the North Korea International Documentation Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He is currently completing a PhD in Korean history at the George Washington University, working on a dissertation on North Korea's relations with the Soviet Union and China from 1956-1967.

2 See James F. Person, “New Evidence on North Korea in 1956,” *CWIHP Bulletin* 16 (Spring 2008): 447-454.

3 See, for example, Balazs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953-1964* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 138.

4 See “New East German and Soviet Evidence on North Korean Support to South Korean Political Parties and Labor Unions,” *NKIDP eDossier* no. 8 (June 2012).

5 “Contents of the 18 [May] [North] Korean Party Central [Committee] Standing Committee Meeting,” 21 May 1961, Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive, File No. 106-00581-06.

6 Hungarian Foreign Ministry, Memorandum, 22 June 1961, “Visit of Comrade Paek Chong-won.” XIX-J-1-j Korea (Top Secret Documents), 1945-64, 3, doboz, 4/af, 003159/7/1961.

7 Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 8 January 1965, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1965, 73. doboz, IV-100, 001819/1965, Report

8 Record of a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK Comrade V.P. Moskovsky about the negotiations between the Soviet delegation, led by the USSR Council of Ministers Chairman Kosygin, and the governing body of the Korean Workers Party, 16 February 1965, Czech Foreign Ministry Archive.

9 Ibid.

10 Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and Kim Il Sung, 1 November 1962, AVPRE, Fond 0102, Opis 18, Papka 93, Delo 5, Listy 135-138.

11 Memorandum of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to North Korea Vasily Moskovsky and Kim Il Sung, 14 November 1962, AVPRE, Fond 0102, Opis 18, Papka 93, Delo 5, Listy 152-154.

12 Ibid.

13 See, for example, Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era*, 192.

14 Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 15 February 1963, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 6. Dobo, 5/d, 0011/RT/1963.

15 Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 8 January 1965, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1965, 73. doboz, IV-100, 001819/1965.

16 Czech Foreign Ministry Archive, Record of a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in the DPRK Comrade V.P. Moskovsky about the negotiations between the Soviet delegation, led by the USSR Council of Ministers Chairman Kosygin, and the governing body of the Korean Workers Party, which took place at the USSR Embassy in the DPRK on 16 February 1965.

17 Report, Embassy of Hungary in North Korea to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, 8 January 1965, MOL, XIX-J-1-j Korea, 1965, 73. doboz, IV-100, 001819/1965.

18 Conversation with the Soviet Ambassador, 19 February 1965, Hungarian National Archives.

19 See Christian F. Ostermann and James F. Person, eds., *Crisis and Confrontation on the Korean Peninsula, 1968-1969: A Critical Oral History* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011).

North Vietnam and the Cuban Missile Crisis

By Pierre Asselin¹

For many in Hanoi, the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 underscored the risks and limitations of diplomacy. The John F. Kennedy administration, they surmised on the basis of the outcome of the crisis, would stop at nothing to win the Cold War, including risking a nuclear Armageddon. At the same time, it discredited Khrushchev in their eyes, and peaceful coexistence with him. “The Russian call for peaceful co-existence has much less appeal” among Vietnamese, foreign diplomats in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV/DRVN) capital reported shortly after the Cuban crisis ended.² The Soviet premier had been humiliated, and had embarrassed the entire socialist camp by extension. This of course increased the allure of Beijing’s radical prescriptions on national liberation, and thus those of Vietnamese hardliners who had been calling for a dramatic escalation of armed struggle in the South.³ In late October Prime Minister Pham Van Dong told a reporter from the French communist newspaper *L’Humanité* that his government “strongly supports national liberation movements in the world, against all forms of colonization.” Observers at the time thought those comments “put the DRV firmly into the Eastern wing of the Socialist camp.”⁴

Like the failure of the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos—acknowledged in the National Assembly in February 1963—the outcome of the Cuban crisis exacerbated tensions within the Vietnamese communist party (officially the Vietnamese Workers Party [VWP], or Lao Dong) between committed moderates and hardliners over the war in the South.⁵ Ho Chi Minh later confided to Soviet diplomats that the outcome of the Cuban affair had alienated many Vietnamese who felt that Moscow had abandoned Havana as it had abandoned them in matters concerning American aggression.⁶ “The difference between the official attitude” in Hanoi favoring a diplomatic solution in the South “and that being [popularly] propagated within the country” favoring armed struggle, one assessment noted, “may ... reflect on the one hand, the basic loyalty to the USSR of most members of the Government,” and, “on the other, the fundamental identity of views of the mass of the party membership with those of the Chinese.” “As long as the present leadership subsists,” this assessment predicted, “the DRV will continue to steer roughly a middle course between the Russian and Chinese policies.” But “in the body of the party sympathy for the Chinese attitudes will continue to grow as the feeling of frustration about South Vietnam continues.”⁷ “Although it appears at first glance that Chinese influence or participation in Vietnamese military

affairs [is] predominant,” a Canadian diplomat noted a little later in December, “it should not be considered (necessarily) as a trend away from the Soviet Union.”⁸ What was now a slim majority in VWP ruling circles in fact remained “loathe to sacrifice” economic progress above the seventeenth parallel for a wider war in the South that carried with it risks of an American invasion and a Chinese occupation of the DRVN.⁹

As conditions in the South continued to deteriorate, and in light of recent international developments and the Cuban crisis in particular, increasing numbers on both sides of the seventeenth parallel clamored for an escalation of the southern insurgency and for greater DRVN involvement in it. “The policies of aggression and expansion of the war” of Washington and Saigon “have made the situation in the South extremely dangerous,” Nguyen Van Hien of the National Liberation Front (NLF) told the DRVN national assembly in late 1962. “The war in the South is widening each day and directly threatening the security of the DRVN, directly threatening peace in Indochina and [the rest of] Southeast Asia.”¹⁰ Perhaps sensing the inevitability of a wider war, the National Assembly drew a parallel between the present plight of the DRVN and the recent agony of North Korea: “the Vietnamese people have deep fondness and profound sympathy toward the Korean people” as both their countries were “divided and invaded by the Americans.”¹¹

By late 1962, foreign observers were noting “ominous indications” that “both the guerrilla warfare in the South and the active participation of the North in it may intensify.”¹² In a joint statement in November the DRVN and NLF insisted that “the 16 million North Vietnamese compatriots will support more actively the South Vietnamese compatriots’ liberation struggle.”¹³ The International Control Commission—the organ set up in 1954 to monitor implementation of the Geneva accords on Indochina and consisting of representatives from India, Poland, and Canada—reported that “a number of items of kinds which have been accepted ... in the past as conclusive evidence of subversion south of the 17th parallel by the Northern authorities” had been “given quite openly to assist the [National Liberation] Front in its ‘struggle’” during the last months of 1962.¹⁴ “For the past few weeks,” French diplomats in Hanoi reported on the last day of the year, “the balance traditionally maintained by the DRV between China and the Soviet Union has been affected and the balance is now tilting, more obviously, in favor of the first.”¹⁵ Things were coming to a head in Hanoi and in the rest of Vietnam, and

the outcome of the Cuban crisis had played a not insignificant role in that development.

Recognizing that their Vietnamese allies seemed more amenable than ever to a resumption of war below the seventeenth parallel, Moscow, which remained committed to precluding the outbreak of another major conflagration in Vietnam, dispatched Yuri Andropov to Hanoi in January 1963. Andropov, the head of the CPSU's Department for Liaison with Communist and Workers' Parties in Socialist Countries, pressed upon his hosts the imperative need to act carefully and give the Americans no pretext to involve themselves militarily in the South.¹⁶ "The road to socialism is the road of peace," Andropov told his hosts; "the crisis in the Caribbean Sea region," that is, the Cuban Missile Crisis, "was resolved by peaceful means."¹⁷ Hanoi had therefore to settle its differences with Saigon and the Americans in the same way.

The variance between Andropov's interpretation of the "lessons" of the Cuban crisis and Vietnamese interpretations of the same event underscored the widening "credibility gap" between Moscow and its Vietnamese allies, and those among the latter who espoused hardline positions in particular. Indeed by 1963 hardline views were becoming increasingly popular within the VWP. By the end of the year, in the aftermath of the overthrow of South Vietnamese president Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother and close adviser Ngo Dinh Nhu, hardliners were in control of VWP decision-making, and their first order of business was to sanction all-out war in the South and to effectively embark the DRVN on an irreversible collision course with the United States. Although the Cuban Missile Crisis was not the main reason for that denouement, it was important in authenticating the views of Vietnamese hardliners and invalidating the notion that the crisis in the South could be resolved by negotiations with the Kennedy administration.

Notes

1 This article is based on the author's *Hanoi's Road to the Vietnam War, 1954-65*, forthcoming from the University of California Press.

2 British Consul-General Hanoi (BCGH) to Southeast Asia Department (SEAD), Foreign Office, 3 November 1962; FO 371/166712; The National Archives, United Kingdom (TNAUK), Kew Gardens, England, 1.

3 Sergei Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 44.

4 Dong's remarks and the western response to them appear in BCGH to SEAD, 3 November 1962, 1.

5 "Tham luan ve tinh hinh Lao, dai bieu Pham-ngoc-Que, Phu-yen" [Address on the Situation in Laos by Representative Pham Ngoc Que of Phu Yen]; Ho so 749: Ho so ky hop thu sau cua QH khoa II tu ngay 28.4.1963 - 08.5.1963. Tap 7: Phien hop ngay 08.5.1963: Tham luan cua DBQH ve dau tranh thong nhat dat nuoc o mien Nam, ve tinh hinh Tay Nguyen, ve tang cuong quan ly kinh te tai chinh, Nghi quyet va bao cao cua CP; Phong Quoc hoi; Vietnam National Archives Center 3, Hanoi [hereafter VNAC3], 4.

6 Balazs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953-1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 192.

7 BCGH to SEAD, 3 November 1962, 1.

8 BCGH to SEAD, 1 January 1962; FO 371/166712; TNAUK, 3.

9 BCGH to SEAD, 9 December 1962; FO 371/166712; TNAUK, 1.

10 "Loi chao mung Quoc hoi VNDCCH cua g.s. Nguyen Van Hien, trung dai bieu MTDGTGPMNVN, 23.10.1962 [Welcome Address Before the DRVN National Assembly by Professor Nguyen Van Hien, Head Representative of the NLF, 23 October 1962]; Ho so 740: Ho so ky hop thu nam cua QH khoa II tu ngay 22.27.10.1962. Tap 2: Phien hop ngay 23.10.1962: Bao cao to trinh, Nghi quyet cua QH UBTVQH, PTT ve cong tac cua UBTVQH, ve tong quyet toan ngan sach Nha nuoc, ket qua Hoi nghi Gionevo ve Lao, ve to chuc HDND va UBHC cac cap; Phong Quoc hoi; VNAC3, 4.

11 "Tuyen bo cua QH nuoc VNDCCH ung ho chu truong cua Hoi nghi nhan dan toi cao nuoc chu nghia dan chu cong hoa Trieu-tien doi de quoc My rut khoi Nam Trieu-tien nham hoa binh thong nhat nuoc Trieu-tien, 27.10.1962 [Declaration by the DRVN National Assembly Supporting the Supreme People's Council of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Demanding the Withdrawal of American Imperialists from South Korea to Bring About the Peaceful Reunification of Korea, 27 October 1962]; Ho so 742: Ho so ky hop thu nam cua QH khoa II tu ngay 22-27.10.1962. Tap 4: Phieu hop ngay 27.10.1962: Tham luan cua DBQH ve to chuc HDND va UBHC cac cap, ve tinh hinh mien Nam va thong nhat nuoc; Phong Quoc hoi; VNAC3.

12 "Report of Visit to North Vietnam by a Delegation of the South Vietnam Liberation National Front (from Canadian Element of the I.C.C.)," 5 November 1962; FO 371/170115; TNAUK, 4-5.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 French General Delegation, Hanoi [hereafter FGDH] to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris [hereafter MFA], 1 January 1963; #74: Asie-Océanie: Vietnam Nord [hereafter AO: VN], Archives Diplomatiques de France, La Courneuve [hereafter ADF], 2.

16 FGDH to MFA, 14 January 1963; #36: AO: VN; ADF, 3 and FGDH to MFA, 21 January 1963; AO: VN; ADF, 1-2.

17 "Dien van cua d/c I.V. An-do-ro-pop, 16.1.63" [Address by Comrade I.V. Andropov, 16 January 1963]; Ho so 1046: Ho so ve doan dai bieu Xo viet toi cao Lien Xo do ong Andropop lam trung doan sang tham Viet Nam tu ngay 12-20.01.1963. Tap 2: Dien van, dien tu va cac loi phat bieu trong thoi gian doan o Viet Nam; Phong Quoc hoi; VNAC3, 4.

Mongolia and the Cuban Missile Crisis

A Glimpse Inside the Ulaanbaatar Archives

Introduction and translation by Sergey Radchenko

Mongolia and Cuba established diplomatic relations in 1960. For both parties, it was like establishing a relationship with the Moon. The only thing that united the two countries was their common adherence to socialism and their common sponsor, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (both ended up high on the list of Soviet aid-recipients, to Moscow's growing frustration, in the 1980s). Still, during the Cold War, the Cubans and the Mongolians found themselves party to some of the same meetings (e.g. Comecon, the anti-Chinese "Interkit,"¹ and of course various gatherings of party secretaries in Moscow), so there was a relationship there that defied purely geographical realities.²

What, if anything, can be gleaned from the now open archives of Cuba's once-upon-a-time socialist ally? The Foreign Ministry Archives in Ulaanbaatar—formerly known as Ulan Bator, "Red Hero," the Russian-ized version, during the Soviet-dominated, communist period from 1924 until the USSR's collapse in 1991—was a natural place to check out the documentary trace of this somewhat artificial relationship.³

I learned (from fond 19, the Cuban "*referentura*") that there was in fact considerable traffic in cables between Ulaanbaatar and Havana from about 1961 onwards. Most cables turned out, on inspection, to be congratulatory messages related to different anniversaries. Mongolian diplomats in Havana had a hard time getting appointments with Cuban officials of respectable level (though there are a few memoranda of conversations with the deputy foreign minister), and the subjects discussed rarely went beyond explaining Mongolia's climatic conditions to the oblivious Cubans. There was one interesting document from August 1962 between the Soviet Ambassador in Cuba, Aleksandr Alekseev, and his Mongolian colleague: Alekseev opined that Mongolia could serve as a model for Cuba, as a country that successfully escaped feudalism. There was apparently no significant communication during the crisis itself, though on 27 October, the "Black Saturday," Mongolia's leader Yumjaagiin Tsendenbal called in Cuba's ambassador for a very lengthy discussion of the situation in the Caribbean: in this time of need Tsendenbal wanted to express his sympathy for the Cubans from the other side of the world.

The document presented below is a record of 14 December 1962 conversation between the Mongolian

Ambassador in Moscow Luvsan and the visiting Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade Alberto Mora.⁴ Although ultimately not particularly informative, the document exemplifies the workings of so called "proletarian internationalism": "Although our country is small," Luvsan told Mora, "we will help the Cuban comrades within our possibilities." In his comments to Mora, Luvsan tried to defend the Soviet handling of the crisis against—though he never said so openly—the Chinese allegations of betrayal (which were echoed by some Cubans).⁵ Mongolia then and later served as a pro-Soviet voice in the Third World. Mora avoided polemics and instead brought Luvsan up to date on Cuba's relations with Chile and Brazil. Thus, one is bound to conclude that there is fairly little on Cuba in the Mongolian archives for 1962 (and nothing at all for 1963—the relevant files disappeared!) but the broader point remains relevant: Mongolian diplomats were witness to these events and had something to say. By exploring these documents—like documents of Cuba's other socialist allies—we can gain a better understanding of the dynamic of "fraternal" relationships within the Eastern bloc.



DOCUMENT

Mongolian embassy in Moscow (Lusvan),
Record of Conversation between the Mongolian
Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Cuba's
Minister of Foreign Trade Alberto Mora Becerra, 14
December 1962

EMBASSY OF THE MPR [MONGOLIAN PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC] IN THE USSR

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

No. 171

1962-12-14

Content: About a meeting between the minister of foreign
trade of Cuba Alberto Mora Becerra and Ambassador Luvsan.

Taking part in the conversation were, from the Cuban side: Ambassador of Cuba in the USSR Arnaldo Peres Pinto, and interpreters, and from our side: deputy trade representative Hishigsuren and interpreters Ilyin and Erdene.

At the beginning of the conversation Ambassador Luvsan asked Alberto Mora Becerra whether he travelled well and whether he likes the Moscow weather. Alberto Mora, after expressing his happiness, asked Ambassador Luvsan how his health was after he had visited Cuba this spring, to which Ambassador Luvsan said that it was great to be in Havana, and that he came back very content. He answered that Cuban air and atmosphere were very suitable for his health.

Alberto—On the occasion of being in Moscow I wanted to talk to you about our two countries' trade discussions. We had our first negotiation in Ulaanbaatar, and the next in Moscow. If possible, we propose to conduct the next round in Havana; what if we invited your representatives?

Luvsan—Our government, seeing [that it was agreed] to conduct trade negotiations in Havana, and that our representatives could not come there, believes that it would be correct to have trade negotiations for 1963 in Havana, and appointed me the head of the trade delegation, on the occasion of my own trip to Cuba to participate in the Cuban [national day] celebration.

This delegation, other than me, will consist of our deputy trade representatives Hishigsuren, and the third will be a technical expert who will come from Ulaanbaatar. Our representatives were invited to your national day celebrations through the channels of public organizations. These representatives, who will come to participate in your [national day] celebration, will be the deputy member of the MPRP Central Committee Politburo, deputy of the State Khural, first secretary of Ulaanbaatar city committee, head of the Mongol-Cuban Friendship Society Luvsanravdan, as the head, and another person.

Alberto—I am very satisfied that you will come to Havana to do trade negotiations.

Luvsan—On the occasion of your being in Moscow, and in order to ease our negotiations in Havana, I would like to hear your main thoughts about what goods could be exchanged [between Mongolia and Cuba].

Alberto—Our trade councilor Arnaldo Peres Pinto will later give you full explanations about this.

Peres—When tomorrow I come to meet with your deputy trade representative Hishigsuren, I will bring a list of our goods in Russian.

Luvsan—We will carefully study your list of goods. Although our country is small, we will help the Cuban comrades within our possibilities.

Alberto—Now, after finishing negotiations in Moscow, I will go to China. Because I may not be able to meet with you in Havana, you will probably conduct negotiations with my deputy Rodriguez. In general, because ministers travel here and there a lot, there is little time to meet.

Luvsan—I know your deputy well. I am happy to conduct negotiations with an old acquaintance comrade Rodriguez. Has the policy of squeezing Cuba, conducted by American imperialism, changed at all?

Alberto—At yesterday's press conference, President Kennedy let it be known that the policy of economic squeeze, conducted with respect to our country, will continue.

Luvsan—During the last crisis, under the wise leadership of comrade N.S. Khrushchev and the victorious leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro, the Socialist camp, headed by the Soviet Union, and the people who struggle for peace, saved the entire world from the danger of a nuclear war.

Alberto—During the last crisis, our people bravely and heroically struggled against the American aggression. F. Castro, after the crisis, spoke on Havana television. He said: "our people are truly heroic people. I have never been more proud to have been born a son to this people." Other than that, the USSR truly carried out a great duty.

Luvsan—People of every socialist country provide Cuba with all necessary help, and Cuba has friends in all corners of the world. Therefore, I firmly believe that if there is no war, Cuba's difficult questions can all easily be resolved. We understand that Brazil, Mexico, and Chile support Cuba, could you explain what, truly, is there relationship with Cuba?

Alberto—Because the governments of these countries are under the pressure of American imperialism, they are very irresolute. We had a great trade relationship with Chile. But Chile stopped buying our sugar, and buys sugar on the world market at prices that are twice the price of our sugar. For our sugar, we were getting goods from them that do not sell well on the world market—think of it, this [stopping trade with

Cuba] is very harmful to Chile. It is clear what Chile-Cuban relations will be like after the meeting between Kennedy and the Chilean President that will take place soon. Mexico and Brazil are also irresolute like this. In general it is difficult to believe any of the governments of Latin America but one can believe the people. For example, even though the Venezuelan government is brutal, the people are well-disposed towards us, and stand on the side of our people.

Luvsan—How was your harvest this year?

Alberto—This year there was more rain in our country compared to previous years. This has had a bad influence on sugar, which has become our main crop, and it looks like this year we will take in less sugar than during the previous years.

Luvsan—In addition to that, the provocative policies of the American imperialists draw considerable force away from peaceful labor, creating obstacles.

Alberto—This of course had a negative influence but while our men hold guns defending the country, women and children successfully gather the harvest.

After the conversation ended, there were friendly parting formalities.

Conversation recorded by: /Erdene/
Checked by Ambassador /Luvsan/

[Mongolian Foreign Ministry Archive, Ulaanbaatar: fond 2, dans 1, kh/n, khuu 84-87. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Sergey Radchenko.]

Notes

1 On Interkit, see James Hershberg, Sergey Radchenko, Péter Vámos, and David Wolff, “The Interkit Story: A Window into the Final Decades of the Sino-Soviet Relationship,” *CWIHP Working Paper*, No. 63 (April 2011). Mongolia hosted a 1975 meeting of this anti-Chinese, Soviet-led coordinating group, and Radchenko has found its records in the Ulaanbaatar archives—ed.

2 On Mongolian foreign relations and Mongolian-Soviet relations during the Cold War, see Radchenko’s many writings using Mongolian, Russian, and other archival sources, e.g., “Choibalsan’s Great Mongolia Dream,” *Inner Asia*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Fall 2009), pp. 305-332; “Mongolian Politics in the Shadow of the Cold War,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 8, Issue 1 (Winter 2005-06), pp. 95-119; “The Soviets’ Best Friend in Asia: the Mongolian Dimension of the Sino-Soviet Split,” *CWIHP Working Paper*, No. 42 (November 2003); and the section on Mongolia in his forthcoming *Half a Leap Across An Abyss: How Russia Lost Asia, and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013)—ed.

3 For examples of materials now available from the Mongolian archives, especially on the Sino-Soviet split, see Sergey Radchenko, “New Documents on Mongolia and the Cold War,” *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 16 (Fall 2007/Winter 2008), pp. 341-366—ed.

4 Mora may have been in Moscow as part of a delegation led by the head of Cuba’s National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, a senior communist member of Fidel Castro’s inner circle. For translated Cuban records of Rodríguez’s talks with Nikita Khrushchev on 11-12 December 1962, see elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

5 For translated Chinese records on the Cuban Missile Crisis, see elsewhere on this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

The Final Frontier: Cuban Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis

For most researchers probing the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Cuban archives have been the final frontier—known to exist, undoubtedly critical, yet largely and tantalizingly out of reach. For a little more than two decades, even as important archives remained shut (except to a few favored scholars), Havana has occasionally and selectively released closed materials on the crisis, often in the context of international conferences. This process began with Cuban participation in a series of “critical oral history” conferences in 1989-92 with U.S. and Soviet (and then Russian) veterans of the events, which climaxed in a January 1992 gathering in Havana at which Fidel Castro not only participated actively during all four days of discussions but several times, with a figurative snap of the fingers, “declassified” important Cuban records.¹

Ten years later, in October 2002, to mark the 40th anniversary of the crisis, Fidel Castro and the Cuban government again hosted an international assembly of scholars and former officials, co-organized with the National Security Archive (a non-governmental research institute and declassified documents repository based at George Washington University) and Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Studies.² For the conference (“*La Crisis de Octubre: Una vision politica 40 años despues*”), in cooperation with the US co-sponsors, Cuba released hundreds of pages of additional documents pertaining to the events of the fall of 1962, from a variety of sources—party, military, intelligence, diplomatic, and more.³

While many of these materials have been made available to specialists in the original Spanish through the National Security Archive’s website and Digital Archive, only a handful have either been translated into English or published in any form. What follows below is a selection of some of the most significant, high-level materials made available by Cuba for the 2002 conference, which are appearing in English and in print for the first time. They include: a record of a meeting of Fidel Castro and his military commanders on 24 October 1962—the day the U.S. blockade (“quarantine”) of the island went into effect—as they discussion preparations for a potential American invasion; a chronology of Cuban contacts at the United Nations apparently prepared by Havana’s ambassador, Carlos Lechuga Hevia⁴, and a bit of cable traffic between Lechuga and Cuba’s foreign minister, Raúl Roa, regarding a Brazilian “denuclearization” proposal to declare Latin America an atomic-free zone (offering a wider cover for the removal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba); a report to Fidel Castro from Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos regarding a conversation with Soviet (i.e.,

Nikita Khrushchev) emissary Anastas Mikoyan near the end of his three-week November 1962 stay in Cuba; a summary of Mikoyan’s subsequent conversation in Washington with US President John F. Kennedy, conveyed to the Cubans at the UN in New York by Moscow’s ambassador to the United States, Anatoly F. Dobrynin; an internal report by communist party leader Blas Roca Calderio on his travels in Europe at the time of the crisis; and—perhaps most valuably for those seeking to understand Soviet-Cuban interactions after the crisis—a record of the conversation in Moscow in December 1962 between Nikita Khrushchev and a visiting Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, evidently the first face-to-face meeting between the Soviet leader and a senior Cuban communist figure since the Soviet leader’s decision to withdraw the missiles, a step taken without advance notice to or consultation with Havana that aroused consternation among the Cuban leadership and populace. (The last-mentioned document is particularly valuable since the Soviet version has yet to emerge from the Russian archives.)

While these documents are fascinating and important to understanding Cuban conduct, they unfortunately remain exceptional: Only a small percentage of the Cuban materials opened for the 2002 conference (or a predecessor in March 2001 to mark the 40th anniversary of the Bay of Pigs/Playa Giron events) dealt with top-level Cuban decision-making or exchanges with the Soviet Union. Moreover, Havana is not known to have made any further significant releases of historical documents on the 1962 crisis in the past decade, and as a result, far more materials have been available on the Soviet (and Soviet bloc) perspective on the events—especially the Mikoyan mission, detailed in the just-published book *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, which includes essentially the complete record of those November 1962 Soviet-Cuban exchanges from the Soviet side.⁵ This new book, in turn, builds on an already substantial record of Soviet materials previously (and now) made available, including scores of diplomatic cables from Moscow’s embassy in Havana published by the Cold War International History Project.⁶

Consequently, the Cuban side of the 1962 events—both the “October crisis” confrontation with the United States, and the ensuing Soviet-Cuban crisis over Khrushchev’s handling of the missiles’ removal—remains largely inaccessible due to continued restrictions on Cuban sources. Worse, from a Cuban perspective, this means that the most important accounts continue to interpret and reconstruct Havana’s actions (and Soviet-Cuban interactions) through the lens of other countries’ sources⁷—from CIA reports to Soviet cables (and Russian memoirs) to the documents

of many other nations, whether communist, neutral, or Western, that are represented in this issue of the CWIHP Bulletin. Judging from the documents printed below, further releases of Cuban material and openings of Cuban archives could add a valuable fresh perspective on this event beyond the documents of the opposing nuclear superpowers, and help inform a more balanced narrative of one of the twentieth century's most significant episodes. -JH



DOCUMENT No. 1

Record of Meeting of Fidel Castro and Military Chiefs, 24 October 1962

Important aspects contained in the information offered by the military chiefs, meeting on 24 October 1962, in the General Staff with Commander Fidel Castro.

Captain Pedro Luis (Information):

We believe that in case of aggression against us, the possibility of mobilization of United States forces would be between 5 and 6 divisions, and no more. They have 10 divisions, but it is not possible to deploy them all against us. These facts are interesting for making our operation plan, because we think that they might in the first step use 2 or 3 divisions that would be moved in 120 or 130 ships, a considerable amount of force that must be detected by us in time.

The American base at Key West [Florida] has been reinforced, and has acquired a quite interesting importance.

Our opinion, based on the concrete facts that we have, is that there is no evidence of any immediate aggression against us – based on the information we have – but rather that they will enact the blockade, and if a grave situation should arise because of this, they have the possibility of moving between 4 and 5 divisions and launching them against us, but could not do this in fewer than six days. However, using the airborne division, they could move their first troops here in five or six hours. But if they move the 82nd division, we would certainly know, [excised]

Captain Flavio Bravo (Operations):

A particularly interesting fact: according to the average mobilization, the permanent units were moved in 3 hours to their zones of concentration; the reduced divisions, from 8 to 9 hours; and the wartime divisions, from 12 to 13 hours, in

less time than what was figured; and anti-landing divisions 2[unreadable] 2 hours.⁹

I suggest that the operation plan be made taking the following into account: first, the possibilities of the enemy in each army zone; later, the movements of forces, and last, the mutual aid between forces.

Capt. Raúl Curbelo (Aviation):

According to the estimations made, we have fuel and fleet for making four daily missions for 20 days.

Of the 200 trucks promised for the transport of anti-aircraft (missiles) only 85 have been delivered to us. We are missing personnel for the 11 batteries for which we are coordinating with our comrade Rebellón to begin a training course tomorrow, if it is authorized.

Commander Fidel Castro:

The reserve anti-aircraft batteries in Havana must be in such conditions that they can be moved when it is necessary.

To lend mobility to the reserve batteries we need more trucks, and a further increase of 200 to the requested amount is needed.

Commander Fidel Castro:

Withdraw the trucks from batteries that are in San Antonio, Baracoa and Ciudad Libertad, because they are not needed there; do not remove them from Loma del Burro or from Príncipe, because those can be moved; and do not take them from the refineries either.

I would have the reserve batteries in three groups, for example, to facilitate their removal in case it is necessary, since it is more difficult if they are widely dispersed.

The 30mm anti-aircraft guns are very effective weapons against landings, and have an enormous value, as they serve to fight on the coast, against infantry, airplanes, and everything; they are the weapons that can demolish the highest number of tactical aircraft. They should be concentrated in three points, at least 24 batteries in three points; not disorderly, but carefully placed, not in assigned places but so that they can be moved toward any other place.

I would put at least 24 batteries outside Havana, but so that we could move them, transfer them to whatever place. I mean that the reserve guns should not be placed in a dispersed manner.

The Artillery requires many trucks; the situation with the rocket launchers is fine but we must figure out those trucks. We can use the three for the rocket launchers, one for each;

for the Artillery Brigades, another three, and one for the Battalion of Tanks. Seven total.

Captain Flavio Bravo:

An idea that we have is that we must think through a reserve to cover the highways in case of immediate aggression, in order to move through them.

The most dire deficiency we have is in communications. Those that we should have are still coming by sea or leaving the Soviet Union. Our primary method of communications is telephones. With respect to communications, the air force in wartime will have great difficulties, and we want to draw attention to this. We have radio communications as well but there are many things yet to arrive that have not; they were expected between October and December, and this is a grave difficulty that comrade Chief of Communications knows well.

Commander Pedro Miret (Artillery):

All artillery groups that were ready to fight, occupying their zones of concentration within a time between one and one-and-a-half hours. The Brigades took a little longer, but the groups in general occupied their positions in this time.

All units were provided between 95 and 100% of both armaments and fleet. All units are provisioned with the modules that correspond to them.

With the fleet of Soviet rocket launchers, we have a problem with respect to transportation. We need some more trucks to move the munitions.

Commander Fidel Castro:

It is good that the weapons found in Ceiba del Agua have been moved. In SAU we are very poor in vehicles, because we have less than one full module. In 82mm mortars, we are a little short with 0.83 modules, however, there is a huge number of mortar projectiles.

To improve the supply of vehicles, we urgently need the roads from Managua repaired. Additionally, some 400 workers need to be located there for loading and unloading of packages in storage facilities. And at the same time, we must ask infantry units of the Army of the West to send trucks without personnel, only a driver and helper. I believe it is very important to facilitate mobility from the storage facilities, with strong people accustomed to carrying much weight.

We must be careful placing personnel in the storage facilities for explosives.

Yesterday ten enemy aircraft entered our national territory and examined Mariel and Baracea, some 10 km to the east, in

two groups of two and two groups of three. They dropped to some 100 m above the ground and, once back on the coast, ascended to 3,000 meters.

Commander Alto Santamaría (Tanks):

Specifically, I believe the most serious weakness that we have among tanks, is that of the independent companies [**2 lines redacted and part of a third**] because they are very small units and to not have real control over them makes it difficult to have security in general.

Commander Rolando Díaz Aztaraín (Marines):

Analyzing them quickly, regarding the combat preparation of the LT, we can say that they have made up to nine daily torpedo launches, but have not conducted any at night, since we are precisely in that stage of training. During the day, they can act completely, and at night also with reinforcement from the torpedo boats, but there has not been enough practice.

The frigates do not have personnel with very good experience in shooting artillery devices.

We consider one of the problems we have to be the lack of rapid coordination with our aviation and coastal forces to know the regions in which we can operate. It is highly necessary to establish this coordination.

The General Staff approved in the last few days some anti-aircraft equipment for our bases, but they have not arrived yet. We have a concern about the base of Baneis; we need, at least, to have a battery in Baneis, one in Cienfuegos, another in Sigüanea and also in Cabañas, primarily.

Commander Fidel Castro:

The one in Sigüanea is not important; there you do not need anti-aircraft capabilities; for the others, yes. The two in Cabañas and the 30mm in Cienfuegos make three.

Captain Fausto Díaz (Communications):

For communications, the worst situation is that of Aviation. What they have are radio stations, fixed or mobile, but still taking them away from the fronts of battle. The worst in terms of this are Aviation and anti-landing battalions. Those battalions have some German stations that are not ideal for military uses, and they consume a great deal of current from the batteries.

I have a proposition regarding all this: there are two R-104 radio stations that the Headquarters of Artillery received. One can be given to the Independent Battalion of Tanks,

which does not have communications, and one taken away from the Services Command Post to give to the Anti-Landing Battalion. These stations are very secure, and these comrades do not need them right now.

Captain Joaquín Ordoqui (Services)

We are coordinating the problem of distribution of medicine with Public Health, and besides, developing plans to present to the Chief of General Staff, to see if they will let us use second-year medical students and promote them to the level of Nurses, now that they have some experience and are presently on vacation.

[One paragraph redacted]

Castro: We should do as much as possible to resume fumigation, because lacking that can damage us more than the enemy. I believe we should see how soon fumigation flights can be reestablished.

I think there are some of our zones into which we should not let pass the Yankee planes that are violating our territory. I believe we should study some zones and put good anti-aircraft weapons so that when they fly there we will be able to shoot them and bring them down, primarily with 30mm anti-aircraft guns and when they pass, in obvious places and in low flights, bring them down. We would have two or three sites, not all that close to the coast, where they would be over land and not say that we had taken down the aircraft in waters under their jurisdiction, and place aircraft-hunters there.¹⁰ We have no political reason, of any type or any kind, that prevents us from shooting down a plane that flies above us at 300 feet. If it's still over the sea, one, three miles...fine, but anything flying here, we bring down, making sure it falls in our territory.

However, we should not give a general order, for we cannot have them shoot down one of our planes. I would look for four or five places and place four or five batteries in these sites, and give only to these crews orders to shoot at that moment. Concentrate batteries of 30mm guns in four or five places, and when a plane passes over these, flying low, "fry it." We must establish good coordination to avoid the possibility of one of our planes passing over these sites.

It is necessary to start to fire some shots, because the [Americans] have a mess stirred up. Planes that are flying within our territory, at 200 feet, we must take them down. If they begin with the "little mess" we will start to fire, but controlled shots, because now they will begin flying Piper (planes) over our defenses.

[Source: provided by the Cuban Government for the October 2002 Havana conference ("La Crisis de Octubre: Una vision politica 40 años despues") organized by the National Security Archive. Translated from Spanish for CWHIP by Chris Dunlap.]



DOCUMENT No. 2

United Nations Cuban Ambassador Carlos Lechuga, Record of contacts at the UN, 22 October 1962-11 January 1963¹¹

22 October—Considered denouncing the United States for its blockade in the Security Council.

24 — Arinos (Alfonso Arinos de Melo Franco, delegate from Brazil in the General Assembly) -- ambassador in Havana instructed [him] to take steps in favor of observers.

— Meeting in Washington with Latin Americans; we were told "You are with us or with Cuba."

26 — [Charles W.] Youst [sic; Yost] ([deputy] Ambassador of US delegation) with Latin Americans in UN. "Situation in United Nations; in the sea, good, but not in Cuba, where they continue work on the bases."

Arinos: Brazil and Mexico ready to support actions to prevent war – they propose suspension of USSR shipments and withdrawal of American ships. Later a general solution – not only for Cuba – with Brazilian proposal for denuclearization

— US threats might be to enable negotiating in better conditions for them.

— [UN Acting Secretary-General] U Thant: separate discussion. Quick fix, consisting of suspension of the blockade and shipment of arms. (USSR in agreement.) US wishes for suppression of arms and construction in Cuba and then they will lift the blockade. U Thant sees an opening for [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticós' appeal to negotiate. He wants guarantees and asks Cuba. This was said to [US UN Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson, who stated that he would consider it.

— U Thant's letter to Fidel [Castro]. Remember what U Thant said in the Security Council on the 24th [of October] about Dorticós' words concerning US guarantees about Cuba.

He believes that would be on the right track. He is asking for suspension of medium and intermediate range ballistic missile plans in order to make a contribution to peace. He says that [the] US and USSR gave encouraging answers toward a peaceful solution.

27 — [Soviet UN Ambassador Valerian] Zorin and U Thant. U Thant stated: 1) Stevenson proposed inspection of ships on the high seas or in Cuban ports. Zorin said it was a matter for the Cuban government and that was a variation of U Thant's proposition. 2) That an agreement had come about on Soviet ships not advancing into the blockade zone and US not intercepting Soviet ships. 3) That Dorticós' words were a crucial point in the negotiations.

— It is said that Latin Americans will express to U Thant a) the necessity of negotiation, b) denuclearization of Latin America, c) observers in Cuba.

— U Thant said, concerning the inspection of ships, that Zorin had rejected it because it was against peace-time law and that verification in Cuba was an issue for Cuba and meant a capitulation on construction of bases and assembly of planes, and that the Soviet Union said no more were being made there. About Khrushchev's letter [to US President John F. Kennedy] referring to Cuba and Turkey, he confirmed that his reaction was positive. He said that their presence in Cuba would halt an invasion.

— [Mahmoud] Riad, [the ambassador] from the United Arab Republic [Egypt], said that the US insisted on the liquidation of the bases as a foundation for understanding and that they were prepared to give Cuba guarantees...Stevenson told him that observers were necessary but it would be preferable to the UN not only to have observers, but also a no-invasion guarantee.

28 — U Thant said that, during his stay in Cuba, "Radio Havana" lowered the pitch of its denunciations.

Journalist Donald Grant [of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*] said he had spoken with Clayton Fritchey, from the American mission [to the UN.] Fritchey said "that the policy of the CIA in Cuba had ended, that the letter from Kennedy to Khrushchev was the recognition of the social regime here; US would accept first four points and not the last for reasons of its own prestige, that they were ready to resume economic and diplomatic relations.

29 — Bulgarian Vice Minister of Foreign Relations told U Thant that Fidel's letter had matched up with that of Khrushchev.

— U Thant introduced the issue of verification on the high seas by the Red Cross, neutrals, or the UN, to the Soviets. The USSR accepted Red Cross verification under the following conditions: cessation of the blockade; verification taking place on Soviet or neutral ships. U Thant said it would be better in the destination port and that Soviets had said it was a matter for Cuba.

1 November: Chile, Venezuela, and Ireland (and permanent Western powers) will oppose a long-term solution in the Security Council. Ghana and the UAR [Egypt] have asked for instructions.

1 — [Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasili V.] Kuznetsov says [Fidel Castro's] 5 points make a good base for negotiation.

2 — US will take USSR acceptance of inspection as a precedent for disarmament and pressure it to accept the Western plan.

2 — Kuznetsov: U Thant's idea was to propose a variation on inspection, considering not only Cuba but the entire Caribbean as an area of tension, and that UN troops would operate in the entire zone including the US. I suggest that to complicate the matter, some country should suggest inspection of Puerto Rico, Central America and the Panama Canal. Soviets do not have a clear idea on Council procedures.

2 — Arinos suggests that Cuba invite neutral ambassadors based in Havana, without prior warning, to resolve Cuba inspection issue. They would visit bases and after dismantling, make declarations in confirmation. He sees an advantage, that this would be the initiative of the Cuban government and not another from outside. He says this is his own idea and if it is accepted, he will convince Brazil to support it.

3 — Zorin explained to me that the idea of Red Cross inspection is not a Soviet one, but rather U Thant's; as U Thant and Kennedy said yesterday, that the US had proposed three alternatives, namely UN, neutrals, or Red Cross, and that they preferred the Red Cross. The three ideas were proposed by the US to U Thant.

3 — Winievoig? [Josef Winiewicz] Poland's Vice Minister of [Foreign Affairs] spoke with [US journalist] Walter

Lippmann and said that at present direct conversations between Cuba and the US were difficult, but later on, through Latin American positive influence they would happen, and Dorticós' support was a good foundation. He called it the "Dorticós alternative."

3 — The impression [exists] that socialist countries were worried about war and that they still are.

3 — Danish Ambassador [Aage Hesselund-Jensen] informed me that his Government asked Cuba to reconsider the negative vote on UN inspection because it would damage U Thant's administration and that it was advisable to strengthen the UN for the defense of small countries. Urged Cuba to cooperate with the UN and said that UN intervention contributed to halting the crisis and it would be better to support the UN in future steps.

4 November 3 — Irish Ambassador [Frederick H. Boland] said in conversation that he regarded as appropriate Cuba's demand that US counterrevolutionary activities be stopped and that this increased tensions in the Caribbean and incited militaristic hysteria in American public opinion.

5 — U Thant consults with countries for the Council session. Also awaits the return of [Anastas] Mikoyan.

5 — In interview with [former] president of the Red Cross [and Swiss UN ambassador, Paul Rüeegger], I was asked if Cuba accepted their inspections on the open seas. Said that US and USSR were in agreement and that our acceptance was missing. Agreed that Red Cross would select a group of inspectors from neutral countries and impartial people: that they would do inspections under the superior authority of the United Nations. Possibly they would use Swedish ships.

7 November — USSR mentions that inspection would be done within next five days. Impression in United Nations is that there is no time.

8—U Thant confidentially proposed that accredited Latin American ambassadors in Cuba be invited by our government to visit bases and later make an informal declaration. His idea is that the group would continue afterwards to serve as a link between Cuba and the UN for a permanent solution. He believes this is crucial in getting the US to give guarantees, lift the blockade, and suspend its flights. U Thant has written an unsigned letter about this, but awaits a reaction. Last night he told me that the USSR and US reached an agreement that

warships from the US would inspect Soviet ships carrying missiles on the way to the Soviet Union.

8 — Communicated the Red Cross' answer. They will do no more inspection of Soviet ships going to Cuba. At the last minute, Red Cross said its constitution forbids carrying out inspection with its insignias and those of the UN would need to be used, because in practice they were the body doing the inspection.

Nov. 9 — Based on what Fidel told me, I will vote in favor of Brazil's motion. Socialists will do the same as us.

10 — Brazil asked me to study an amendment to the motion. This came about because I said we objected to the reference to verification for the connotation it has right now. Socialists agree as they always favor denuclearized zones and will make a similar area in Europe as a precedent. They tell me they accept control or verification because it can be no other way. I see as positive the negotiations among Latin American countries because a door is being opened.

10 — Zorin reports to me that in the last meeting with Americans, they insisted on inspection and avoided giving guarantees; upon proposing some demands containing the five points, McCloy said that the hand of Castro lurked in the background.

10 — Arinos told me that in a meeting in New York between the US and other NATO countries, they said the possibility for future negotiations with Cuba exists, as well as for the resumption of diplomatic and economic relations.

10 — Algeria's ambassador said his Government will accept inspection in the Caribbean and not only Cuba. (Recently, others have done the same.)

10 — I have the impression that the US insists on inspection and shies away from giving guarantees so that they strengthen their negotiating position. It is very difficult that they incite worsening of the crisis. After the elections, public tension will dissipate, and after the missiles are withdrawn, the US lacks political justification.¹² They seem to feel relieved by the agreement with the USSR. Every day their position in the UN is weaker as they try to win a political victory in this second stage.

10 — Regarding the Brazilian plan [for Latin American denuclearization], I understand that Puerto Rico and Panama must be mentioned specifically [as locations where the United

States cannot possess nuclear weapons]. Zorin told me his observations that the prohibition on bomb transport equipment must not be accepted, because they might apply to the ILUSHIN-18 that are in Cuba. He also affirms that nuclear weapon states must guarantee not to use such weapons against Latin America since the US can do so from their bases. This is also in [Polish foreign minister Adam] Rapacki's plan for Central Europe.

10 — Letter from the president of Mali [Modibo Keita] to Fidel stating he proposed to solve the crisis 1) expulsion of Cuban refugees from the US who propose invasion by American personnel, 2) lifting of the blockade, 3) cessation of the transport of nuclear weapons to Cuba. US and Cuba should submit themselves to UN arbitration.

11 — UAR ambassador [Mahmoud Riad] says that a group of 45 countries that made appeal to U Thant never acted as such a group, and that the majority of them feared displeasing the United States; the appeal was aimed toward peace and not solidarity with Cuba. Almost all of them presently agree with inspection to various degrees. The group has disintegrated. Chandery [not further identified] also confirmed this to me. However, they can continue to use it.

11 November — I passed on an answer to U Thant at his request. He told me of the difficult situation in which the Soviets found themselves due to Khrushchev's letter and the United States' insistence. U Thant now proposes the same but with countries from different geographic areas, almost all from the group of Belgrade [i.e., the Non-Aligned Movement], and neutrals. He did not mention countries but proposed Guinea and Ghana from Black Africa, Mexico and Brazil from Latin America, Austria and Sweden from Europe, and reminded me that Sweden is opposed to the blockade; Indonesia and India for Asia and the UAR [Egypt] from the Arab nations. He will send a letter to Fidel so that, should he maintain his rejection of the inspection, considering the idea that those countries offer their "good offices" for a permanent solution to be a meritorious one. Then U Thant would talk with the United States about the two letters. It occurred to me that the acceptance of "good offices" will serve to nourish 5 points propaganda. The letter from Kennedy to Khrushchev refers to missiles, and no subsequent solution. Until something positive has been achieved, the Council will not be convened. [But] if there is no agreement on the high seas and the blockade continues, they are considering calling the Council anyway.

Nov. 12 — U Thant letter (previous)

12 — U Thant brought to my attention that now there would be no inspection, but rather verification. I told him the effects were the same.

12 — Seeking joint interview with the USSR and us for U Thant to present him with a protocol. Kuznetsov had the idea that he and I would go to see the Americans tonight to present the plan, and I told him no.

13 — Interview with U Thant. I talked about the protocol in general terms. The Soviets made modifications and I too (smaller ones) and until Havana is aware of it, I will not present it formally. I asked Kuznetsov not to see the Americans until I received confirmation. USSR anxious to conclude this as soon as possible.

13 — Connected to modification of the protocol. Changes to Article 12 for U Thant.

13 — Explanation by U Thant of Article 12.

14 — About Kuznetsov and modification and my criterion, by which it was substantially altered.

16 — Stevenson reacted harshly to Fidel's declaration on flights over Cuba. He spoke of the absurdity that [Fidel?] would send a note in protest. Regarding the protocol he said it was unacceptable and stated that it contained the five points. Soviets said it was the basis for negotiation, Americans that they saw it as difficult. Zorin recalled that the Council had agreed on this after UAR and Ghana delegates had spoken.

16 — Modification of Brazil plan

17 — Arinos told me he would postpone voting on the plan.

17 — Kuznetsov with U Thant. U Thant told him that negotiations would be tripartite [i.e., US-Soviet-Cuban—ed.] through the UN. He spoke also on Article 12 of the protocol. U Thant said that he saw no problem in presenting his proposal on this issue if the parties could agree on eleven of the articles. He announced that he was developing a plan to create mobile verification groups for the UN, comprised of representatives of neutral countries approved by all parties. The headquarters would be in New York. Verification would occur in all places agreed on by the three parties. Each party would be able to send groups to determined locations on its own initiative, as would the Secretary General.

19 — [US negotiator John J.] McCloy's reaction on the protocol and other matters. (They suspended flights after Fidel's declaration, and also no more U2 [flights] going forward.)

19 — U Thant said that the president of the mobile groups will be a person of global stature accepted by all.

21 — U Thant gave me a letter for Fidel acknowledging receipt of his note from November 19. He noted that the Cuban government is prepared to withdraw its IL-28 bombers, and also that Cuba is open to a wide-ranging solution. U Thant expects to continue contact through me.

23 — To avoid the Council meeting and doing nothing, I suggested the possibility that U Thant give a boost to the idea of "good offices" with neutrals so that the matter stays within the auspices of the UN.

26 — US declaration plan.

26 — U Thant invited Mikoyan and the Soviets to dinner, and they asked that he also invite the Americans. Tomorrow I will have lunch with Mikoyan.

26 — I told U Thant that the Americans have said nothing about the documents that the Soviets gave them. In the past few days negotiation has taken place between the USSR and US without participation by the UN. I told U Thant and the Soviets that it was very important that the UN not lose control. Today, I repeated this to U Thant. The Americans have two alternatives for the proceedings to continue in the Council. One is that each party makes a declaration and the President summarizes them. The other would be to not hold a session and send written documents then gather them in a dossier. The Americans submitted this idea to the Soviets. I asked U Thant if now there might be an opportunity to obtain a letter about the neutrals. He told me he would include it in his report.

29 November — Soviets trying to make a similar declaration with the Americans that contains minimum points. If they succeed, they will write a second one about the matters on which there is no agreement, supporting the 5 points.

4 Dec. — I gave the Cuban declaration plan to U Thant in case there is agreement among the three parties.

5 — Soviets and Americans — two interviews. One six hours long with McCloy and Youst [Yost] and another last

night with Stevenson. Nothing. I told K. to think about a date for the Council and that the topic was losing steam in public opinion. The Americans continue flights and don't promise anything. I told U Thant the same thing.

5 — About proceedings and differences.

7 — American modifications to the plan. Suppressed reference to the Treaty of Rio.

7 — Brazil will postpone the Latin American group meeting.

10 — USSR supports Cuban plan to read [to] Council.

13 — US will today present its joint declaration plan to the USSR on behalf of both countries.

19 — I asked U Thant to make an appeal in his letter with documents for the president of the Council and not consider the Caribbean crisis to be concluded. I told the Soviets to ask this of U Thant also.

19 — Americans have not accepted any procedure. They are waiting for Kennedy to return from the Bahamas [where he was meeting UK Prime Minister Harold Macmillan]. It is possible they will accept something, but will add other documents. McCloy told us that he did not wish for the USSR to send its letter from October 27, because Kennedy did not refer to it in his own letter.

3 January 1963 — Americans say if USSR sends letter from October 27 and 28 then they will send additional documents. New Soviet proposal is that US and USSR not send any documents [to the UN Security Council], but rather a letter. McCloy's observation in the letter was that the Caribbean area was mentioned, and not Cuba.

4 January — Americans accept Soviet proposition to send only one document and noted some modifications. McCloy submitted the modified document today.

5 January — Moscow accepted modifications.

7—US and USSR agree to send document tonight after 8 pm or tomorrow morning. They will not go in person. We will wait but turn in ours in person. In my judgment they will send it because if they go alone they will have to (THERE ARE WORDS HERE THAT I CANNOT MAKE OUT.

THEY ARE TWO SHORT WORDS) [in original—trans.¹³] and since Cuba is alone, it will go alone.

7—Documents will be submitted today [at] 5 pm and to propaganda at 8 pm.

10-- Very cordially, I explained to U Thant that his proposal concerning informal (or unofficial) invitation, besides being an abdication of our position on principle, is futile, since the Yankee government is inspecting Soviet ships, and it is known that the dismantling and packing have concluded, and they are now making their departures.

11— Government opposes inspection. It is auspicious that efforts will lead to permanent solution and in agreement that U Thant send confidential letter along the lines indicated. Even though they are opposed to returning planes, we have reached agreement with the USSR that demands an end to the blockade in exchange for their withdrawal.

[Source: Provided by the Cuban Government for the October 2002 Havana conference (“La Crisis de Octubre: Una vision politica 40 años despues”). Organized by the National Security Archive. Translated from Spanish for CWIHP by Chris Dunlap.]



DOCUMENT No. 3

Cable from Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl Roa to Cuban Mission to the United Nations (Amb. Carlos M. Lechuga), New York, 10 November 1962

Secretariat of the Minister
10 November 1962

CLASSIFIED

Cuba Mission to the UN

Very cordially, I explained to U Thant¹⁴ that his proposal concerning informal [i.e. unofficial—trans.] invitation [sic; i.e., inspection—trans./ed.], besides being an abdication of our position on principle, is futile, since the Yankee government is inspecting Soviet ships, and it is known that the dismantling and packing have concluded, and they are now making their departures. On the other hand, so that you may decide your course of action, informed visitors represent countries that are practically on the side of the enemy.

Regarding the Brazilian project [i.e., draft—ed.], await instructions from the government. Regards.

[Source: provided by the Cuban Government for the October 2002 Havana conference (“La Crisis de Octubre: Una vision politica 40 años despues”) organized by the National Security Archive. Translated from Spanish for CWIHP by Chris Dunlap.]



DOCUMENT No. 4

Cables from Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl Roa to Cuban Mission to the United Nations (Lechuga), New York, 11 November 1962

Republic of Cuba
Ministry of Foreign Relations
Secretariat of the Minister
11 November 1962

CLASSIFIED

Cuba Mission to the UN

Government resolved to present following amendments to Brazilian proposal. First: Specifically include Puerto Rico and Panama Canal Zone as territories with the objective of denuclearization. Second: Guarantees from nuclear powers – should give guarantees not to deploy bombs against Latin America. Third: Withdrawal of all existing military bases in Latin American territory and Africa belonging to nuclear powers. This, obviously, includes Guantánamo. Explicit instructions to discuss and negotiate amendments (mentioned) first and second. Inflexible attitude around third amendment related to bases. In case it is not accepted Cuba will vote “abstention”, explaining that although it may be in essential agreement with the substance of the motion, it cannot vote for it because [the] Cuban amendment is not included. Friendly and explanatory arguments and language for Brazil. Absurd that other nuclear powers cannot have bases in Latin America and the United States has one in Cuba. A promise not to use Guantánamo as a nuclear base is not enough, because it lacks effective validity. Regards, ROA



11 November 1962

Ministry of Foreign Relations
Secretariat of the Minister

CLASSIFIED

Cuba Mission (to the) UN

USSR approved the document as sent. Text, article nine, should be substituted for another in which Soviets confirm having honored the commitment contracted in article eight. We will send exact wording tomorrow. An avenue for further discussion with U Thant is presentation of the tripartite protocol. See [Soviet deputy foreign minister Vasily V.] Kuznetsov immediately. In case the US opposes the protocol, accept U Thant's idea of independent declaration in which each country would promise to uphold its corresponding part of the protocol. Postponing this declaration until the content of that of the US is known satisfies points raised by the protocol and Cuban government gives approval. Regards. ROA



CLASSIFIED

Cuba Mission to the UN
11 November 1962

Government opposes inspection, favorable that efforts will lead to permanent solution and in agreement that U Thant send confidential letter along the lines indicated. Regards.

[Source: provided by the Cuban Government for the October 2002 Havana conference ("La Crisis de Octubre: Una vision politica 40 años despues") organized by the National Security Archive. Translated from Spanish for CWIHP by Chris Dunlap.]



DOCUMENT No. 4

Cable from Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl Roa to Cuban Mission to the United Nations (Lechuga), New York, 20 November 1962

Republic of Cuba
Ministry of Foreign Relations
Secretariat of the Minister
20 November 1962

CLASSIFIED

Cuba Mission to the UN

Acting in a coordinated fashion with Soviet delegation on Brazil proposal. Insist with [Brazilian UN Amb. Afonso] Arinos [de Mello Franco] on inclusion of our points of view and if not, present them as amendments. Essential to demand nuclear powers promise not to have bases in Latin America and guarantee not to use nuclear weapons against it. Obtain formulation of paragraph **[illegible, one letter or number]** of Article Two, the part on devices, to avoid characterizing these devices, and vehicles for air and naval launches, as nuclear weapons when they are not. **[Excised]** Establishing a denuclearized zone is worth nothing without guarantees against the only nuclear power on the continent. Remember a fundamental point is withdrawal of military bases by nuclear powers. In any case, it should be asked that voting on the resolution be separate, the goal being to vote affirmatively on whatever position or abstain. If the resolution excludes Cuban concerns vote against position according to agreed terms. Send word of the situation to receive final instructions. In truth, it does not interest us to push the Brazilian proposal.¹⁵ [Soviet politburo member Anastas] Mikoyan stated that USSR and USA have agreed that after announcement to retire [IL-28] bombers **[illegible]** they will do so within a month's time. We have expressed our non-opposition to this. Prepared to consider U Thant proposal on Article Twelve, always within the general and permanent solution envisioned in the protocol project. ROA

[Source: provided by the Cuban Government for the October 2002 Havana conference ("La Crisis de Octubre: Una vision politica 40 años despues") organized by the National Security Archive. Translated from Spanish for CWIHP by Chris Dunlap.]

Letter from Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos to Fidel Castro re Conversation with Anastas Mikoyan, 25 November 1962

Havana, 25 November 1962
YEAR OF PLANNING

Commander Fidel Castro Ruz, First Secretary General of the ORI [Integrated Revolutionary Organization], [Havana] City.

Comrade Fidel:

Here I will inform you about the conversation with comrade Mikoyan last night when he paid a visit to my house.

This visit was announced to me by the USSR's ambassador to Cuba, comrade [Alexander] Alexeiev [Alexeyev], who told me that Mikoyan wished to greet me in the presence of my family.

I thought this was a visit for pure reasons of courtesy, because by way of my presence in the USSR as the Cuban ambassador, I met him and we got together countless times, and I befriended his son Sergei, but Mikoyan quickly began to talk about the USSR's position with respect to the decision taken on the Cuban problem.

I began to talk about his trip to Santiago [de Cuba] and his return that was barely an hour later, but he immediately jumped to the topic of discussion.

First, he made a long statement, and upon finishing, I indicated to him that I already knew, through reports of the comrades in the Secretariat and by those which he too had learned our points of view. **[several lines excised]**

Immediately a dialogue developed, the essence of which – and what Mikoyan primarily expressed – are the following:

Position of the USSR with respect to Cuba: “Humanity has been freed from a catastrophic war, and Cuba from its complete liquidation. It must be understood that the situation has improved for Cuba. The missiles accomplished their task. We thought about six months beforehand; then Cuba had no missiles and there was the danger of an immediate invasion. The problem was stopping the aggressors, and this has been accomplished in Kennedy's promise not to invade Cuba. We must believe this promise. Besides, in the next election, he will doubtlessly be reelected and will need to keep his word. So we think Cuba will not have problems for the next five or six years.”

“If Cuba is assaulted in another way, it must be understood that the USSR will retaliate in other parts of the world in which the Americans are very interested, and other points closer to the USSR. Cuba is far from the USSR and close to the USA. But those other important parts of the world are close to the USSR and far from the United States, say, Laos or Berlin.”

“In Berlin they are in a mousetrap; we have them in a fist. With just some artillery and a few tanks, we will crush them. If not having the missiles in Cuba ceases to be an advantage, (this answer to one of my questions remained unclear, despite my insistence on it. I don't know if the translator is at fault or if Mikoyan preferred leaving it this way.) we must tally what has been achieved regarding the guarantees not to invade Cuba from the United States. And the USSR does not need bases near the United States, as its missile forces are powerful and precise enough to strike the enemy in any place in the world from within the USSR's own territory. Recall that Khrushchev

said that the precision of our technology permits us to hit a bull's-eye on a point situated out in the cosmos. However, what was the situation of that military advantage over the United States? Our missile bases in Cuba, having been discovered by the USA and become perfectly known to them. This situation allowed them to destroy the missile bases before they could be used. Therefore, there was not such an advantage.”

And if they had not discovered those bases, do you think that advantage would exist?

“If they had not been discovered, it would be as if they did not exist. The situation would have been different as it would not have produced the crisis. Talking about this point, one can reach the conclusion that Mikoyan tried to indicate that the USSR transferred and installed missiles in Cuba thinking not of using them, but rather as a political maneuver. And that they proceeded to install them in a way that allowed the US to discover them.”

“The moment of liquidating imperialism has not come. The fate of imperialism and socialism is not tied up in a war. This goes against our principles, against all those on which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union bases its fight. Peaceful coexistence is the path to follow for the development of humanity toward socialism and the defeat of imperialism. The ideas of communism are not carried on bayonets. Communism is not imposed by cannon fire or nuclear bombs. Our guarantee or assurance that war can be avoided, that imperialism can be stopped, is in our military strength. It is clear that if we did not have that military power, the situation would be different and we would have war instead.”

[Source: provided by the Cuban Government for the October 2002 Havana conference (“La Crisis de Octubre: Una vision politica 40 años despues”) organized by the National Security Archive. Translated from Spanish for CWIHP by Chris Dunlap.]



DOCUMENT No. 5

Letter from Cuban Communist Party leader Blas Roca Calderio, Passed by Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos to Emilio Aragonés, 27 November 1962
Havana, November 27, 1962
“YEAR OF PLANNING”

To Capt. Emilio Aragonés

I send to you, enclosed, a copy of the letter sent by Comrade Blas Roca for your knowledge.

Fraternally, HOMELAND OR DEATH
WE WILL WIN

Oswaldo Dorticós Torrado

[Letter from Blas Roca¹⁶.]

In Copenhagen, I did not state in my speech, nor in any declaration, that peace could have been saved. I don't know how this version was given or who might have thought it. A French journalist from *Le Monde* asked me for an interview, but I did not grant one. I did a television interview, but all the questions were insinuating and the main interest seemed to be David Salvador.¹⁷ I said a few words to another local journalist in Copenhagen before the meeting began, but at no time did I use a phrasing that would reflect my thoughts to even a minimal degree.

Despite the fact that since I left Cuba I have not had information or even received the *HOY* newspaper or any other, my principal interpretations of the crisis have aligned fully with those of the National Leadership. My opinions and words, up to and including in many details, coincided with what I have seen since in the newspapers and Fidel [Castro]'s speeches. I am in complete agreement with what I have learned of the interpretations and points of view of the National Leadership, and also with the attitude that leadership has adopted in the face of the crisis.

I agree entirely with the opposition to any kind of UN commission, or that of any other organization, inspecting Cuba. Cuba does not need to be inspected. The United States, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua should be inspected, and other countries that violate rules and principles of international law and the UN Charter itself – they have been organizing, arming and conducting mercenary invasions from their territories against Cuba and today they train mercenaries, arm pirate ships, infiltrate saboteurs and assassins, etc. Cuba has not violated any principle, rule, or international law. It had the right to arm itself and did so. It had the right to install atomic weapons, and installed them.

I agree completely with the FIVE POINTS presented by Fidel [on 28 October 1962]. Only if they are fulfilled by the United States, those Five Points will create relative security if that nation disarms the apparatus of the military invasion of Cuba. Achieving these Five Points would give us a decided advantage in the entire situation. The most important – and what I consider among the greatest probability of success – is the withdrawal of the [US] naval base at Guantánamo. The incongruence of the existence of the base in the current status

of relations between Cuba and the United States has been made quite obvious.

This base today lacks its value for defense of the Panama Canal. Its only value is as 1) a point of support for aggression toward Cuba and center of hostility to our country, 2) a point of departure for primitive and interventionist actions against Venezuela, Colombia, the Guyanas, Brazil, and the Caribbean islands. 3) A calm sea for training and teaching. The existence of the base is a point of friction more dangerous to the United States' troops than for us. It is inconceivable that troops would now leave from that base to intervene in Venezuela or whatever Caribbean nation. The American leaders understand very well that this base, surrounded by well-armed enemy troops, is ineffective and dangerous for its occupants. Can you imagine what we would have to do in this situation?

The other points, save that concerning the economic freeze [i.e., embargo—ed.], ask the United States to stop committing crimes and inadmissible acts under international law, and actions contrary to explicit laws of the United States itself. The economic freeze, or, better put, the suspension of all import and export trade with Cuba, in spite of its absolute lack of morality, has a certain foundation in the fact that each country is free to trade or not trade with another, to have diplomatic relations or not. To maintain the suspension of import and export trade with Cuba is to maintain economic aggression. To keep economic aggression is to keep the door open to military aggression.

Even so, I see no possibility that this kind of aggression might cease, unless the leaders[hip] of the United States does a U-turn and tries to establish similar relations with Cuba as they have with Yugoslavia and with the same ends, if they have some hope for a similar arrangement.

But as I see things, this is not likely. With the exception of the cardinal difference between our leadership and the Yugoslavian one, of course, here I have only thought of the ideas that might move [US President John F.] Kennedy. The United States must try to defeat the Cuban Revolution so that no doubt remains among Latin American nations that the path of Cuba cannot be taken. The US cannot renounce the fight against the Cuban Revolution in the same way that we cannot give up the struggle against capitalism. The problem is that of the forms of conflict. Effectively, the US turning to invasion can be avoided. There are many reasons for this:

FIRST: Invasion leads to world war, which would mean risking everything for Cuba.

SECOND: The socialist camp is stronger and its strength is a significant factor – precisely against invasion, when faced with the prospect of war.

THIRD: Invasion of Cuba is costly in terms of life for the Yankees because Cuba is well armed and prepared to defend itself with the spirit of Homeland or Death.

FOURTH: It is not possible at this stage to carry out an invasion that would quickly triumph. No matter how much the invasion drags out, its results would be uncertain and problematic, even in the case that it did not lead – as it would [certainly] lead – to world war.

FIFTH: The invasion of Cuba, as soon as it unfolds, would unleash a series of anti-American actions in Latin American countries as well as others in the world. This crisis, despite its brevity, led to the destruction of American property, businesses, and institutions in various Latin American countries. If it had taken even one week longer, what happened in Venezuela would have been equaled or surpassed in many countries.

These factors can weigh decisively in the intentions of the Yankee leaders to obligate them to accept and respect the promise of non-invasion of Cuba.

But what they cannot seriously promise is not to seek many other ways of fighting against the Cuban Revolution, in hopes of diverting, corrupting, or crushing it.

I am in complete agreement with the way that comrade Fidel set out the matter of our relations and discrepancies [i.e., divergences—ed.] with the Soviet Union. We have much to be grateful for from the USSR and we are thankful. We know of the respect that they have shown for our sovereignty and the rights of our State. We are identified with them in the ideal of socialism and communism and the theory of Marxism-Leninism. We trust in their Government, in their Party and in their people. We are brothers, bosom friends. But even between brothers and friends, differences arise. As we have done, we wish to overcome these differences within the framework of fraternal discussion, direct and private, or semi-private, since the differences are very obvious and the points of view of all concerned are well enough known.

Frank, brotherly discussion of differences should lead us to strengthen our relations, to make them better, and to make unity stronger. This is how I have viewed and interpreted Fidel's statements. Cuba, in the socialist camp, means a great deal. It is the beginning of the Revolution in Latin America. It is the first hedge against the United States, the center of great influence over still-undecided governments of Asia and Africa. At the same time, the socialist camp means a great deal

to Cuba. It means weapons, breaking the economic blockade, facilitating the construction of socialism to the maximum extent. It means, in a word, the guarantee of economic and social victory in the shortest time possible and with the fewest possible sacrifices. That is why Fidel's position, which I share from the heart, is so wise and fair, and so Marxist-Leninist.

I share the point of view that we have no reason to trust in Kennedy's statements. I have previously stated the reasons I believe a non-invasion pledge to be possible. These reasons make the promise possible, but it also could be that no such promise is made.

I share the justified feeling of affront at the fact that the Cuban government was not previously informed [by Khrushchev] of the step that would be taken. Even more seriously, the necessity of relying upon the Cuban government was not stated in the document. I consider even worse the fact that the Soviet document would accept in principle inspection within Cuba, despite Cuba's categorical rejection of the same for solid and sensible reasons. Apparently, there is no solution for this besides accepting what would satisfy the Soviet government, guaranteeing us in the future that it would not happen under any circumstances, and fighting together for the FIVE POINTS of guarantee against direct military aggression by the United States against Cuba. Of course, I believe that, with firmness and good sense, resolute opposition to inspection must be maintained, whether in Cuban territory or Cuban waters.

My primary reaction to the problem of the provocative Yankee flights is to shoot down the planes. The brazen Yankees exploit the USSR's eagerness for peace and Cuba's good sense to commit these unspeakable acts of abuse. The only thing that goes against my first reaction is that previously, we have tolerated these flights and starting to shoot down planes now could appear to be a desire to provoke a situation that would make agreement impossible. And we must be very careful not to give that impression. Our policy does not make difficult—or impossible—any valid and worthy accord in favor of Peace. Our opposition to inspection defends Peace, because if Cuba gives up its sovereignty and declares itself defeated by the United States, there cannot be peace in the world. Some impatient people say: "Inspection is not important." "You all decide what countries would [make up the inspection authority]"... "That will make an agreement easier..."

We say: No. This will not make an agreement easier; it will only make countless new, humiliating petitions presented by the United States easier. Inspection is important because if we accede to it, the United States will present themselves [i.e., itself] as victorious and omnipotent. It will not facilitate an agreement because inspection is not necessary to prove that the bases were dismantled and missiles withdrawn. We would not choose the countries or the personnel. We would have to

accept countries that the United States finds acceptable; the United States would, in reality, choose the personnel. In the inspection debate, something similar happens to that concerning control and disarmament. The United States backs control, and the USSR opts for disarmament.

Many believe that the USSR should have agreed to control measures sought by the United States because it would not¹⁸ “guarantee an immediate agreement on disarmament.” It is not so. Accepting control as the United States wishes is to make disarmament more difficult and accelerate preparations for war. Going along with inspection is to speed up the march to a situation advantageous to the imperialists that also would bring us closer to war. In [East] Germany, I visited the Soviet ambassador [Mikhail] Pervukhin to sort out matters concerning the trip to Moscow, before receiving any indication that it should not be done.

In the conversation, the crisis became the main topic. I said:

It has been very dire that the USSR did not previously warn Cuba about its determination [to remove the missiles] and that the message [from Khrushchev to Kennedy] did not take the government of Cuba into account. More serious yet is that the message discusses inspection, when it is known that Cuba will not accept this in any way. I believe the crisis could have gone another way that would have given us advantages and guarantees for the peace and integrity of Cuba. The solution reached is no victory: it is a compromise and we should see it as such.

In Prague, I talked with Caderca (in the same airport), with Hendrix [Hendrych], with the leaders of the International Journal, Soboliev and Rumiantsev.¹⁹ In these conversations I stated the same thing, with a heavier emphasis on one matter or another, according to the conflict most pertinent to the argument. With Caderca, for example, the subject was that we could not consider it a victory, but rather a compromise. With Hendrix, it was that I thought bringing Soviet cruise ships to the Caribbean and having merchant vessels cross under their protection would not provoke war. Hendrix was laconic in his expressions and told me that the Czech government supported the FIVE POINTS of Fidel. The [East] Germans, in a not very explicit way, led me to understand the same. They believed that the course that the crisis had taken delayed the solution to the Berlin crisis. They also showed a great deal of interest in the normalization of diplomatic relations with Cuba.²⁰

In conclusion, here I have done as much as I could in the middle of a complex situation in which I, unfortunately, lacked reports, sometimes of the most basic kind, since the lack of language hindered me from seeing information in the press directly and in its entirety.

With regards and an embrace, Blas.

[Source: provided by the Cuban Government for the October 2002 Havana conference (“La Crisis de Octubre: Una visión política 40 años después”) organized by the National Security Archive; translation from Spanish for CWIHP by Christopher Dunlap.]



DOCUMENT No. 6

Confidential Memo from Cuban Mission to the United Nations Concerning Anastas Mikoyan's Conversations with US President John F. Kennedy (and Secretary of State Dean Rusk), 2 December 1962, with cover note from Cuban President Dorticos to Foreign Minister Roa, 5 December 1962

Havana, 5 December 1962

“YEAR OF PLANNING”

To Dr. Raúl Roa García

I am returning the confidential memo from 2December, directed to you regarding the interview of Mikoyan with Kennedy.

Fraternally,

HOMELAND OR DEATH, WE WILL WIN

Oswaldo Dorticos Torrado



DOCUMENT No. 7

Permanent Mission of Cuba in the United Nations, 2 December 1962

Raúl:

Mikoyan sent to New York the USSR's ambassador in Washington, Dobryni [Anatoly F. Dobrynin], so that he might inform us about his interview with Kennedy.

The version is the following:

Mikoyan spoke extensively on his visit to Cuba. He said the Revolution had accomplished many tasks, and specially pointed out the schools and hospitals, referring also to production. He stated that Fidel Castro concerned himself very much with the people and spoke of the public atmosphere that exists in Cuba, and of support for the Government.

Kennedy made no comment. He only expressed "that he was pleased [that] Castro worried about the people." Immediately after, he stated that the Cuban government continued a plan of subversion within Latin America and that this behavior greatly worried the United States government.

Mikoyan spoke of Cuba's distrust of "American imperialism" (they told me he had used that expression) and blamed the USA for the crisis in relations with Cuba. He added that the project [i.e., draft—ed.] of the US declaration before the Security Council is not satisfactory because it cancels, in practice, American obligations emerging from the exchange of messages between Kennedy and Khrushchev.

Kennedy said that the idea of agreeing on the three declarations before the Security Council is generally not acceptable because they cannot vote for Cuba's declaration and Cuba was not going to vote for that of the United States. He said it would be better not to arrive at similar declarations and limit the process to U Thant taking note of the declarations from the USSR and USA, without any voting by the Security Council. He also suggested not going to the Council in any form – neither to the session, nor to the proceedings through U Thant – but rather producing the declarations, he in Washington and Khrushchev in Moscow.

Mikoyan rejected the idea and said it would be better to go to the Council and continue negotiations between the Soviets and the Americans, and between the Soviets and us [Cubans] in New York.

Kennedy stated that if they went to the Council they would have to mention the Rio de Janeiro Pact and inter-American obligations because the USA and the other Latin American countries were signatories of that Pact.

Mikoyan (said) that the Rio Pact could not be mentioned because it is not the object of the negotiations, and besides, the USA might facilitate separation of Cuba from the OAS. "Therefore, the USA does not have the right to mention the Pact in this situation."

Kennedy stated that the Soviets wanted to receive an official document from the USA that promised not for two months, but for two years, which is what remains of his presidency, or for six years if he is reelected. The USA had to guarantee to the Western Hemisphere (countries) that the USSR would not send missiles to Cuba again and that Cuba

would not carry out acts of subversion in Latin America. He added that in this situation (the USA) feels obligated to fly over Cuban territory, even though the USSR criticizes them for doing so. He then showed a newspaper clipping in which it was said that Cuba was still hiding some Soviet missiles, and asked Mikoyan, "What would you do in my position after reading this allegation?"

Mikoyan said that this all seemed like the talk of crazy men, and expressed his confidence that the USA would not be swayed by such foolishness.

Kennedy laughed, but did not comment.

Mikoyan related that Fidel asked him in Cuba: with what right does Kennedy or the USA speak of attacking Cuba? What law lets them fly over our territory?

Kennedy did not answer.

Mikoyan declared that the USSR would never accept the American "right" to interfere with these flights, as this was against international law.

Kennedy said they would not carry out any more low-altitude flights, but that higher flights would continue.

Mikoyan responded that low flights were an act of blatant piracy, and the rest were piracy in the high skies. He added that if the USA had suspicions, that they should accept multilateral inspection (of Cuba.). He stated that Fidel had accepted it because it involved a basis of reciprocity, and that was a proposition by U Thant. In that way, he said, the USA could assure themselves that Cuba was not subverting order in Latin America, a charge that he rejected. He added that Cuba could also talk of subversion in its territory, not only by the United States but also by other countries in the Western Hemisphere. Continuing the conversation, he mentioned that the additional propositions contained in the declarations of the USA before the Security Council did not appear in Kennedy's messages, and it seemed that the USA was attempting to reject the results of the negotiations. "It appears that the USA doesn't want to put out all the sparks in the fire, and we want to resolve this matter as soon as possible in order to be able to move on to other problems and resolve them too. What can I tell Khrushchev? Do I tell him that you are going to fulfill the obligations you have laid out, or that you don't intend to?"

Kennedy said that it seemed that the translator had not summarized his observations well, and that he was prepared to reiterate the promise of no Cuban invasion, but that there were some difficulties in the editing of the text. "We will give instructions to Stevenson and you give them to Kuznetsov, so that conversations in New York on this matter can continue."

In the interview of Mikoyan with Dean Rusk, the next day, the Cuban issue was not discussed. They discussed nuclear tests and other matters. Rusk, however, spoke of Brazil's proposal to denuclearize Latin America. (He said the same as

[Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Edwin M.] Martin to the Brazilian ambassador [to the United States Roberto de Oliveira] Campos, whom I informed in a recent confidential memo.)

Rusk told Mikoyan that they were prepared to add Guantanamo and the Panama Canal to Brazil's resolution for a territory free of nuclear weapons, with the only reservation being that the USA could use the Canal to transport nuclear arms from the Atlantic to the Pacific, or vice versa.

[Source: provided by the Cuban Government for the October 2002 Havana conference ("La Crisis de Octubre: Una vision politica 40 años despues") organized by the National Security Archive. Translated from Spanish for CWIHP by Chris Dunlap.]



DOCUMENT No. 8

Documents Concerning Conversations in Moscow between Cuban Communist Official Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and Soviet Leader Nikita Khrushchev, 11-12 December 1962
Memorandum from Carlos Rafael Rodriguez to Commander Raúl Castro, re: Sending of Documents

Dear comrade:

I am sending now to the members of the Secretariat the report of the conversation with comrade Nikita S. Khrushchev in Moscow, as well as that of the meal we had with him and other leaders of the Soviet Government.

Subsequently, I will send you the report on the result of the negotiations. Later, information on some political aspects of the trip that I believe are of great interest to us.

Fraternal regards,



DOCUMENT No. 9

REPORT ON THE CONVERSATION OF COMRADE CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ WITH COMRADE NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV WITH THE PRESENCE OF COMRADE ANASTAS MIKOYAN, 11 DECEMBER 1962

Upon arrival, comrade Carlos Rafael Rodríguez was received by comrades Khrushchev and Mikoyan. The press, televi-

sion and film crews were there, took various photos, some of which have already appeared in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*.

Once photographers left, we were alone with the translator Vladimir Titmienev.

Comrade Khrushchev asked: Well, is the shock over now?

Carlos Rafael Rodríguez answered: The shock is not completely done. Among other things, the UN situation persists and that has meant that the differences between us are repeating themselves to various extents. We all want this matter to be settled, the moment of declarations to pass, and to begin the possibility of working anew toward agreement. We have made an effort to have the smallest possible discrepancies in our declarations before the Security Council, but evidently, some public disagreements will inevitably continue.

Khrushchev explained that "the President" had problems and that he had asked the Republicans to help him work around their demands, with the objective of being able to fulfill all their commitments to the USSR.

On the other hand, we must take into account that Kennedy does not really wish to keep these commitments. He is an enemy. Under these conditions, the Soviet Union is helping to shape the development of events in the desired direction, that is, forcing the imperialists to accept a public commitment with respect to Cuba.

Khrushchev said, "We also have felt much bitterness." He continued: "We have never stated that the missiles would serve to convert Cuba to a military installation against imperialism. Only the foolish could argue that we placed the missiles there with the purpose of keeping them in that location. We think that we have gained a victory for Cuba and for the Soviet Union, and that the objectives that we sought in bringing the missiles there have been achieved. The imperialists have been claiming victory and the American press has made many arguments along these lines. We have not wished to answer them, though they have used even the press organs closest to Kennedy. Why not? Because if we were to use brusque arguments to answer them, if we were to show that we had won a victory and boasted too much about it, those arguments would work against Kennedy and not allow him to develop his policies, making him feel obligated to threaten Cuba again.

But what is fundamental is this: We have achieved our bottom line. Let us ask ourselves: Why did they not attack Cuba? The only answer is: because of the missiles. We were certain that the attack would come, and because of that we decided to place our missiles there. We accomplished our objective. However, we must not get excited. It is necessary to show a "sense of moderation."

Cuba is in a different situation. Cuba can shout more. However, speaking frankly, we do not think it is necessary to egg on the enemies, who are strong.

We have become bitter about the fact that after having made an extraordinary effort by situating the missiles in Cuba, the effort that brought us to move men, weapons, risk war and spend enormous sums of money, when we believed we had arrived at the end victorious, suddenly your rude criticism of us crops up. And afterwards, we have seen how your attitudes get in the way of solving problems, not only in Cuba but elsewhere. (This version is not literal, but rather more free in interpretation; the word “*estorban*” was that used by Comrade Khrushchev.)

I must admit to you that we have not moved beyond this shock either. When Fidel declared that he was opposed to moderation, we asked ourselves: “What the hell pushed us to send the missiles to Cuba? Why have we done this, risking so many things?” And always, we have had to answer: We did it thinking of Cuba, we have thought principally of Cuba, and they now answer us in this way.

[One paragraph excised]

If we speak of blasphemy, we are in better conditions to do so; we have 45 years of experience in speaking blasphemies to the imperialists, and if this were all that we had to do, it would be very easy.

“We are convinced that if we had not placed missiles in Cuba, Cuba would already have been crushed.” (Literal) Kennedy had launched this attack before the elections. In his interview with Adschuvej [Adzhubei²¹], he made an ominous comparison between Cuba and Hungary. He told him: “We have not finished our work in Cuba. We failed there. Khrushchev resolved his problems in Hungary in three days.” It was a grim announcement. Because of this, we decided to place the missiles to frighten the imperialists.

Of course you are proud, for you can “die like heroes,” you are prepared to do it, but that does not resolve our problems. I asked [Soviet Defense Minister Rodion] Malinovski, who knows all that you have in Cuba, how much time it would take him with forces like those of the United States to occupy Cuba, and he answered three days. I am completely in agreement with Malinovski’s judgment. The Americans’ war capabilities are extremely powerful. We could, for example, bombard the territory of Cuba from a distance, without reaching [its] airspace. We must think about this. The people do not want to die; they want to live. We cannot give them a program to die.

Mikoyan reminded me of the lyrics of a song from the [Russian] civil war (Mikoyan says that actually it was Khrushchev that remembered this song) in which we too talked about dying heroically, but that is good for songs.

We have ordered the Soviet troops to die alongside the Cubans. You can be certain that they would.

In making our decisions, we have thought this action would be beneficial to Cuba, but it did not seem this way to you. You walked out in order to bring up our differences.

There is another way to solve this problem, through nuclear strikes, but we will only do this when there is no other way out. For then, we are not talking about a war game, but a terrible nuclear war, with enormous losses for humanity. **[2 lines excised]**

Cuba is not a convenient weapons station. Its small size and geographic conditions do not let it become such a thing.

You have Spanish blood – you are proud, you speak of principles. Maybe you think that we Russians have a different temperament, and maybe you do not appreciate this about us, but we too are proud. Khrushchev then reminded us that Lenin in 1905 tried for a revolution, failed, and was required to emigrate. He said then Lenin was neither scared nor desperate, that he carefully prepared the revolution, organized the Party, assembled the revolutionary forces, and in the decisive moment initiated combat. This is what must be done; this is Marxism-Leninism: measure the forces of the enemy, know how to distinguish the appropriate forces, and only then fight. **[1 line excised]**

He then explained that previously the United States did not accept the presence of forces of socialism in the Americas. They talked about the Monroe Doctrine, etc. Now they have left that aside, and have accepted Cuba’s survival, including public guarantees of non-invasion. This is a decisive shift. They have yielded guarantees, besides, from other States not to invade.

“This skirmish has been the most interesting in all of history between imperialism and socialism, and it is imperialism that has retreated.” (Literal)

We have retreated tactically, but they have withdrawn in essence. I repeat: We have not retreated on any front, we are not in any way on the defensive; I insist, not anywhere, even in Cuba. Everywhere, we are on the offensive. (Mikoyan said some words corroborating this statement.)

But the Cubans did not understand us, and they began to attack us in their press, using the words of the Albanians and the Chinese. If you are in favor of this position, please tell us so, and we promise you that we can shout more than the Albanians and the Chinese.

We have sent men, weapons, and spent hundreds of millions of rubles on this war. In transport alone, we have spent 20 million dollars, since we had to concentrate our whole fleet on this operation and rent capitalist vessels for the shipment of our merchandise to other countries. **[1 line and a couple words excised]** Now there is the promise not to attack Cuba,

now Cuba exists. Cuba will be a catalyst for the revolution in Latin America. We have dedicated all of our efforts to saving Cuba, so that it may serve as an example to the region, and all the efforts and expenditures will be justified, in our judgment, since Cuba exists [as a revolutionary country].

“We saw it all when we transported the missiles – we knew that they would put us on the brink of war and that we could collapse into war itself.” (Literal) When the decision reached the diplomatic core, we had more problems with you than with Kennedy. Mikoyan barely left Cuba alive (laughing). I’ve told Mikoyan that only he would be able to complete that mission, that no other member of the Presidium could carry it out.

I have told him that if I had gone to Cuba, in spite of how much I love and respect Fidel, perhaps we would have fought and I would have exited long before Mikoyan did. “We are satisfied, however, having achieved the principal goal.” (Literal)

Now we have a situation in which imperialism is not on the rise anywhere, nowhere, even in Cuba. Underline: nowhere. [approximately 2 pages excised]

However, time has now passed. At the beginning, we were quite upset, but when Mikoyan arrived, he softened us up. I don’t know what you did to him there, what kind of treatment you gave him. I have told him “You have become a Cuban agent, they will have to interrogate you.” (Mikoyan clarified that nothing similar has been said to him.)

“We are very pleased about Cuba, and at the same time, we are upset. We are very proud of you.” (Literal)

We share your ideas, we support them, but at the time it was necessary to do things more sensibly. You have behaved something like fighting roosters. We know that for you things have been difficult, but for the United States they have not been easy. Later we will know how many pairs of underwear have been changed during this crisis.

We think that the non-aggression against Cuba is assured for six years. We know that Kennedy has two years left, and we are sure that he is a manipulator and will win a second term, which will give us four more years. Six years is a good period. In these years, the correlation of forces will be favorable to us. It may be that Brazil and other countries enter the revolution.

We feel that it has been hard to resolve these things with you, the bearded ones, but things have been settled.

Khrushchev burst out laughing, and said: “Well, I am tired, and I have vented to you now, comrades.”

When comrade Khrushchev finished speaking, an hour and a half had passed. I asked him if he had time to listen to me, because I had to talk about many topics. He told me that he did. I told him then that before getting deep into the

matter I wished to “clear up” some problems about which I believed they had certain erroneous interpretations. Jokingly, he replied, “You think you’re going to talk and everything will be clarified?” I said to him: I don’t expect that. I only mean to put forward a few things about which I am profoundly convinced, and that I hope they will also be convincing [to him].

I then began to tell him that I thought they had the impression that the Cuban people and leadership underestimated their Soviet counterparts, that we believed them to be a people susceptible to weakening in the face of danger, while we thought Cuba and its leaders capable of all types of heroism. I argued that this was an erroneous opinion, that the Cuban people knew the history of the Russian people and the history of the Soviet Revolution, that we had a deep appreciation for all the Russian people had done and for all the work of the Soviet Revolution; we well knew the admirable heroism of the Russians and Soviets during the Second World War and, on our part, a great admiration existed for all their actions and heroism. Certainly, we Cubans were proud, as he said, but our pride in the bravery of our people, and in their revolutionary position, we did not regard relative to other countries, but only with respect to our own national attitude.

He added that comrade Mikoyan had been able to confirm this admiration and affection by the Cuban people for the Soviet people, because in spite of the crisis, and notwithstanding the bitterness of the Cubans, he found everywhere the affection to which I had referred. (Mikoyan interrupted to say this was true and to tell short anecdotes of his travels with Raúl and Fidel, the messages at the Santiago Airport, the reception by the university students and other similar things.)

I told him that, secondly, I wanted to make perfectly clear that in the attitude of Cuba during this crisis, not a trace of the Chinese position could be found, nor did Cuban positions derive from Chinese ones. I expressed that they knew well, and I did not wish to hide it from them, that among our leaders there were some who sympathized in concrete ways with some of the positions of our Chinese comrades, but I wished to explain how, in this crisis, even the comrades that felt more sympathy toward some Chinese positions found the attitude of the Chinese government erroneous, and that the solidarity they had expressed was too late and not sufficiently enthusiastic.

I stated, thirdly, that I wished to pause to discuss some statements by comrade Khrushchev which had given off the impression that he had attributed to comrade Fidel a position prepared to provoke a war, discounting the importance of nuclear devastation, and that comrade Khrushchev insisted upon interpreting Fidel’s letter from the 27th [of October 1962] as a proposition that the Soviet Union would launch a nuclear war. I told him these ideas were false and one of the

things that most irritated Fidel during the crisis had been the letter from Khrushchev in which he insinuated these opinions. I had carefully read Fidel's letter, and in it many things had been made clear in the sense of warning of the imminence of the attack on Cuba, expressing the Cuban disposition to resist until the end. At the same time, it advised him, once the attack against Cuba was done, not to vacillate on deploying [i.e., using—ed.] atomic weapons, since the attack on Cuba would be apparently followed by atomic aggression against the Soviet Union and socialist countries should not allow an imperialist force to destroy, for the second time, all that their peoples had created.

I expressed categorically that it was unfair and completely false to present Fidel and the Cuban leadership as having an attitude supporting war at any cost against imperialism. I told them, instead, the way in which Fidel had personally conducted events and had given orders to impede incidents, even at the cost of our pride, as they said, of our own love and even our military needs; they had tolerated situations (that I described) that other leaders would have found difficult to withstand, all to block a conflict that could degenerate into a war of universal proportions. I explained the firm but cautious position of Fidel in the whole process of relations with the United States.

I then told him that I wished to get more deeply into the matter. I set out with all possible clarity our points of view, although with a little more care in expression, than I had done in the Havana conversation with comrade Mikoyan, warning Khrushchev that they were points unanimously shared by all comrades in the leadership.

I said that I wanted to speak starting from the great respect that I had always possessed toward the Soviet Party and the Soviet Union, and asked that my words not be misinterpreted, but that I understood that a serious error had occurred in the process. The fundamental error had consisted in not treating us as a Party, and furthermore, not even as a State to which things should be explained. If they had developed a strategy that imagined the withdrawal of the missiles at a given moment, this strategy had to be discussed carefully with us. Things had not been this way, and we had all held an interpretation of the presence of the missiles that, evidently, did not correspond to the intentions of the Soviet government.

I explained that for Fidel, the acceptance of the missiles was not grounded in the needs of Cuba but in the consideration that installing the missiles meant the Soviet Union was devising a global strategy, and the presence of the missiles would be beneficial for the socialist area. (At this time, Khrushchev spoke to Mikoyan as if surprised by what he was hearing.) When we accepted the missiles, we had also

accepted the danger of atomic destruction, in the same way that they had risked atomic warfare by placing the missiles [in Cuba], but that we had done so thinking it was best for the socialist world, even though at its extreme ends, if things led to war, Cuba would practically disappear from the map.

I told him as well that the comrades that had led the first discussions were convinced that the missiles had come there to stay, as part of a global strategy. His [Khrushchev's] interviews with Che [Guevara] and [Emilio] Aragonés [when they visited the Soviet Union in late August/early September 1962] had left some comrades with this impression, and that he had even said things more or less along the lines of "the Yankees will scream, but they will have to put up with the missiles." The reference to the sending of the Baltic Fleet and other related things had confirmed our opinions and therefore, when we learned of the offer to withdraw the missiles, and after his decision to remove them, we were overwhelmed by the surprise and disoriented by the choice they made. We understood that there was sufficient time to discuss the matter with us and, besides, the way in which the problem had been brought up left us in a harmful situation that has threatened the influence and prestige of the Cuban Revolution and the sovereign character of our country, obligating us to make a public expression of our differences, things that for Fidel and all others have been a bitter decision. As a result of this way of leading the process, Cuba has had to adopt a position that clashed with the commitment from the USSR.

Once these two initial positions had been adopted, each had its logical development. The development of each made convergence of our positions practically impossible, which brought us to maintain different positions until the last possible moment in the UN, in spite of all the efforts that we were making to reduce these divergences to a minimum. In our leadership there had been an overwhelming desire that the process unfold at the UN so that we did not remain in this dead-end alley, to which we had been driven by the way the crisis was managed.

Khrushchev answered as follows: "If we are going to return once more to the problem of the missiles, I should say that I do not understand the Cuban interpretations. It is absurd to think that we placed the missiles to defend the socialist world. The missiles were placed for Cuba and thinking only about Cuba. We have intercontinental missiles, capable of striking severe blows against the United States and all countries allied with them – why would we need Cuba as a missile base?" He then focused on explaining the incapability of Cuba serving as a weapons storehouse, due to its narrowness, the vulnerability of the missile sites, the fact that the open emplacements could have been destroyed or rendered ineffective by bombs exploding many kilometers away from its coasts, but with waves able

to destabilize the sites. He expressed his irritation with the Soviet generals, and even spoke about Marshal [Sergei] Briusov [sic; Biryuzov] in a way that I did not understand clearly and that I refused to confirm because it did not seem opportune to me (I am referring to the Chief of Soviet Missile Forces.)

Then he explained what we already know about the way to emplace the missiles, about the security from palm forests where the missiles would not be seen, about the lack of attention to Khrushchev's order to locate them in horizontal positions during the day, etc. etc. I made a small intervention, insisting on what had been said about our interpretation of their propositions and he said: I cannot understand the reason behind these interpretations. [3-4 lines excised]

(He then told us what Mikoyan had said about what Khrushchev brought up upon returning from Bulgaria [after his visit from 14-20 May 1962—ed.].) In my conversations with Raúl, I started from the idea that no declaration would be sufficient to contain the Americans, so we decided that the missile forces could provoke a shock, though their placement would be very dangerous, yet we decided to send them because we were convinced that the result would be that the Yankees would have to reconcile themselves to the Revolution and accept it as a done deal." Then he said this: "Probably we will too share the blame for not having made the plan clear, though what is certain is that we spoke. The fault is ours for having spoken badly, but in spite of all the serious dangers that have threatened us, we can all be happy today, because Cuba exists, the Revolution exists, and the red flag flies. Today you criticize us harshly, but someday you will understand us.["]

We were convinced that Kennedy had a complex, having failed in the previous invasion, and therefore felt a necessity to raise his prestige by attacking Cuba, and had the forces to do it. His references to Hungary, comparing it to the case of Cuba, were statements of this sort of inferiority. The imperialists have tried to "appeal" to our conscience so that we understand their actions, starting from what they understand us to have done in the Hungarian case. Kennedy insisted that Cuba is to them what Hungary is to us.

Only the missiles could contain the United States, only the fear. We expected the aggression before the American elections on November 6, so we began the transport of weapons and incurred great costs in currency to rush the date of arrival. But things were done poorly, and the agents of the Federal Republic of Germany were the first to discover them. They were surprised. Their reports said that the way in which the Soviets were acting gave the idea that they wanted to impress, that they wanted Western powers to know that they had the missiles in Cuba.

[almost 3 pages redacted]

My idea came from there. I did everything in the interest of Cuba. It cost three times as much to install the missiles there as to add a device of the same power among the intercontinental missiles installed at Soviet bases. Apparently, our ideas were not clear from the beginning.

Regarding the military agreement, this is a problem that has concerned us. What should we do? How do we leave things in a way that Cuba remains fully protected with some assurance that it will continue in the same manner? He added that tomorrow, I would have the opportunity to hear a report [to the USSR Supreme Soviet] that would contain a strong declaration on Cuba, in that if the Americans did not fulfill their promises, neither would the Soviet Union, and the USSR would feel free to act in whatever manner necessary. He also explained that the report would link the problem of Cuba to the beginning of a war.

Then comrade Khrushchev said he must confess that we Cubans had scared them. He laughed, and said: "We find it difficult to sign treaties with you, because you don't leave space to maneuver." You have scared us a great deal, apparently, as relations are worse now. [2 lines redacted] We'll think, and give a satisfactory solution. We must think, and have some amount of control. I don't have the formula right now. We'll keep thinking about this and return to the discussion. (At this time, I tell him that in the conversations between Fidel and Mikoyan an idea has come about, the possibility of transforming the content of the military pact so that Soviet soldiers presently in Cuba remain as specialists, similar to those who stayed and worked in Indonesia, exactly as he talked about them in the conversation with us. These specialists would stay in Cuba, showing Cubans how to operate weapons, and leave the country as soon as our troops were prepared to use all kinds of armaments. We had to find the proper balance through which our people and others of the world, as well as the imperialists, would come to know that Cuba would have the level of military readiness necessary to contain aggression.

Khrushchev said verbatim: "This is not a problem. However, I don't think it would be sufficient. Something else must be considered, although tomorrow in my report I will talk about the same thing in a way that I hope you will find satisfactory." (It would be good if we continued thinking about and discussing this matter.)

Khrushchev said: Tomorrow I will say that if Kennedy does not come through, we will feel unconstrained. Besides, I'll state that we will never stop supporting Cuba and that we will stand by our duties toward Cuba.

[several lines excised] Mikoyan left at this time, 7:15 in the evening, for an interview with the Yugoslavians, as

Khrushchev joked that he would look after the revisionists. I said that it was already too late [3/4 page excised].

He stood up and said, laughing, "I'll do this: Tomorrow, on television, I'll say that we have spoken, that you have told us your needs, and that we still have differences around this problem...(I then interrupted him and said) "but, as you are a Marxist-Leninist, you will help us." Then Khrushchev said, "Yes, I will also establish publicly that we have differences."

I began to excuse myself, and Khrushchev said to me, "No, we are going in the same direction, so come with me. Put on your coat and we'll leave together."

Leaving the place where we had put our coats, the news that we were heading out with Khrushchev caused a firestorm, since on principle, people did not understand what it meant. Then we left together. Khrushchev asked the driver to go to some other places to show me the other new things that were along the way, and finally we arrived at the home.

I climbed out of the car, and we said goodbye, but the car had to drive around the residence to be able to get out. Two or three comrades came to the door, and Khrushchev greeted them at a distance then stepped out of the car. We invited him to enter and he accepted with great enthusiasm. He came in, we had some time together telling stories and joking, and soon after he left for his own house.



THE MEAL WITH KHRUSHCHEV

The day of the session of the Supreme Soviet, a little before they began, comrade Mikoyan told me that Khrushchev had invited me to dine with them, and that I should choose the comrades who would accompany me. I decided that my guests would be all the official delegates, and they were officially invited during the session.

When the session ended, Tito left immediately, and Khrushchev directed me to sit down and take tea. For some time, they commented on the Congresses of Prague and Italy. [CPSU politburo member Frol] Koslov [Kozlov] said he had seen [Cuban Communist Party leader] Blas [Roca], who had spoken with him, and that [Italian Communist Party leader Palmiro] Togliatti's report was very good, the position of [Italian Communist Giancarlo] Pajett [Pajetta] and other comrades had completely changed, and their speeches had been very enthusiastic.

Brezhnev then said that Blas had not been able to go to Czechoslovakia, but that [Cuban foreign minister Raúl] Roa had vetted his speech with him by telephone from Geneva. He never gave his opinion on the speech, but said there had

been 69 [national communist] Parties, that all but four had condemned the Chinese position. I felt somehow implicated in this statement but did not think it necessary to say anything in response.

After this, we went toward the official residences. Khrushchev drove me in his car. Mikoyan went with [Cuban foreign trade minister Alberto] Mora, etc. Upon our arrival, Mora told us that he needed to send off his mother at the airport and, as he had not known about the dinner beforehand, he would need to leave. I explained the matter to Khrushchev. He said that of course it was necessary for him to go to see his mother off, but he wanted him to have a drink with us first.

[Source: provided by the Cuban Government for the October 2002 Havana conference ("La Crisis de Octubre: Una vision politica 40 años despues") organized by the National Security Archive. Translated from Spanish for CWIHP by Chris Dunlap.]

Notes

1 See esp. James G. Blight and David A. Welch, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reexamine the Cuban Missile Crisis* (2nd ed., Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1990); and James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon, 1993).

2 Key coordinators at the co-sponsoring US institutions included Peter Kornbluh at the National Security Archive and, at the Watson Institute, James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang (the organizers of "critical oral history" projects not only on the missile crisis but on the collapse of US-Soviet détente, the Vietnam War, and US-Iranian relations), who are now at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Waterloo, Canada.

3 On the October 2002 conference in Havana, see esp. reports on the National Security Archive website. The Cuban documents were contained in two "briefing books" for participants in the conference; see the Archive's digital archive for these (Spanish-language) materials. Around that time, scholars were also able to obtain an important Cuban record of a secret speech by Fidel Castro in January 1968 to a closed party meeting that covered the 1962 events during a discussion on Soviet-Cuban relations. See James G. Blight and Philip Brenner, *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba's Struggle with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2002).

4 Lechuga may have subsequently prepared these chronologies based on contemporary documents (e.g., cables or journals) in connection with two books he later authored on the missile crisis: *In the Eye of the Storm: Castro, Khrushchev, Kennedy, and the Missile Crisis*, trans. May Todd (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 1995) and *Cuba and the Missile Crisis* (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 2001).

5 Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 2012).

6 See, e.g., the translated Soviet cables published in *CWIHP Bulletins* no. 5 (Spring 1995) and no. 8/9 (Winter 1996/1997).

7 See esp. the two most important secondary accounts to emerge since the end of the Cold War—Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *“One Hell of a Gamble”—Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: Norton, 1997), and Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008)—both of which rely heavily on US and Russian (but not Cuban) sources.

8 Before releasing the documents, the Cuban authorities evidently carefully reviewed them, and censored some passages (or entire pages, in the case of the Rodriguez-Khrushchev memcon) which are indicated in the text.

9 Translator’s note: In the original, there is a clear numeral 2, then a letter (possibly an E overstruck by another letter), then a clear letter n. This could be “2en,” or “2 in” 2 hours, or simply an error and thus a redundant 2 that doesn’t convey any additional information.

10 Trans. note: This is one of Castro’s more innovative turns of phrase, as it does not seem to be common military slang in the present day.

11 Ed. note: Mario Garcia-Inchaustegui was replaced as Cuba’s ambassador to the United Nations by Carlos M. Lechuga, until then Havana’s ambassador to Mexico, at the end of October 1962. On a cover page to this document there is a handwritten note reading, “Notes from Carlos Lechuga in a bookcase located in New York.”

12 Trans. note: My best estimate, as “cerece,” a typographical error, resembles “carece” meaning to lack or fall short.

13 Trans. note: This is part of the original text, in capital letters and in Spanish.

14 Editor’s note: Presumably when he visited Havana on 30-31 October 1962—ed.

15 Ed. note: Brazil withdrew its denuclearization proposal due to the Cuban insistence on the removal of all military bases belonging to nuclear powers—i.e., Guantánamo—a condition which the United States predictably rejected.

16 Ed. note: Roca made an extensive trip to Europe in October-November 1962, including stops in Denmark; East Germany (where he attended annual commemorations of the founding of the German Democratic Republic and spoke at a “Hands off Cuba!” rally in East Berlin on October 26); Czechoslovakia; Bulgaria (where he attended the Bulgarian Communist Party Congress in Sofia on 8-14 November); and Hungary (where attended the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party Congress in Budapest on 20-25 November). According to a report from Hungary’s ambassador in Havana, Roca had been scheduled to represent Cuba at the annual commemorations of the Bolshevik Revolution in Moscow, but his instructions were changed and he was instead directed to fly from Prague to Sofia. See the 30 November 1962 report on signs of Soviet-Cuba strains from the

Hungarian Embassy in Cuba, printed in the collection of Hungarian documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

17 Ed. note: David Salvador was a Cuban trade union leader, ex-communist, and member of the “26 of July” movement who had been arrested for alleged counter-revolutionary activities in 1960 and sentenced to 30 years in prison in August 1962. See Hugh Thomas, *The Cuban Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971, 1977, paperback edition), esp. pp. 86, 570.

18 Trans. note: Given the context, I feel this must be an error, since the author seems to wish to make the opposite point. But “no” — that is, “not” -- is indeed in the original Spanish text.

19 Ed. note: For the Czechoslovak record of Roca’s conversation with senior Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) figure Jiri Hendrych, dated 3 November 1962, see the collection of translated Czechoslovak documents on the missile crisis published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

20 Ed. note: Relations between the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and Cuba were normalized on 11 January 1963, prompting the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) to sever relations with Havana under the so-called Hallstein Doctrine in which the FRG broke or reduced relations with countries recognizing the GDR (with the prominent exceptions of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia). See the translated West and East German documents and accompanying commentary elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*, in particular Mark Kramer’s translation and analysis of a record of a January 1963 conversation between Blas Roca and an East German communist official.

21 Ed. note: Alexei I. Adzhubei, the editor of *Izvestia* and Khrushchev’s son-in-law, interviewed Kennedy at his home in Hyannis Port in November 1961, a conversation that was subsequently published, but the reference here is to his private talk with JFK in Washington in January 1962. In his report on this conversation, the translation of which appears in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*, Adzhubei quoted Kennedy as saying, after slamming his fist on his desk: “Once I summoned [CIA director] Allen Dulles and rebuked him. I said to him: ‘Learn from the Russians. When they had a tough situation in Hungary, they put an end to the conflict in just three days. When they didn’t like the events in Finland, the president of that country went to meet with the Soviet premier in Siberia, and everything was worked out. And you, Dulles, couldn’t do a thing.’”

Chatting with Che:

Conversations in 1961 between Cuban Revolutionary Ernesto Guevara and the Soviet Ambassador in Havana—and a Brazilian Record of his Meeting in Punta del Este with JFK Aide Richard Goodwin

Introduced by James G. Hershberg

Ernesto “Che” Guevara was one of the most iconic figures of the Cuban revolution—and of revolution in general (long before his image morphed into a fashion icon in the decades after his death).¹ The Argentine-born prospective medical student who left the land of his birth to promote revolution, joined Fidel Castro’s cause in Mexico in the mid-1950s, and followed him (on the legendary *Granma* boat voyage) to Cuba to wage guerrilla war against Batista, becoming one of the scraggly “*barbudos*” (bearded ones) who came down from the mountains and seized power in Havana in 1959. As Castro consolidated control, Guevara emerged as one of the top government figures, occupying various posts (head of the national bank, trade minister, et al.) and traveling frequently on international missions (including contacts with communist diplomats abroad to forge new relations). In 1965, amid considerable mystery and conflicting rumors, he furtively left Cuba to promote revolution abroad—first in the Congo (a futile effort to overthrow the American-backed Mobutu regime that left him somewhat disillusioned²), and then, finally, in Bolivia, where he was killed by CIA-assisted government troops in 1967.

This issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin* adds some fresh evidence on this controversial actor in the Cuban drama, who while admired in some quarters as an idealistic revolutionary and adventurer—as depicted in novels and movies such as *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2004)³—is reviled in others as a bloodthirsty communist who in the name of revolutionary “justice” personally killed many enemies. Among newly-translated materials found elsewhere in this *Bulletin* are the Chinese records of Che’s conversations with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai when he visited Beijing in November 1960, and with China’s ambassador in Havana around the time of the Cuban missile crisis in the fall of 1962; reports on Guevara from Soviet-bloc (and other) diplomats stationed there; and the (now uncensored) interview by a visiting Italian communist journalist shortly before the missile crisis.⁴

Presented below are Soviet and Brazilian records documenting six conversations with Guevara in 1961, before and after the failed April 1961 invasion at the Bay of Pigs (Playa Giron) aimed at toppling the revolutionary Cuban government by anti-Castro Cuban exiles who were secretly—but as these conversations and Cuban intelligence reports printed elsewhere in this *Bulletin* confirm, not *so* secretly⁵—financed, armed, trained, equipped, and (to the extent possible for this unruly and discordant crowd) organized by the US government. The first five talks are described in cables from Moscow’s ambassador in Havana, Sergei Kudryavtsev, and mix sometimes quite technical discussions of bilateral economic relations—predictably enough, given Che’s portfolio at the time—and broader reflections on the fluid situation in Cuba and international affairs, especially the looming threat of a U.S. or U.S.-backed attack, the ongoing fight within Cuba against “counterrevolutionary” forces, and the attitude of the incoming president, John F. Kennedy, who took office on 20 January 1961.

At the time of the first few conversations (Documents 1-2) with the Kremlin’s envoy, in January 1961, Che was president of Cuba’s national bank; by the time of the fourth and fifth conversations (Documents 3-4), in April—just before the Bay of Pigs—and June, he had become the Minister of Industry, in which position he also ran the powerful National Institute of Agricultural Affairs (INRA). While there is no room here for a detailed analysis of the political, economic, or military significance of Che’s comments, which bear on a wide range of topics, one impression that leapt out was his misjudgment of the incoming U.S. president’s likely handling of the plans for an anti-Castro military assault, covertly supported by the United States, that he was clearly inheriting from the outgoing Eisenhower Administration. Days before Kennedy entered the White House, the Soviet envoy’s report of his talks with Guevara reveals (see Document

1), Che assessed that not only that the “danger of a direct aggression on the part of the American armed forces has essentially passed,” but also judged that the new Democratic administration had no appetite for covert action against Cuba and “do not want the Republicans to put them in a difficult situation on the eve of assuming power.” In fact, Che made an erroneous inference from recent exposés in what he described as “the Democrats’ press” that “started to actively reveal the training of the Cuban counterrevolutionaries by the Eisenhower government in Florida, Guatemala, on the Swan Island and in other locations for an attack on Cuba.” Those “revelations,” noted Guevara, “in our opinion, clearly speak to the fact that Kennedy does not want to associate himself with this kind of operations from the start, and wants to make it impossible for Eisenhower beforehand.” In fact, Kennedy was not behind the press revelations, and would go forward, albeit grudgingly and in a constricted form (to minimize the “noise level”), with the covert operation that had begun a year earlier under Eisenhower—leading to the utter failure that got the foreign policy part of his presidency off to a disastrous start. If only Kennedy *had* followed Che’s reasoning—in other words, if he had cancelled the operation, blaming the loss of operational security due to premature press disclosures—the new US leader could have avoided the Bay of Pigs debacle yet deflected blame for doing so.

Even just a few days before the Bay of Pigs intervention began (see Document 3), Che still misjudged Kennedy’s intent and, at the same time, read the actual situation more accurately than the US president or most of his advisors (especially from the Pentagon and CIA). Though the situation remained “quite tense,” he told Kudryavtsev on 14 April 1961, he personally believes that the danger of invasion of the country by large beachheads of the external counterrevolutionary forces has now in all likelihood receded. The counterrevolution understands that given the presence of large contingents of well-armed people’s militia and the revolutionary army, an operation of deploying paratroopers, even numbering several thousand troops would be doomed to failure. Therefore, mentioned Guevara, it is unlikely that the forces of external counterrevolution would undertake such a risk now, knowing that it would be senseless to count on any kind of extensive internal uprisings in Cuba.

Events would soon vindicate Che’s analysis, and refute the calculations of those advisors who had convinced Kennedy to take the gamble of authorizing the operation. By June (Document 4), after Cuban forces had not only crushed the invasion but used the event to crack down on

perceived or potential alleged enemies of the revolution throughout the island, Che was confidently asserting that, “after the defeat of the counterrevolutionary landing force, the revolution in general grew even stronger,” and the “counterrevolutionaries would need at least two to three months to recover from the strikes against them implemented by the organs of Cuban counterintelligence.”

Little wonder, then, that when Che met furtively a couple of months later with a representative of the Kennedy Administration, he began their conversation by thanking him for the Bay of Pigs. The final document offers a fresh perspective on that encounter, which has entered the lore of the US-Cuban confrontation: the secret post-midnight August 1961 meeting in Punta del Este between Che and Richard N. Goodwin, the young Kennedy advisor who was a key force behind the conception of JFK’s Alliance for Progress, the program of economic aid, introduced five months earlier, that had occasioned the meeting of high-level representatives of member-countries of the Organization of American States (OAS) in the coastal Uruguayan resort. Although the massive program of proposed US economic aid to Latin American countries was depicted simply as an effort to promote economic development and political democracy in the hemisphere, it was also perceived, correctly, as an anti-Cuban tool—an effort to stem the potential spread of “Castroism” by promoting a more moderate, and more pro-Washington, alternative to both communism and to military-ruled regimes that favored a relatively small elite.

The Punta del Este meeting took place during an intriguing interregnum in US policy toward Cuba. The Kennedy Administration was still licking its wounds from the failure at the Bay of Pigs four months before, and had not yet agreed on the covert CIA program (known as “Mongoose”) to undermine Castro that would be organized in the fall. One thing that had not changed was the pervasive hostility in US domestic politics and the US government that precluded any formal or open contacts or negotiations with Havana—yet, informally, Brazilian and Argentine diplomats at the Punta del Este conference, advancing their governments’ promotion of US-Cuban reconciliation⁶, were able to bring Goodwin and Guevara together for a lengthy face-to-face conversation lasting several hours behind closed doors at a cocktail party in a private apartment—a meeting that in fact would constitute the highest-level direct talk between US and Cuban officials during the Kennedy Administration, or during this stretch of the Cold War, for that matter.⁷ In his memoir, *Remembering America* (1988), Goodwin vividly described his experience, both his nocturnal conversation with Che

(sporting “green fatigues, and his usual overgrown and scraggly beard”) and report on it to President Kennedy in the Oval Office after he returned to Washington—including his delivery of revolutionary’s gift of Cuban cigars: JFK famously lit one up, then wondered, perhaps facetiously, whether Goodwin should have smoked the first one.⁸ One may also read declassified contemporaneous US documents on the episode, including Goodwin’s written report to JFK.⁹

While, unfortunately, no comparable documentation on this episode has emerged on the Cuban side—which is a particular shame since Che’s impressions of Goodwin, as reported to Fidel Castro and the leadership, could indeed have been fascinating—the Brazilian record presented below finally offers a non-US perspective on the Che-Goodwin meeting. While space limitations preclude a careful analysis of the significance of the Brazilian record, which would require careful comparison to the existing record both of the meeting and overall US-Cuban relations, it clearly offers fresh information. In addition to its significance to the story of the evolving US-Cuban confrontation—and the enduring controversy over whether a reasonable chance might have existed to limit the mutual hostility or even to attain (as Che put it) “at least an interim *modus vivendi*” if not a genuine “understanding”—the story possesses some significance for Brazilian political history. Following the Punta del Este conference, Guevara continued on to Rio de Janeiro, where he was cordially greeted by Brazilian President Jânio Quadros and decorated with the country’s most distinguished honor, the *cruzeiro do sol*, sparking an outraged outcry from conservatives. Amid the tumult from that and other causes, soon afterwards, at the end of August, Quadros resigned suddenly, triggering a political crisis, and was eventually succeeded by João Goulart, who would seek to continue the policy of delicately balancing relations with the United States and Cuba and trying quietly to mediate between them—an effort that climaxed during the Cuban Missile Crisis.



The Soviet documents presented here were generously contributed by the Mexican scholar (and former foreign minister) Jorge Castaneda, who obtained them from the Russian archives in the course of researching his book, *Compañero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara* (New York: Knopf, 1997). They were then translated by Svetlana Savranskaya of the National Security Archive for circulation at the March 2001 conference in Havana to mark the 40th anniversary of the Bay of Pigs, which the National Security Archive (led by

its Cuba coordinator, Peter Kornbluh) co-organized together with Brown University’s Watson Institute of International Studies (James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, now at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Waterloo, Canada) and several Cuban partners, including the University of Havana; some of the translations have appeared on-line, but never in print. The Brazilian document was obtained by James Hershberg from the Brazilian Ministry of External Relations archives in Brasília, and can also be found in a collection of Brazilian documents contributed to the National Security Archive by the Brazilian scholar Luis Alberto Moniz Bandeira, author of *De Martí a Fidel: A Revolução Cubana e a América Latina* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1998). The translation from Portuguese, by Hershberg, was also circulated to participants at the Havana conference but, until now, has not appeared in print.



Document No. 1

Record of Conversations between Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Sergey Kudryavtsev and Che Guevara, 11 and 17 January 1961

From S. M. Kudryavtsev’s Diary

Top Secret
Copy No. I
15 February 1961
No. 42

RECORD OF CONVERSATION
with President of the National Bank of Cuba
Ernesto Guevara
11 January and 17 January 1961

In accordance with my instructions from the State Bank of the USSR, I informed Guevara that at the present time we could sell up to thirty tons of pure gold in blocks no less than 99 proof at the fixed gold prices in London on the day of payment in pounds to the National Bank of Cuba. In accordance with the preference of the National Bank of Cuba, the purchased gold could be deposited in the State Bank of the USSR in Moscow in the National Bank’s disposal, or, by instruction of the latter, at the disposal of third persons or organizations. The State Bank will not charge any fees for depositing the gold. The payment for the gold purchased by the National Bank will be

processed on the day of depositing of the relevant amount of gold to the account of the National Bank of Cuba. The State Bank will process transactions in pounds. Then I said that of course we believe that by the time of the gold purchase the National Bank will have the needed resources in its account at the State bank of the USSR. Then I informed Guevara that the State Bank would send specifications for the deposited gold to the National Bank of Cuba through our Embassy. The National Bank, on its part, can give instructions to the State Bank to give the authorized representatives of the National Bank in Moscow a part or the whole of the gold deposited in the State Bank in its name at any time, or to transfer a part or the whole of the deposited gold with given destination to other locations. All expenses incurred in connection with transportation of gold to the locations specified by the National Bank will be the responsibility of the National Bank. The details regarding transportation of gold and relevant transactions will be coordinated between the State Bank and the National Bank in each individual case. All correspondence regarding these issues should be conducted confidentially through our Embassy in Havana or the Cuban Embassy in Moscow. Guevara said that he was very grateful that the State Bank of the USSR was willing to satisfy the requests of the National Bank regarding the purchase of gold. We will probably buy part of the proposed gold because at the present time our gold reserves have decreased significantly, noted Guevara, and we probably will not be able to buy all 30 tons. However, before I give you a final answer to this proposal, said Guevara, I would have to discuss this issue with Fidel Castro. We decided to return to this issue some time later.

On 17 January, Guevara informed me that he consulted with Fidel Castro on the issue of buying gold from the Soviet Union. As a result, it was decided to buy gold for the overall sum of 20 million dollars from the State bank. The Cuban government, said Guevara, presently has 25 million dollars in its account in Mosnarbank in London. In addition, they are presently processing a transfer of 8 million dollars. However, the sum of over 20 million dollars that the Cuban government has at its disposal, is needed for other expenses. Guevara stated that they agreed to purchase approximately 20 tons of gold on the conditions proposed by the State Bank, which we discussed in our conversation on 11 January.

In the conversation with Guevara, in addition to the question mentioned above, we touched upon some other issues of the situation that are developing in Cuba. In this respect, Guevara expressed the following considerations.

The internal political situation, in the opinion of the Cuban government, does not give any reason for concern at the present time. The danger of a possible American invasion of Cuba has united the masses around the government even

more. The implemented mobilization of the people's militia helped the Cuban government to be assured of the further growth of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses and their readiness to defend their Motherland, on the one hand. On the other hand, the mobilization helped the government to discover a number of organizational drawbacks and mistakes, which are being corrected now, and that in its turn will enable it to further strengthen the entire governmental structure, and to improve the preparedness and the organization both of the people's militia and the army in general.

Using the experience of the mobilization, the Cuban government, continued Guevara, drew a conclusion that the people's militia was the main force on which it could rely on fully both in the political and in the military respect. During the period of mobilization, the internal counterrevolution has noticeably decreased its activity. This can be explained, on the one hand, by the measures introduced by the government, beginning from 4 January, and by the general demoralization of these forces hostile to the Cuban revolution, which were hoping that the US would come to their rescue immediately after the breakup of its relations with Cuba, on the other hand.

At the present time, continued Guevara, we are observing the flight of the counterrevolutionaries from the cities, and especially Havana, to the mountains. The main center of concentration of counterrevolutionaries is located in the area of Escambray mountains, where there are up to 400 armed counterrevolutionaries overall. Those counterrevolutionary forces in Escambray are not united, and they represent separate spots of resistance. Presently, the revolutionary army and the people's militia, said Guevara, have surrounded all the locations where those counterrevolutionaries are [located]. Gradually, the army and the people's militia are pursuing elimination of those [groups]. The operations for clearing mountain forests of those counterrevolutionary groups will continue for some time, noted Guevara, because the counterrevolutionaries avoid clashes with the people's militia and hide carefully in the mountain caves. Those isolated and surrounded counterrevolutionary groups in Escambray, noted Guevara, in our opinion, do not present any danger to the government today. The most [important] counterrevolutionary group in the province of Pinar del Rio, said Guevara, had been totally liquidated.

In the course of further conversation, we touched upon the question of the danger of possible direct military intervention on the part of the U.S. against Cuba. In this connection, Guevara said that in his opinion, danger of a direct aggression on the part of the American armed forces has essentially passed. It is impossible for Eisenhower, for a number of internal reasons to embark upon an aggression against Cuba now. In any case, Kennedy and the Democrats do not want the

Republicans to put them in a difficult situation on the eve of assuming power. It could be seen clearly from Kennedy's statement regarding the break-up of relations with Cuba. Besides, in the last several days, the Democrats' press started to actively reveal the training of the Cuban counterrevolutionaries by the Eisenhower government in Florida, Guatemala, on the Swan Island and in other locations for an attack on Cuba. Such revelations, noted Guevara, in our opinion, clearly speak to the fact that Kennedy does not want to associate himself with this kind of operations from the start, and wants to make it impossible for Eisenhower beforehand.

In the course of our conversation, I told him that everything said notwithstanding, they should still exercise caution and restraint in order not to give the Americans any pretext for any provocations against Cuba, especially in the days left before Kennedy assumes power.

Guevara said that he personally understood it very well. However, noted Guevara jokingly, presently we do not have anything where we could respond to the Americans' new challenges as we have done it in the past. All that remains is essentially the American base in Guantanamo. However, in this question, of course, we will exhibit maximum caution, said Guevara in conclusion.

The rest of the conversation dealt with general issues.

USSR Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba (Signature).
Kudryavtsev)

[Source: Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation (AVPRF), Moscow, Fond 0104, Opis 17, Folder 118, File 3, pp. 23-26; Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya (National Security Archive).]



Document No. 2

Record of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Sergey Kudryavtsev and Che Guevara, 30 January 1961

From S. M. Kudryavtsev's Diary
Top Secret
Copy No.
15 February 1961
No. 45

RECORD OF CONVERSATION
with President of the National Bank of Cuba

Ernesto Guevara
30 January 1961

1. I visited Guevara at the National Bank and in accordance with my instructions informed him that the State Bank of the Soviet Union, in accordance with the preference of the National Bank of Cuba deposited 17,523,008 grams of pure gold in the name of the National Bank of Cuba. On 23 January, the State Bank received 11,874,800 pounds from the Mosnarbank in London and deposited them to the account No. 7 of the National Bank of Cuba. The State Bank withdrew 7,124,377 pounds from this account for the amount of gold mentioned above, which was transferred to the National Bank of Cuba. Specifications for the deposited gold will be sent to the National Bank shortly after they are received from Moscow.

I also informed Guevara that the State Bank would credit 3.75% annually to account No.7 unless any changes are made.

Thanking me for the information, Guevara told me that the storage of gold and currency reserves proposed by the State Bank of the USSR fully satisfied the Cuban side, and that they would act in accordance with the proposed procedure.

2. In the course of further conversation, I asked Guevara about the progress of the selection of 100 Cuban students, who were supposed to be sent by the ship "Cooperation." I said that "Cooperation" must leave Cuba no later than 8 February of this year.

3. In response, Guevara said that he was personally involved in this issue. The students were being selected, although there were certain problems involved. However, he was confident that they would be able to send if not all 100 people, then at least 70 to 80 people in accordance with the signed agreement.

4. In the course of further conversation with Guevara, we touched upon the issue of Kennedy's speech to the U.S. Congress. In this connection, Guevara said that he personally never expected Kennedy to change the U.S. hostile policy toward Cuba. His speech in Congress has only confirmed my conviction. The United States will continue the policy for strangling the Cuban revolution as they did under Eisenhower. Kennedy, noted Guevara, would also actively support the internal and the external counterrevolution in the hope to undermine the stability inside the country with its help, and to create an opportunity for an extensive uprising of counterrevolutionaries.

5. We are convinced, continued Guevara, that Kennedy would continue the economic blockade in order to create

internal difficulties. I personally, noted Guevara, am absolutely convinced that Kennedy will not stop before a direct military intervention, when he sees that all his calculations for overthrowing Fidel Castro's revolutionary government with the help of forces of the internal and external counterrevolution are failing.

6. At the present time one can be sure, continued Guevara, that Kennedy's main efforts would be directed at achieving a more perfect isolation of Cuba from the countries of Latin America and the external world. At the present time Cuba has air communications only with Mexico, and that line is hanging by a thread. In such circumstances, emphasized Guevara, our task should be to conduct ourselves in such a way so as not to allow realization of these designs of the U.S.. We should conduct our foreign policy in such a way, emphasized Guevara, so as not to allow isolation of Cuba from the countries of Latin America. At the present time, we have great, though maybe unfounded hopes for [Brazilian President Jânio] Quadros' assumption of power in Brazil. Quadros, representing interests of Brazil, cannot benefit from the U.S. strangling of Cuba. Therefore, it would be possible to rely on him, or rather use his interest in strengthening the national independence of Brazil in the Cuban interests. It seems to rile, noted Guevara, that Quadros, guided by precisely those considerations, and in particular by the need to strengthen the Brazilian positions vis-a-vis the United States, would most likely want to establish diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet Union.

USSR Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba
[signature]

(S. Kudryavtsev)

[Source: Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation (AVPRF), Moscow, Fond 0104, Opis 17, Folder 118, File 3, pp. 58-59; translated by Svetlana Savranskaya (National Security Archive).]



Document No. 3

Record of Conversation between Soviet
Ambassador to Cuba Sergey Kudryavtsev and Che
Guevara, 14 April 1961

From S.M. Kudryavtsev's Diary

Secret

Copy No.2

26 April 1961

No. 136

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

with Minister of Industry of the Republic of Cuba

Ernesto Guevara

14 April 1961

In the conversation with E. Guevara, [I] inquired about his point of view regarding the situation, which recently developed in Cuba, and also about his assessment of Kennedy's recent statements regarding the U.S. policy toward the revolutionary government of Cuba.

In response, Guevara said that the situation remained quite tense, although he personally believes that the danger of invasion of the country by large beachheads of the external counterrevolutionary forces has now in all likelihood receded. The counterrevolution understands that given the presence of large contingents of well-armed people's militia and the revolutionary army, an operation of deploying paratroopers, even numbering several thousand troops would be doomed to failure. Therefore, mentioned Guevara, it is unlikely that the forces of external counterrevolution would undertake such a risk now, knowing that it would be senseless to count on any kind of extensive internal uprisings in Cuba.

We know, said Guevara later on, that there is no single point of view on this issue among the leadership of the counterrevolutionary formations, who would have to command such operations. A number of counterrevolutionary officers believe that it would be risky and senseless to go forward without a direct military support from the United States. This split will likely deepen now especially because Kennedy stated that the US armed forces would not take part in a direct military intervention against Cuba.

In this regard, Kennedy's statement, noted Guevara, has a positive meaning. Besides, it will exert some demoralizing influence on the internal counterrevolution. However, this influence will be very limited, because the chiefs of the counterrevolutionary gangs know perfectly well that the US policy toward Cuba has not changed and that Kennedy's statement represents some kind of camouflage. By this statement, Kennedy, first of all, is trying to present the US in a good light on the eve of the discussion of the Cuban issue in the UN, and secondly, he is trying to ameliorate the unfavorable reaction, which is present in a number of Latin American countries, regarding the explicitly aggressive character of US policy toward Cuba.

The current American president follows the same [policy] line toward Cuba [as his predecessor], though the tactics are

being somewhat changed. We know that the United States is presently increasing its assistance to the forces of external and internal counterrevolution. The main emphasis here is toward undermining the Cuban economy through stronger acts of sabotage, subversion and the like. This serves as a kind of supplement to the economic blockade, which is enforced against Cuba from the US. Recently, well-trained groups of subversive elements equipped with the newest technology for conducting explosions and arson are deployed in Cuba from the US. Also, the U.S. is transferring large quantities of explosives and weapons to Cuba.

In the recent days the internal counterrevolution, continued Guevara, stepped up its activity and has practically begun an attack. It would suffice to say that just in the last several days there were explosions in the Havana water system, power station; several warehouses were burned down, a sugar plant was burned down, and finally the biggest store "El Encanton." All this occurred over the period of 3 or 4 days, and it is extremely difficult for the government to undertake anything effective to prevent acts of that kind. The El Encanton store, as it has been established, was put on fire with special thermal bombs, which produce very high temperature and burning for 20 minutes. The bombs themselves, however, are very small in size. One of such bombs was found unexploded in the store building after the fire with a stamp "US Army" [on it]. Damages from sabotage and subversive acts, continued Guevara, are estimated in tens of millions of dollars. One can say that the internal counterrevolution has inflicted a serious economic damage upon us during these days.

Guevara said then that the revolutionary government would respond to these strikes of the counterrevolution with counterstrikes. First of all, the repressive measures will be strengthened. A significant number of captured terrorists and subversive elements will be executed, and the people will be called to even more vigilance and more decisive struggle with the enemy of the revolution.

The political situation in the country, emphasized Guevara, is generally good. The pressure of the internal counterrevolution only unites people and revolutionizes them. Almost all the peasants stand behind the government. Recently the position of the government in the working class has strengthened significantly. If winning of the peasantry over to the side of the revolution has been already accomplished, noted Guevara, much still can be done in regard to the working class.

The economic difficulties, which, according to Kennedy's and the counterrevolution's calculations, should lead to dissatisfaction in the country and create the conditions for an internal explosion, will, in our opinion, said Guevara, have just the opposite effect. These difficulties will unite the people, because the overwhelming majority of the population understands that

this is not the government's fault, but rather the consequence of American imperialism's fight against revolutionary Cuba.

In the course of further conversation, Guevara said that the revolutionary government is presently seriously studying the question regarding the ways of overcoming the growing economic hardships. The government would not want to be in the role of beggar, especially because realistically the Soviet Union is the only country among the countries of the socialist camp that can help Cuba, but the Soviet Union already provides enormous assistance and support to Cuba. And yet, nonetheless, said Guevara, it looks like we will have to ask the Soviet Union to help us in some areas, especially in supplying some kinds of raw materials to ensure uninterrupted work of our industry.

Evidently, we will not be able to avoid rationing on fat-containing products and soap. As it is known, continued Guevara, Cuba imported all fat-containing products and raw materials for production of soap from the US for hard currency. At the present time, the hard currency inflows do not cover the needs of the country, and therefore, we would have to sharply cut the import of fat-containing products and ingredients for soap production. Introduction of rationing cards is very undesirable politically, but it is unavoidable. The main task now, emphasized Guevara, is to provide the industry with raw materials and the workers with work. The nationalized industry works well, and its organization is improving. However, production quotas are under-fulfilled by 15 to 20% as a result of deficit of raw materials, and also as a result of distraction of a significant number of workers from production in the period of mobilization of units of the people's militia.

In the course of further conversations, we touched upon several general issues. I informed Guevara about the scheduled trips to the Soviet Union for a number of Cuban delegations, and also gave him a film about his stay in Moscow.

USSR Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba.[Signature]
(S. Kudryavtsev)

[Source: Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation (AVPRF), Moscow, Fond 0104, Opis 17, Folder 118, File 3, pp. 181-184; Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya (National Security Archive).]



Document No. 4

Record of Conversation between Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Sergey Kudryavtsev and Che Guevara, 3 June 1961

From S.M. Kudryavtsev's Diary

Top Secret

Copy No. 2

12 July 1961

No. 226

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

with Minister of Industry of the Republic of Cuba

Ernesto Guevara

3 June 1961

During the conversation, Guevara, touching upon the internal situation in Cuba, noted that the situation in the country was in general good. Elections to the organs of state apparatus both in the center and in the provinces were proceeding successfully. Last week he, Guevara, completed his tour of the province Oriente, with which he was very satisfied. In the province Oriente, he inspected the state of industrial objects, and first of all the progress of work on opening the nickel plant in Moa, and also the functioning of the nickel plant in Nicaro, where Soviet specialists were employed.

In this connection, Guevara expressed great satisfaction with the Soviet-Cuban agreement signed in June on providing technical assistance in organizing the Cuba nickel industry, and he asked me to pass his gratitude, as well as the gratitude of the entire Cuban leadership to the Soviet government for providing help in this area, which is important to Cuba.

Speaking about the internal political situation, Guevara emphasized that after the defeat of the counterrevolutionary landing force, the revolution in general grew even stronger, and started moving ahead with more confidence. Touching upon the possibility of revitalization of the internal counterrevolution's activity, Guevara said that in his opinion, the counterrevolutionaries would need at least two to three months to recover from the strikes against them implemented by the organs of Cuban counterintelligence. Only after that the counterrevolution would be capable to renew its fight against the revolutionary government. It is likely that the U.S. continued Guevara, will keep sending their agents to Cuba during these months in order to create new terrorist and sabotage groups, which has been proven in no unclear terms by the recent statement of former Cuban Minister of Public Works [Manolo] Ray, who as it is known is the main organizer and leader of the terrorist and sabotage activities against the Cuban state. Ray recently left the so-called "[Cuban] Revolutionary Council" of Miro Cardona. This shows, noted Guevara, that the external counterrevolution would remain split, and that the contradictions within individual groups would grow deeper.

In the course of further conversation, Guevara stated that in his opinion, it was unlikely that the internal counterrevolution would succeed in organizing some activities in the country that would present any serious threat to the internal situation. The organs of Cuban counterintelligence, said Guevara, would deal with the counterrevolutionaries decisively, and would not allow them to raise their heads again, as it happened before the invasion.

Touching upon Fidel Castro's plan to exchange the captured participants of the intervention for tractors, Guevara said that apparently it would not work. The US would drag this process out and would not agree to pay compensation because it is not in their interest politically. He got such an impression from his conversations with the commission of prisoners of war, who participated in the intervention, who recently returned from the US, and who conducted negotiations with the American authorities and with the Roosevelt committee.

In the course of further conversation we spoke about the economic situation of the country. In this connection, Guevara expressed the following considerations. The economic situation remains in general satisfactory, although, of course, our difficulties are growing as well. These difficulties, however, turned out to be much smaller than the government expected in the beginning of May. The assistance from the Soviet Union and a number of countries of the socialist camp played a big role in removing those difficulties. However, the issue of supplying the country with fat-containing food products still remains problem number one.

Speaking about the international situation developing around Cuba, Guevara said that the United States now has to face the growing resistance on the part of Latin American countries in realization of the Kennedy plans of Cuba's isolation. The mission of acting Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs [Carlos] Olivares to the countries of Latin America was successful overall and helped strengthen Cuban positions in such important countries as Brazil, Mexico, and Ecuador.

Of course, noted Guevara, Communist parties of many Latin American countries could do much more in defense of Cuba, but unfortunately the majority of them acts extremely indecisively. Presently, the United States, according to their information, said Guevara, proceed with hostile actions around Cuba, trying to encourage the countries of Latin America to participate in collective sanctions, which should be approved by the Organization of American States [OAS]. We do not exclude a possibility that the recent assassination of [Dominican Republic President Rafael] Trujillo would most likely be used in the United States to create a certain precedent for future interference in the Cuban affairs. At this moment, the United States apparently will try to get an OAS agreement to introduce order in the Dominican Republic. They need it in order to be

able to persuade the OAS to interfere in the Cuban affairs. It is very difficult to directly accuse Cuba of the involvement in the assassination of Trujillo, although some Americans make statements to this effect. However, nobody believes such statements, and the United States probably will have to leave them behind soon. The Kennedy government in all likelihood will use the crisis in the Dominican Republic in order to create a certain precedent of interference in the internal affairs of that country with the approval and sanction of the OAS, so that they could use this precedent also against Cuba at a later stage.

The rest of the conversation dealt with general issues.

USSR Ambassador to the Republic of Cuba [Signature]
Kudryavtsev

[Source: Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation (AVPRF), Moscow, Fond 0104, Opis 17, Folder 118, File 4, pp. 65-67; translated by Svetlana Savranskaya (National Security Archive).]



Document No. 5

Telegram from the Brazilian Secretary of State for External Relations (Afonso Arinos) for the Cabinet in Brasilia, 19 August 1961, describing conversation between Ernesto “Che” Guevara and Richard Goodwin, Montevideo, Uruguay, 18 August 1961

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

SENT

FOR THE CABINET IN BRASILIA

ON/19/VIII/61

CONFIDENTIAL

600.(24h)

SEC/DPC/DEC/Dor/591.7(24h)

Cuba. Information for the interview
Of the President of the Republic with the Minister of
Economics of Cuba, Mr. Guevara.

707 – I request to transmit to the Mister President of the Republic: “I judged to be of interest of Your Excellency to know the following information that was presented to me by Ambassador Barbosa da Silva about an interview realized in Montevideo at an informal gathering in the early morning of the 18th [of August] between, Commandante Ernesto Guevara and Mister Richard Goodwin, with also the participation of Mister Rodrigues Larreta, of Argentina. In this meeting, Mister Guevara and Mister Goodwin, speaking as [*falando-se de*] “enemies”, made a general appreciation of Cuban-American relations. Affirming that Cuba today definitely was of the sphere of influence of the United States, Commandante Guevara declared: 1) “the Cuban revolution has an irreversible character[?]”; 2) there is no possibility of the overthrow of the Government, since the people participated integrally in the revolution; 3) there should be dispelled the myths that the leaders of the revolution can be recovered [*recuperados*]; 4) it is an illusion to think that one can hope for a schism in the Government by the forces of the “moderates”; 5) they will continue to accelerate the socialization of the economy of the country; 6) the Cuban leaders do not have a Marxist theoretical formation, being [xxx], Guevara, the one that have greater readers in this camp, considering that the case of Cuba will be to illustrate completely the correctness of the Marxist doctrine for the solution of its problem; 7) Cuba, in order to be a socialist State, has a natural sympathy for similar systems, but this does not imply a political alliance; 8) the Cuban Government does not intend to invade the base at Guantánamo; 9) the United States provided a great service to the revolution by supporting the failed invasion [i.e., the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961], since it rallied the people around the Government. The success transformed the position of the Government from a “small offender” to an equal to equal, in whatever negotiations that will be realized; 10) Cuba does not intend “to export revolution,” but cannot prevent that its example influences powerful sectors of opinion on the [South American] Continent; 11) although it does not finance or participate directly in the “pro-Cuba clubs” or similar activities, the Cuban Government knows that its example has, in many cases, the power to regiment the left, every time that Cuba was attacked. This regimentation of the left can be illustrated by the example with what occurred in Uruguay. Continuing in his exposition and insisting about the necessity of establishing a dialogue between the Cuban Government and the American Government, Commandante Guevara pointed out that both have ahead serious difficulties, as is known: 1) United States: a) the great discontent of the Latin American peoples; b) some debilities of the “Alliance for Progress” program with which the United States seeks to combat this discontent, owing to the intrinsic contradictions of

capitalism and the internal problems that the execution of the program will be susceptible to in various countries; II) Cuba: economic problems: a) certain deficiencies of its foreign commerce, including the loss of the American market for its exports of sugar; b) lack of consumer goods to meet the popular necessities, amplified by the extremely accelerated process of development realized by the revolution; c) lack of spare parts for the factories “inherited” by the Government, which frequently are paralyzed or diminish their rate of production for reason of the lack of the aforementioned parts. Political problems: the action of provocateurs and saboteurs who are not despicable [*não eram desprezíveis*]; b [sic]) the reactions of the bourgeoisie to the socialization of the country; c [sic]) the reaction of the Catholic Church. Mister Goodwin explained to Mister Guevara that he did not have qualification, nor authority, to appreciate, concretely, all [*quais-quer*] aspects of the problems raised in the conversation. He explained, however, that there did not exist illusions in his country regarding the irreversible character of the revolution and the unrecoverability [*irrecuperabilidade*] of its leaders, but that it was judged to be possible other solutions with another government... [ellipsis in original] As for the decision of the Cuban Government not to attack Guantánamo, he lamented to be deprived of the possibility of making [an expression of] gratitude similar to that which was made to him regarding the failed [Bay of Pigs] invasion... [ellipsis in original] It is not judged possible any negotiation between the two governments, given the irreconcilability [*irredutibilidade*] in principle that exists between the two. Mister Guevara recognized these difficulties, saying, however, that perhaps one could think of official conversations about a secondary aspect of the Cuban-American problems, like, for example, the theft of airplanes [hijackings]. The American Government would have problems in order to justify the start of official negotiations owing to the reactions of public opinion, which would not be the case of the Cuban Government. The discussions about a secondary aspect, as the cited [example], perhaps would be a solution. By the way, Guevara stressed that the Cuban Government had nothing to do with the theft of airplanes. Mister Goodwin asked him if the affirmation was valid for the first airplane hijacked. Guevara responded affirmatively, saying that the performer of the theft was a good boy, who acted on his own account, he being presently incarcerated. Asked about the last hijacking, he said again that it was not his responsibility, the Cuban Government having judged until the same [action] was realized by “provocateurs.” Mister Goodwin declared that such could not be, since the American Government has not explained this act to its public opinion. He registered the information and suggestions of Commandante Guevara and assured him that they would be

transmitted to the highest level of his Government. Saying farewell with a handshake, Mister Guevara, Ambassador Barbosa da Silva and Mister Rodrigues Larreta continued in conversation until 5:30 in the morning. Ambassador Barbosa da Silva stressed the importance of his affirmation that the sympathies or affinities of the Cuban regime had not led his Government to the point of a political alliance or other form of affiliation [with] the Soviet Union. He pointed out the affirmative reiterations of a general character made by the Brazilian Government in the sense of which Brazil maintains its commitments in the ambit of the democratic west. The firm Brazilian position, [as] would be in case of a collective action against Cuba, [and] would be on other international questions such as Algeria, for example, indicates the independence of the Brazilian position within the western camp. Without prejudice to the position of the President of Brazil, one may ponder [*ponderava*] regarding the gravity of the situation that is created for Brazil, in case Cuba is [*viesses*] to incline for an alliance with the Soviet world. Mister Rodrigues Larreta mentioned the identity of the Argentine position with Brazil, to which Mister Guevara responded that he well understood [this]. As a matter of fact Argentina and Brazil, but above all Brazil, maintain an enviable position of independence, which lamentably is not the case of other American countries, above all the countries of the Caribbean. He was asked about why he came to Punta del Este and why there he maintained a moderate and conciliatory attitude, he responded that he saw in the “Alliance for Progress” program some positive aspects for the people of the Continent and that he hoped some Cuban suggestions would come to be incorporated in the final document, as in fact occurred. He was asked if he did not see in the result of the conference a significant political triumph for the United States, he declared that no, once that the internal problems that are created for the consultation of the postulates of Punta del Este will generate many difficult to resolve dissatisfactions. Cuba could not adhere to the document, not only owing to the political incompatibilities about the concepts in the same contents, but also because it has the certainty that it will not facilitate any of the recourses linked to the Alliance for Progress. Mister Guevara mentioned next that Cuba does not ignore the American condition, but that his country was constantly attacked, including by things that were not realized [*fizera*]. In a certain moment the help of President [Romulo] Betancourt of Venezuela was procured, but straightaway since the signing of the Commercial Accord with the Soviet Union, President Betancourt has made public declarations [*aleivosas*] for the Cuban Government. It is not fit to blame if Cuba counts on the spontaneous support in various countries, but in this it does not intend to intervene deliberately. However, he

emphasized, in the case of Peru, if it can create a “bundle/ intrigue to [President Don Manuel] Prado” [*lio a Prado*] [Cuba could] not fail to make [one]. The conclusion is that the Cuban Government demonstrates such fundamental interest in negotiations with the United States and in appeasing the reactions of the American Republics for fear of the defeat of the revolution by the play of factors on three planes: 1) the internal sector, where are presently the economic and political factors already mentioned; 2) the continental sector, where exists latent possibility of collective action against Cuba; 3) the international sector, where the East-West conflict can assume such magnitude that Cuba will come to be bargained between the United States and the Soviet Union. The appeal for negotiation with the United States, made in a speech at the opening of the conference and in the private conference, reveals a preoccupation so strong that it betrays the professed confidence in the stability of the regime. The preoccupation on making a good impression on the American Republics reveals unquestionably the fear of continental collective action. The desire to reopen its commerce with the United States, given to understand that it would pay indemnities for confiscated properties with resources withdrawn from its exports, show that the Soviet Union not only is not able to give all that is necessary, but it also does not give articles of quality that it needs. Moreover, [Cuba’s] exclusive dependency on the East weakens its negotiating position, and would characterize its exclusion from American environment. The peaceful coexistence inside the Continent would be of interest for the Soviet Union, in order to maintain in check the American policy and, at the same time, constitutes the assurance of that the investments that it has made in the Cuban economy would not be lost in consequence of the fall of the present Government. It seems, since, that the principal desire of Mister Guevara to catch sight of Presidents [Janio] Quadros [of Brazil] and [Arturo] Frondizi [of Argentina] is motivated by his interest in strengthening the non-interventionist line, eliminating doubts as for its alliance or political affiliation [with] the Soviet Union. I believe that this information could be useful to Your Excellence in your audience with Mister Guevara. Respectfully, Afonso Arinos”.

CABINET—RIO

.../VIII/1961

[Source: AHMRE 600(24h)—SIT. POL.—CUBA 1961 (Moniz Bandeira Collection, National Security Archive), Ministry of External Relations archives, Brasilia, Brazil; translation from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg, George Washington University.]

Notes

1 See such biographies as Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (Grove Press, 1997); Jorge G. Castaneda, *Compañero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara* (New York: Knopf, 1997); and Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Guevara, Also Known as Che* (Macmillan, 1999).

2 On Che’s African efforts, see esp. Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) and Ernesto “Che” Guevara, *The African Dream: The Diaries of Revolutionary War in the Congo* (Grove Press, 2001).

3 See the “Bibliography of Che Guevara” page on Wikipedia for a lengthy compilation of films, novels, documentaries, and plays, as well as non-fiction works, for examples of “Che” in popular culture.

4 Despite the voluminous publications in Cuba of Che’s diaries and writings, the lack of open scholarly access to pertinent party and state archives in Havana containing the original records of Che’s official activities, views, and actions unfortunately compels increased reliance on foreign, non-Cuban records.

5 See Cuban G-2 intelligence documents from January-May 1961 on anti-Castro Cuban exile preparations to attack Cuba, in Guatemala, Florida, and elsewhere—supplementing what was appearing in such open publications as *The Nation* magazine and *The New York Times* before the Bay of Pigs—published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

6 A year earlier, in 1960, amid deteriorating U.S.-Cuban relations, the Brazilian and Argentine ambassadors in Havana had labored vainly to mediate between their American colleague, US ambassador Philip Bonsal, and the Castro leadership, prior to the formal breaking of diplomatic ties between Washington and Havana in January 1961. For more on Brazil’s attempted mediation between the United States and Cuba in 1960-62, climaxing during the Cuban Missile Crisis, see James G. Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962,” pts. 1 and 2, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and 6:3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67; for the best Brazilian source, see, in Portuguese, Luis Alberto Moniz Bandeira, *De Martí a Fidel: A Revolução Cubana e a América Latina* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1998).

7 A little more than twenty years later, in November 1981, an even higher-level furtive U.S.-Cuban diplomatic encounter occurred when U.S. Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr. met near Mexico City with senior Cuban official Carlos Rafael Rodríguez. For the detailed Cuban record of that conversation—given to the Soviet ambassador in Havana and translated into Russian, then found in the Moscow archives after the Soviet collapse and translated into English—see *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997).

8 Richard N. Goodwin, *Remembering America: A Voice from the Sixties* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1988), pp. 196-210.

9 See U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1961-1963*, Vol. X: Cuba, 1961-1962 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), pp. 640-645; and, for the fully declassified version, see Nate Jones, “Document Friday: Che Guevara Thanks the United States for the Bay of Pigs Invasion,” 3 February 2012, on the National Security Archive “Unredacted” blog on-line.



Before The Bay of Pigs—What Did The Cubans Know?

Cuban Intelligence Reports, January-May 1961

Ed. note: The attempted invasion of Cuba by CIA-backed anti-Castro Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs/Playa Girón in April 1961 was a milestone not only in the intensifying confrontation between Cuba and the United States, and between Fidel Castro and John F. Kennedy—it was also a crucial step toward the Cuban Missile Crisis (a year later, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev would justify sending nuclear missiles to the island on the grounds that this would deter the Americans from trying another military assault, this time with their own military forces). Its failure—and many of the books on the affair bear titles attesting to that result, from *The Perfect Failure* to *The Brilliant Disaster*¹—also dealt a severe blow to the new Kennedy Administration’s foreign policy and to the movement of anti-Castro Cubans, both in exile and on the island, hoping to foment an insurrection to topple the bearded revolutionary who himself had overthrown the Batista dictatorship two years before.

Since April 1961, one enduring question has been: What did Castro’s government know, and when did it know it, about the threat of an impending assault supported by the US government? Did their advance knowledge help the Cubans to crush the operation? Of course, any careful reader of such publications as *The New York Times* and *The Nation* in the winter of 1960-61 knew that anti-Castro Cubans were being trained, in camps in Guatemala and elsewhere, with evident US government aid, for a military assault to try to recapture their island from Castro. In fact, such published reports led one senior Cuban revolutionary, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, to speculate to the Soviet ambassador in Havana in January 1961, days before Kennedy took office, that such reports had been deliberately leaked by Democrats to allow them to disavow an operation they had inherited from the Eisenhower Administration; even a few days before the invasion began, Guevara, then head of Cuba’s national bank, still doubted that an attempted invasion was imminent, since it would undoubtedly fail.²

It is still not known precisely what Fidel Castro and his top associates thought was coming, but the four translated Cuban intelligence documents published below—three reports on the anti-Castro groups’ preparations for military action in the first months of 1961, including on the eve of the Bay of Pigs, and then a post-mortem a couple of weeks after the attempted invasion was defeated and a massive crackdown launched on potential domestic enemies of the Castro government—offer some contemporaneous evidence as to what Cuban authorities actually knew at the time, beyond the published reports. They and many other Cuban docu-

ments on the Bay of Pigs/Playa Girón events were obtained by the National Security Archive in connection with a “critical oral history” conference in Havana in March 2001 (“Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After”) which the Archive (and particularly its Cuba coordinator, Peter Kornbluh) co-organized with Brown Watson Institute of International Studies (and particularly James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, who have since moved to the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Waterloo, Canada) and several Cuban partners, including the University of Havana.³ Of the documents presented below, a translation of the first (a 12 January 1961 reports on “mercenary camps and bases in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Florida”) appeared on the National Security Archive’s website but has not previously appeared in print; the rest were translated for CWIHP by Christopher Dunlap for this issue of the *Bulletin*. While numerous books, articles, and other writings on the Bay of Pigs have been published, when it comes to government documentation, they generally rely almost exclusively on declassified US records, not Cuban.⁴ A serious analysis of the documents that follow—and the accuracy and perspicacity of the Cuban intelligence reports, or their lack thereof—will require careful cross-comparison with other evidence, including available US records on the CIA/Pentagon’s training of the anti-Castro groups and the Kennedy Administration’s relations with their leaders (still constrained by classification restrictions); the accounts of the anti-Castro force members and their (often feuding) leaders; and the still-limited sources on how the Cuban leadership actually integrated the sort of intelligence contained in these (and other) reports into their own calculations and decisions.⁵ Nevertheless, these sources at least begin to provide the opportunity to document the perspective, until now largely missing, of the Cuban intelligence services responsible for monitoring the activities of the “enemies of the revolution” (or “gusanos”—worms—as Castro’s government then scorned them) as the Bay of Pigs approached. To further delve into what happened within Fidel Castro’s government before, during, and after the Bay of Pigs events—at state, party, and military levels—more Cuban evidence from the March 2001 conference, never before translated, is available through the National Security Archive; and much more information awaits release from still-closed Cuban archives, and research in the archives of other nations (particularly communist ones) who in 1961 had diplomatic relations with Cuba, and embassies in Havana.—J.H.



Document No.1

Cuban G-2 (military intelligence), "Report on mercenary camps and bases in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Florida," 12 January 1961 (forwarded to Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos Torrado)

[Box] DIY. INT. G-2 MINFAR
CENTRAL
HEADQUARTERS
APR 7 1961
RECEIVED NO. 2681

THIS REPORT IS EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE CHIEF OF REVOLUTION TO WHOM IT IS ADDRESSED.

IT SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE DEPARTMENT CHIEF INF G-2 MINFAR [MINISTRY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES]

CONFIDENTIAL

From: Dr. Tec. 0. Inf. G-2
To: Commander Ramiro Valdes Menendez
Department Chief. Inf. G-2 MINFAR

Dpt. Inf. G-2 MINFAR
January 12, 1961
"YEAR OF EDUCATION"

Re: Report on mercenary camps and bases in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Florida

In 1959, the "yanki" [Yankee, i.e., US] Department of State made the Dominican Republic its main mercenary training center. Adventurers and murderers from different countries, Falangists from the Blue Legion, Nazis, Japanese, "yankis", war criminals, European renegades, and other riffraff assembled there and trained under the direction of [Former Batista General Jose] PEDRAZA [Cabrera] and [Dominican Republic President Rafael] TRUJILLO'S Officers for an invasion of Cuba. Every day, the Dominican

radio spewed insults and defamation against the Cuban Revolution and its leaders.

But then Washington changed its plans. TRUJILLO turned out to be spoiled goods for the peoples of America. This devoted lackey was already very "burned." Plans were made to "sacrifice him" at the OAS [Organization of American States] (a sacrifice that later turned out to be apparent, not real) in order to stage a farce in that International Organization that would lead to condemnation of the TRUJILLO dictatorship along with the CASTRO "dictatorship."

As these "highly strategic" political plans were being developed, plans in which "democrats"[former Costa Rican President] PEPE "CACHUCHA" FIGUERES, [Venezuelan President ROMULO BETANCOURT, and [Puerto Rican Governor Luis] MUNOZ MARIN were not uninvolved, the forces of imperialism transferred out of Santo Domingo their most important preparation center for an attack against Cuba. From that day forward, Guatemala became the main focal point for mercenary training in camps and bases established there. The distinguishing feature was that this operation was no longer run by PEDRAZA and TRUJILLO, but rather by the CIA, with North American officials directly training the mercenaries, and provisioning them with equipment, arms, supplies, aircraft, etc.

Thus, by the first few months of 1960, an important airstrip, as well as a major mercenary camp, had already been built in Retalhuleu under the direction of "yanki" officials. This base was built with utmost haste by a "yanki" company and "yanki" engineers at a cost of over one million dollars supplied, according to reports, by the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) and businesses such as the United Fruit Company.

More than twenty such camps were quickly established in different areas of Guatemala, comprising a total of more than six thousand mercenaries as well as a large number of airplanes and huge quantities of arms.

By this past October [1960], the climate of hostility toward Cuba and preparations underway in Guatemala for an invasion were evident.

In mid-October there was a marked increase in activity on bases established in the Department of Retalhuleu. The number of airplanes arriving and unloading was higher than usual. People working in those centers observed that there was every indication of an impending attack on Cuba. The airplanes had unloaded parachutes, field hammocks, and stretchers.

The mercenaries were concentrated mainly in the Department of Retalhuleu. At "Helvetia" farm, 600 tents were divided into two camps of 300 tents each. An individual who was in one of those tents reported that there was an average of ten men in each tent, which added up to six thou-

sand mercenaries. These included Cubans, Guatemalans, other nationalities, and North Americans. They were paid about ten dollars per day. There are approximately two hundred North Americans, who direct training, construction, the radar station, etc. One of these camps is situated 3 kms. north of the center of the above-mentioned farm.

The airstrip at Retalhuleu airport is built to withstand bombardment and to last an average of two years. Its estimated cost is placed at over one million dollars. Although this airstrip was recently built, repair crews are there every day, which can only be interpreted as a preventive measure in case of reprisal from Cuba.

When the Retalhuleu airport was first opened, [Guatemalan] President [Miguel] YDIGORAS [Fuentes] said that it was to be used to export products from western Guatemala. It has been closed to the public for the past several weeks, however, having been placed under military jurisdiction during the state of siege. And although it is ostensibly under the control of the Guatemalan Army, the fact is that the airport actually is controlled by North Americans, to the extent that truck drivers who arrive there to unload cargo are replaced by North Americans to keep them from entering. Moreover, the Governor of the Department does not even have access to this airport.

There are an estimated 48 airplanes based in Guatemala for use in the attack and invasion of Cuba. There are B-26 airplanes, some propulsion aircraft, and Globemaster transport planes. Most of these planes are based at the Retalhuleu airport and in Chinaja, while the rest are distributed between the central "Aurora" airport near Guatemala City, and Puerto Barrios on the Atlantic coast.

Flights take place at night. The majority of the planes are unmarked and most are painted black. Activities are generally nocturnal. This can be construed not only as a means to remain inconspicuous and cover up these activities, but also as a means of preparing the men to operate at night against Cuba. As a result, there have been a number of air accidents on the coast of Retalhuleu and the area known as Flores, in the Peten. The plane that crashed in the Peten (Flores) had taken off from Tapachula, located almost on the Mexican-Guatemalan border. Nighttime parachute drills also are taking place.

Training sessions are held using real firepower. As a result, the Ydigoras government has publicly acknowledged that several men have been killed or wounded, while alleging that this occurred during the training of Guatemalan troops with modern weapons.

On the "Helvetia" farm, municipality of El Palmar, Department of Quetzaltenango, but also accessible via the

municipality of San Sebastian, Department of Retalhuleu, in the area known as Cerro Nil, on the banks of the Nima River, a radar station was installed. Another radar station recently was installed on the central Guatemalan Air Force base located at "La Aurora" airport in Guatemala City, and on the base at San Jose airport on the Pacific coast.

The areas where the aggressors have focused their activities are Retalhuleu; Chinaja; "La Aurora" international airport which also houses the FAG [Guatemalan Air Force] base, located on the outskirts of Guatemala City; the base located at the port of San Jose on the Pacific coast; and the base in Puerto Barrios, on the Atlantic coast. But the main mercenary concentration point is located in Retalhuleu, near the Guatemalan-Mexican border, whose airport is situated between kilometers 186 and 188 of the highway leading to Champerico port; the new airport was secretly built on the national (government-owned) farm called "La Aurora" located in the municipality of Nuevo San Carlo, also in Retalhuleu, whose airport is made of concrete cemented on piles ten meters deep and two meters wide and is outfitted, according to unconfirmed data, with underground hangars.

Other information sources indicate that there is a 45,000-gallon gasoline tank covered over with sandbags and garbage in Retalhuleu airport. Airplanes usually take off from Retalhuleu on Mondays at four o'clock in the morning and return on Wednesdays between four and five o'clock in the morning. During the first week of last October, a cargo of leather boots was received for the alleged invaders. US Air Force planes numbers 850 and 854 reportedly were painted with Guatemalan insignia.

The apparent chief or authority in the Retalhuleu camps is a North American who goes by the assumed name NORTH. There are an estimated fifty North American aviators.

Since 11 August 1960, several jets and Mustang airplanes have landed at the base at the port of San Jose. On the 13 August, a Globemaster landed at the main "La Aurora" airport in Guatemala City supposedly to deliver milk to CARE, but was actually carrying weapons and ammunition that were unloaded by Guatemalan Army soldiers. The following week, other Globemasters landed at the San Jose airport and their cargo was transported to Retalhuleu.

Airplane arrivals and departures then intensified. On October 14, two North American B-29 bombers and a transport plane landed at "La Aurora" central airport in Guatemala City. During the third week of October, airplanes marked with registration numbers, or alleged registration numbers, L-F-5, L-F-8, L-F-9, L-F-11 conducted night flights between "La Aurora" central airport and Retalhuleu airport. This past October 14, a large number of airplanes

landed at Retalhuleu airport. Also, [Avro] Lancaster airplanes, Canadianmade bombers. By October 26, 47 bombers had been assembled at the secret airport located on "Aurora" farm, as well as a huge arsenal of five hundred and six hundred pound bombs which, arranged in a row, cover 150 meters.

It is possible that the northwestern zone of Retalhuleu Department has been chosen for mercenary camps because several national farms are located there. In other words, farms that were owned by Germans, were expropriated following World War II, and are now administrated by the Guatemalan government. The most important of these farms is "Candelaria Xornuitz." Others currently occupied by camps are "Aurora," "La Suiza," "Tambor," "Culsin," and "Helvetia" itself, owned by brothers ROBERTO and CARLOS ALEJOS ARZU, who are YDIGORAS stalwarts.

"Helvetia" farm, currently owned by ROBERTO ALEJOS ARZU, former coordinator of "North American Aid to the Guatemalan Government," friend and advisor of YDIGORAS, currently diplomatic representative of the Knights of Malta, and his brother, CARLOS

ALEJOS ARZU, currently the Ambassador to Washington, is one of the most important mercenary concentration points. Reports indicate that, possibly in the month of August or earlier, 185 mercenaries and 45 specialists were there, most of the latter North Americans. Later, Batista followers and other mercenaries began to join them. In late July or early August, 500 soldiers and non-commissioned officers from the Guatemalan army also were taken there, 20 of whom were taken to the United States and the Panama Canal Zone for special training. Many workers and peasant farmers from the national and private farms in the area were persuaded, or obliged, to sign up. At the end of the third week of October, a large number of North American soldiers were brought in by railway via Puerto Barrios, and were taken to "Helvetia" farm.

Some regular troops of the Guatemalan National Army, about four infantry companies, have been assigned to guard the zone and are deployed at "Helvetia," "Aurora," "La Suiza," "Tambor," and "Culsin" farms.

Reports have been received regarding the presence of an airplane-launching catapult at "La Suiza" farm, which serves the dual purpose of instructing pilots for aircraft carrier based operations and impeding detection of the base from the air. These installations were built by the North American company "Johnson Powers."

Other camps worth mentioning are located at "Rancho Florida" farm in Escuintla Department, "Campo Corriente," owned by United Fruit Company; "Helvetia" and "Aurora" mentioned earlier, and those in other zones.

Last November, AUGUSTO MULET, Press Secretary of the Guatemalan Presidency, confirmed the existence of secret training camps at more than TWENTY farms where forces are instructed in commando and guerrilla tactics; he identified the Retalhuleu air base and "Helvetia" farm as one such camp.

It is common knowledge that the Retalhuleu airport was outfitted hastily by North American engineers at an estimated cost of more than one million dollars. Its main facility is the airstrip. Funding was supplied by the "Central Intelligence Agency" (CIA) and by corporations such as United Fruit Company among others.

Other reports provide the following information:

The meteorological Service at the port of San Jose in the Pacific has been under military control recently and other meteorological centers in the country also operate under a quasi-military system.

A ten kilowatt radio transmitter has been installed at Puerto Matias de Galvez, at a cost of 35,000 dollars. Its broadcasts on official frequencies and primarily target Belize. It is therefore possible to surmise that its broadcasts could also reach Cuba on other frequencies; that it is able to broadcast instead of, or in conjunction with, Radio Swan; and that it could be put into service during an invasion, since its geographical location and power enable it to broadcast a clear signal to Cuba.

YDIGORAS' chauffeur makes two trips per week to Puerto Matias de Galvez to deliver tape recordings of speeches recorded by "a Cuban" in Guatemala City.

A fleet of fishing vessels on the Atlantic Coast is well equipped with artillery, data that was gleaned from a public statement made by MARCO ANTONIO VILLAMAR, secretary of the organization PUR.

Military preparations also extend to other areas of the country. A few kilometers from Champerico Port, work has begun on a new air base in a place called "El Manchon," some eight kms. to the east, and for the installation of troops on "Montecristo" farm, approximately 12 kms. from there. Punta de Manabique, enclosing Amatique Bay in the Atlantic, is fortified. On the banks of the Polochic River, what appears to be a new airstrip is under construction; and construction took place at a rapid pace in an area known as "Rama Blanca," Izabal Department.

Other reports indicate that it is likely that YDIGORAS and the "yankis" plan to unleash hostilities between Guatemala and Cuba by falsely claiming the incursion of an alleged Cuban aircraft that would be shot down in Guatemalan territory. This would permit the "legal" use of Guatemala territory for operations against Cuba, which

would be followed by an attempt to provoke a collective OAS response.

In addition to sparking protests by the Guatemalan people, the existence of over 20 mercenary training camps has raised concerns inside the army over preparations for an attack on Cuba. Certain reports indicate that last 26 October, there were discussions inside the army chief of staff headquarters [Estado Mayor] regarding the position the army should take regarding these matters.

At the same time, the political opposition to YDIGORAS in the Parliament denounced the existence of the camps, issuing summons in the matter and calling for an immediate investigation. At first the government rejected their demands, but a few days later, YDIGORAS invited opposition legislators to visit the Retalhuleu base. This offer was rejected because the legislators in question asserted that, on 27 October 1960, the authorities had just finished dispersing the mercenaries to other areas.

The considerable level of air traffic registered during the first weeks of October in the zone of Retalhuleu diminished and nearly disappeared after the opposition began to agitate.

Whether because the opposition faction in Parliament had requested that an investigatory commission be sent to Retalhuleu; or because of the stance taken by many Army Officers; or perhaps because the YDIGORAS administration and the "yanki" Embassy in Guatemala already were aware of a conspiracy involving numerous officers (which culminated in the 13 November military uprising), the fact of the matter is that most of the mercenaries were removed from "Helvetia" farm on the night of 27 October.

Mercenaries taken out of "Helvetia" farm were distributed more or less as follows: some four thousand mercenaries boarded thirteen war vessels, with no flags or registration numbers, anchored in the bay at Puerto Barrios and embarked for Nicaragua. Upon arriving in that country, they disembarked at the mouth of the Prinsapolka River, where an air base is located, and were later taken to a camp six miles away.

The ships left Puerto Barrios at 22:30 hours on that night, 27 October. This mercenary contingent was mainly composed of Cubans, as well as Salvadorans, Hondurans, etc. Other reports add that some of these mercenaries were left in the area of Puerto Cabezas, Blue Fields, Cabo Gracias a Dios and the Islas de Maiz (leased to the US) in Nicaragua. It also indicates that a group disembarked at Swan [Cisne] Island in Honduran territory.

That same night, 27 October, another group of some fifteen hundred mercenaries was removed from "Helvetia" farm in an extraordinary movement of trains and aircraft.

They were taken to a camp adjoining the Chinaja airstrip, where they were seen over the following days.

The Chinaja airstrip and camp mentioned earlier is described as follows: Chinaja is located in northern Alta Verapaz department, latitude approximately 16 degrees north and longitude 90 degrees, fifteen minutes. Because there are no roads, this area is virtually cut off by land from the rest of the country. It is located in an area spanning 271,601 hectares, that was obtained by a North American corporation, "The Ohio Oil Company," through oil claim number three. This was where the first oil well was drilled in 1958. The Company built an airstrip there, which is the longest in the country and currently is used by aircraft stationed there by the United States for the invasion of Cuba. As stated earlier, a camp currently has been established there with part of the troops previously located at "Helvetia Farm."

We should also mention that some distance from Chinaja, in the Peten, there are airstrips in Poptun and Flores.

Airports also were under construction in Champerico and in Carmelita, on "Concepcion" farm, equipped with radar and military personnel stationed there by the CIA.

Following the transfer of mercenaries from the "Helvetia" base and other nearby national farms, the situation was as follows:

The four Guatemalan army companies remain on "Helvetia" farm, to which another contingent of 500 regular troops has been added, in other words a total of one thousand soldiers.

Many North Americans also remain on "Helvetia." The rural workers and peasant farmers who signed up were demobilized and returned to their agricultural pursuits, although under strict vigilance. This is presumably a temporary situation.

Some reports point to a total of 60 aircraft, for the attack on Cuba, while others report as many as 150 aircraft. Although the latter figure coincides with YDIGORAS' statement on 13 October, the start of the military uprising, in his threatening words to Guatemalan Air Force (FAG) pilots who refused to bomb Zacapa and Puerto Barrios, so far we have not been able to obtain exact figures.

North American instructors had already concluded other aspects of mercenary training; therefore, those who remain camped at "Helvetia" and other bases are only undergoing training in parachute jumping, for which a huge transport plane is used.

Public protests against preparations for the invasion of Cuba that took place in Guatemala:

The fact that a Cuban invasion was being planned was widely reported in Guatemala and had a strong impact on public opinion there. Beginning in July, the "Guatemalan

Labor Party" [*Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo*"] made a number of charges and statements on the subject.

Several publications, especially radio news programs such as "Guatemala Flash" and "Radio Noticias," and the newspaper "Prensa Libre," reported on the issue. Colonel CARLOS A. PAZ TEJADA's allegations, widely circulated and published on an entire page of Guatemalan newspaper "Prensa Libre" with a daily circulation of some thirty thousand papers.

The declarations of the "Association of University Students," the "Association of Economic Sciences Students," the "Association of Students in the School of Humanities," in the capital. The declarations by the "Western Association of Law Students," and the "Salvador Orozco Circle," both in Quetzaltenango. Another prominent event had to do with the summons of the Foreign Minister that was issued by congressmen JULIO VALLADARES CASTILLO and MARCO ANTONIO VILLAMAR CONTRERAS, and the public letter issued by the latter.

The allegations emanating from within the Guatemalan Congress and the motion

presented by congressman VALLADARES CASTILLO of the PUR, at the request of the Student Associations, calling for an investigation of the activities and camps at Retalhuleu; the declaration by the "Federacion Autonoma Sindical;" the protest demonstration and rally held in front of the United States Embassy in Guatemala City; and the rally last 20 October, the XVI anniversary of the Guatemalan Revolution, attended by the above mentioned FAS, the Sindicato de Pilotos Automovilistas, etc., were all demonstrations of open solidarity with the Cuban revolution and outright rejection of the military preparations taking place against Cuba, all of which had an impact on YDIGORAS' frame of mind and that of his "yanki" protectors.

The military uprising of 13 November 1960

The YDIGORAS government, consumed by a serious economic, political, and social crisis, a substantial foreign debt, and completely discredited in public opinion, is facing the active opposition of the Guatemalan masses.

For some time, a significant number of Army Officers had been expressing their disagreement with the YDIGORAS regime. In late June, 1960 a conspiratorial circle had formed comprising some 60 officers. Most of those involved were young officers from different army divisions and a few troop commanders. In July, when the teachers and students movement emerged around the seniority law and other demands, this group of soldiers tried to act, seeking the opportunity and means to bring about a change of government. A huge

demonstration took place at that time and there were street disturbances for several days despite the declared state of emergency; but these officers never managed to act.

The group continued to attract more officers to its cause, achieving a certain degree of organization as well as a core of five members who directed the conspiracy. These officers contacted Colonel CARLOS A. PAZ TEJADA and, following his statements against the mercenary camps and military bases on Guatemalan territory, essentially placed him at the head of the core directorate, discussing with him the actions that they planned to take.

They reached agreements with PAZ TEJADA on several points: agreeing to publish a proclamation clearly signaling their opposition to the mercenary army's presence in the country, the derogation of the 1956 Constitution in effect, and the formation of a Junta to be headed by PAZ TEJADA and a government cabinet including three or four PUR Ministers.

Nonetheless, the position taken by these Officers was patently indecisive and opportunistic. They did not want to be identified with the 1944-1954 Revolution; nor did they wish to acquire commitments with the revolutionary organizations that would entail difficulties with the North American government, or publicly express sympathy for the Cuban revolution.

After the overthrow of LEMUS in El Salvador, these officers considered doing something similar in Guatemala.

To summarize, this military movement was not proposing structural changes in the country, but rather sought to preserve the country's existing dependency on "yanki" monopolies and native exploiters. In fact, their conspiracy tended to hamper grassroots revolutionary action, and sought to establish the traditional government by military junta, accompanied by a lot of "democratic" rhetoric and the same submission to imperialism in practice.

Last 28 October, Lieutenant Colonel SESSAN PEREIRA, who while not part of the plotters' leadership was very much taken into account because of his personal commitment and his influence at Military Zone I General Headquarters, was willing to launch a coup and requested the approval of the Group's leadership. After initially giving its approval, the group changed its mind after considering the situation, and told him it would be better to wait awhile and further develop the plans.

Inside the army there was considerable concern over preparations underway in the mercenary camps for an attack on Cuba. Unconfirmed reports indicated that on 26 October, a discussion took place inside the Army Chief of Staff Headquarters [Estado Mayor] regarding the position the army should take with respect to these events.

The Officers' conspiracy followed its course. On 30-31 October, a large officers meeting was held in the capital, where discussion centered on whether or not the army should continue to support the YDIGORAS administration or form part of the Junta that would replace him. By a narrow margin, the vote came out in favor of continuing to support the government and, although the conspirators received a significant number of votes, they stopped acting at that time.

The conspirators then distanced themselves from Colonel PAZ TEJADA. They expanded their directorate to seven members, with a strengthened centrist position favoring a *coup d'état* that did not involve alliances with the left so as to avoid confrontations with the "yankis." They later made contact with certain leaders of the "Revolutionary Party" [PR] who reinforced their already indecisive and sell-out [*entreguista*] mentality. PR members succeeded in influencing the officers in support of their halfhearted approach, pushing aside Colonel PAZ TEJADA and his friends.

On 5 November, the army officers presented YDIGORAS with a memorandum giving him 72 hours to modify certain aspects of his policy of internal repression and to remove from the country all mercenaries remaining in the camps. It appears that, from a military standpoint, these officers viewed the presence of government-sponsored armed mercenaries as a blow to their military ego.

For its part, the YDIGORAS government had already taken precautions against the conspiracy and internal army opposition, which was quite pervasive if we consider the narrow vote in favor of continuing to support the government.

The deadline set by the Officers expired on 8 November and YDIGORAS, far from complying with their petitions, ordered repressive measures to be taken against the disgruntled officers. On 11 and 12 November, the principal officers who had presented the memorandum were arrested, and 97 others were relieved of their duties and discharged. The detainees were taken to jail cells located in the General Headquarters of Military Zone 1 ("Justo Rufino Barrios"), a hub of rebellion since Colonel SESSAN PEREIRA had won over to the conspiracy many officers from the military police, who were headquartered there, many of whom were pushing for a coup.

When the plotters realized that YDIGORAS had begun to move against them, they decided to act before it was too late, without public support or that of the revolutionary organizations, and without the collaboration of Colonel PAZ TEJADA, merely as a coup-minded army group, isolated from the people and already dependent on foreign monopolies.

On the morning of 13 November, the plotters easily took control of the General Headquarters of Military Zone 1. And they were confident of their ability to coordinate with certain officers to take over the Mariscal Zabala Regiment, the best complex, with more troops and equipment than anywhere else in the country, save the mercenary camp installed by the "yankis" at the "Helvetia" base.

Other young officers assured the plotters that they could take control of Military Zone No. 2 in Zacapa. They were also confident that they could take control of the bases at Puerto Barrios and Jutiapa.

But the rebellious officers were unable to take over the Mariscal Zabala Regiment. With the few officials [officers?] they had, they were only able to neutralize the guard, passing without difficulty in front of the Regiment with some two hundred soldiers from the General Headquarters of Zone No. 1 and six large trucks carrying weapons, taking over the Atlantic highway. The Zacapa zone was taken over as planned, as was Puerto Barrios, but they failed to gain control of the base at Jutiapa.

The rebels gained military control over the departments of Zacapa and Izabal; but their best hope for triumph had been placed in the rapid support they anticipated from their counterparts in the capital, that could lead to a rapid coup d'état without too much struggle. They also were counting on the fact that the Guatemalan Air Force would not attack them.

Thus, awaiting the decision of their co-conspirators in the capital, without ties to the people or revolutionary organizations, lacking a concrete fighting plan, refusing to arm revolutionaries in Zacapa and Puerto Barrios who came to request that they do so (Colonel SESSAN PEREIRA wanted to arm the people, a position virulently opposed by his colleagues); all of these factors gave YDIGORAS time to react and take measures to counteract the rebels.

They published just two proclamations, one in Zacapa and the other in Puerto Barrios, about which the rest of the country remained virtually unaware. The plan essentially was to wait and see how the situation played out in the Capital.

YDIGORAS had difficulties mobilizing the Air Force against the rebels. Approximately

25 pilots, more than half, refused to attack their fellow soldiers. The President could only count on the full support of the Air Force chief of operations, who also piloted his Comander aircraft, and two or three other aviators. On that day, 13 November, YDIGORAS was compelled to go personally to the FAG and threaten the pilots with the use of the organized military force at the "Helvetia" base where, the President warned, there were 6,000 men and 150 aircraft.

His threat notwithstanding, YDIGORAS, did not trust the FAG; the bombing and strafing operations that ensued

were primarily carried out by North American pilots. On that same day, 13 November, the United States Embassy's Air Force Attache, together with other "yanki" military attaches, directed operations from the Presidential Palace, where pilots presented themselves in person to report and receive their instructions. In addition to the pilots operating out of "La Aurora" central airport, we understand that other aircraft also operated out of Retalhuleu and Chinaja. Some Guatemalan FAG pilots were used for nothing more than to taxi the aircraft out onto the runway where they would deboard the plane and a "yanki" pilot would take over the controls. They used B-2 bombers and Mustangs.

Later, there were reports from Puerto Barrios that "Catalina" airplanes had been sighted, which could have taken off from the "Shan-gri-la" aircraft carrier.

While the FAG had few bombs, during those days they were amply stocked from the arsenals of the North American mercenary bases. This included Napalm bombs.

YDIGORAS' army chief of staff, AUGUSTIN DONNIS KESTLER, with strong ties to the "yankis" dating back to 1954, stated that the Army Chief of Staff intended to request the deployment of North American marine infantry if the situation got complicated. This plan to request US assistance was furthered, without YDIGORAS' prior knowledge, by EISENHOWER's order to send, as he did, several US Marine units and an aircraft carrier to guard Guatemala's Atlantic coast.

13 and 14 November were very insecure days for the government. However, YDIGORAS' prompt use of the "yanki" aviators and the immediate maritime intervention decreed by [US President Dwight D.] EISENHOWER, coupled with the rebels' indecisiveness, successfully prevented other officers and units from joining the rebellion, and the movement failed in the wake of intense bombing in Zacapa and Puerto Barrios.

The rebellious troops were subjected to intense air fire and bombardment, which was enough, without calling in the infantry, to compel them to retreat from their positions in Puerto Barrios and Gualan. The Government regained control in the other areas without resorting to armed force. As for the mutinous soldiers, who numbered close to a thousand, some fled into the mountains, others were captured, and still others surrendered. One group of chiefs and Officers reached the Honduran border. Colonel EDUARDO LLERENA refused to leave Puerto Barrios, and remained in hiding in the area.

On 16 November, the uprising was considered to be under control, but the army remained very divided. The movement led by the group of officers had implicated some two hundred officers, of which at least fifty had participated actively in the rebellion. Others who were part of the plan to rebel did not do so, and some of these probably were discharged for

suspicion. Still others remained on active duty. Several young officers who played prominent roles in this military action are university students, and others had received specialized "ranger" training in the United States and the Panama Canal Zone. Some non-commissioned officers also participated, but the rank and file were not clearly aware of what they were doing. Although it is still weak, a certain nationalism is unquestionably taking root among young officers, and some wish that "things not continue as they are."

Democratic forces continue to struggle to overthrow YDIGORAS and change the situation. To this end, they organize and assemble, awaiting new battles in the struggle against the sell-out government.

The military uprising has accentuated the government's internal contradictions and weaknesses. Colonel JOSE LUIS CRUZ SALAZAR, a favorite of the North Americans and the government's Minister of Communications and Public Works, at one point during the uprising looked for an opportunity to carry out a coup d'etat with Castillo Armas followers.

Colonel ENRIQUE PERALTA AZURDIA, who was named Chief of Operations during the revolt, now is emerging as a new US favorite and is the man IGIDORAS [sic; YDIGORAS] is grooming to be his presidential successor by appointing him Minister of National Defense.

YDIGORAS and the forces of imperialism tried to take advantage of this army uprising devoid of revolutionary plans against Cuba, by accusing it of links to Fidel, which events soon proved false.

The uprising, as stated earlier, was quashed without infantry troops, through the exclusive use of intense aerial bombardments, including rockets, carried out by the mercenary air force and piloted by "yanki" aviators (they used B-26 airplanes numbers 16 through 21). Puerto Barrios was attacked by more than 800 rockets.

The units that participated in the uprising were: a) those from the Military Police headquarters in the Capital; b) those from the Zacapa zone; c) the Puerto Barrios garrison.

The entire city of Zacapa was bombed and, particularly, the railway stations. Part of the city of Puerto Barrios was bombed, the airstrips, and the recently-built radio station. Military casualties were insignificant on both sides, but many civilians, women and children, were killed in the bombings of Zacapa and Puerto Barrios.

Current situation in Guatemala

YDIGORAS, who in late October, 1960 had been obliged to disperse the mercenaries in the face of public protest and allegations and inquiries in Parliament, now, in January 1961,

has resumed its activities in the camps and bases established for an attack on Cuba.

YDIGORAS' attitude can be explained based on the following: In putting down the 13 November 1960 military uprising, he had had the opportunity to purge the Army's ranks of disgruntled officers, disaffected with his administration. Further, EISENHOWER's active support of his floundering government, the deployment of naval guard units in Guatemala's Atlantic waters, is considered a decisive factor likely to quell any threat by the opposition against his regime. YDIGORAS, then is considered to be in a strong position, in charge of the situation. And therefore, in compliance with orders from his "yanki" bosses, he is resuming mercenary activities in the Guatemalan camps.

In light of Guatemala's internal situation at the end of October, 1960 it is easy to appreciate the threats that hovered over the mercenary camps and, as a consequence, over the "yanki" plans to attack Cuba. That explains why the North American government did not hesitate to mobilize part of its fleet and openly declared its willingness to use any means to prevent the downfall of the YDIGORAS government, which would put a serious wrench in the CIA's invasion plans.

In fact, they justified their open intervention in support of YDIGORAS by invoking the already stale and false excuse of a possible attack by Cuba and communism.

This reactivation of the mercenary camps has become so obvious that it has been reported openly in the "yanki" press, including the "New York Times" among others, provoking a scandal of worldwide proportions.

For example, on 9 January, correspondents JOSEPH MARTIN and PHIL SANTORA wrote in the New York "Daily News" that the activities of counterrevolutionary groups operating in the United States and Guatemala are financed by North American industrial interests. They added that each week, fifty or sixty counterrevolutionaries depart from Miami International Airport in a plane headed for one of the three secret training camps.

They confirmed that, as part of this operation, pilots are trained on an airstrip located in Guatemala just 56 kms. from the Mexican border. The existence of the secret base was revealed by another journalist, DON DWIGGINS, in an article published in the weekly "The Nation."

Both journalists affirmed that these forces have 12 B-26 light bombers and at least 6 troop transport planes, which have been sent to the secret base in Guatemala.

This past 9 January, the "Sunday Times" of London published an article, including text and photographs, on Cuban counterrevolutionary training camps in Miami, reporting that preparations are openly underway to invade Cuba.

The "New York Times" reported on 9 February that combat forces in Guatemala are being trained in guerrilla warfare by foreign personnel, most of whom are from the United States. A dispatch from Retalhuleu reports that "this zone is the focal point for Guatemalan military preparations, for which Guatemalans believe that a clash with Cuba is virtually unavoidable." It later adds that the United States is supporting this action not only with personnel, but also with materials and the construction of facilities for air and ground services.

While ground forces train on the spurs of the mountain range a few kilometers from the Pacific, intense air training is taking place here in a partially camouflaged aerodrome. President YDIGORAS admitted in an interview that training in guerrilla warfare was taking place on the spurs of the "Helvetia" hacienda, located a few kilometers from the provincial capital. He further stated that the air base located approximately 5 kms. west of the Capital on the Pacific side was being used for military purposes, but that he expected that it would be turned over to commercial use in the near future.

A Guatemalan authority at the "Helvetia" farm indicated, according to the Times, that the project had grown so quickly that they had imported foreign instructors. According to this source, most of these were North American guerrilla warfare specialists; experts also had been imported from other countries. He added that the latter group included Cubans, but the authority at "Helvetia" denied that Cuban citizens currently were being trained there.

The Times went on to report that, according to a source, a group of United States military personnel were at the air base, as well as other foreigners, for training purposes.

CARLOS ALEJOS ARZU, Guatemalan Ambassador to the United States, acknowledged on 10 January that North American officials are assisting Guatemalan forces and troops of other nationalities with training in the environs of the Retalhuleu air base and other parts of the country, but said that the training was not for the purpose of invading Cuba.

The declaration was made after revelations published by North American journalists in the "New York Times," "The Nation," and the "New York Daily News."

The Department of State in Washington announced at the last minute that it would have no comment or statement to make about reports published in the "New York Times" to the effect that commandos were being trained to attack Cuba from Guatemalan bases. This announcement was made by LINCOLN WHITE who had stated at noon that the Department would have an official statement to make on the subject.

The journalists mention GUILLERMO HERNANDEZ VEGA, a Cuban who passed himself off as a counter-revolutionary and was in the training camps, and fled the camps before the Christmas holidays, seeking asylum in the Mexican Embassy in Guatemala. Upon being denied safe conduct he fled the Embassy and headed for Mexico where, according to reports, he informed the Cuban Ambassador of the invasion plans.

That same day, 10 January, President Ydigoras categorically denied that preparations were underway to invade Cuba.

A dispatch from the Guatemalan city of Retalhuleu signed by "New York Times" correspondent PAUL P. KENNEDY, reports that this zone is the focal point of military preparations in Guatemala against Cuba. The dispatch adds that the base at Retalhuleu is used to train commando forces with the assistance of specialists from North America, Cuba and other countries.

KENNEDY asserts that the base was built with financial assistance from the United States, which also supplied arms. He added that an official who participated in the negotiations in Washington confirmed for him that the North American government refused to send more arms than those already sent, because it believed that the supplies requested exceeded the requirements of defensive operations.

He added that the base's main facility is an airstrip built by a North American firm, but that the aerodrome is not a military facility in the true sense of the word. He went on to report that military personnel wearing North American uniforms have been sighted in the city of Retalhuleu.

Colonel ENRIQUE PERALTA AZURDIA, Guatemalan Minister of Defense, stated that: "There are indeed troops stationed in Retalhuleu because it is a Guatemalan military base where Guatemalan regular army troops are trained to repel a second attack, whether it be launched from within Guatemala or from the outside.

"There are North American officers in Guatemala and they belong to the Air Mission. In addition, a Naval Mission will be arriving shortly.

They provide valuable training services to Guatemalan troops because that is why they have come to Guatemala, as they have gone to almost all Latin American countries.

"Guatemalan troops who are being trained in guerrilla warfare in Retalhuleu were airlifted to the battles in Zacapa and Puerto Barrios last November."

As can be observed, there are two falsehoods in these statements by YDIGORAS' Minister of Defense: the first being when he states that the troops were airlifted to the battles in Zacapa and Puerto Barrios. It is common knowledge that infantry forces did not operate there and that the air power used was operated by "yanki" pilots. The second

lie has to do with affirming that Retalhuleu is a Guatemalan Army base, when it is well known that it is a foreign mercenary base. In fact, it appears that YDIGORAS now wants to cover up these mercenary activities by saying that they actually correspond to the Guatemalan Army.

After visiting Guatemala last November, the head of UPI [United Press International] in Mexico confirmed the presence of an air base in Retalhuleu. At that time, he cynically commented that the base was being prepared as a potential future facility to protect the Panama Canal, and as a center from which to launch an attack on any invading fleet.

The "New York Times" correspondent was able to prove that the base was isolated from the surrounding road and that armed soldiers man a guard post on a neighboring agricultural farm, from which they are able to observe activities in the military center and keep strangers from entering.

In September and October of last year, a considerable number of North Americans, military in appearance and with tattoos customary among members of the United States Armed Forces, were observed around Retalhuleu and on nearby Pacific beaches.

The opposition asserted that those North Americans were responsible for training commandos, but the government only stated that they were engineers assisting with construction of the base.

As Guatemalan Minister of Defense Colonel Enrique Peralta just indicated, recently there has been a resumption of intensive activity at Retalhuleu.

The "New York Post" called journalists MARTIN and SANTORA careless for reporting that these counterrevolutionary activities are financed by American industries whose properties in Cuba were nationalized by the Revolutionary Government.

In the New York-based "The Nation," DON DWIGGINS reported that he had been able to confirm the existence of a military base in Retalhuleu. All access routes to the aerodrome are closed off. Rifle-bearing guards are posted on roads leading to the base. According to reports, the aerodrome's airstrip is eight thousand feet long, which would seem rather short for operating jet propulsion combat planes, although it can be done since the aerodrome is at sea level.

The airstrip is built on terrain belonging to MANUEL RALDA, a prominent Guatemalan cattle rancher. It is said that the construction was completed in record time, over 80 days in the summer of 1960, under the worst conditions of heat and humidity. Since there are no flights to and from the Department of Retalhuleu, there is no doubt as to the purpose of the base there.

Dr. ROGER HILTON, Director of the Hispanic American Studies Institute of Stanford University, recently returned from Guatemala with proof that the country was replete with exiles who were planning a Cuban invasion via Isla de los Pinos; this information was published in "The Nation."

According to Dr. HILTON, they expect to establish a Formosa-style government there (referring to Isla de los Pinos), that would serve as an assembly point for enemies of FIDEL CASTRO. In coordination with the invasion plans, forces would be concentrated in Puerto Barrios, which would serve as a springboard during the maneuver.

One report indicates that Retalhuleu is a training base for air and ground forces pertaining to a burgeoning "volunteer" army comprising OAS member countries. Other reports describe the aerodrome as one of many in a growing network of military bases from which it would be easy to launch a coordinated attack against Cuba.

On 10 January, the "New York Times" reported that the United States is supplying Guatemala with training personnel, materials, and other assistance to ready a guerrilla force for a possible clash with Cuba. Times correspondent KENNEDY reported from Retalhuleu that the US also has helped finance the construction of a landing camp where daily training in air maneuvers is taking place. He also reported that the hacienda is mostly owned by ROBERTO ALEJOS ARZU, one of the largest independent coffee growers in Guatemala and an intimate friend and advisor of YDIGORAS.

Two B-26s and two DC-4 or DC6s, without registration marks, operate on the airstrip. The camp structures appear to be army barracks, one of which is used as a radio station.

News correspondent KENNEDY said that he was able to penetrate twelve kilometers into the hacienda where the Guatemalans are being trained. A Guatemalan authority told him that Guatemalans originally were in charge of training at the base, but that the project expanded so quickly that guerrilla warfare specialists, mainly from the United States, were brought in.

It was reported that they used two Russians so that the recruits could get used to hearing Russian commands. The source denied, however, that Cubans currently are being trained on that hacienda.

Officers who appear to be wearing United States Air Force uniforms have been seen driving vehicles in downtown Retalhuleu, but none with that type of uniform have been seen on foot in the streets.

The Minister of Defense stated that "in fact we have forces stationed in Retalhuleu, but they are Guatemalan army soldiers who are there to receive training in guerrilla

warfare. He added that this was not for the purpose of armed action, but rather part of the Army's routine activities. With regard to the presence of North American officers, it must be recalled that there are United States military and air missions in Guatemala, which usually provide valuable assistance to our Army. The Ministry of Defense is developing plans to reorganize the military bases in the country: the seven bases now in existence would be reduced to four bases, which would be better equipped and organized than the existing facilities. These plans include establishing a strong military base in Retalhuleu. The troops there played a successful role in putting down the 13 November uprising against the government.

The Minister said that it is not true that Retalhuleu is the focal point of Guatemalan preparations for an inevitable clash with Cuba.

For approximately one year now, the opposition has been alleging that mercenary forces are trained in Retalhuleu for an invasion of Cuba.

Persistent rumors are circulating unofficially about unusual troop movements in Retalhuleu, especially on "Helvetia" farm, owned by the ALEJO brothers. These rumors even describe mercenary groups leaving Retalhuleu for Isla Cisne in Honduras; in recent weeks, there has been talk of the presence of numerous Cubans in Retalhuleu, which official sources deny.

As can be observed, all of these reports by North American correspondents that caused an international scandal provided very little information about the mercenary bases in Guatemala. This G-2 Information Department already had complete information, which was recounted in the first part of this report. These activities were condemned in a timely fashion by the Cuban government and by its representative at the U.N., Dr. RAUL ROA.

Mercenary activities in Florida.

Besides Guatemala, the United States is the other country where significant mercenary and counterrevolutionary activity in training camps is visible.

Florida has become an important center for conspiracy and training camps operate blatantly in different parts of the state.

The camp run by the FRD [*Frente Revolucionario Democrático*; Democratic Revolutionary Front] [led] by TONY VARONA is well known and contains some 1,400 mercenaries. Although the titular chief of this camp is former Colonel EDUARDO MARTIN ELENA and former Lieutenant MANUEL ARTIME, the true leaders are North American officials working for the CIA.

In addition, there are other camps run by PEDRAZA, MARTIN DIAZ TAMAYO, GARCIA TUNON, SANCHEZ MOSQUERA, MEROB SOSA, ROLANDO MASFERRER, and others.

All in all, approximately 5,000 mercenaries are receiving training in different regions of the United States.

On 10 January, the "Miami Herald" reported that the city could be linked to the air transport of anti-Castro forces to a training center in Guatemala.

Its editor, JAMES BUCHANAN, reported that an unmarked airplane with its lights off landed at the rarely used Opa-Loka aerodrome, and this was explained as merely an airplane that was low on gasoline.

Last 13 January, Dade County Commissioner ARTHUR H. PATTEN, made a proposal to assemble mercenaries throughout Florida in Opa-Loka, for an invasion of Cuba.

The newspaper also stated that a few weeks ago Hendry County police authorities were investigating similar cases of unmarked planes, with their lights off, picking up groups of men from an abandoned air strip near Clewiston [Florida].

The newspaper further reported that recruits, some of them North American, have been active in the Miami area for several months, screening exiles for men considered to be qualified and trustworthy. One agent screened volunteers from his home. The recruits are not allowed a single suitcase, nor can they carry identification documents or money; they are allowed to take only the clothes on their backs which is exchanged for a field uniform once they arrive at their destination.

On 10 January, a 28-year-old North American named DEL GURULE in Denver, Colorado, stated that he was trying to assemble a force of about 500 men in the Rocky Mountain region to join the invasion of Cuba scheduled for next June. GURULE, a Korean war veteran, said that the force he plans to mobilize will join the invading force undergoing training in Florida. He cited part of a letter signed by RAMON [S?]UAGO, a Cuban Army Colonel, to the effect that five thousand men are being prepared in Miami for the invasion.

"Parade" Magazine in New York published an article by ROBERT MAY stating that the United States has at least eleven espionage services headed by the CIA, Central Intelligence Agency, for a total of 45,000 spies who meddle in the affairs of Cuba, Guatemala, El Congo, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Burma, Laos, and other countries. He went on to say that, based on conservative estimates, the CIA spends approximately one billion dollars annually to obtain intelligence and promote subversive activities abroad. The article reports that the CIA has espionage centers disguised as busi-

ness establishments in many cities. In Formosa, for example, it uses a publishing house and in the Philippines, a restaurant.

In Los Angeles, California, there is talk of an incredible air raid operation planned for early 1961. They are offering 25,000 dollars to pilots willing to participate in this mission. Those offering the money are "big shots" in the Government. According to the plan, six A-20 planes equipped with 600-pound bombs, whose pilots are only waiting to receive the offered money up front and in cash, are scattered among aerodromes in Los Angeles, Miami, Haiti, and Venezuela. The plan is to fly low over the water, appear suddenly on the Cuban coast at four o'clock in the morning, and bomb petroleum tanks and refineries.

A North American journalist recounts that, in a Caracas bar, an aviator [was] described [as] an intermediary who handles secret messages for members of the recently formed "Caribbean Legion" comprising mercenary aviators. These salaried pilots are bringing into the Caribbean a heterogeneous fleet ranging from English jet propulsion "Vampires" to B-25s and P-51s from the last war.

Mercenary training in the United States is carried out so blatantly that the 31 October edition of "Life" magazine included photographs of mercenary camps in the State of Florida. Last 25 October, CBS television (Columbia Broadcasting System) ran footage of several of these counter-revolutionary centers in Miami.

Last 22 November, the "Diario de las Americas" reported the death of North American RUSSELL F. MASKER, victim of a stray shot from Cuban ROLANDO MARTINEZ CAMPANERIA during military instruction in a camp located in "Cayo Sin Nombre," thirty miles from Cayo Hueso.

There have been reports of a paratrooper base in Tucson, Arizona, as well as small mercenary groups on the Andros Islands, in Nassau, in Cayo Sal and Cayo la Roque. There is also talk that mercenaries assembled in camps in Miami, Orlando, Homestead, Fort Lauderdale and Fort Myers earn 25 dollars a week in pay and a stipend for family members, based on the number.

Mercenaries have been transferred from these Florida training camps to Guatemala and Isla Cisne in North American Army transport planes and civilian cargo planes. The same practice is followed for those who complete instruction in Guatemala. Isla Cisne is used as a transfer point where mercenaries remain for several days before being transferred to Guantanamo Naval Base.

The first group transported to Guantanamo comprised 150 men who traveled last 24 October on United States Navy warship "Burman," commanded by Captain JOSEPH MCDONALD. Since that date, there have been weekly embarkations of groups of 150 men with weapons, sup-

plies, medicines and food rations. Recently, mercenaries in Guatemala have gone directly to the Guantanamo Naval Base without stopping over in Isla Cisne.

Mercenaries located in Guantanamo, wearing the camouflage olive green, caramel and white uniforms used by the Marine Infantry in the Second World War, are the best troops and have the best weapons. The plan is to launch several small commando-type expeditions to different points on the Island, synchronized with attacks and acts of sabotage in the cities. These expeditions will depart from Florida, some adjacent keys, and possibly Isla Cisne. During disembarkation, mercenaries camped at the Guantanamo Naval Base will head toward Sierra Maestra, which will be used as an operations center to launch attacks on several cities in the Oriente province, with air support from bases in Isla Cisne and Guatemala. The mercenary air force also plans to bomb different locations in the La Habana province.

One of the Miami recruitment centers is located on 17th Street and Biscayne Boulevard, where mercenaries openly are signed up to join an invading army:

There already have been reports that the FRD under TONY VARONA has the approval of the United States authorities and transfers contraband weapons, supplies, and explosives to the Isla. Further, [in] this counterrevolutionary group's camp, mercenaries may not return to civilian life after they have been accepted. They receive correspondence from family and friends through a post office box in Miami, using a system similar to that employed by the North American army during the Second World War to conceal the status of the troops.

On New Years Eve, AP reported from Miami that a group of 200 Cubans and 23 North Americans camped in warehouses near the downtown area of the city were preparing to disembark in Cuba. The group, led by ROLANDO MASFERRER, included North Americans KENNETH PROCTOR, age 33, from Boston; LARRY BRICENT, age 22, from Columbus, Ohio.

We also know of, and have duly reported, radio programs maintained and financed by the Washington administration, that engage in defamation and encourage treachery while simultaneously transmitting coded orders for counterrevolutionaries based in Cuba, all under the CIA's direction.

One such group which produces radio programs maintains a luxury home in Miami where programs are taped and later transmitted from a 35-foot long vessel based in that city.

From New York, another program called "By Cuba and For Cuba" is broadcast five times a week by short wave radio and rebroadcast sixty minutes later on longwave by Radio Swan on Isla del Cisne [Swan Island].

The vessel that leaves Miami every day broadcasts the program "Radio Independent Cuba" in which they give directions to sabotage cinemas, theaters, and other meeting places.

As it is known, Radio Swan is on the air since last August, appearing to be operated by the firm "Gibraltar Steamship Company" located in New York City. Every night, it broadcasts four hours in Spanish and recordings are made in the United States, then sent twice per week by airplane to Isla Cisne [Swan Island].

Isla Cisne serves as a transit point for groups of mercenaries. Though it belongs to Honduras, it is occupied by the United States, which has installed a Meteorological Bureau station for the Caribbean to study hurricanes there. This island is almost entirely the property of Summer Smith, a merchant from Boston and descendant of Captain Alonzo Adams, who established himself there in 1893.

The past December 21st, the "Committee for the Liberation of Cuba" was created, led by John McClatchy, who will buy radio station time to make propaganda against Cuba. He is supported by Representative [Roman] Pucinsky of Illinois, and retired Commander Pilot Nicholas Nonnemather.

Everything stated above is as much as we can report to the present moment about the mercenary camps in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Florida, as well as other counterrevolutionary activities. "We will win."

Capt. Alberto

The preceding report is submitted to Dr. Osvaldo Dorticos Torrado, Citizen President of the Republic, for his knowledge and consideration.

Ramiro Valdés Menéndez, Commander Chief Dept. Infirmary G-2 MINFAR

[Source: Released by Cuban Government for 22-24 March 2001 conference ("Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After") in Havana. Translated by National Security Archive.]



Document No.2

Cuban Intelligence Report, 17 March 1961

17 March 1961
"Year of Education"

To M-1, from MN-1

Re: Information about preparations of American warships and transfer of mercenaries and henchmen by air to Panama

Yesterday we received a communication from Section "L" addressed to Section "M," dated 8 March 1961 that had the following reports attached:

A memorandum note that says "The ship Vicente Comas that is in Havana leaves this morning with a group with destination Cayo Hueso."

And another communication from the same [name excised] to Lieutenant Matos in the airport dated 22 February 1961, that says:

"Dear Comrade,

The information that follows is to be immediately conveyed to the headquarters of DIER and G-2, such that it arrives in the hands of Dr. Fidel Castro at once.

Yesterday afternoon, the loading of three USA destroyers was completed at the naval base of Key West. These ships travel loaded to their maximum capacity and carry weapons of all classes including bombs to be launched from airplanes, *obusos* [shells, as for artillery], munitions of all calibers, and have double the number of mortars than they do of other weapons.

These vessels left today in the early morning, headed for the naval base at Guantanamo, carrying only regular crew members in each destroyer.

From the air base (Bocachica) in Key West, Boxcar type transport planes are leaving daily, as of five or six days ago, with Panama as their destination. Each plane carries an average of 80 to 100 men, who are being transferred to this place, since after these flights, the planes return empty in order to return with another contingent.

The majority of these flights have left for Panama in the night and early morning hours, and return to Key West in the afternoon or at dusk. This is clear evidence that an attack on our Island is being prepared, since these men could also be transported from Panama in the vessels of the American Marines.

Please respond to this."

It does not say whether they have communicated to the appropriate Section the departure of the ship destined for Cayo Hueso, but if they have not, it must be done immediately in spite of the time that has passed, since sometimes there are difficulties or the ships do not sail, or else they go a short distance and return.

Regarding the notice given about the three destroyers that are loaded to bursting in Cayo Hueso, even though they are

on maneuvers until the end of this month, it would be advisable that the group in the East be notified immediately of the part pertaining to the mortars.

We inform you of this as appropriate.

Regards, MN-1

Note: We are enclosing the communication of Section L to Section M with its own enclosures.

We have also enclosed another communication from Section L with Section M from 4 February 1961, the contents of which we have already noted. We have returned this document to the archive prior to 12 March 1961. "Homeland or death. We will win"

[Source: Released by Cuban Government for 22-24 March 2001 conference ("Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After") in Havana. Translated for CWIHP by Christopher Dunlap.]



Document No.3

Cuban Intelligence Report, 15 April 1961

15 April 1961
"Year of Education"

From Director, Tec. O. [Infantry] G-2
To: Commander Ramiro Valdés Menéndez, Chief of Department of [Infantry] G-2, Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces [MinFAR]

In Washington, meetings and exchanges of opinions [took place] between public officials in the Department of State, the White House, the CIA, and the Pentagon, but there were no common, unanimous views with regard to Cuba. Opinions were divided into two families, each one of which included its reasoning and conclusions. Ultimately, it had to be [US President John F.] Kennedy himself who would say the last word and approve one of the two plans.

The CIA and some elements of the Department of State and Pentagon maintained the stance that the most auspicious plan to overthrow the government of Cuba must be launching one invasion on a grand scale using mercenaries trained in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Florida, and other places.

Other officials of the Department of State, Pentagon and some advisers to Kennedy expressed their dissent from this plan, pointed out its risks and advocated another, consistent with the idea of introducing in Cuba relatively small groups in various locations, acting from inside and in contact with groups of clandestine resistance, which would be able to bring about the conditions for an “internal uprising” and general strike that would begin on a predetermined date.

The counterrevolutionary groups, mere peons of imperialism, have neared one of the two positions as well.

[Part of line excised]⁶ affirmed that Kennedy’s advisers were divided. While the CIA applied pressure to the President to support an invasion with bases in Florida and Guatemala, a position that was shared by some officials in the Department of State, other members of the White House and the same Department of State exhorted Kennedy to not act hurriedly, because this decision would have to end the matter. [Marker bleed-through for approximately 3 lines] Already in the past month of March, [heavy black excision line through next line with bleed-through over the rest] had brought up the points of view of the MRF, who discarded the “grand invasion” and trusted instead in a “popular insurrection” as the best form of bringing down our government.

This project of the MRP put forth by [Ramón] Barquín, in front of his masters at the Pentagon, also contemplated the acceptance of a final plan of action by all clandestine groups, that is, enacting a “general strike” and “internal uprising” on a determined date across the entire island.

In the first few days of the present month of April, Kennedy and his advisers in Washington made a decision: they rejected the plan for one large-scale invasion and agreed on another idea, that is, dividing the invasion among multiple command landings, where groups would move between small combat units and [large] batallions of 500-600 men, which would then act in coordination with clandestine sabotage and terrorism groups.

In this way, they hope to stir up internal difficulties, divide the Government’s attention, and hinder the effective use of the Militias and Rebel Army forces against them.

The creation of small “liberated territories” that they would later try to expand into wider zones figures into their calculations.

Also, their plans consider the establishment of a “government in arms” in the most propitious of the “liberated territories” that they will come to occupy, which would immediately seek recognition from the United States, and from the other countries who have severed diplomatic relations with Cuba, like Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, etc.

As they calculate, then, this recognition will not be followed by intervention – “a word so unpleasant to Latin

America,” but rather military aid and all forms of support of this same “government in arms.”

Possibly this aid would not be facilitated by the United States but rather, for example, by Guatemala itself, whose government would send the majority of the trained mercenaries from their camps, the matter thus appearing to be something between Latin American governments, unconnected (?) to the government in Washington.⁷

In this manner, it seems [excision or marker bleed-through] facing them⁸ with principles of non-intervention and the free determination of peoples, which until now has been exercised in Latin America with interventionist aims against Cuba.

[Part of line excised] have discarded the idea of sending one large invasion because it would lay bare to America and the world the flagrant intervention of the government of the United States against the Cuban people, whereas sending small units to multiple locations now⁹ combined with the intervention of sabotage and terrorist groups, could imply that this was a matter to be decided among Cubans. And if as a result of this activity the “puppet government” is established in a place inside Cuba, they believe it will not be difficult to “demonstrate” to Latin American opinion that this “government” is the product of struggle by Cubans against Castro, that Washington has nothing to do with it.

Furthermore, it has been estimated that this “puppet government” would be recognized immediately by countries that have broken relations with Cuba, the United States among them, and for example, after [one or two words illegible by marker bleed through] puppet [Miguel] Ydígoras [Fuentes of Guatemala] – they have recognized they can send the invasion force of mercenaries that train there as assistance to the request that [Cuban Revolutionary Council head José] Miró Cardona made.

And if, in the struggle, the mercenaries perceive themselves to be in a hurry, the possibility of more direct assistance from the United States cannot be discounted, which would be considered then not as an intervention but as help for the [illegible from date on declassified stamp] of the puppet government of Miró.

There is a significant fact: [approximately ¾ of one line excised] reported from Miami that on 5 April, orders of mobilization had been given to the mercenaries on bases in Florida and Louisiana, who then left on ships and planes for regions of the Caribbean and Central America, and added that patrol boats had been constantly entering into and exiting from Florida ports in the last few days, in transport missions to Central America.

[informant's name excised] also said that this operation had been coordinated by José Miró Cardona as chief of the "[Cuban] Revolutionary Council."

This constant transfer of mercenaries and weapons carried out in full daylight and almost in view of everyone, led to the belief that an invasion against Cuba was beginning. Some were so convinced that special reporters started to arrive in Miami from all Yankee and Spanish publication organizations in anticipation of the sensational news of the invasion.

However, [a few words excised] it was known that was not the prelude to the invasion, but a mobilization of the mercenaries from the FRD and other groups in American territory toward Central America, with the goal of preparing them to infiltrate Cuba from Guatemala and other locations far from Yankee soil, in order that they would unite with sabotage and diversion groups that they presume to be placed here.

About this mobilization it was said [approximately 3 lines excised] those knowledgeable of what is happening report that this mobilization is not for an invasion, but to reinforce guerrillas that number more than eight thousand men, found operating in the Sierra Maestra, Sierra Cristal, and the Sierra del Escambray.

It is quite possible that this mercenary mobilization and others to insert them into Cuba as a group are being done with the aim of not moving the bulk of them from Guatemala and Nicaragua, to keep them in reserve and move them only when the Miró puppet government asks for assistance from other countries.

Of course, [a few words excised] that the plan they agreed to would give power to Miró in its first phase: with only assistance of multiple command groups, and the sabotage groups, the "general strike" and the "internal uprising" without needing to make use of the second part of the plan—sending the mercenaries as assistance from Guatemala and Nicaragua. It would please Washington much less to find itself needing to come partially to the aid of these mercenaries, "sheared" or "fleeced" in Cuban territory.

[Illegible, bleed-through] possibility of [illegible, possibly "remitir" = "send or transfer"] in case a [bleed-through, illegible 2-3 words] scale contemplated by the same Miró Cardona when, speaking a few days ago in New York, he stated that an invasion on the part of the anti-Castro exiles was not being planned for now, it is not part of our plans at the moment, but if it is necessary there will be an invasion.

As it is known, Miró made a "call to arms" indicating three phases that they are considering to overturn the Cuban Revolution:

1) Organization of liberation forces in exile.

2) An offensive proceeding from the mountains and cities of Cuba.

3) Establishment of a provisional government in Cuban territory.

When journalists asked him where his exile army was training, Miró categorically denied that they were training in Guatemala, where he said only Guatemalans trained, which had been "clarified" by Idígoras' [Ydigoras'] government. He concluded by saying "I cannot speak of our future plans because they are plans for war."

[Before?]¹⁰ the 13th Miró Cardona and Tony Varona continued to make statements in New York, which reflected the points of view of their Yankee masters. Miró said: "The United States is not lending any hand to the counterrevolution in Cuba." Varona stated, "There will be no invasion of Cuba from any place, let alone the United States," and added that the struggle "would emerge from within Cuba, by the Cubans themselves." Another swine of lesser importance, Sergio Alcacho, representative of the FRD in New Orleans, also said: "The forces that will invade Cuba are not trained in the United States."

According to [3-4 lines excised] they have arrived at the conclusion "that an invasion directed toward one point could only be a risky enterprise, the failure of which would deliver a tremendous blow to all the plans to overthrow Castro's regime." Additionally, "from the political point of view, this invasion would create (in Latin America) the impression that external intervention was taking place."

He concludes by saying [several words excised] "the acceptance of the strategy of multiple attacks constitutes a vindication for the MRP [Revolutionary Movement of the People]" (which approved this aggression plan.)

[Name excised] also said that "Ray has strongly advocated for the theory that the subterranean movement must bear the bulk of the fight against the regime," adding that the MRP operates closely linked with the "November 30th Movement" and with elements of the MRR (Movement for the Revival of the Revolution).

In a New York Times editorial on the 11th day of the present month [April 1961], following the guidelines of the Department of State, he reported that "the Cuban problem can only be resolved by Cuba and the Cubans, because without the support of the people no revolution will triumph."

Everything stated previously in this report is the result of study and analysis of the plan of aggression against Cuba, put in practice by Kennedy and all of his advisers.

The declarations of Kennedy:

In his statements on Cuba from 12 [April], Kennedy said this among other things: "There will not be, under any condition, an intervention in Cuba on the part of the armed forces of the United States" and "this government will do whatever is possible to not have Americans implicated in any action within Cuba."

[2-3 lines bleed-through and a somewhat large bottom margin on this page]

- a) The failure of Washington to achieve collective or majority support by Latin American governments to bolster an agreement against the revolutionary government of Cuba.
- b) The position decided by [illegible] Mexico and Ecuador in favor of non-intervention [illegible] determination by the populace [illegible] vacillation [illegible] to break relations with our country and through pressure by [illegible] it is not decided either to abandon the defense of the principle of non-intervention.
- c) After declaring that the United States would not intervene militarily in Cuba, Kennedy tried to give the impression that the US did not wish to meddle in the internal matters of Cuba, concealing [his intentions while] trying to calm Latin America, alarmed by the repeated announcements [illegible] Yankee government is assisting all [readicados] counterrevolutionaries in that country, in an essential way with weapons, equipment, airplanes, money and Yankee instructors to the mercenaries in the [ampamentos?]¹¹ of Florida, Louisiana, Guatemala, [illegible, bleed-through] other places. Of course, Kennedy's objective here is in vain.
- d) Kennedy can say this because the United States continues organizing aggression against Cuba, not exactly using its military forces, but arming and training counterrevolutionaries and adventurers in different locations.
- e) Kennedy is careful to clarify that he will do whatever is possible to not have Americans implicated in any action in Cuba, by which he tries to throw a blanket over the

participation of American officials and technicians in training mercenaries (not inside) but indeed outside of Cuba in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Afterwards, Kennedy said that he would oppose any effort to launch an offensive against Cuba from the United States.

Naturally, he can say this at present, since his plans are in fact otherwise, that is, launching small commands from Central America that integrate Cuban mercenaries with those from other countries, except the United States. In this way, he believes international denunciations will be avoided, for which reason Yankee instructors and technicians from the camps remain in the country.

[2 lines excised] reports the latest statements of Tony Varona and Miró that the United States is not aiding them, and an invasion against Cuba will not come from there.

Of course, the matter of the participation of the Yankee government in support and direction [3-4 lines excised] have reported, on various occasions, about the CIA mercenary camps in Guatemala and other places.

Following his statements, Kennedy made reference to holding Rolando Rasferrer under custody in a hospital, saying that American authorities will act against "those who want to establish in Cuba a regime in the style of Batista."

Kennedy [2 lines excised] knows of the continent's snub of Batista, the protégé of Eisenhower. Therefore, Washington has now relegated the Batista supporters to a lower level. Kennedy prefers to use the services of Tony Varona, Miró, Ray and company, thinking he can better trick the Cuban people and Latin American opinion in this way, dressing these lackeys with the attire of "democrats" and "revolutionaries."

In addition, according to his plans, it is not advantageous to Kennedy now to have an expedition leave from the Yankee coasts. Because of this, in part, they have detained [Rolando] Masferrer in fear that he, now diminished in importance, will rush to send another expedition of Cuban and Yankee mercenaries, as he did the other time, which would give the US government a "headache" at present.

In regards to the expropriation of American goods in Cuba, the Yankee president says that it will not be carried out, assuming "formal and normal negotiations with a free and independent Cuba."

[One short paragraph excised]

Kennedy also affirms that "the matter of Cuba is not between the United States and Cuba, but among Cubans themselves."

Here Kennedy finds himself obligated to admit the huge failure that his government has had in trying to impose upon

the peoples and governments of Latin America the judgment that differences between Cuba and the United States were not merely a matter between the two countries, but rather one that affected the entire Continent.

The posture of some Latin American governments is firm enough on this issue that their delegates at the UN recently rejected the United States delegate's intentions to include in a project the "arguments" contained in the "white book" of the Department of [several words illegible, bleed-through] a project [i.e., draft resolution], in turn, which advocated a solution to the differences [illegible] through peaceful methods [illegible] in the UN Charter [illegible].

The delegations of Guinea and Mali, accompanied by other African and Asian countries, are also preparing a similar project [draft].

Regarding this "white book", it demonstrated Yankee interference in Cuba to Latin American populations, which provoked declarations by the governments of Brazil, Mexico, and Ecuador, concerning their defense of the principles of non-intervention.

Once Kennedy stated that the basic matter of Cuba was to be left among Cubans, he showed his boundless cynicism. He attempts to present the problem as an issue among Cubans when everybody already knows that it is squarely between Cuba and the government of the United States.

Kennedy's statement is based on the recently approved plan of aggression toward Cuba, one that tries to frame the attack on our country as a problem only among Cubans. We have already, in another part of this report, pointed out plans that make the infiltration of numerous groups in our territory into the norm. These plans save for later the dispatch of a mercenary invasion from Guatemala, which they will attempt to present not as an act of intervention by the US and its puppets, but rather as simple assistance from another country (Guatemala) to the appeal from the puppet government of Miró Cardona.

In another part of his statements Kennedy "screws up" again and says that the position of his government is "understood and shared" by the counterrevolutionary refugees in the United States; that is to say, that the puppet government of Miró [illegible] understand and are in agreement with this plan [2 lines illegible]. One of the journalists attending the presentation put Kennedy in a tight spot when he asked, "Do our own laws of neutrality or the treaties of the OAS [Organization of American States] not prevent giving aid or weapons to the anti-Castro elements in this country?"

Kennedy, after being confronted, looked perplexed and confused, did not know what to say and only managed to mumble some endless sentences to try to hide the truth, never arriving at a concrete answer.

In summary, Kennedy's declarations say nothing new or positive, but fit more closely with the counterrevolutionary line that the government in Washington follows at present regarding the Revolution.

"Homeland or death. We will win."

Capt. Alberto

1) [one line excised] among other things the following:

The means of support of the clandestine groups [words excised] is the alliance of MRP groups and the November 30th Movement. Thousands of clandestine papers are distributed among the two groups every month, keeping an interminable flow of information [2-3 lines excised]. In the four months as head of the movement's action in Cuba, Manuel Ray, ex-Minister of Public Works under Castro and now leader of the MRP in the United States, was never bothered by the police [several lines excised]. The basic unity of the MRP is the nucleus composed of seven men, set up in a way that the rest of its members would not put another group in danger. Around these nuclei there are five functional sections (laborers, students, professionals, propaganda, and sabotage), each represented in the national executive of the MRP. To ensure that the movement does not lose all its leaders in one stroke, the national executive has met only four times in plenary session in seven months. A happy group of 15 Cuban youth and their friends on the beach of Varadero hid one of the recent conclaves of the MRP.

[2-3 lines excised]. They carry detonators and fuses inside shopping crates. All people active in the clandestine force try in every way to lead a normal life. They even register for the Militias [one line excised]. If one of them has a feeling that he is being pursued or watched, the organization tries to send him outside the country or obtain asylum in the embassy of a friendly nation. One of the instructions that they give to anyone involved in these activities is "Do not trust the Mexican Embassy."

[One line excised] Manuel Ray's assistant was detained three times [a few words excised]. "Eugenio," [Ray's?]¹² successor in Cuba, was also arrested and set free, as was his assistant from "November 30" who is called "Alejandro." "November 30" builds its own bombs in more than twenty houses in Havana, and another clandestine group organizes "meetings" in the afternoon. [One line excised] Each "firecracker" is lined with dynamite cartridges. When the fuse is lit, the firecracker serves as a detonator.

Cap. Alberto

[Source: Released by Cuban Government for 22-24 March 2001 conference (“Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After”) in Havana. Translated for CWIHP by Christopher Dunlap.]



Document No. 4

Cuban Intelligence “Report on subversive groups that the CIA sent to Cuba clandestinely in order to prepare conditions that would allow for a mercenary invasion,” 5 May 1961

Republic of Cuba – Ministry of Revolutionary Armed Forces – Rebel Army
5 May 1961 “Year of Education”

Report on subversive groups that the CIA sent to Cuba clandestinely in order to prepare conditions that would allow for a mercenary invasion

The Department of State of the United States and the Central Intelligence Agency, seeing the squandering of money by different counterrevolutionary groups in their country, devoted themselves to the task of directly organizing these groups, as well as the training of the mercenaries and saboteurs in the camps already set up in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, and some marine bases in the states of Florida and North Carolina, and also in Puerto Rico. They recruited mercenaries in different parts of Florida and those which were chosen among war criminals displaced from political power, and also from the national bourgeoisie, and from some organizations that played a role against tyranny [i.e., Batista—ed.] like the Second Front of Escambray, the OA and elements of the right wing from 26 July and the Directorate. This recruitment led to the result that a so-called Government would be formed in exile, into which they integrated, among others, Miró Cardona as President and Tony Varona as Vice [President]. They did this with the goal of uniting all counterrevolutionary groups under one leadership, as well as for the effect of propaganda, preparing the way for when the invasion came and power was taken, according to them, over a piece of our land, a beachhead. They would be able to dedicate all necessary aid and possibly be recognized by some puppet governments in [Latin] America, and therefore gave themselves over to the work of preparing these personnel in the handling of weapons and armed struggle.

They chose different groups to accomplish their preparation in sabotage, clandestine work, assassination,¹³ communications, military information and uniting these groups into an organization which they call FUR, the United Revolutionary Front, for whom they chose as organizer the now-executed ex-Commander Sori Marín, one known by Rafael as someone named Francisquito, also shot, calling the mercenary army that would invade our land the “Liberation Army,” and putting as its leaders [Manuel] Artimes, [Pepe] San Román, and others, all known as thieves and elements of the worst caliber, the majority prisoners, after the failed invasion.

After the group that constituted the FUR was imprisoned and the majority shot, the CIA chose another Executive for the composition of the FUR, including Commander Gonzalo Miranda of the Marines of the Revolutionary War and others, almost all being detained.

Here is a diagram of how the FUR is organized in our country, following direct instructions from the CIA in Washington, its form of operation and current conditions, and measures that should be taken for its annihilation.

[See diagram following document translations and endnotes]

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

Below CIA —two groups: **Liaisons, Revolutionary United Front**

Under Liaisons: **Operational Groups: Armament, Sabotage, Radio**¹⁴

Under FUR: Military Coordinator, Supplies, Finances, Propaganda, Coordination, Action and Sabotage, Political Coordinator

1. CIA, intelligence and counterintelligence organization of the United States government, controlled directly by the President of that nation, charged with preparing any actions that can harm our Revolutionary Government, from an act of sabotage to an assassination.
2. FUR, Revolutionary United Front, encompassing at its core all counterrevolutionary groups that operate in our country, forming an Executive [committee], who is chosen by the leaders of counterrevolutionary organizations, and whose function is military and political coordination, supplies, finances, propaganda, action and sabotage, communications, etc.

3. These counterrevolutionary groups are formed by the following organizations. Some “nomes de guerre” appear among leaders, almost always highlighting them as a CIA Delegate, for example, Rafael, mentioned above, now shot, appeared as National Coordinator.

- 1) Liberation Movement – Justo
- 2) Radical Anticommunist Action – Pepe
- 3) Save Cuba Movement (SAC) – César
- 4) Independent Revolutionary Group (ARI) – Ramón
- 5) Revolutionary Action Movement (MAR) – Dr. Jorge
- 6) Democratic Revolutionary Marines (MRD) – Abel
- 7) Mazones15 Anticommunist Movement (MMA) – Benito
- 8) Anticommunist Civic Action – Nasario
- 9) Democratic Liberation Movement (MLD) – Felipe
- 10) Anticommunist Youth of America (JACA) – Raúl
- 11) Constitutional Democratic Legion (Nelson Granada)
- 12) November 30th - Alejandro
- 13) Anticommunist Organizations Block (Jibarito)
- 14) Cuban Action – Demetrio
- 15) Insurreccional Democratic Organization (OID) – Ludovics
- 16) Student Revolutionary Democratic Federation (FERD) – Raúl
- 17) National Democratic Union (May 20th) – Marcelino Toro
- 18) Christianity Against Communism (CCC) – Teté
- 19) Anticommunist Front (FAC) – Felipe
- 20) Naval Revolutionary Corps – Benito
- 21) Action 62
- 22) Anticommunist League
- 23) Insurreccional Movement for the Revival of the Revolution (MIRR)
- 24) Revolutionary Dissident Recuperation Movement (ADRA)
- 25) Union of Anticommunist Medical Professionals Revolutionary Group
- 26) National Anticommunist Union
- 27) Revolutionary Liberation Movement – Montenegro
- 28) Free National Anticommunist Organization
- 29) Cuban National Movement – Mazones

Work accomplished by the executive committee of FUR

Cm – Military commander, position once occupied by ex-Commander Sorí Marín, shot, and now occupied by Commander of the M.G.R. Gonzalo Miranda, presently detained; work consisted of coordinating military matters, attempting to capture members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, as well as all those who were discharged soldiers for whatever reason and still assisted active military personnel, and those who were prisoners or fugitives.

A – Supplies. Someone named Marcial, as a nom de guerre, was responsible for supplies: Tobarich, as well, was in charge of Action and Sabotage, and substituted for Engineer Ray, responsible for various bombs that produced an explosion in Havana, and the entrance of arms and explosives into the capital, including among their missions the occupation of Celimar and the lading near Eufemio Cay. This individual, now deceased, carried out two functions within the Executive of the FUR.

F – Finances. This position was occupied by Salvador García (nom de guerre Octavio) who found himself a fugitive, and substituting for one within the group who had been shot previously, as the CIA had foreseen that its leaders would be taken prisoner and stipulated that each Executive member would have a substitute. His work consisted of distributing money for operations and the counterrevolutionary elements' needs.

P – Propaganda. This task fell to Bebo Borrón, prisoner, and Tony Díaz, fugitive; their obligation comprised the propaganda for said organization although they carried out an infinity of other work.

C – Communications. Executive office unknown to he who occupied it, his task being possibly, but never surely, that of communicating with the CIA and preparing places for the installation of a plant.

(E) Liaison Group This group is formed by four CIA officials of Cuban nationality, serving as the linkage between operation groups and the FUR, as well as directly to the CIA, with the following nom de guerre: Mendoza, Ernesto, Bran, y Luis Acosta, who uses the abbreviation code 2637.

(GO)Operations Group Operation groups of infiltration for action and sabotage. These groups were organized by the CIA in cells of three: one responsible for weapons, one for sabotage, and another as radio operator, specialized in all classes of weapons, as well as sabotages, demolition, assassination and communications, which they carry out directly with the CIA. They also have the function of teaching counterrevolutionary elements that the political apparatus, FUR, positions them to accomplish sabotage, as well as armament and disarmament, which they learn through the Liaisons. The chief of these operations groups is Frank Bernardino, who received training outside the country, remaining within the country¹⁶ in the coastal zone lying between Matanzas and Havana, in the northern part, until the moment of his introduction; some were also brought in by parachute through the province of Camagüey. When they come by sea, they do so by boat, which upon nearing the coast, receives signals from land, as almost always the arrival is done by agreement with groups that operate within the country and, upon receiving the signal, launch a rubber boat that takes them to the shore; now 27 cells are operating within our territory.

These groups have the following characteristics:

- a) They have been recruited from the youth of the petty bourgeoisie, industrial workers, members of the right wing of July 26th, Revolutionary Army ex-members, as well as the Army of the Dictatorship.
- b) They have false documents: a fingerprint wallet and a card from the labor census (these cards have smaller numbers than the authentic ones.)

- c) They travel with a lot of money, and use lighted watches that they had in the camps.

- d) They frequent elegant clubs, bars, and cabarets.

- e) They often use women as camouflage, who dress as militiawomen and travel on buses, just as all these elements go unarmed.

The CIA, after the failures to launch weapons from airplanes, adapted the system of launching said weapons in sets of 30 cavalries, and where they had trusted personnel, promised to launch no fewer than eight tons, between weapons and explosives, and according to the latest news, between Havana and Pinar del Río more than 120 tons have been launched, as one of their tactics was to introduce in cities vast quantities of arms around Havana as well as in the provinces, where surveillance is less effective. Just as all the cells that operate in Havana have their troops in surrounding areas, around 100 agents have entered the country.

In Matanzas, reports say that they have deposited weapons in all municipalities.

Measures that must be taken for the destruction and obliteration of these groups

- a) Introduction of activists¹⁷ in the prisons.
- b) Addition of VR in hotels, guest houses, clubs and cabarets, in order to infiltrate the greatest number of active personnel among the counterrevolutionary organizations.
- c) Recruitment of troops among elements that have been marginalized by the Revolution, in one way or another: soldiers and clandestine fighters.
- d) Increased vigilance on the part of the CDR.

[Source: Released by Cuban Government for 22-24 March 2001 conference (“Bay of Pigs: 40 Years After”) in Havana. Translated for CWIHP by Christopher Dunlap.]

Notes

1 For examples of this motif, see, e.g., Tad Szulc and Karl E. Meyer, *The Cuban Invasion: The Chronicle of a Disaster* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1962); Trumbull Higgins, *The Perfect Failure: Kennedy, Eisenhower, and the CIA at the Bay of Pigs* (New York: Norton, 1987); Grayston L. Lynch, *Decision for Disaster: Betrayal at the Bay of Pigs* (Dulles, VA: Brassey’s, 1998); and Jim Rasenberger, *The Brilliant Disaster: JFK, Castro, and America’s Doomed Invasion*

of *Cuba's Bay of Pigs* (New York: Scribner, 2011). See also Howard Jones, *The Bay of Pigs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

2 See the Soviet ambassador's reports of his conversations with Guevara on 11 and 17 January 1961, and 14 April 1961, respectively, published in the "Chatting with Che" feature elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

3 On the conference, see the news releases and other reports on the website of the National Security Archive. See also James G. Blight and Peter Kornbluh, *The Politics of Illusion: The Bay of Pigs Invasion Reexamined* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), incorporating the findings from a prior "critical oral history" conference held in the United States, organized by the same US co-sponsors, which included veterans of the Kennedy Administration and representatives of the anti-Castro émigré invasion force, but not yet leaders of the Castro government.

4 For declassified US evidence, see esp. Peter Kornbluh, ed., *The Bay of Pigs Declassified—The Secret CIA Report on the Invasion of Cuba* (New York: New Press, 1998), and numerous compilations of newly-released materials on the National Security Archive's website.

5 At the March 2001 conference in Havana, in which Fidel Castro actively participated, the general sense was that the Cuban government had perhaps over-estimated the size of the impending assault, which in turn prompted an even larger mobilization by the Havana authorities to prepare for its landing, wherever it occurred—they did not know in advance the precise landing spot, which had in fact changed in the weeks preceding the invasion. Author's recollection.

6 Trans. note: Throughout this document, I have attempted to keep excisions distinct from "bleed-throughs", sometimes marked as "illegible." Excised text is covered with a heavy black line. These documents were probably originally printed on both sides and the black marker used to excise bled through to the other side, but those marks are more diffuse and sometimes readable text shows through.

7 Trans. note: the "(?)" appears in the original Spanish text after the word "*ajena*," meaning unconnected, alien, or strange.

8 Trans. note: Without the context in the preceding few excised words, it is difficult to translate "enfrentarse," which means something along the lines of meeting, facing, or confronting.

9 Trans. note: Partial erasure/excision makes this word difficult to read, but "ahora" ["now"] can be made out with some uncertainty—trans.

10 Trans. note: "Antier," typed word, is not a word in Spanish, but resembles "antes" ("before") which seems chronologically related to the date of the 13th.

11 Trans. note: The word "readicados" is clearly in the original document in print, but I cannot make it into a word that makes sense in this context, even by substituting vowels or correcting likely typographical errors. "Ampamentos" is less clear in type, partially obscured by bleed-through, but also does not lend itself readily to making into a real Spanish word.

12 Trans. note: The typing is very faint, but the word could be Ray.

13 Trans. note: This seems extreme, but an atentado is an attempted killing, or more generally, an attempted crime. Here its meaning seems more specific and sinister.

14 Trans. note: Spanish "radista" is not commonly used and does not appear in major dictionaries but is my best educated guess based on context in this document.

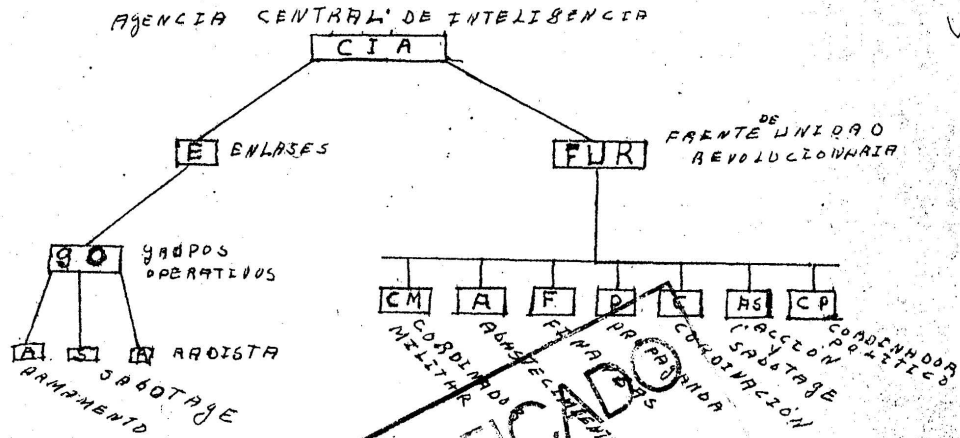
15 Trans. note: Original Spanish "Mazónico" looks very similar to "Masonic," and may be a typo, but given mention of the name Mazones later and context, this interpretation seems correct.

16 Trans. note: Illegible initials written above this word "país", possibly "N.A." or "N.D."

17 Trans. note: Spanish "activos" is difficult to translate well here, and I am not sure, given the limited context of the list, that my interpretation is fully correct. The gist seems to be that prisoners will be recruited into the counterrevolution unless the Cuban government and military introduce some kind of oversight or propaganda mechanism (via human presence) into these prisons.

REPUBLICA DE CUBA
 MINISTERIO DE LAS FUERZAS ARMADAS
 REVOLUCIONARIAS
 EJERCITO REBELDE

Esquema de como está organizado en nuestro país el F.U.R. siguiendo instrucciones directas de la CIA en Washington, así como su forma de operar y condiciones en que se encuentra, medidas que se deben tomar para su aniquilamiento.



1. C.I.A., organización de inteligencia y contrainteligencia del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos, controlada directamente por el Presidente de esa nación, encargada de preparar todos los actos que pueden perjudicar a nuestro Gobierno Revolucionario, desde un acto de sabotaje, hasta un atentado.

2. F.U.R., Frente Unidad Revolucionario, abarca en su seno a todos los grupos contrarrevolucionarios que operan en nuestro país, formando un Ejecutivo, el cual es elegido por los jefes de organizaciones contrarrevolucionarias, siendo su función, coordinación militar, coordinación política, abastecimiento, finanzas, propaganda, acción y sabotaje, comunicaciones, etc.

3. Estos grupos contrarrevolucionarios están formados por las siguientes organizaciones, apareciendo algunos nombres de guerra de sus jefes destacándose casi siempre como jefe un Delegado de la CIA, ejemplo, el tal Rafael, ya fusilado, el cual aparecía como Coordinador Nacional.

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1) Movimiento de Liberación | Justo |
| 2) Acción Radical Anticomunista | Pepe |
| 3) Movimiento Salvar a Cuba SAC | César |
| 4) Agrupación Revolucionaria Independiente ARI | Ramón |
| 5) Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria MAR | Dr. Jorge |
| 6) Marina Revolucionaria Democrática MRD | Abel |
| 7) Movimiento Mazónico Anticomunista MMA | Benito |
| 8) Acción Cívica Anticomunista | Nasario |

DESCUENTIFICADO
 10 de Mayo de 1960

345



Mexican Diplomacy and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Documents from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Mexico City

Introduction by Tanya Harmer

Although there is nothing astonishing in the documents that follow, they are highly significant for what they say about the Cuban Missile Crisis as experienced by Mexico, Latin America, and the Organization of American States. Aside from the story of Brazil's mediation efforts in Cuba¹, we still know relatively little about how the crisis affected Cuba's Latin American and Caribbean neighbors, let alone the significance it had for the inter-American system. To be sure, we know that the Organization of American States (OAS) voted to support the United States on 23 October 1962, but we know very little about how the Cuban Missile Crisis was viewed inside different Latin American states, either by governments or different sectors of the population. This is now beginning to change thanks to the opening of archives in the region. Indeed, in the years to come, we can expect new research and revelations on the crisis as seen from Latin America along with studies of how it altered Cuba's relationships with its neighbors. This will be highly significant to those of us seeking to understand the Cold War in Latin America. After all, this was where Cuba most actively supported revolutionary endeavors and where the United States and Cuba (sometimes, but not always, in conjunction with the Soviet Union) battled intensively for influence. By the early 1960s, most regional governments also regarded Cuba's revolutionary government and Cuban-inspired guerrillas as their countries' biggest security threat while many on the Left, many of them part of a younger generation, looked to Cuba for inspiration and leadership.

The missile crisis broke out slap bang in the middle of all this. For Latin America, it was neither a faraway event nor a short-lived finite emergency determined solely by the superpowers. Instead, it forms one episode in a longer story about the acute regional fall-out following the Cuban Revolution, US and Latin American sponsorship of counter-revolutionary intervention against Castro's government (the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 being one of many incursions), the presence of hundreds of Cuban exiles in neighboring countries hoping to overthrow Castro, Cuba's understandable feeling of insecurity, and mounting tensions that had arisen over Cuba's influence and stated aims of supporting socialist revolution in the region. In fact, given the way that events had unfolded over the two years before October 1962, the crisis was a showdown

that many in Latin America had been expecting and fearing, only worse.

If *some* sort of crisis over Cuba was not a big surprise, the way it was resolved had lasting relevance for the Cold War battles in Latin America, making them arguably *more* intense and centered on Cuba. In part, this was because many governments in the hemisphere were alarmed both by President Kennedy's promise not to invade Cuba in return for Khrushchev withdrawing the missiles and by the continued presence of thousands of Soviet troops on the island. Having attacked the US position on Cuba for its "paralysis and lack of foresight" before the crisis, Guatemala's far-right military president embraced Kennedy's insistence that the missiles must be removed as evidence that Washington was finally ready to do battle. Guatemala's armed forces were proclaimed ready for action, a state of emergency was imposed in the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica offered its ports and airspace to help impose a blockade ("quarantine"), and Argentina proclaimed its navy was ready to defend the Western Hemisphere. When the crisis ended, however, Castro was still in power, more intransigent and revolutionary than ever, now in open defiance of the Soviet Union and even more committed to supporting revolution abroad.

Moreover, the perceived danger revolutionary Cuba posed to the region was magnified by the severity of the crisis and the nuclear threat it had brought to the hemisphere. In this context, many Latin American representatives at the OAS voiced concerns about the United States position and demanded more leadership from Washington when it came to protecting the hemisphere from communist "subversion." What proposals did the United States have for action? Argentina's representative to the OAS asked; what was being done to coordinate with Cuban exiles and deal with the fact that Cuba remained "ferociously" armed? the Venezuelan representative wanted to know; were there any other quid pro quos and secret compromises that had been made to get Khrushchev to withdraw the weapons that the Latin American should know about? El Salvador's OAS representative asked. The Cuban exile leader, José Miró Cardona, was so angered by what he saw as a lack of support from the United States in the shadow of the crisis that he resigned his post as head of the Cuban Revolutionary Council in exile citing what he saw as US negligence as the reason.

Meanwhile, Brazil tried to mediate a solution (both on its own and at Washington's secret request) and US spokesmen tried to calm OAS members' fears by emphasizing the risks in re-escalating tensions, its promise to support governments that felt threatened by Cuba, and its progress in negotiating with the Soviet Union (which was also alarmed by Cuba's position). Preoccupations about the fragility of the status quo after October 1962 nevertheless continued into 1963 and efforts to isolate Cuba escalated, culminating with the imposition of collective OAS diplomatic and economic sanctions against the island in 1964. Rather than being imposed on Latin America by the US as is commonly assumed, what the Mexican documents below show is that the call for harsher, more resolute action against Cuba was very often also coming from Latin America in direct relation to the missile crisis and its resolution.

Mexico was caught in the middle of all this, famously being one of the only countries in Latin America that refused to break relations with Cuba (and the only one at the end of 1964 that still had diplomatic ties with the island). On the one hand, its refusal was grounded in its proud tradition of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries as a cardinal principle of its foreign policy. President Adolfo Lopez Mateos was also wary of domestic opinion and a widespread support for Cuba within Mexico. Alongside, and in coordination with, Brazil, it therefore abstained from US-backed OAS resolutions sanctioning the use of armed force against Cuba to enforce the "quarantine" and condemnation of the Cuban regime at the OAS during the crisis. Raising a reservation (on constitutional grounds) only to the part of the OAS resolution that sanctioned the use of armed force, Mexico tried to square the circle: preserving its non-interventionist position and not being seen to be advocating an invasion of Cuba while not opposing the basis for the OAS' position of support for the removal of Soviet missiles and an end to the transport of offensive weapons to Cuba overall. Meanwhile, its diplomats batted away questions about collective armed action from other countries and avoided insinuations from US diplomats that it was not doing enough.

However, Mexico could not remain totally aloof either from mounting tensions over Cuba before the crisis or from how the crisis itself played out in the hemisphere. For one, it was not only a member of the OAS, but a country in Latin America that others wanted to follow and coordinate with. President Lopez Mateos was under considerable pressure from the United States to clamp down on the Left in Mexico and to oppose Fidel Castro as a condition for good relations with the United States.² Due to its proximity to Cuba, Mexico

was meanwhile a transit route for goods travelling to the island, a market for Cuban purchases, and a staging ground for counter-revolutionary raids against Castro's regime. As the documents below – and others held at Mexico's National Archive – illustrate, Mexican intelligence kept a close watch on Cuban exiles in Mexico, and their relationship with the United States embassy, without appearing to do anything to intervene against them. The Cuban government, meanwhile, sought direct diplomatic support from Mexico and the Mexicans remained relatively well informed about what was happening in Havana.

Indeed, Mexico's government and diplomats had a panoramic view of developments. True, Mexico did not influence events significantly: its diplomatic position appears to have been more of conditional support for the US and reactive waiting. This fit within a broader policy that aimed to keep Mexico on good terms with both the United States and Cuba, described by Kate Doyle as "Double Dealing."³ However, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, in 1963, the Mexican government started to "deal" far more with the United States when it came to clamping down on the left and Cuban operations via Mexico. This in turn sparked suspicion and distrust from the Cuban government who came to regard Mexico as being awash with CIA operatives. But in many ways Mexico's officially non-committal stance on Cuba allowed it to remain a bridge within Latin America and the inter-American system, a home to exiles of different political persuasions, and a nationalist Third Worldist country at the same time as belonging to the US sphere. The downside to this position, as suggested by these documents, is that Mexico never seized the initiative or stood out as a leader of inter-American politics but rather seemed to avoid the direction in which they were headed. Indeed, so close both to the United States and Cuba, dependent on US trade, with a revolutionary history and a sizeable left-wing population, the Mexican government remained torn between different positions and unable to fulfill its bridge-building potential between them.

This collection is merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Latin American perspectives on and experiences of the Cuban Missile Crisis. However, two key points emerge from them that will be of interest to scholars of the crisis, the Cold War, and the inter-American system: first, the crisis cannot be viewed in isolation from the larger story of how the Latin Americans and the inter-American system as a whole reacted to and interacted with the Cuban revolution and, second, rather than being dictated to, it seems as if most members of the OAS were looking to the US for more leadership and action against Cuba after the crisis that helped propel the Cold War conflict and battle

over Cuba forward. Mexico and Brazil (until its military coup in 1964) may have attempted, respectively, to avoid or avert an escalation of tension. However, the crisis amplified already hysterical fears about Cuba and strengthened those calling for anti-Castro measures within the Western Hemisphere.



Document No.1

Telegram from Mexican embassy, Havana, 1 September 1962

TRANSLATION OF CODED TELEGRAM
PROCEDURAL COPY
HAVANA, 1 September 1962

RELATIONS MEXICO, DF.

URGENT

601. – With appropriate reservations and taking into account the typical exaggerations of the Cuban people, I must inform you that we are only dealing with rumors without knowing anything concrete. 1. The press announces that there has been an increase in commercial maritime traffic between Cuba and socialist countries and counter-revolutionaries are circulating news suggesting that Soviet boats are bringing war materiel [*elementos de guerra*] and troops from said country and African republics, asserting that until now up to now, thirteen thousand men have landed in provincial ports. 2. A functionary of the Ministry of Foreign Relations told us today in an informal way that that three hundred and sixty counter-revolutionary Cubans tried to land in the Province of Las Villas, in an invasion plan having been annihilated by MiG airplanes. The press does give news about this because it is said that....

[page 2 missing]

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro and translated by Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No.2

Report on meeting between the Mexican representative at the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Czechoslovak Ambassador in Washington about US-Cuban tensions over Guantanamo, 25 September 1962

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
NUMBER

FILE XII/442/16

SUBJECT: Information about the situation in Guantanamo Mexico, D.F., 25 September 1962

MEMORANDUM

C. General Directorate of the Diplomatic Service
Building ['Edificio']

Considering it of interest to this General Directorate and your very honorable position, I am providing you with information here that our representative at the Council of the Organization of American States has just transmitted to this Secretariat [Ministry] about the information that the Czechoslovakian Ambassador to the White House entrusted him with about the situation that, as he conceives it, prevails on the North American naval base of Guantanamo:

1. – The Czechoslovakian Ambassador told Sánchez Gavito that in a recent visit to Cuba he had made an extensive tour “of the border” and that he could verify not only the violation of Cuban air space by airplanes coming from Guantanamo, but at the same time that the North American airplanes fired machine guns over Cuban territory.

2. – Without explaining the reason why this shooting continues, the Czechoslovakian Ambassador limited himself to reporting that Cuban troops are “in trenches” and that this is why until now they have not suffered any losses; he also assured, that the practice of shootings [*descargas*] continues, and that he fears that in one moment or another an extremely serious incident will occur.

3. – Equally the Czechoslovakian Ambassador expressed that it is very possible that Cuba will refer to this situation in its speeches during the seventeenth session of the United Nations General Assembly; that he is convinced

that representatives of the UN could easily verify the aforementioned facts, and that, although he doubted that the Cuban government would take the step of asking for an inspection, it would be very useful to put an end to a situation which he described as extremely serious.

Furthermore, I permit myself to transcribe below a reflection that Ambassador Sánchez Gavito made about the source of the previous information:

“For the first time since I have occupied this position, the Czechoslovakian Ambassador to the United States government invited me to have lunch with him. He had offered this attention to different colleagues of mine and I remember that [his invitation to] Ambassador Sanz de Santamaría – who at that time represented Colombia at the Council – preceded the April invasion of Cuba last year by a few days. As I knew that on that occasion the aim of the invitation as I found out months later had been to assure the Colombian Ambassador that an invasion against Cuba was going to be launched, I accepted the invitation with the keenest possible interest, made greater because the topic of Cuba, during the last few weeks, attracts maximum attention in Washington.”

Attentively,
ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL
Lic. María Emilia Téllez

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro, translated by Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.3

Telegram from Mexican Embassy, Havana, 23 October 1962

HAVANA, 23 October 1962
2509

Relaciones Mexico DF.

741. – Faced with the declarations made by President Kennedy yesterday, the government of Cuba gave the order to be at battle stations [*orden de alarma de combate*] to all its armed forces in anticipation of an air attack against this

country. [The] press announced that all combat units found themselves ready to fight and that all mass organizations were mobilized for the defense of the country.

INSUNZA

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.4

Memorandum of Telephone Conversation between Mexican Foreign Ministry official and Mexican Ambassador to Brazil, 23 October 1962

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Today at 12:45, Ambassador [Alfonso] García Robles called by telephone from Rio de Janeiro and communicated to the Director General of the Diplomatic Service that that morning, at the request of [Hermes Lima,] the Prime Minister and [acting] Minister of Foreign Relations, he had a long meeting with him to examine the Cuban situation.⁴

Professor Lima informed Ambassador García Robles that the government of Brazil had asked its Ambassador in Cuba – the same as the Ambassador of Cuba in Rio de Janeiro – to transmit to the Cuban government the conviction of the Brazilian government that it would be advisable for Cuba to examine the possibility of taking the initiative itself of suggesting a UN Investigating Commission (composed naturally of countries that have an independent position) go to the island.

The Brazilian government thinks that this measure could contribute towards finding a solution and undoubtedly lessening the current tension.

Prime Minister Lima also expressed that Itamaraty [Brazil's foreign ministry] had knowledge that a draft resolution would be presented to the Security Council of the United Nations, that in this respect the Brazilian Representative at the Organization had received instructions to standardize [*normar*] his posture, in conversations with other delegates, according to the following points: a) favor whatever draft resolution asks for an investigation; b) for now this should not go further; c) for the measures that should eventually be adopted, wait for the result of the investigation in keeping with the process of the United Nations Charter.

In relation to the Organization of American States [OAS], Professor Lima assured Ambassador García Robles that the Brazilian delegate had refrained, together with the Mexican [delegate], from voting in favor of calling the Provisional Organ of Consultation for lack of instructions. With regard to the essence of the matter, instructions have been sent to the Brazilian Representative this morning stating that Brazil would have no objections if, on the basis that resolution 8 of Punta del Este was approved, a system of control, was established to obstruct the transfer of arms, without this going further than that for the moment.⁵ On the other hand, whatever resolution [that is approved] should make reference to the investigation that the United Nations carries out and indicate that they should await results of this investigation.

The Prime Minister of Brazil asked the Mexican Ambassador that he communicate this to this Secretariat [Foreign Ministry] with the wish that Brazil keeps in closest possible contact with it in these moments.

Finally Ambassador García Robles asked that he be kept up to date with what the Secretariat [Ministry] of Foreign Relations considers pertinent to communicate.

Mexico, D.F., 23 October 1962

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by Jim Hershberg. Translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer, LSE.]



Document No.5

Telegram from Mexican Foreign Ministry to Mexican Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, 23 October 1962

Telegram for coding [*Telegrama para cifra*]

Number:
From: DIPL
To: III/210/72911/31558

Mexico, D. F., 23 October 1962

[To Amb. Alfonso] García Robles
Embamex
Rio de Janiero, Brasil
52226

Referring to your telephone conversation this morning.⁶ Mexican representative at the Organization of American States [OAS] Council voted in favor of calling the Organ of Consultation and in keeping with our information [the] Brazilian representative did the same. In this afternoon's session a United States resolution was approved that contains two fundamental points to know[:] first [...] is that Soviet bases in Cuba will be dismantled[:] second, authorization [was given] for member states to adopt individual or collective measures including the use of armed force. The resolution was voted for in parts and Mexico, Brazil, and Bolivia abstained from [the] second part. In the block vote Mexico and Brazil voted in favor (there were no abstentions or votes against) with the Mexican representative having raised the caveat relating to the constitutional limitations of facilitating executive power. Our representative has maintained close contact with [the] Brazilian representative. Our impression is that the present international situation is of great seriousness.

Relations [*Relaciones*]

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.6

Telegram from Mexican Embassy, Guatemala City, 23 October 1962

GUATEMALA, 23 Oct. 1962

Relaciones Mexico.

170. – The President of the [Guatemalan] Republic, commenting yesterday on the President of the United States of America's speech, said the following: "I consider that the moment has arrived when they will believe in us. How many times have I publicly expressed the danger that Castro in Cuba embodied, I was branded as trying to camouflage a movement against my government that was not communist, making it seem as if it was a projection from Cuba. My government warned of the danger of Castro in Cuba in March 1960 breaking off diplomatic and commercial relations with this government." "President Kennedy's speech tells us that the giant finally woke up and that it will abandon its paralysis and lack of foresight, for a state of arms at the ready and

alertness. Guatemala in its great anticommunist majority as it demonstrated on 20 October, is prepared as a democratic country to align with our brothers of America, and its army will occupy the position that is required to, within its borders and in strict keeping with the pacts of Rio de Janeiro, in whichever place where its commitments obligate it to resolve by arms what has not been able to be resolved within the assigned peace that our countries, enemies of war and of aggression, deserve.

SILVA

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No.7

Telegram from Mexican Embassy, Santo Domingo,
23 October 1962

TRANSLATION OF CODED TELEGRAM
PROCEDURAL COPY
X/442/17

SANTO DOMINGO, 23 October 1962 [received 24
October]

187 - The Ministry of Foreign Relations convened the entire diplomatic corps today [and] announced that the Dominican people had, signed by President of the Republic and Council of the State, [a document] in which it showed solidarity with measures adopted [by] the Cuban blockade and others that the OAS as well as International Organizations may adopt. [The] Government of the Republic affirms Cuba has turned into an imminent danger to peace by permitting [an] aggressive Russian base with nuclear weapons. Given [the] state of emergency, measures have been given [for] public force to suppress possible disorders and [an] agreement [for the] government to give wide protection [to] embassies. According to non-official sources [there is a] possibility of [a] suspension of individual guarantees with decreeing [a] state of emergency [in the] country. This afternoon the text communicated [will be] delivered [to the] diplomatic corps so that it can be made known fully to our governments. [The] Apostolic Nuncio [in his] character [as] senior member [of the] diplomatic corps convened a

meeting this afternoon. [The] city is restless because of troop movements maintaining order. I will keep informing.

125545
SOTO REYES.

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No.8

Message from Mexican President Adolfo López
Mateos to Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos, [n.d.,
approx. 23-24 October 1962]

To Gilberto Bosques
To deliver urgently to Mr. President Dorticos.
14460
Mr. President:

On board [a] plane on [a] return flight to my country [*'patria'*] after a friendly mission to four countries in Asia⁷, the essence of which was to express the need to preserve peace, to seek an end to the arms race, and to abolish the manufacture and use of nuclear weapons, I learned of President Kennedy's message, in which he reported on the installation in Cuba of platforms to launch missiles of medium and long range capacity able to transport nuclear weapons. In repeated occasions, your ambassadors in Mexico Mr. [Jose Antonio] Portuondo and [Carlos] Lechuga [soon to become Cuban ambassador to the United Nations] assured me that the Cuban government was only receiving defensive weaponry and training for its use but that there was no intention at all of acquiring or installing any type of aggressive weapons and even less so of so-called atomic [bombs].

I consider that the possible existence of the installations of the type referred to could constitute a serious threat not only to the security of the peoples in the American continent [i.e., hemisphere—ed.] but for the peace of the world.

I think that neither the government nor the Cuban people wish to be constituted as a threat to the peoples of America nor as factors that may lead to a breach of the peace. Humanity as a whole would be in danger.

In the name of the friendly relations that unite and have united our countries, I fervently wish that Cuban territory

has not become a base for weapons of aggression and in the case that this were to have occurred, I believe it is my duty in the name of peace which all the Mexicans have the wish to preserve, to cordially make a call to your government so that those bases are not used in any form whatsoever and the offensive weapons are withdrawn from Cuban territory.

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.9

Message from Mexican Embassy, Washington
(Antonio Carrillo Flores), 24 October 1962

Number 2617
Washington, 24 October 1962
Manuel Tello

140. - As the OAS session was ending Secretary Rusk took care to thank our country for its attitude.
Carrillo Flores

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.10

Memo of Conversation between Mexican Foreign
Ministry official and Chilean diplomat, Mexico City,
24 October 1962

X/442/17
MEMORANDUM

Mexico, DF, 24 October 1962

The Chilean Chargé d'Affaires visited Second Undersecretary [Pablo] Campos Ortiz this afternoon. He told him that he had instructions from his government to communicate to

us, first, that Chile would vote in the OAS, in favor of the draft resolution presented by the United States (meeting of the Organ of Consultation under the terms of the TIAR [Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, i.e., the 1947 Rio Treaty], and that it will also vote in favor of the draft resolution that the United States will present to the meeting of the Provisional Organ of Consultation; and second, that Chile will vote, in the [UN] Security Council, in favor of the United States' Resolution.

This Chargé d'Affaires commented with regards to the first point, that the information was late, since the resolutions had already been approved. With regards to the second point, Campos Ortiz thanked him for his information, and mentioned the fact that Mexico is not member of the Security Council.

The Chargé d'Affaires ended by saying that his Government would have, as always, special interest in exchanging information with Mexico in everything related to the situation of the moment.

P.C.O.

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.11

Telegram from Mexican Embassy, New Delhi, 25
October 1962

TRANSLATION OF CODED TELEGRAM
PROCEDURAL COPY

Number: 2529
New Delhi, 25 October 1962

188. - Today's press publishes Brazil's offer to mediate Cuba conflict and adds possibility Mexico joins this action. I would be grateful if you could orient me about this and similar affairs [relating to] our country's role [at the] OAS [and] UN and other international fora given that the press [in] this country concedes extremely special attention [to] Latin American countries.

PAZ

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No.12

Memo of Conversation between Mexican Foreign Ministry official and Peruvian Diplomat, Mexico City, 25 October 1962

MEMORANDUM

Mexico, D. F., 25 October 1962

The Peruvian Chargé d'affaires Mr. Don Carlos Pérez Cánepa, visited the Second Undersecretary [Pablo] Campos Ortiz, last Tuesday the 23rd. He said he had instructions from his Government to ask us what our point of view was regarding possible action – military (in which all the republics of the continent would take part) against Cuba.

Campos Ortiz answered him that he did not have any piece of information about this matter, but that he would confirm this later.

Campos Ortiz, after having talked with Mr. Undersecretary [José] Gorostiza, communicated with Mr. Pérez Cánepa and confirmed what he had previously expressed, that is, that no government, nor any American [i.e., Western Hemispheric—ed.] Foreign Ministry had informed us on this matter. Campos Ortiz asked him, even, if it might not be a Peruvian initiative.

Today in the morning, the Peruvian Chargé d'Affaires called to express that he had received a telegram from his Foreign Ministry which told him, with regards to this matter, that it was not a Peruvian initiative.

The text of the telegram that Mr. Pérez Cánepa received from Lima the day of the 23rd, said as follows:

“The Peruvian Foreign Ministry would like to know the opinion of the Mexican Government about a military meeting to consider possible armed action against Cuba.”

P.C.O.

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No.13

Memo of Conversation between Mexican Foreign Ministry official and Canadian Ambassador, Mexico City, 25 October 1962

MEMORANDUM

Mexico, D.F., 25 October 1962

The Ambassador of Canada visited the Second Undersecretary Campos Ortiz. He dealt with the following:

That the government of Canada has dictated the necessary provisions so that airplanes with a Cuban flag that land in Canadian territory will be inspected, in search of weapons. That this will proceed as such in accordance with provisions contained in international agreements, according to which civilian airplanes are not allowed to transport arms unless previous approval is obtained. The Ambassador added that the above is independent of the provisions also dictated by the Canadian authorities, to the effect that Russian airplanes will not be permitted to fly over Canadian territory nor land at Canadian airports.

The Ambassador asked what was the meaning of the reservation that Mexico had made when the vote was being taken by the [OAS] Provisional Consultation Organ in its session in Washington on the 23rd of the current month, against the Resolution that the United States presented.

Campos Ortiz answered that in the vote on the second paragraph, Mexico abstained because the said paragraph mentions the possible use of armed forces, being that the employment or use of armed forces outside national territory, is not under the Executive's authority, but requires previous authorization by Congress. Campos Ortiz noted that Mexico had voted in favor of the Resolution overall.

P.C.O. [Pablo Campos Ortiz]

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.*]

Document No.14

Telegram from Mexican Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS), Washington, 25 October 1962

X/442/17

LETTERGRAM [CORREOGRAMA]

Washington DC

25 October 1962

C. Manuel Tello,

Secretariat [Ministry] of Foreign Relations,

General Directorate of International Organizations,
Mexico, D. F.

135. - In the following I allow myself to inform you about the development of the extraordinary session celebrated by the Council [of the OAS] on the 23rd of this month, to consider the request by the Government of the United States that the Council, in accordance with what is established in Article 6 of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, that the organ of consultation be immediately called and authorized, in accordance of Article 12 of that Treaty, to act provisionally as such. As annex 1 I enclose the note from the Representative of the United States.

Once the request was read, the Secretary of State of the United States of America, [Dean Rusk,] representing his country, read a long declaration about the situation in Cuba that has been created because of the existence in this country of weapons of an offensive character.

Once his declaration was finished, the Representatives in the Council pronounced in favor of the call. It was my turn to speak after about the Representatives of Argentina and Guatemala. As I reported by telephone to the Secretariat [Ministry], my intervention was along the following lines:

The last session of the Council that was convened to examine a request to call the Organ of Consultation was that of 14 November 1961. On that occasion, as the request, in the Mexican government's opinion, did not fill, among others, the requirement of alleging that the inviolability or territorial integrity or the sovereignty or the political independence of an American State had been affected, the Mexican Delegation [*Representación*] declared that it would not support it.

Announcing this position at the Council, I permitted myself to remind, and I cite textually from the act, that "on as many occasions when a Member State had requested calling a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Relations, Mexico had voted favorably."

Consistent with the above, the Secretariat [Ministry] of Foreign Relations has given me instructions to vote in favor of the draft resolution presented by the United States Delegation, to call the Organ of Consultation and ask the Council to constitute itself and act provisionally as such.

Submitted to a vote, the Resolution that I enclose as annex 2, was approved by the 18 favorable votes. Bolivia and Uruguay abstained. The Representatives of these two countries expressed that they were doing so because of a lack of instructions, which were not late in arriving in the case of Bolivia and that the Representative of Uruguay has now received, as a result of which it is possible to say that the call was approved unanimously.

Once the voting was made, a recess of half an hour was agreed.

Once the Council's session continued, now provisionally acting as the organ of consultation, US Ambassador [deLesseps S.] Morrison asked, in name of the North American government, that the resolution be read, that I enclose as annex 3 and requested that the session be suspended until three in the afternoon in order to give time for the Representatives to ask for instructions. In a separate *oficio*, I will inform you about the afternoon session on the same 23rd of October.

Very attentively,
Vicente Sanchez Gavito
Ambassador

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.15

Letter from Mexican Ambassador to the
Organization of American States (OAS),
Washington, to Mexican Foreign Minister, 26
October 1962
X/442/17

SUBJECT: Organ of Consultation

Washington DC
26 October 1962

CONFIDENTIAL

C. Manuel Tello
Secretariat [Ministry] of Foreign Relations
General Directorate of International Organs [*Organismos*]
Mexico, DF

Please find enclosed three examples of the reports by Argentina, Costa Rica, the United States and the Dominican Republic, about the measures that their respective governments have adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 of the Resolution of the 23rd of this month.

As it would be helpful for you to remember, in paragraph 4 of this Resolution, members are urged to keep the Organ of Consultation dutifully informed about these kinds of

measures. The day after the adoption of the Resolution, [in response] to my question, Mr. [Ward P.] Allen, from the North American delegation, answered that the State Department was planning to request a meeting of the Organ of Consultation today, Friday, precisely to receive the information that has been sent to me by mail.

Undoubtedly wishing to be attentive, this American functionary communicated last night with Minister [Andrés] Fenochio to inform him that the State Department had given up on the aforementioned project [draft] and suggested to the governments that were taking measures to record the corresponding information in writing. Mr. Allen added that in this way it would be possible to avoid governments that have not yet taken measures and those that have decided not to take measures of any kind, being seen to be placed in an embarrassing situation. He summed his thinking by the use of the idiomatic phrase “*we do not want to put countries like Mexico on the spot.*” [in English in original—trans.]

Although his attitude had displeased me a great deal, today I did not look for Mr. Allen since I knew that he had interest in talking to me about the need of summoning the Commission on Judicial-Political Affairs that I preside. In fact, he has just called me; we agreed to convene the Commission and, at the end of the conversation, I alluded to the one that I had had yesterday with Mr. Fenochio.

When he confirmed to me what he had said, exactly in the same terms that Mr. Fenochio had communicated to me, I told him that he could be sure that, in the whole process that the OAS observes with respect to the serious situation that we are going through, the Mexican government would never view itself as being in an embarrassing situation and that, for the same reason, this possibility should be discarded when he would be collaborating in determining the course of action of the Delegation of the United States. Undoubtedly referring to my violent reaction at the secret meeting that the North American Delegation organized on the eve of the Budget vote, he told me that it was very difficult to get on with me since I was unhappy when my feelings were not taken into account and I was also unhappy when they took them too much into account. I limited myself in saying to him that the difficulty lies in his lack of understanding and that, instead of going over things that have already past, the important thing, was to clearly establish that the Mexican Government has no objection to the Organ of Consultation having as many meetings as the member states wish.

Very attentively,

Vicente Sanchez Gavito
Ambassador

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No.16

Letter from Yugoslav President Tito to Brazilian President Goulart, 26 October 1962

LETTER DIRECTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF YUGOSLAVIA TO PRESIDENT GOULART ON THE DATE 26 OCTOBER 1962

The critical situation that, with a rapidity that is causing worry, develops around Cuba impels me to address this brief message to you. I share general worries and, encouraged by the activity of many countries, particularly in the United Nations, I have already made, in name of the government and the people of Yugoslavia, a declaration asking that, with the object of overcoming the current bitter stage, the disputing countries begin direct negotiations in keeping with the principles of the United Nations. We received with a certain relief the first results of the efforts already realized in the United Nations and we share the determination of the Secretary General U Thant in the sense that the tension might be lessened by means of direct negotiations. We consider, however, that, as much as for the success of the current initial conversations as for the success of the previous efforts destined to put an end to crisis, it is also necessary to abolish the quarantine and suspend the transportation of offensive arms to Cuba, and as a result encourage by way of a positive contribution U Thant's effort so that at the least it can be initiated even though it may be a provisional arrangement in this respect.

Our constant point of view, along with numerous other countries of the world – as far as has become clear in the course of this grave crisis – is that the United Nations is the instrument that in the present situation can and should act with most efficiency to put an end to the crisis. As such we completely support the efforts that have been made at the United Nations by countries that do not belong to any bloc and other countries, as well as the indefatigable effort by U Thant. Even so, in the case that, as unfortunately has occurred with frequency in the past, the Security Council finds itself paralyzed and shows itself unable to undertake adequate action, it will be, as everything makes us believe, indispensable to immediately move this serious dispute to the General Assembly.

In my opinion in the present serious moment it would be very useful for the leaders of countries that do not belong to blocs and that are independent to assert their personal influence by means of messages addressed to the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly. As far as I am concerned I have the intention of doing this as soon as possible.

I ask that you excuse me for the liberty that I have taken and for the brevity of this message, which is the consequence of the seriousness of the situation and its urgent character.

For my part, I would be very grateful to receive any of your suggestions or opinions in respect to the meaning and content of any subsequent action.

Cordially yours.

Joseph Broz Tito.

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No.17

Air Letter from Mexican Embassy, Rio de Janeiro,
27 October 1962

AIR MAIL

From Brazilian Embassy

Number 1607

Expedient 81-0/210

SUBJECT: Brazil's international policy
Rio de Janeiro, 27 October 1962

C. Secretary of Foreign Relations
General Directorate of the Diplomatic Service [*Dirección General del Servicio Diplomático*]
Mexico, D.F.
1900

On the occasion of the recent international crisis, the Minister of War, General Amaury Kruehl, declared on the 23rd of the current [month], to the "Journal do Brasil" that "the armed forces of Brazil are united and closely adhered to the position adopted by the Government in the current international situation." General Amaury Kruehl added, "we are ready to carry out the decisions of the last Conference of Punta del

Este, especially in the anticipated case that a foreign nation provides offensive weapons to another nation of the Continent."

In its edition on the 24th the said newspaper published a journalistic summary of these declarations (see Annex 1).

On the other hand, the Foreign Minister [*Canciller*] Hermes Lima affirmed on the 24th of the current month before a group of women and students that went to the Itamaraty to express their support for the measures adopted by the North American Government that Brazil voted in favor of necessary measures to impede the traffic of offensive weapons in the Continent, but that it will not vote in favor of a condemnation of the Cuban regime, because "it does not correspond Brazil to condemn or authorize the invasion of the island." The Brazilian Foreign Minister was referring to the position taken by the Brazilian Delegate in the Council of the Organization of American States [OAS], acting provisionally as an Organ of Consultation, in the course of the voting of the resolution that was approved on the 23rd of the current [month].

Professor Hermes Lima added that: "we voted [for] the necessary measures to impede the transport of offensive weapons to Cuba, and to any other country of America, in keeping with what we approved in Punta del Este, with respect to the prohibition of such weapons in the Continent. We voted without indecisions and freely, against the accumulation of nuclear material in America [i.e., the Western Hemisphere]. What we did not vote on and will not vote for is a condemnation of the Cuban regime or for an authorization of the invasion. It is necessary to distinguish between the accumulation of nuclear weapons in the Americas and the measures that tend towards overthrowing a population's domestic regime. The "Journal do Brasil" on the 25th of the current [month] publishes a journalistic report about this. (See Annex 2)

Finally, I enclose the text of an editorial published the same day in the "Diario de Noticias" that refers likewise to the Cuban question.

I reiterate to you the assurances of my most esteemed and distinguished consideration.

EFFECTIVE SUFFRAGE. NO REELECTION.

THE AMBASSADOR

Lic. Alfonso Garcia Robles.

Attached.

c.c.p. General Directorate [*Dirección General*] for International Organizations.

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hersbberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No.18

Telegram from Mexican Embassy, Washington (Flores), 29 October 1962

TRANSLATION OF CODED TELEGRAM
PROCEDURAL TELEGRAM

Number 2551
Washington, 29 October 1962
RELACIONES MEXICO

144. - I [am writing to] confirm [our] telephone conversation last night. Secretary Rusk summoned Ambassadors [to the] White House and OAS to specify [the] development [of the] international crisis [in the] last few days. He told [us that the] message transmitted by Moscow yesterday and [the] immediate response by President Kennedy had fundamentally alleviated tension. He insisted several times however that [the] crisis has not ended as difficulties could arise [regarding] various sorts [of] interpretations and executions [of the] commitments made [in the] message and letter previously cited. Rusk asked us to tell our governments [that the] imminent danger [had been] removed through withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Cuba [but that the] Cuban problem remains alive and that President Kennedy [has not] taken nor will he take any commitment contrary [to] resolutions approved [at the] consultation meeting of Foreign Ministers at Punta del Este [in January 1962] without consulting the Organization system. [In a] long *oficio* [official letter—ed.] I [will] expand information and commentary.

CARRILLO FLORES
[...] 510719
arp. --

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hersbberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No.19

Message from Mexican Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS), Washington, 29 October 1962, enclosing memorandum of meeting of US Secretary of State Rusk with Latin American Ambassadors, 28 October 1962

X-/442/17
No. 957
Exp. 4(1)-8

SUBJECT: Cuban situation

Washington, DC
29 October 1962

CONFIDENTIAL

C. Manuel Tello,
Secretariat [Ministry] of Foreign Relations
General Directorate of International Organizations

I am enclosing the memorandum that I have written of the interview that Secretary Dean Rusk granted the Latin American Ambassadors yesterday.

Very attentively,

Vicente Sanchez Gavito,
Ambassador

[document follows:]



Document No.20

MEMORANDUM about Secretary of State Dean Rusk's declarations during the meeting with the Latin American Ambassadors at the State Department on Sunday 28 October 1962

Mr. Rusk began his briefing by referring to the following 3 Soviet documents:

1. - The letter of 26 October, from Mr. Khrushchev to President Kennedy, which Rusk qualified as vague, long

and anguished, which says that the USSR is prepared to withdraw weapons of an offensive character from Cuba;

2. - The message disseminated by radio [Moscow on] the 27th [of October] in which Mr. Khrushchev related Cuba with Turkey. Rusk expressed that no connection exists between the two issues; that the United States could not even consider the possibility of putting Europe in danger in order to solve the Cuban situation and that, consequently, the United States decided to reply to the letter of the 26th and not allude to this message of the 27th;

3. - The message disseminated on the morning of the 28th in which the USSR announces that it is prepared to suspend the construction of the bases in Cuba, dismantle them and return the armaments to its territory, all under supervision of United Nations representatives. As a counterpart, the aforementioned power has requested assurances that the United States will not launch an armed attack against Cuba. The Secretary of State reported that his government had accepted this proposition and that the same terms of the North American agreement are present in the letter from President Kennedy [to Premier Khrushchev] on the 27th of this month (Annex 10 of the complete collection [*juego completo*] of letters and messages that the Delegation has enclosed for the Secretariat [Ministry]).

Immediately after, the Secretary of State emphasized the following points:

It cannot be assumed that the problem is settled. In the following days it is possible that difficulties may arise. For example, the Undersecretary [Deputy Minister] of Foreign Relations of the Soviet Union, [Vasily] Kuznetsov, is about to arrive at the United Nations “and no one knows what he brings in his briefcase.” Castro, in today’s speech, refers to “the abandonment by the United States of Guantanamo” and that is even more problematic than the issue of Turkey, because as long as a regime like that of Castro’s remains in power, one cannot even take seriously the possibility of modifying “the statute of the referred American base.” In summary, the United States has reacted favorably to today’s Soviet message, but it remains in a state of alert and will proceed very cautiously.

Nothing of what the United States says and does will alter its attitude towards the pressing situation in Cuba. Next Mr. Rusk reiterated and expanded on this concept, reading the text: “We are not going to give Castro nor any other Cuban regime assurances of any kind that are incompatible with our obligations and with the agreements that we reached at Punta del Este” [in January 1962].

Ambassador Lima, from El Salvador, then took an opportunity to ask for clarifications. Although he was extremely cautious, he gave the impression of being seriously worried about the turn that events had taken. The Secretary of State, in reply, made clear what he had already expressed, saying that the quid pro quo had operated exclusively on the terrain of the violence [*el terreno de la violencia*]: assurances that the United States will not invade Cuba in exchange for the dismantling and return of the offensive weapons to Soviet territory, under the vigilance of the United Nations. With regards to this last issue, he announced that the Secretary General of the United Nations, with a group of numerous experts, will go to Cuba on the 30th of this month. Likewise, he repeated that one should not consider that there had been “a great victory” and that the problem had ended. With regards to the latter, he told us that it is his understanding that there had been changes in the Kremlin over the last two days and that it was important that the position of Mr. Khrushchev did not weaken too much.

With regards to the question of the [El] Salvadorian Ambassador, Mr. Rusk also said that there had been no deals [*componendas*] or secret arrangements; that the “record” from the letter of 26 October onwards is public.

With regards to the next steps, after making clear that the task of the UN experts does not require review by nuclear physicists, but rather exclusively the participation of engineers and military personnel, Rusk expressed that the “quarantine” will continue while the arrangements are put into practice; that the United States did not believe that incidents would occur since the Soviet ships are already now on their way to their country; and, finally, that the Department of State does not believe that for now there is any need for “formal action” by the Organ of Consultation.

Ambassador [Roberto] Campos, from Brazil, then formulated two questions that served so that the Secretary of State would confirm that the situation on the day before, Saturday, had reached the point of extreme danger and that surely Moscow’s knowledge of this had influenced the decision to dismantle the bases. In this part of his briefing, Rusk clearly gave the impression that, the previous day, the United States has been about to bomb the bases. As an example, the following is a transcription of one of his phrases: “Khrushchev yesterday noticed that the situation was as dangerous as it could ever be and saw clearly that this armament could not remain in Cuba.” At this point, he praised Mr. Khrushchev saying that he had revealed “a certain amount of caution” and remembering that he had abstained from issuing ultimatums.

At the end of the meeting, the Secretary of State said that “the solidarity of the OAS had been a magnificent contribution to peace and that it had made a deep impression around

the entire world, especially in Moscow.” His last words constituted an appeal to his interlocutors for them to be discreet in their declarations to the press given that the situation facing the world continues being delicate.

Washington DC, 29 October 1962.

V.S.G. [Vincente Sanchez Gavito]

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.21

Telegram from Mexican Embassy, Prague, 29 October 1962

TRANSLATION OF CODED TELEGRAM
PROCEDURAL COPY

Number 2557

Prague, 29 October 1962

RELACIONCES MEXICO

104. - Continuing on from my 98. Panic purchases [meant that] the population ran out of existing basic food supplies. Last Thursday ordered demonstrations were carried out against the United States of America and in solidarity with Cuba in front of the embassies of those countries. [The] Czechoslovakian government declaration that I enclosed in my air *oficio* number 540 and [a] speech pronounced on Friday by [Czechoslovak] Foreign Minister [Vaclav] David, both [of which had] violent tone and terms, described [the] American attitude [as] irresponsible hysteria and warmongering and [a] piratical act that constitutes [an] infringement without precedent [in the] internal affairs [of a] free Latin American country, [an] act that threatens aggression in violation [of the] United Nations Charter, against freedom of the seas and international law. Czechoslovakia repudiates [the] blockade, declared its support [for] Cuba, and supports [the] declaration [by the] Soviet delegate [at the] Security Council. Last Saturday [the] Czechoslovak Foreign Minister returned American notes relating to [the] blockade. [The] Communist Party organ [*Rudé Právo*] today conceptualized [the] determination of Prime Minister Khrushchev [to] dismantle bases under assurances that Cuba is not invaded as another step [of

the] Soviet Government to liquidate conflict [and] threats [to] world peace.

DEL RIO

510599

fb

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.22

Telegram from Mexican Embassy, Havana, 30 October 1962

Number 2583

HAVANA 30 October 1962 [received 31 October 1962]

[Handwritten *Dipl. Urgente*]

RELATIONS MEXICO DF.

759. -

I beg you take note that due to the situation that prevails in Cuba it is not possible for the time being to carry out interviews to deal with urgent or pending matters with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Relations in light of most of them being mobilized.

[First Secretary Pedro] INZUNZA [Makay].

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.23

Memo of Conversation of Mexican Foreign Ministry official with Cuban charge d'affaires, Mexico City, 30 October 1962

EP 31558

2nd PART

MEMORANDUM

The Chargé d'Affaires of Cuba [Ramon Sinobas] visited Undersecretary [Pablo] Campos Ortiz. He dealt with the following matters:

1.- He asked if there was a response yet to [Cuban UN] Ambassador [Carlos] Lechuga's question about the possibility that a Japanese ship transfer to a Cuban ship - directly from ship to ship without using the dock - in a Mexican port certain cargo that the Japanese ship brings [with it] destined for Havana.

2. - Campos Ortiz responded to the Chargé d'Affaires [saying] that the answer was negative, since the opinion that Mexican authorities have in this respect and that was applied the first time in the case of the Norwegian Ship "Teneriffa" applies in respect to any port facility, use of the dock, use of quay or transfer inside the ship.

3.- The Chargé d'Affaires asked if it was true that the Spanish ship Monte Ayala had left shipment with destination to Cuba in Progreso [Yucatán]. Campos Ortiz told him that the information in this respect, which appeared in the newspapers on the 29th, has no basis whatsoever and that *Excelsior* on this date published an explanatory about the specific case.

4.- The Commercial Attaché said that Cuban authorities through various companies have acquired from CONASUPO [the National Company of Popular Subsistence] four thousand five hundred tons of rice; that this operation is already concluded and that the only thing missing is to send it to Veracruz, where a Cuban ship or a ship that the Government of Cuba charters will pick it up. Mr. Sinobas added that an operation to buy one thousand five hundred tons of beans is also about to be concluded, an operation that is being carried out by the Agricultural Bank [Banco Agrícola]. The beans would be sent to Cuba at the same time as the rice. The ones in charge of the shipment of this merchandize, Mr. Sinobas continued, have informed the Cuban Commercial Agency (Agency that depends on the Cuban Embassy in Mexico) that the [Mexican] Secretariat of [the] Navy has told them that at the request of the [Mexican] Secretariat [Ministry] of Foreign Relations, Cuban ships cannot transport said merchandise.

Mexico, 30 October 1962

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by*

James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No.24

Memorandum Re Message from Mexican Embassy, Caracas, 30 October 1962
NO PASO

TOP LEVEL INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

Our Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela, in [an] *oficio* dated 30 October recently past, informed this Secretariat [Ministry] about the most important events registered in that country, in relation with the crisis that the Caribbean zone is going through.

In the collection of information that the Embassy enclosed for me the topics to be noted can be summed up as follows:

In a message directed to the country on 24 of this past month of October, President [Romulo] Betancourt announced the grave situation that was coming and made a call to National Unity in order to face the danger of the Russian atomic bases in Cuba; likewise he announced that the Venezuelan Government had the firm intention of carrying out every and each of its international commitments, not only for the feeling of loyalty to the written texts that are in unavoidably binding form but by a sense of national coexistence.

The same day Mr. President Betancourt noted that Cuba, before transforming into a Soviet atomic base, was already exporting slogans, money and weapons to [...] and destroy democratic American regimes.

During an interview granted to the Foreign Policy Commission by Foreign Minister Marcos Falcón Briceño, he answered to a series of questions about the international policy of Venezuela referring specially to the area of the Caribbean and the situation created between the OAS and Cuba; the Foreign Minister said that direct belligerent actions against Cuba had not been talked about, and that the OAS Charter binds member countries [not] to use the Armed Forces but that, however, all member countries of that Inter-American Organ agree that no communist regime may form part of our community,... the whole hemisphere is convinced of the goodness of the representative democratic system.

Los Organismos

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by*

James Hersbberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No. 25

Message from Chilean Embassy, Mexico City, to
Mexican Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962
EMBASSY OF CHILE
MEXICO
PRIVATE FOR MR. UNDERSECRETARY
DON JOSE GOROSTIZA.-

1. Chile wishes to emphasize with Mexico, with respect to the Cuban case, the exchange of information and to coordinate, if possible, the future action of both Governments.
2. In consideration of the new events in Cuba, that mean the implicit acceptance of Prime Minister Khrushchev, of the USSR, of the installation in Cuba of eminently offensive weapons and the presence of Russian elements [i.e., people—trans.] for their military use, strong sectors of Chilean public opinion deem that the Cuban problem will suffer a change in interpretation that will merit a modification of Chile's position with regards to the matter.
3. In addition to communicating these facts to the Mexican Foreign Ministry, the Chilean Government would be greatly indebted if you could give your points of view about the specific matter.

Mexico City, 31 October 1962

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hersbberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No. 26

Air Letter from Mexican Embassy, Rio de Janeiro,
31 October 1962

AIR LETTER ['Correo Aereo']
Reserved
Office EMBASSY OF MEXICO

Number 1619

File

SUBJECT: Press interview granted yesterday by the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Relations,. Professor Hermes Lima.

Rio de Janeiro, 31 October 1962

C. Secretariat [Ministry] of Foreign Relations
Mexico, D.F.

In relation to the coded telegram number 348 that I sent yesterday to this Secretariat, I wish to inform you that the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Relations Professor Hermes Lima, conceded a group press interview yesterday in which he, in keeping with the coincidental version published in the newspapers today, expressed, amongst other things, what follows:

1) Brazil has taken on "on its own behalf and risk" the role of mediator, offering its good offices aimed at establishing a modus vivendi between Cuba and other American countries. General Albino Silva was chosen as instrument of this mission "because he is the Head of the Military House of the Presidency of the Republic and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and because he is a member of the Armed forces and one of the General Officers of great political clarity."

The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister emphasized that the most important [thing] in this respect would be the reestablishment of the relations between Cuba and the other American countries that are broken since this "will be a guarantee for Cuba as much as for said countries."

The Prime Minister denied that part of the Brazilian envoy's mission was to propose that Cuba held elections, affirming that a proposal of this kind would constitute interference in the internal affairs of Cuba.

2) The Government of Brazil and its envoy are well aware that the fundamental conditions for overcoming the crisis will be "proof of the existence of the nuclear bases and its [sic] dismantling," which must have as a counterpart the commitment of the United States to not invade Cuba.

3) The Prime Minister affirmed that "with the nature of the nuclear weapons that the great powers possess, they are the ones who must have the most patience and care, for they are the ones who possess nuclear armaments, the first and greatest victims of an atomic war in contrast to what happened in the past to the better armed nations [...] Faced with the danger of a nuclear war breaking out, Brazil felt that a critical moment of the international crisis had arrived and that a supreme effort was necessary so that the mechanisms of international

organizations worked in order to reestablish the contacts, the conversations, and to open a door so that the harmony between peoples was reestablished [...] the United States, with its nuclear superiority, gave an example of prudence and care. This proves the high political capacity and statesmanlike ability of President Kennedy. The same can be affirmed of Prime Minister Khrushchev.

The "Jornal do Brasil" publishes, about this same matter, the declarations of a spokesman of the President of the Republic which say that President [João] Goulart considers that the "solution of the conflict between Cuba and the United States has definitely been left under the competency of the United Nations." The mission of the personal Representative of the President is to present the Cuban Government a conciliatory proposal communicated to the diplomatic representatives of the United States and the USSR in Brazil and that seems to be on the way toward being accepted by the governments of both powers."

I take the opportunity to reiterate to you assurances of my most high and distinguished consideration.

EFFECTIVE SUFFRAGE. NO REELECTION.

THE AMBASSADOR

[...] Alfonso Garcia Robies

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No. 27

Memo of Conversation between Mexican Foreign Ministry official and Cuban diplomat, Mexico City, 1 November 1962

MEMORANDUM

1 November 1962

The Cuban Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Ramon Sinobas, requested to be received by [Foreign].Secretary [Manuel] Tello. The Secretary gave instructions to Mr. *Licenciado* [Pablo] Campos Ortiz to receive him in his name.

Mr. Sinobas said that he had instructions from his government to ask the Mexican government for its support in the United Nations, to obtain acceptance of the five points that Prime Minister Castro had just made known.

Campos Ortiz asked Mr. Sinobas if he had an official text of the said five points. He answered that he did and that he would send it to him immediately.

Mr. Sinobas expressed to Campos Ortiz that the Cuban government considered the support of Mexico, in this case, as being of the highest importance.

Undersecretary Campos Ortiz, without expressing any opinion, limited himself to telling Mr. Sinobas that he will immediately inform the Secretary of Foreign Relations about what he had just made known to him.

P.C.O.

Annex: Note of the Embassy of Cuba of this same date.

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No. 28

Memo of Conversation between Mexican Foreign Ministry official and Cuban diplomat, Mexico City, 7 November 1962

MEMORANDUM

Mexico, DF, 7 November 1962

The Cuban Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Ramon Sinobas, visited today, by prior appointment, the Undersecretary [Pablo] Campos Ortiz. He touched on the following points:

1. He said he had instructions to ask us if we could give him an answer yet to the request his government had made to us for the Delegation of Mexico to give its support in the United Nations, more concretely in the General Assembly, to the Five Points that Prime Minister Castro made known recently, and that are related to the crisis situation that has been taking place between Cuba and the United States.

Mr. Sinobas dealt with this matter with Undersecretary Campos Ortiz in the visit he made to him on 1 November. He did not have with him the text of the Five Points, but he gave it to us that same day in the afternoon in a note.

Campos Ortiz said to Mr. Sinobas that the General Assembly of the UN could not approve any resolution nor make any recommendation about this matter, as it is already being considered by the Security Council. That is set pit, Campos Ortiz added, in the first paragraph of Article 12 of the Charter, which he then read. This, he added, because

of what the four first Points that Prime Minister Castro's Declaration includes.

Mr. Sinobas asked Campos Ortiz if we could disclose to him what would be our position would be in the event that the matter was discussed in the Assembly. Campos Ortiz told him that, should that case arise, we would consider the matter, but that for now we could not disclose anything.

With regards to the fifth Point of the Prime Minister's Declaration, that is the one relating to the Base in Guantanamo – Campos Ortiz continued – we consider that because the Base exists by virtue of a Treaty, the return of it to Cuba should be a matter of negotiation or bilateral arrangement between Cuba and the United States, as long as this is in keeping with the stipulations that the Treaty contains in this respect, that is adjusting to the general applicable principles on this matter. In addition, Campos Ortiz added, given the current state of extreme tension between Cuba and the United States, the North American Government would consider it very unfriendly, not only any effort, but even more still a position in favor of Cuba, that any Government took on this point, as a result of which the Mexican government will abstain from pronouncing on this problem in any way. Campos Ortiz added that in analogous cases, but in other circumstances, the Mexican position has been different; for example, in the recent case of Panama (efforts of the Panamanian Government regarding the Canal) or in the case, a while ago, of the abrogation of the Platt Amendment, that the Cuban Government obtained.

2. The second point that Mr. Sinobas touched upon refers to the Cuban Government's purchase of 4,500 tons of rice, that were obtained from CONASUPO [the National Company of Popular Subsistence] and of 1,500 tons of beans, that were obtained from the Agriculture Bank. Mr. Sinobas had already informed the Secretary about these transactions. It is now to do with, the Chargé d'Affairs said, their dispatch to Cuba. Since the 3rd of November – he added – the steamship "Bahia de Marriel" has been in Veracruz, but the merchandise has not been able to board given that the Head of the ANDSA [customs agency?—trans.] at the Port, a gentleman with the surname Vega, is not allowing its dispatch because of not having, he says, instructions for it from the seller. In addition, Mr. Vega is requesting that the proper contract of the freight be presented. Mr. Sinobas considers that perhaps there is a misunderstanding in this case, given that the Embassy's Commercial Counselor was informed that CONASUPO had given instructions for dispatching the merchandise. With respect to the freight contract, Mr. Sinobas commented, he understands that this is not necessary, as the buyer of the merchandise is the Cuban

Government and the boat that plans to take it to Cuba is property of the State. In addition, he added, in the previous cases, similar to this one, presentation of the freight contract has never been requested.

Mr. Sinobas added that the loading of a separate box with merchandise consigned to Cuba onto the "Bahia del Marel" has not been permitted either and that it was in the Port on standby for a boat. A customs official said that he could not authorize the dispatch of this box, as he had instructions not to authorize any dispatch of merchandise to Cuba without specific instructions in every case.

Mr. Sinobas thinks that just as in the case of the rice and the beans as in the case of the separate box, it is possible that there has been a confusion caused by what happened recently in the case of Steamship "Teneriffa", a Norwegian steamship that was not allowed to unload the load that it carried destined for Cuba in Coatzacoalcos or in Veracruz.

Mr. Sinobas requests that, if possible, instructions be given to those whom it may concern so that the shipment of this merchandise – rice, beans, and the separate box – [can] be carried without difficulty. Campos Ortiz offered to communicate with him by telephone during the course of the day in this respect.

3. Thirdly, Mr. Sinobas told Campo Ortiz that he had telegraphic instructions from his Government to kindly request that the Secretariat of Foreign Relations provide all possible information about the nature of Mexico's policy and attitude in relation to the problem of territorial waters and jurisdiction over its air space. He would also like to have, he added, reports regarding Mexico's posture in International Organizations on these two matters.

Campos Ortiz answered Mr. Sinobas that he would do what was possible to provide him with the concrete data about these points throughout the course of tomorrow and in addition, possibly, an official publication of the Secretariat.

Mr. Sinobas thanked Mr. Campos Ortiz's offer and commented that he would very much like to have these reports in time to send them to Havana on next Friday's airplane.

4. Fourthly, Mr. Sinobas asked Undersecretary Campos Ortiz if any resolution had been taken yet in relation to Cuba joining the Convention on the Inter-American Indigenous Institute. Campos Ortiz answered him that an answer to the note that the Cuban Embassy had sent with regards to this matter was still pending.

5. Lastly, Mr. Sinobas said that he had communicated with [Cuban UN] Ambassador [Carlos] Lechuga, who told him that he is thinking of coming to Mexico, that he does not yet

know exactly when, but that at latest it will be by the end of the United Nations General Assembly meeting.

By way of conclusion, Campos Ortiz repeated what he had told Mr. Sinobas in respect to the Five Points contained in the Declaration by Prime Minister Castro, because he wanted, he told Mr. Sinobas, to be very precise on this point so that Mr. Sinobas, in turn, took note, very clearly, of our answer.

P.C.O. [Pablo Campos Ortiz]

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No. 29

Memo of Conversation between Mexican officials regarding shipment to Cuba, 7 November 1962

MEMORANDUM

Mexico, D. F., 7 November 1962

Undersecretary [Pablo] Campos Ortiz called the Undersecretary of Customs by phone to ask him if he had any information about the rice and the beans that the Cuban government had acquired in Mexico and for whose shipment Cuba had especially sent a Cuban boat, the “Bahia de Mariel”.

Mr. Moreno answered that, in effect, it appears that it has not yet been possible to authorize the dispatch of the merchandise, that he has no more information, but that he suggests speaking to the Undersecretary of Revenues [‘Ingresos’], Mr. Romero Castañeda.

Campos Ortiz also referred in his conversation with the Undersecretary of Customs, to the separate box consigned for Cuba that is to be dispatched in the “Bahia del Mariel”. In this respect Mr. Moreno said that this was a box that contained food preserves and some machinery spare parts, and that the dispatch of said box had already been authorized.

P.C.O. [Pablo Campos Ortiz]

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No. 30

Memo of Conversation between Mexican officials regarding trade with Cuba, 8 November 1962

MEMORANDUM

Mexico, DF, 8 November 1962

Undersecretary [Pablo] Campos Ortiz was not able to communicate with the Undersecretary of Revenues [‘Ingresos’] yesterday; he did so this morning.

Mr. Romero Castañeda told him that, in effect, they were trying to send three tons of machinery on the “Bahia del Mariel”, a box (or boxes) of preserves, and two tourist automobiles which had entered over the border, and that the dispatch of the two automobiles as well as the boxes of preserves and the three tons of machinery were already authorized.

With respect to the rice, he said that the 4,500 tons of rice that were obtained from CONASUPO and that brings in \$9,000,000, appeared consigned to a Swiss firm in Lausanne, but that it was later known that the rice was destined to Cuba. That because of this, the Treasury communicated with Mr. Amoroz and he (Mr. Romero Castañeda) does not know what was resolved with regards to authorizing the dispatch of the 4,500 tons of rice.

Campos Ortiz told the Undersecretary of Revenues that there were more than 1,500 tons of beans that had been acquired from the Agricultural Bank; that the Embassy had informed us of the two operations and had asked us, if possible, for the necessary authorization to be obtained so that this merchandise could be dispatched to its destination.

Mr. Romero Castañeda told Campos Ortiz that, apparently, the implications that the dispatch of the merchandise to Cuba could have has been considered, given that, as is known, the American [i.e., US] authorities have announced specific measures for countries whose ships transport merchandise to Cuba and that even in this case which concerns a Cuban boat it is possible that similar measures could still be imposed on countries that simply send any type of merchandise to Cuba. Mr. Romero Castaneda (who asked Campos Ortiz to call him through the private network to deal with this matter) said that in the course of the morning he would perhaps have some additional information for him.

P.C.O. [Pablo Campos Ortiz]

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hersbberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No. 31

Letter from Mexican Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS) to Mexican Foreign Minister, 14 November 1962

Washington, D. C.
14 November 1962

C. Manuel Tello
Secretary of Foreign Relations
General Directorate of International Organizations
Mexico, D. F.

Yesterday at 5:30 in the afternoon, Mr. Edward Martin, Assistant Secretary [of State] for Latin [i.e., Inter-] American Affairs, met with the Ambassadors to the White House and the OAS [Organization of American States] to continue the exchange of views, initiated by the Secretary of State, about the Cuban crisis.

On this occasion, the summary of the most recent events, which is the way that this type of meeting invariably starts, was so cautious that it did not even include the news, that we have just read in the Evening Star, that the International Committee of the Red Cross had decided not to take charge of the inspection of boats that leave Cuban ports. Mr. Martin also did not refer to the “slight progress” that, according to newspapers this morning, North American and Soviet representatives have achieved in the negotiations that are taking place in New York.

The central idea of Mr. Martin’s presentation was the futility of making concrete plans while the results of the conversations between [Anastas] Mikoyan and [Fidel] Castro are not known. He emphasized the importance of the IL-28 airplanes being removed from Cuban territory as well as an effective system of inspection being established that assures Cuba will not return to being a base with aggressive capabilities.

Regarding this last item, Martin gave his opinion that the UN is the ideal organization and that perhaps the draft, co-sponsored by Brazil, Bolivia, and Chile for denuclearization [of Latin America], is indicating the path towards a solution.

Regarding the internal conditions in Cuba [parts

missing—trans.]

He finished his presentations, assuring us that the Department of State would inform us of the development of negotiations and that our governments would be consulted regarding the solution to concrete problems such as:

- a) the removal of IL-28 airplanes;
 - b) Effective inspection; and
 - c) Measures to increase pressure on the Cuban regime.
- Unfortunately, he did not offer us his ideas on this last point and it did not appear to me to be convenient to ask for clarifications.

In my view, the interesting part of the meeting revolved around the interventions of the Ambassadors who, with the exception of the Brazilian and Costa Rican [ambassadors], appeared to have previously agreed to participate in a marathon of senselessness and lack of dignity.

This part of the meeting began with the acting Representative of the Dominican Republic at the Council, who declared that he had instructions from his government to declare its opposition to any draft [resolution] of denuclearization in Latin America “because Castro still has atomic bombs in Cuba and for other reasons.” He added that, according to his government, Castro is equally dangerous with nuclear arms as without them “among other reasons because they have discovered links between Cuba and subversive activities in the Dominican Republic and will very probably present these complaints and evidence [for them] before the [OAS] organ of consultation soon” (quotation).

Ambassador [Guillermo] Sevilla Sacasa [of Nicaragua] repeated the extraordinary intervention that, on the 5th of this month, he made to the [OAS] Council (paragraph 4 of my airgram 146 and my annex to today’s *oficio* 1004), although this time he was less violent and his declaration did not lack humor. He asked if the Department of State considered that Castro without “rockets” was no longer a danger and he maintained that “communist penetration is the most deadly of its weapons.” He finished saying that when in his country communists are not pursued his government is accused of being unfriendly to the United States and when “we apprehend communist agents the New York Times accuses [us] of being a dictatorship.”

Mr. Martin limited himself to answering that the United States has not changed its position regarding Cuba and that, for the moment, it had only been able to refer to the problem of denuclearization.

The Ambassador of El Salvador referred to the conversations in New York to inquire if they have been limited to denuclearization. He seemed to suggest he was worried they

were discussing some points of friction between the United States and Cuba. Martin replied that the Soviets had mentioned Fidel Castro's five points but that the North American [i.e., US] negotiators had refused to take these into account.

The Ambassador of Guatemala to the White House referred then to the rumors that the re-entry of Cuba to the OAS was being prepared and said that the Cuban regime, with or without atomic bombs, is incompatible with the Organization. He gave the impression that his government did not attribute importance to the problem of denuclearization. By contrast, it does appear to be very worried about the activities of communist agents, with the Ambassador having informed us that last Saturday [10 November], two Guatemalan communists had arrived from Cuba in Guatemala, and "attacked" a radio transmitter. "With luck we will find proof of this, and in this case, we will present it to the Organ of Consultation."

The overall impression of these interventions is, undoubtedly, that the governments in question will not be satisfied while the United States, directly or indirectly, does not overthrow the Cuban regime. The method that they use for this, does not interest them, given that all their attention seems focused on the time factor.

Ambassador [Roberto] Campos, of Brazil, elevated the tone of the meeting. In effect, in a brief and perfectly ordered presentation, he described the draft regarding denuclearization, clarifying that it is not aimed at bringing about the re-entry of Cuba into the OAS nor at bringing the Cuban and North American governments closer together. It is an effort, he said, to avoid the [nuclear] proliferation and all possibility of future competition over nuclear arms in Latin America.

The Ambassador of Costa Rica said that his government studied the draft with "great sympathy" and that the lines it pursued are, in his view, exactly those that Ambassador Campos had just mentioned.

The meeting ended with the following question from the Acting Representative from Uruguay at the Council, that is not lacking interest: "Will the North American possessions in the geographic zone known as Latin America also be denuclearized, like those in Puerto Rico?["] Mr. Martin said that it was premature to get into this problem; that the United States would hope that it would be invited to a corresponding conference, "not about denuclearization but so that it agrees not to install nuclear weapons in the zone that is agreed." According to him, it would not be until the document that was going to be signed was made known that "on which side Puerto Rico was, if with those that had nuclear weapons or those that had agreed never to have them" could be determined.

It is my opinion, that we should connect the presentation made by Venezuela before the Organ of Consultation (my airgram 146 on the 9th of this month), the interventions, summarized above, of the representatives of the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala, and Martin's declaration about the "measures to increase the pressure on the Cuban regime."

Among a considerable number of Latin American representatives there undoubtedly exists unrest over of the possible repercussions of a North American agreement not to invade Cuba. In effect, many of my colleagues have been talking, both in the Council and in conversations with me, about the neutralization and "Finlandization" of Cuba.

It is my understanding that, until now, the Department of State has limited itself to reassuring them that this would not be the result of an agreement not to invade, that this is the quid pro quo for the removal of offensive weapons and nothing more. But as this explanation has not reassured these governments, nor those of Honduras and Panama, and as all these make a common cause with those of Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, and Colombia, there is various evidence that the Department of State is trying to find a way of pleasing its most dedicated allies in the battle against the Cuban regime.

I do not think that what they are doing now in the OAS will be sufficient. All the representatives of the cited governments, have shown themselves to be happy with the important role that Ambassador Lavalle, from Peru, has been given in the collective struggle against communist penetration and subversive activities. They hope, as well, that the Commission for Cultural Affairs, under the dynamic direction of Ambassador [deLesseps] Morrison, of the United States, will be able to begin a big campaign of propaganda. But they believe, perhaps with reason, that this will not achieve the overthrow of Fidel Castro and this is their sole purpose.

The violent reaction to any suggestion that the Cuban people are the only competent ones to resolve this problem is also symptomatic of the current mood of these representatives. They maintain, for example, that far from discrediting Castro the way that the crisis is being resolved is strengthening him and they refer to the lack of progress in negotiations regarding inspection as a Cuban "triumph." The day that the United States ratifies its agreement not to invade, my colleagues' complaints will only be comparable to those that continental [mainland] China seems to have directed at Khrushchev for having given way in its confrontation with the United States.

A new Meeting of Consultation could very well be an escape valve. It would admittedly be a way "to increase pressure on the Cuban regime." But the certainty is that the course of future events – holding another Meeting of Consultation

included – is not being determined, in any way, at the OAS. Ours [the OAS] is a ring for light-weights [compared] to those locked in the so-called cold war and the capacity of this ring decreased even more with the exclusion of Cuba. At the moment, all events of real importance for the solution of the Cuban problem have as their stage, like yesterday, Cuba in first place and, in second, the place that the United States and the Soviet Union choose to hold their negotiations.

However, the reaction of the majority of the Latin American governments to these events will create growing problems for us in the Council. I will continue carefully observing the direction they [events] take I will endeavor to reduce their proportions and I will keep you informed of any new development that presents itself.

Very attentively,

Vicente Sáncz Gavito
Ambassador

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro, translated by Tanya Harmer.]



Document No. 32

Message from Mexican Foreign Ministry to Mexican Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, 17 December 1962

511949
GENERAL DIRECTION OF THE DIPLOMATIC
SERVICE
Dept.- Latin America

JNR
III
III/210([...])/31558
SUBJECT: Press interview granted by Mr. Hermes Lima.
Mexico, D. F., 17 December 1962

O. Ambassador of Mexico,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

I have the pleasure of making reference to your attentive *oficio* number 1619 dated this past 31 October in which you informed this Secretariat [Ministry] at length about the press interview granted on the date of the 30th of the pres-

ent month by the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Relations of Brazil, Professor Hermes Lima.

This Secretariat is aware of the Brazilian government's various proposals to intervene in the resolution of the Cuban-North American problem.

Attentively
EFFECTIVE SUFFRAGE. NO REELECTION.

*P.O. DEL SECRETARIO.
EL DIRECTOR GENERAL INTERINO.*

Lic. José Luis [Laris/Loris]

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer.]



Document No. 33

Memorandum from Mexican Delegation,
Organization of American States (OAS), Washington,
on Informal Remarks by US United Nations
Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson, 7 January 1963

Mexican Delegation
Organization of American States
Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington D. C.

MEMORANDUM

This morning, at the request of the United States, the Council of the Organization [of American States] met, acting provisionally as Organ of Consultation, in a secret session, with the objective of listening to a speech by [US United Nations] Ambassador Adlai Stevenson in relation to the issue of Cuba.

After having initiated the session and immediately agreeing to a break, so as to be able to speak informally, the Ambassador announced that he was going to summarize the negotiations conducted by him, in New York, with the representatives of the Soviet Union, after the exchange of letters between President Kennedy and Mr. Khrushchev last October.

First he referred to the efforts aimed at replacing the quarantine established by the United States with an inspection by the International Red Cross. He reported that the USSR

agreed that its boats would be inspected but that it could not do anything to make other nationalities of the Soviet bloc do the same. Another aspect, that he was examining at this stage of the conversations, related to whether representatives of the Red Cross should use a North American boat, a Soviet one, or one from a neutral country. He added that, by this time, the USSR had already withdrawn the offensive arms that it had in Cuba and begun to dismantle the corresponding platforms. Finally, an agreement was reached so that the missiles and bombers that were withdrawn, would go on the deck of the boats so that the United States could verify their withdrawal on the high seas easily. In this way, he added, 42 missiles of an “intermediate” range left Cuba. The North Americans were never able to see the nuclear cones [*conos nucleares*], but the government of this country has reason to believe the assurances that Russia has given it that they left Cuba in the first boat and that it set sail after the fundamental letter from Prime Minister Khrushchev.

The next point was the IL-28 bombers. After quite a lot of time and at the cost of great effort, [Anastas] Mikoyan persuaded “President Castro” to allow these bombers to leave, having the operation verified by means of reconnaissance and aerial photography. Immediately afterwards the United States lifted the quarantine.

There then still remained two aspects to the problem: (1) inspection on the ground to verify the departure of the offensive arms and (2) the guarantee that they would not be reinserted in Cuba.

Stevenson said that in view of Mikoyan’s efforts with Castro, in relation to the inspection having failed, the Secretary General of the United Nations [U Thant] had suggested the establishment of a United Nations inspection system that would include the territory of the United States and countries of the Caribbean. The United States replied that if the inspection was not going to limit itself to Cuba, it would have to cover not only the United States and the Caribbean, but also Soviet ports. In this way, this chapter of the negotiation was brought to an end.

By then, the United States had become convinced that it was very doubtful that the United Nations could carry out an effective inspection on the ground. On the other hand, aerial reconnaissance had produced very good results. Even so, the North American plan was as unacceptable to the Soviet Union as the Soviet one was for the United States. As an example, Ambassador Stevenson alluded to the reference that the United States wanted to make to wish to continue flights by its airplanes over Cuban territory and to the Soviet position that this was violating Cuban air space.

Given the way things were, presenting independent declarations to the Security Council was considered, but when they

were examining the texts, the United States concluded that it would not be prudent to reopen the debate before the Security Council, where Cuba would be present and could take advantage of the opportunity to begin launching diatribes and insults again. Fortunately, Stevenson said, the USSR did not only share this point of view but, in fact, gave the appearance of having an even greater interest than the North American delegation of avoiding debate in the Security Council.

During the next stage, the possibility of sending a joint letter to Secretary General of United Nations was examined and, after this, what would be two separate letters with the interpretations of each government. This procedure did not meet with success either, however, as each Delegation considered the other’s plan unacceptable.

Finally, both countries agreed to write a letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations, in which they thanked him for his efforts to help them find a solution to the crisis; they refer to the agreement that they reached as having been achieved “in considerable measure,” and assure that, although it was not possible to resolve all debated points, they thought that the topic did not need to occupy the Security Council’s attention. The note ended saying that the two governments entertained the hope that the differences that they had been able to settle helped to eliminate other difficulties that existed between both of them. This note, Ambassador Stevenson added, would be delivered tomorrow and immediately distributed to the Security Council. At the same time, he added, its text would be sent to the North American diplomatic missions throughout the Continent and respective Foreign Ministries.

Finishing his declaration, Ambassador Stevenson offered to answer any questions that members of the Council wanted to ask him.

The first to ask a question was the Alternate Representative from Uruguay to investigate what conclusion had been reached in relation to the presence of Russian troops in Cuba. Mr. Stevenson expressed that the Soviet Union had withdrawn at the very least a thousand soldiers of the twenty-one thousand that were calculated to have been in Cuba and he added that, naturally, despite these troops leaving, there was still a strong Soviet base in Cuba, [and] although it does not have nuclear weapons, undoubtedly it has existing and effective anti-aircraft equipment.

As it appeared that with this question the questioning had finished, Mr. Martin, Assistant Secretary of the Department of State for Latin American Affairs, indicated that our Permanent Missions in New York were also going to be informed in the same way as had been done here in Washington. Mr. Stevenson expressed his thanks to his Latin American colleagues in New York for the support that they

had offered and the advice that they had given him throughout the difficult negotiations.

In turn, [Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Edwin M.] Mr. Martin expressed that the negotiations with the Soviet Union were finished as of this morning, meaning that the problem of Cuba and its relations with American countries would continue to be a question for consideration in the Council. We should bear in mind, he said, that the Soviet [Union] could establish an offensive base in Cuba. The United States has reserved its right to aerial reconnaissance. The other members of the OAS would also have to keep on guard. Castro's policy, in relation to Latin America, Martin continued saying, had not changed at all: radio transmissions continue being aggressive and incite people to rebellion; Prime Minister Fidel Castro's speech, on 2 January [1963], was as "bellicose" as any other. My government, he added, will not allow any of our republics to be attacked and is ready to act where necessary. Our policy continues being the one outlined by President Kennedy last 20 November in his press conference. He also alluded to the Miami speech. He finished saying that, for now, they do not have concrete proposals to make and that what is next is to undertake consultations to consider what measures can be taken.

The Alternate Representative of Venezuela recalled the declarations made by Mr. [U. Alexis] Johnson, Assistant Secretary of the Department of State for Political Affairs, made on 17 December [1962] before the Council (see the Delegation's *oficio* 1096 of this date) in the sense that the United States did not want to undertake any measure that could slow down negotiations but that now that these had finished, he wanted to know the North American opinion regarding the permanence of Russian troops in Cuba, and leaving this [Cuban] government alone, armed "ferociously" [*ferozmente*] as it was, and committing all sorts of subversive acts, of sabotage, etc.

Mr. Martin clarified that before the exchange of letters with the Soviet Union, the presence of Russian troops was ignored as these had not been included in the agreement, that, up to now, it had not been possible to support the notion that the term "offensive weapons," employed in the correspondence, included the troops; that until now it had not been possible to obtain a guarantee for the withdrawal on the part of the USSR and, lastly, that his government shared Venezuela's preoccupation.

In turn, the Argentine ambassador asked if there was any news about the Soviet Union's proposals or plans for the propagation of communism in America [i.e., the Western Hemisphere]. Mr. Martin declared that for now there were no indications that these activities were going to decrease.

The Argentine ambassador asked if there were signs that communist China would try to spread in America what he called the most aggressive doctrines of communism. Mr. Martin's answer was this was what they were trying to do around the whole world but that China does not count, in Latin America, on resources that the Soviet Union has.

The Uruguayan Representative asked to speak again to ask if it was considered useful for the Organ of Consultation to continue in "permanent session." Mr. Martin replied that this was one of the points that the Department of State wanted to consult other American Foreign Ministries about.

With an intervention by the Venezuelan Representative, who wanted to arrange a certain date for the next meeting of the Council acting as an Organ of Consultation, to which he was not given an answer, the session ended.

Washington, DC, 7 January 1963

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro, translated by Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No. 34

Memorandum from the Mexican chargé d'affaires in Washington (OAS) regarding a meeting between Alexis Johnson and Latin American Ambassadors, 28 June 1963

X/442/17

CONFIDENTIAL

LETTERGRAM ['Correograma']

Washington, DC

28 June 1963

JC

C. José Gorostiza

Undersecretary of Foreign Relations

Office Manager ['Encargado de Despacho']

General Directorate of International Organizations

Mexico, D.F.

91. At the request of the United States Delegation, the Council of the Organization [of American States] met this morning, in a "secret" session, acting provisionally as an Organ of Consultation, on the case of Cuba.

The object of the meeting was to listen to Mr. Alexis Johnson, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, about the latest developments registered in Cuba.

The talk was divided into three parts, namely:

- 1) Presence of Soviet troops on the island;
- 2) Visit by Prime Minister Fidel Castro to the Soviet Union;
- 3) Internal situation in Cuba.

1) Presence of Soviet Troops in Cuba.

With regards to this issue Mr. Johnson reported that his government calculated that at the moment there were between twelve and thirteen thousand Soviet nationals on the island, without being able to be precise about the number of these that corresponded to technicians and that [which corresponded] to soldiers. He said that the presence of these troops did not represent any threat to the Continent in view of the lack of boats to transport them outside the island. That, even so, his government continues to make efforts designed to get them to leave Cuba. Since last February, he added, approximately five thousand men had left. The troops that remain on the island continue controlling arms such as the guided missiles but, as far as he can tell, they are [also] training Cuban elements to operate "MiG" airplanes and torpedo boats (PT-boats).

2) Visit by Prime Minister Fidel Castro to the Soviet Union.

Undersecretary Johnson reported that, apparently, the purpose of Mr. Castro's trip to the Soviet Union was to "inject new life" into the alliance between both countries. He notes that it is a triumph for the Soviet Union that Prime Minister Khrushchev has obtained Castro's support in relation to the existing dispute between his country and Communist China and, in relation to this point, he stressed the importance that was given, during the conversations that both prime ministers had, to "coexistence," in relation with other affairs that were only loosely touched upon. He gave Laos as an example. That, even so, the North American government harbors serious doubts about Castro's intention to tie himself totally to the political line followed by the Soviet Union. He concedes great importance to the fact that the Soviet Union, in referring to Prime Minister Castro, talks of the "First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba" and he adds that this type of conduct is similar to the one that the Soviet Union has followed in relation to other socialist countries. It seems, he said, [that] it is about giving more importance to the "Party" than the "person" of Fidel Castro. By way of a comment he added that

he would not be surprised if in the more or less near future the Soviet Union tried to get rid of Castro. At the same time, he gives a lot of importance to the fact that it wants to continue, in Cuba, the same policy that it is observed in other socialist states, that is to say, specialize each of them in a certain activity, production, industry, etc. In the case of Cuba, he said, the only product that was spoken about during the talks was sugar. At no point is the possibility of establishing industries of any kind mentioned. As a result, he indicated that Cuba remains limited to the role of producing primary materials, in this case, sugar. He finished this chapter indicating that Khrushchev's triumph had amounted to presenting Castro to the world as an example of the good results of his policy.

3) Internal Situation in Cuba.

In the communiqué that was issued after the meeting, on which he based nearly all his information on, he reported that emphasis is being placed on the need to consolidate Fidel Castro's government in Cuba. He declared that the Cuban economy is continuing to deteriorate and, as an example, he mentioned the fact that, this year, the production of sugar will only be 3.8 million tons, which is the lowest figure registered until now. He mentioned the shortage of certain items such as shoes and others, which they are rationing. In terms of transport, he said that the situation is also difficult due to the lack of replacement parts, since they have run into serious difficulties with the equipment that the Soviet Union has provided them with. He reported that the level of morale among workers was very low and that the lack of certain products obliged the government to take measures that aggravated the situation. In spite of this, he added, you could not say that the regime in Cuba was in a dangerous situation, given that, the security measures that it had adopted, are very effective. He commented that the subversive radio propaganda from Cuba had declined while, in other countries in America, it had increased. That the United States are trying [*están tratando*] to cooperate with the Governments that see themselves as seriously threatened. Finally, he said that the lack of controls on journeys to and from Cuba continues to be a real problem but, he added, [particularly] via Europe.

Ending his speech, Undersecretary Johnson offered to answer questions to him. Permit me to mention only the following:

Argentina: What course of action does the United States government have in mind in which the OAS could intervene?

Johnson: The measures that that are being thought about are of an economic character on the part of the countries of

Western Europe. He said that trade between these countries and Cuba had notably declined. That some of them had adopted what you could call “public measures” and others, that have not able to do so in an open way, have decided gone for “official measures.” He reported that those adopted by the Organ of Consultation [of the OAS] had been very useful to other Governments and he ended saying that, for now, they did not have in mind any proposal that the Organization of American States could intervene in.

Venezuela: What is the real situation of the Cuban exiles in the United States in terms of their possible collaboration in ending Castro’s regime?

Johnson: The Cuban exiles are very divided. The American government would like to see them united in one single Party but it could not force them to do this. On this issue, he added, I am not an optimist. In the case that any change in this situation is registered, this would originate within Cuba and the role of the exiles would only be to help their compatriots on the island.

Very attentively,
CHARGÉ d’AFFAIRES

Andrés Fenochio
Minister,

[Source: *Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro, translated by Tanya Harmer.*]

Notes

1 See James G. Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962,” pts. 1 and 2, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 6:2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and 6:3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67.

2 See Kate Doyle, ed., “After the Revolution: Lázaro Cárdenas and the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional,” National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 124, online at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB124/index.htm>

3 Kate Doyle, ed., “Double Dealing: Mexico’s Foreign Policy Toward Cuba,” National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 83, online at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB83/index.htm>

4 Ed note: Prime Minister Hermes Lima at that time was temporarily also serving as foreign minister due to the illness of San Tiago Dantas.

5 Ed note: This refers to a resolution passed at the January 1962 meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay, at which hemispheric countries approved measures against Cuba.

6 Ed note: See previous document.

7 [López-Mateos’ trip to Asia took place from 3-24 October 1962—T.H.]

The Anti-Castro Cuban Émigré Forces: Mexican Documents, 1961-1963

Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro and Translated by Tanya Harmer

Ed. Note: Relations between the Kennedy Administration and anti-Castro Cuban exile groups, never easy or simple, deteriorated significantly after the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961, and even more so after the Cuban Missile Crisis ended with Washington, in exchange for Khrushchev's decision to withdraw the missiles, effectively fore-swearing any plans to invade Cuba.¹ Historians have long faced difficulty in documenting this sometimes tense relationship due to the classification of many pertinent US documents. However, the five translated documents below represent a potentially valuable new source base to explore this aspect of the US-Cuban confrontation—the Mexican archives. They suggest rising dissatisfaction among the anti-Castro activists at the declining level of US government support, finally leading to the resignation in April 1963 of one of the leading figures, Jose Miro Cardona, the head of the Cuban Revolutionary Council, whose lengthy and somewhat bitter resignation letter (found in the Mexican foreign ministry archives), detailing his secret contacts with the Kennedy Administration, is included here. The intelligence reports on the activities of the anti-Castro Cuban exiles are contained in a much-larger collection of records produced by the Mexican Federal Directorate of Security which is now available in the Archivo General de la Nación. The documents were obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro and translated by Tanya Harmer.



Document No.1

Information Memorandum, 1 November 1961

In the month of September 1961, a report from Guatemala reached us, from an entirely credible source – the same [source] that gave us reports on the preparations for the aggression in April [i.e., the Bay of Pigs] – which points out the following:

“The invasion planned for the near future is imminent. It will be more violent, much more than the one in April.

Place of departure: Yucatán Peninsula, Quintana Roo [Mexico], and Belize.

Number of men in camps, according to lists with names in our hands:

Rancho Viejo, 131 men; Santa María, 132 men; Leona Vicario, 159.

There are other camps that have not been localized, all directed by Yankees.

Arms seen: M-1, M-3, machineguns, pistols and abundant ammunition”.

It also informs us that in the first days of September Prio, at the request of the State Department, visited Mexico in order to unify all the groups of counter-revolutionary Cuban immigrants, including the Batistianos. The idea was the formation of only one supposed Cuban government-in-exile with Dr. Pio Elizalde and with other representatives of the Cuban immigrants. He met in the house of *Licenciado* Jorge Castro Leal, in the street Marina 706 where a few Mexicans were also present.

Among the participants of these meetings of counter-revolutionaries [were] the Cubans Dr. Pio Elizalde, José Rodríguez and Julieta Zambrano, the Spaniards Luis de la Garza, Eduardo González and Felipe de la Rosa, the Chilean journalist Luis Farías, the Mexicans Castro Leal, Fernando del la Mota, Prieto Laurens and the priest [by the name of] Germán Fernández.

We have received information that in Puerto Juárez [today, part of the city of Cancún] there is a center of recruitment, that men of different nationalities go to and are distributed to different training centers. The closest center is in Santa María, some 8 km from Puerto Juárez, and where there are around 200 men well equipped with machineguns and M-1 and M-3 rifles, with abundant ammunition. An airplane supplies them at night; there is a landing strip in the middle of the wilderness, 1,200 metres long and 100 metres wide. The men are of different nationalities.

Another center is situated in Rancho Viejo (Mato Chilero). In this place there is a group of about 100 men as with the group before of different nationalities. There is a small airstrip approximately 800 metres in length. This place is about 10 km from Puerto Juárez.

In Leona Vicario, along the coast to the right [sic] of the town by about 2 km, and 14 km from Puerto Juárez, there are movements of about 80 foreigners, who carry long weapons [*armas largas*] and pistols.

The counter-revolutionaries that are camped in these camps do not have uniforms yet, they are hoping for them on the date of departure.

According to subsequent information it has become known that the individuals that are to be found in the three aforementioned places, received orders to move to Cabo Catoche, which had not yet happened at the time of the report due to the bad weather that existed in this region.

On 2 September some counterrevolutionary fugitives arrived from Cuba: 17 men and 5 women. They took them to Valladolid. They arrived with on a boat with a Guatemalan flag.

[Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Dirección Federal de Seguridad, Exp: 12-0-61; H24 L10. Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro, translated by Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No. 2

Memorandum from Mexican Federal Director of Security re "Political Cuban Refugees," 26 December 1961

FEDERAL DIRECTORATE OF SECURITY

OFICIO No.

SUBJECT: Information relating to
POLITICAL CUBAN REFUGEES

CARLOS FERNANDEZ TRUJILLO, DR. ROLANDO ROJAS, ALDO-FOREST, CARMEN VILLARES, ANGEL GONZALEZ FERNANDEZ and the rest of the Directors of the Cuban Revolutionary Council [*Consejo Revolucionario Cubano*] (formerly the Cuban Revolutionary Democratic Front), are disorientated regarding what attitude they will assume because the Embassy of the United States has decided to withdraw as of the next 1st of January, the subsidy that they had been providing for expenses, due to the fact that the aforementioned Council has not fulfilled its mission to carry out an intense campaign of propaganda against FIDEL CASTRO RUZ, nor have they been able to unify the Cuban refugees in Mexico.

It is said that as a result of the above, it is possible that the Council in question will dissolve.

Respectfully.

EL CORONEL D. E. M.

FEDERAL DIRECTOR OF SECURITY

MANUEL RANGEL ESCAMINA.

[Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Dirección Federal de Seguridad, Exp: 12-9-961; H-176 L-10. Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro, translated by Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No. 3

Memorandum from Mexican Federal Director of Security re Democratic Revolutionary Front (Cuban), 15 January 1962

FEDERAL DIRECTORATE OF SECURITY

OFICIO NUMBER:

SUBJECT: Information relating to the
DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTIONARY FRONT. (CUBAN).

Mexico, D. F., 15 January 1962

CARLOS FERNANDEZ TRUJILLO and Drs. ALDO FOREST and ROLANDO ROJAS, Directors of the Front mentioned above, have officially expressed today that it will stop functioning because it does not count on the economic means necessary, now that the subsidy that the Embassy of the United States had been giving them and that they basically depended on has been withdrawn.

Notwithstanding the above, the declarants affirmed that the members of the Front in question would continue to meet periodically to maintain a nucleus of resistance against Castro's tyranny.

The Cuban Department of Industrialists and Tradesmen in exile [*La Sección de Industriales y Comerciantes Cubanos en el Exilio*] will continue to function as it has been doing until now, directed by AMADO ALVAREZ TORMO, in its offices on Mariano Escobedo No. 360-1, in this capital.

Respectfully

EL CORONEL D. E. X.

FEDERAL DIRECTOR OF SECURITY

MANUEL RANGEL ESCAMILLA

[Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Dirección Federal de Seguridad, Exp: 12-9-62; 180-L-10. Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro, translated by Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No. 4

Memorandum from Mexican Federal Director of Security re Cuban Revolutionary Council in Exile, 9 April 1963

FEDERAL DIRECTORATE OF SECURITY

OFICIO No.

SUBJECT: Information relating to the CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IN EXILE [‘Consejo Revolucionario de Cuba en el Exilio’]

Mexico, D. F., 9 April 1963

In the offices of this Organization, situated on Calle Paris No. 10, 4th floor, of this capital, with telephone number 46-20-[unclear] and whose Delegate in Mexico is CARLOS FERNANDEZ TRUJILLO, it became known that JOSE MIRO CARDONA, President of the Council in Miami, FL, U.S.A., met with president JOHN F. KENNEDY and asked him for greater support for anti-Castro forces [*anticastristas*], in relation to the raids that they are launching against the present Cuban Government. In view of the fact that the answer of the aforementioned president was negative, MIRO CARDONA chose to resign the position that he occupies, “because the anti-Castro forces can not count in any way, on North American backing.”

At 1600 hours today, in Miami, FL, Cuban leaders in exile met, to try and stop and convince MIRO CARDONA not to resign, saying “anti-Castro Cubans without North American support or support from another nation, should form combat brigades on their own in every country, whether their governments oppose them or not, that is to say, that these groups would integrate themselves clandestinely.”

Respectfully.

EL CORONEL D. E. M.

FEDERAL DIRECTOR OF SECURITY

MANUEL RANGEL ESCAMINA.

[Source: *Archivo General de la Nación, Dirección Federal de Seguridad, Exp: 12-9-963; H-164 L-13. Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro, translated by Tanya Harmer.*]



Document No. 5

Resignation Letter of Jose Miro Cardona to the Revolutionary Council of Cuba, 9 April 1963

Revolutionary Council of Cuba

I Resignation

It is my duty to address the Revolutionary Council of Cuba, which I chair, to resign from the post which I have held to this day, which I was appointed to on 22 March 1961 by unanimous agreement of the organizations and dignitaries which I am honored to address.

The only reason for my irrevocable decision is extremely serious. Its basis could cause temporary discouragement to our compatriots who are anxiously waiting for the minute of liberation. Despite this – with a full sense of the enormous responsibility which rests on my shoulders, with a deep knowledge of all the implied consequences of my resignation, putting an end to a tormenting conflict of motives - a duty of clear loyalty, has led me to bring about this necessary crisis, in the hope of resolving it.

II Historical Account

Before explaining the main reason for my irrevocable decision, I feel obliged to give, in a short synthesis, an account of the main events which occurred after 17th April 1961. I made it my duty to maintain absolute silence regarding the agreements with the United States and the Council’s plans, thinking it would better serve the cause. That judgment stopped me, until now, from clearing up the situation and offering the guidance, which exile continuously demands. Today it cannot be negated in any way.

a) Two Bitter Years

The last two years, after the defeat on 17 April 1961, have been, in truth, hard and bitter for all Cubans; for the men and women of the sacrificed underground; for the brave mountain guerrillas, for the proud political prisoners; for the heroic combatants of the Bay of Pigs; for the civilian population of Cuba dominated by terror; for the long-suffering émigrés; for the revolutionary organizations that have seen their fighting units decimated; for the Council and for me[.] [E]ncouraged by faith, I have resisted the onslaught of fierce adversaries without weakness, without responding to straight criticism of those justifiably impatient and poisonous diatribes of gratuitous adversaries, in order to avoid useless controversies.

After the Playa Girón episode - which in due course we will clarify in depth and detail, with reference to people, circumstances, precise dates and relevant details - we have worked with fervor and in silence for a homeland for everyone. To summarize the road after the disaster, we put Cuba above our pain. For this reason, we were able to suppress anger, close the road to resentment, not listen to ungrateful voices of hurt pride and dented dignity. And with a spirit clean of all hostile sentiment, we started the great task of reconstructing the forces of the broken Revolution.

b) Two Important Dates: 20 April and 4 May 1961

On 20 April 1961, the Honorable President Kennedy—who with the exemplary honesty of a head of—government—had taken complete responsibility for the experienced failure, in clear pronouncements that also expressed “his decision not to abandon Cuba,” and warned the Hemisphere that if Latin American countries did not fulfill their duty, the United States would fulfill it with those who joined it, informed by inter-American treaties and agreements. Fourteen days later, on the 4th May, on my return from a trip to Nicaragua, Guatemala, and the Virgin Islands, [that I undertook] at his behest, [to conduct] a painstaking search for survivors, in the company of the doctors [Antonio] Maceo and [Manuel Antonio de “Tony”] Varona, President Kennedy planned the immediate future of Cuba with me in a meeting for this purpose. His offers of cooperation were categorical and his backing absolute and total. Thanks to his personal decision, permanent economic aid to the widows and orphans of the expeditionary forces, was made possible. He also made it possible to provide help for clandestine forces in Cuba, [and] he planned the first recruitment program of Cuban volunteers in different US military units for very brief training and then [proposed] grouping them into one military corps with their natural leaders at an opportune moment, which we would discuss together. In his name, I invited officials from the Cuban

Armed Forces (professionals, “rebels,” and of liberation [sic]) to receive specialized courses in different US schools aimed at fighting on Castro’s island, as well as other things that it is not necessary to record at this moment. The road travelled between May and October of 1961 was unforgiving at times. We did not waver in expressing our disagreement with the President’s collaborators about methods and tactics, with a spirit of cooperation, it must be said, always prevailing. On 31 October of that year all the differences were harmonized and agreements were finalized in an “Agreement,” which history will recover one day.

Only one thought gave me strength in the daily toil: the assurance that we had found the right path leading straight to reconquering Independence. It did not matter that adversaries rejected me [*“me negaron el pan y la sal”*]. The alliance between free Cubans and this nation became crystalized on “the basis of mutual respect” in order to eradicate communism from the homeland of Martí and to reaffirm the pillars of Democracy, [that were] in the throes of perishing on the American Continent.

c) The Activities of the Council

The revolutionary organizations represented on the Council coordinated the actions that needed to be implemented with the clandestine forces of Cuba and the agreed plans were put into action. The presiding organization also had to fight on other fronts. In October we appeared before the Inter-American Press Society to mobilize continental public opinion in favor of Cuba. The backing of the journalists from the continent was unanimous: to denounce Castro’s crimes at the Commission for Human Rights of the Organization of American States [OAS] (October 1961) and to put a stop to the increasing wave of shootings; to oppose, with ample reasons, the relocation of exiled Cubans, who are now, being forcibly dispersed throughout the Union, before the American Senate (6 December 1961); to offer conclusive facts regarding the nature of the established regime in Cuba, its penetration throughout the continent, its links with Soviet Russia and communist China, and the repeated breach of all human rights to the Inter-American Commission for Peace of the Organization of American States (26 December 1961), in charge of harmonizing and supporting Peru and Colombia’s motions. The relationship of interviews with Continental diplomats and politicians seemed to go on forever.

d) The Honorable Dean Rusk

With the actions agreed by the Revolutionary organizations represented on the Council already under way (November

and December 1961), we had a long...meeting with the Honorable Secretary of State to hear about the policy that would be advocated at the [OAS] Conference of Foreign Ministers due to take place in Punta del Este, Uruguay. In that opportunity, I was also the conveyor of a message from the University Student Directorate to the illustrious Secretary of State. After analyzing each nation's position, he put an end to the meeting in the appropriate manner with these words: "I assure you that the San Jose de Costa Rica declaration will not be repeated and I beg you to inform your people that the United States will not permit Communism to continue in Cuba. I will inform the President of your points of view this evening. He will be very pleased to know them. The three of us are in agreement, he, you and I."

e) Punta del Este (Uruguay)

We set off for Uruguay immediately. The fate of our country was discussed there. We contributed as far as we could and it was possible to unify the American [ie. Western Hemisphere] way of thinking. The Hemisphere was in firm solidarity with the Cuba in combat and exile; the right of individual and collective legitimate defense of American nations in danger was consecrated, as well as other measures which were agreed. It was a brilliant and fruitful conference in terms of results. We returned rejoicing. A long, complicated and difficult chapter of diplomatic negotiations had been concluded in order to begin a new one: military action. Everything pointed to our being at the threshold of great achievements.

f) Richard N. Goodwin and Mac [i.e., Mc]George Bundy

On returning to Miami, after the Conference of Punta del Este closed [on 31 January 1962], we had to leave for Washington in order to make urgent efforts regarding the political prisoners, whose "status" had been unidentified by Fidel Castro, who was already planning the dubious tactic of holding trials. On that occasion Dr. Varona and I went. We had several meetings with important officials at the State Department, and principally with Mr. Richard N. Goodwin, one of the President's closest advisors. With this official, we raised various aspects of the Cuban problem, as well as the political prisoners; but in this case, he evaded the conversation. Instead of answering, he asked. His attitude, in my opinion, was in contrast to the personal assurances given to me by the Honorable President [Kennedy] in the meetings which took place on 4 May, 13 June and were confirmed in writing in a letter to me on 25 September [1961], which put an end to one of the crises I alluded to earlier and to which the "Agreement" of October, which I have referred to, formally

put an end to. As Mr Goodwin was dealing with the questions about Cuba very reluctantly, I, there and then, asked for a meeting with President Kennedy.

We returned to Miami, reported to the Council and in the hope that the requested interview would be granted, we left for Washington again. Castro's announcement of the unfair and illegal trial prompted us to do this. Whilst engaging in anxious requests, which I will have to refer to immediately, I reiterated my request for Dr. Varona and myself to have an audience with the President. We were handed over to another person, Mr. Mac George [sic] Bundy. Our conversation was polite but cold. Imprecision, procrastination, vagaries. He did not commit to any opinion. The seriousness of this correct gentleman was only lifted slightly as a result of a certain expression by Dr. Varona, regarding the fate of the prisoners who were to be tried the next day, 29 March [1962]. Tremendous vigil by all those in exile! I remember having declared the following: "Prevented from fulfilling my duties as a lawyer for the men of the Brigade, I send them my most heartfelt regards. My son is amongst them. It is a privilege to suffer and die for the homeland. May God be with them."

Dr. Varona agreed with me that we should stay in Washington until the end of the trial and that I should try to have a meeting with President Kennedy. He returned to Miami. The efforts I referred to earlier continued. We approached the representative of the Nuncio S.S. in Washington, all the ambassadors, and by telegram, all the governments of the world. We were not asking for clemency. We quoted the stipulations on "prisoners of war" in the Geneva Convention, with the aim of stopping the iniquitous and illegal trial. Cuba was a signatory to the Convention. To our honor and satisfaction, the Foreign Minister of the Dominican Republic, Jose Bonilla Atilas, acted as the lawyer at the Organization of American States for the Cuba or Martí [José Martí]. He worked tirelessly until he managed to get an agreement, with "the inevitable abstention of Mexico and Brazil," on a declaration in support of the proposal put forth by the Council. The United Nations, as always, was deaf to our appeals. The neutralists in the useless and prejudiced organization have a narrow outlook on human rights when they are violated by a Communist regime.

g) Robert F. Kennedy

During those days, a meeting occurred, which seemed decisive for Cuba's fate, with a person of indisputably good will and essentially executive [power]. I am referring to the Attorney General, the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy. Two journalists, true friends of Cuba, made that meeting possible, Hal Hendrix and Joe Mallin, both editors at the Miami News. I

aired two subjects with Mr. Kennedy. The first, because of its urgency, was the freeing of the prisoners, an issue which until then Mr. Goodwin had disrupted or delayed. After listening to me with undivided attention and giving thought to the arguments, he promised to take charge of solving the matter. He committed himself to it with real devotion. The second regarded the problem of Cuba. I gave him a summary of the whole question and I expressed my worries about the differences I had observed between Mr. Goodwin's vagueness and the assurances of the Honorable President. He answered: "I don't know all the details, but I assure you that the President's policy has not changed." He gave me a date for a further meeting on Tuesday 10th April [1962] at 4 pm.

h) The Meeting of 10 April

After talking briefly with the Attorney General in his office on the appointed day, he invited me to accompany him to the President's house. I went, as on previous occasions, with Dr. Ernesto de Aragon. Richard N. Goodwin was there. The meeting with the President lasted one hour exactly. It was satisfactory and enlightening. During the meeting, I outlined Cuba's internal crisis of Cuba, the hemispheric crisis, the crisis of a lack of trust of those exiled and the troubled position of the Council. It was not a protocol or cold meeting. We had a genuine dialogue in which he assured me emphatically, conclusively and with finality "that it was essentially a military problem of six divisions," and that the Council had to contribute the largest contingent of fighters possible; that unilateral action should not be adopted, because, in total agreement with my judgment, it would be a very serious error with continental repercussions. He listened to my opinions attentively and repeated his request that the Cubans should continue their training in the military units. When I informed him that the agreed plan was on its way to being a disaster, because of the bureaucratic delays, excessive demands of certain physical conditions, because of the limit on the agreed age and because officers had not been invited, he asked Mr. Goodwin for explanations [line missing—trans.] I answered, I have been asking, nearly daily for the fulfillment of what was agreed." With little opposition, the Honorable President dictated orders, then and there, for massive recruitment, without as many requirements and with a formal invitation to the Officers. The meeting, obviously, also covered aspects which it is not my place to reveal. He put an end to our conversation with words that I shall never forget: "Your destiny is to suffer. Do not waver. You have my support and I reiterate my pronouncements. Pass on to the Council my most cordial best wishes." I left the White House certain that

the liberation of the homeland with a Cuban presence at the forefront of battle, was getting close.

i) Crisis in the Council

I went back to Miami. The atmosphere of the exiles was charged. We were attacked "for not declaring war." The crisis within the Council intensified. Absences were noticed at the session we held for me to inform them of my efforts. The councilors, fully aware of the need for discretion, did not want me to be too explicit. At Dr. Varona's request, it was agreed to approve the plans and I was given a vote of confidence to put them into effect and I was congratulated for the patriotic work I had undertaken. The internal crisis was averted but I lost the effective collaboration of nationally relevant figure at the time I most needed them. Pleas were not worthwhile.

j. General Lansdale
The sugar quota
Trip to Central America

From that moment on, under tremendous attack by the exiles in opposition, whilst the revolutionary organizations were carrying out truly brave acts, we prepared a register of possible combatants and without vetoes or exclusions, the lists of officers, within the age limits given. General [Edward] Lansdale came to Miami to discuss certain aspects of the military problem, which had no simple solution and implied inevitable delays.² Whilst these matters were being fleshed out, the Council defended Cuba's right to the sugar quota at the House of Representatives (25 May 1962), under the direction of Professor Arturo Manas, who I am grateful to. Afterwards, for international political reasons, I visited the nations of Central America and Panama (7 to 19 June 1962), whose unity of thought and action were due, in part, to the agreements of Punta del Este. The exiles who were there welcomed us affectionately. I met with all the presidents and ministers. President Kennedy's visit, which had just taken place, was outlined. We found the nations of the Isthmus, united, proud, in solidarity with Cuba, but powerless.

k) Recruitments. Meeting of Ministers

On our return, we had to wait a while longer, which was inevitable. But it was an intense time of meetings with Latin American diplomats. In the meantime [Soviet leader Nikita] Khrushchev was arming the island of Cuba. The clandestine organizations did a great job of providing intelligence. There were many public opinions, all contradictory, that were made

about the missile bases and the presence of Russian troops. On 25 August [1962], at a press conference on the subject, we denounced the arsenal in the Antilles and the invasion of Russian troops. We asked for a naval and air blockade of the island, we alerted all the nations of the continent. At that moment a reckless action, due to its heroism, was undertaken by the Revolutionary Student Board and the Monte Cristi Association. A month later, after many conversations at the Pentagon, I was told about the massive recruitment program. I opposed some of its aspects. My objections were accepted, and on 25 September the Council made a proclamation urging Cubans of military age “without distinction of age, creed or political alliances, to put aside all the attitudes and motives which separated and divided them and to join, on mass, the ranks of the combatants.” On 3 October, (with all the factors adjusted in perfect synchronization) the Informal [OAS] Conference of Foreign Ministers took place [in Washington]. The proclamation made was a sign of great future events. The continent was closing ranks. I felt confident, despite criticism of the proclamation, which was described as flimsy and insignificant as was the announcement calling for recruitment. Nonetheless, the offices were filled with volunteers of all ages. Women also responded.

l) A More Important Meeting: Mr. Adan [Adam] Yarmolinsky

Invited by the “Chicago Council,” I went to Chicago in the month of October, to give a talk in commemoration of the *Grito de Yara* [the start of Cuba’s war of independence in 1868]. An appointment was made there for me to attend a meeting with important people in the city of Miami, on Sunday 14 [October] at 3 in the afternoon. The meeting took place. Mr. Adan [Adam] Yarmolinsky [a senior Pentagon aide to Defense Secretary Robert McNamara] was chairing it, with the assistance of Mr. Robert F. Hurtwich [Hurwitch], an exemplary official [Special Assistant for Cuban Affairs] from the State Department and high-ranking officials from the Pentagon. Dr. Varona, Captain Ernesto Despaigne, and I attended for the Council. The meeting which took place at the Carrillon Hotel that Sunday, lasted exactly four hours. We were asked, with unusual urgency, for a massive incorporation of all Cubans of military age, even those who were arriving every day from Cuba, “that they should join before registering at the Refuge.” All matters related to the Officers (rebels, professionals and liberators) were discussed. The problem arising from the use of airmen and the triple legal situation of the use of medics (refugees, resident and North American citizens) was examined. And the classification of “cadres” and of “civil advisers” according to whether they were professional

or rebels. This delegation worked all Sunday night and early Monday morning. Those recruited to Fort Knox were undergoing intense training. The crisis was imminent. We were eight days from 22 October. I was reassured by the approach that it had been the right way ahead. I was tormented by one preoccupation: the situation of the political prisoners, but I worked harder than ever. We discussed the situation with the revolutionary organizations of the Council who alerted, with no indiscretions, their fighting cadres in Cuba. The Economic Corporations worked at a fast pace in the next twelve months to ensure Cuban supplies. They worked extremely discreetly, as the Miami pessimists continued to dole out their unrelenting criticism.

m) 22 October 1962

The 22nd of October arrived. I was informed in good time of the content of the Proclamation that the Honorable President was to make public at six [sic; seven] in the evening. The free world resonated with enthusiasm at President Kennedy’s Proclamation. Nations of abstention, neutrality, and indifference aligned themselves with the United States. There were many who mobilized their forces. The Cubans at Fort Knox were on the alert, impatient for action. I made all the necessary arrangements. The Council declared itself to be in permanent session and its members in their designated places. We waited. The 23rd and 24th were days of unbearable tension. At four o’clock in the afternoon of that day of the 24th, aware of the course of events, I was told “that the circumstances varied, but not the aim and that the planned course of action was delayed for a short time.” Khrushchev was negotiating. I warned that delaying tactics were being employed, which favored the Soviet and his Caribbean commissar. The agreed date arrived, the “quarantine,” that is to say the blockade, was lifted. Public spirit fell. This produced a negative reception at Fort Knox. A wave of disaffection started in an impressive way. Mistrust was being reignited in force and defeatism spread. All arguments put forward to halt it were useless.

n) The Return of the Combatants; Orange Bowl

Another intensely dramatic event rekindled the lost confidence. I am referring to the return [in December 1962] of Bay of Pigs combatants, whose fighting spirit could not be broken by two years in prison. Those who did not return, those who succumbed in the battlefield, were present in their absence. The survivors returned with their slogan: that of returning, with decorum, to save Cuba. That moving event was followed by another of great political importance. I am referring to the President Kennedy’s presence at the Orange Bowl proceedings

[in Miami on 29 December 1962]. Before those men, punished by lead, he made statements of unequivocal alliance, as he picked up the flag of the Brigade. The leader of Democracy spoke and he spoke as leader. His words were vibrant, strong, decisive, and binding. He reiterated his commitment to Cuba before the world. In that way he confirmed what President Villeda Morales had said before, in the City of Miami after having had a meeting with the President in Washington: “Soon, very soon, Cuba will be liberated.”

III

The Current Situation

After that, three more months have transpired with despairingly slow progress. During this time, [in answer to continuous requests] I have received the same assurances given to me beforehand. However, there have been events that obviously contradict them. Such as: 1) the continued change of positions with the corresponding surrender of points of view that the United States had excessively emphasized. I refer to: a) the direct inspection of terrain, put forward as an indomitable question and compromised by the United States after the mediation of U Than [sic; U Thant] and Mikoyan's [sic; Mikoyan's] mysterious visit to Cuba; b) the withdrawal of Russian soldiers – not Agricultural technicians whose number exceeds 20,000, as the Cuban underground has informed – to which a specific date was fixed for evacuation, but which was not able to be realized, [even though] the United States [with its] science and patience, should know already that Khrushchev will change his strategy and battle tactics in a continuous way, a thousand times if necessary, in the pursuit of his objectives. For communism, “the word of honor is nothing more than this; a word.” Honor, for them, is a naïve bourgeois prejudice. 2) the inaction that revolutionary organizations have been forced into. These two things persuaded me to put together summary memorandums (14 February and 28 March) for the Office of Coordination established in Miami after 22 October [just] past and that will be made known at a proper time.

a) Commando actions [*Las acciones comando*]

Having issued the Memorandums I have referred to (I have not received an answer to the first of these) two commando actions were carried out by groups of Cubans (not North Americans) against Russian vessels (not American) out of the territorial waters of this country. As a consequence of these six things happened at breakneck pace, that I list as follows:

1) The illuminating Russian note of protest that warned the

United States that it had violated agreements.

2) The note from the Department of State “condemning Cuban actions that had been carried out,” which contradicts the Joint Resolution of Congress in September 1962. It is significant that the action carried out by the Revolutionary Student Directorate and the Monte Cristi group before 22 October [1962], did not receive the same condemnation.

3) Castro's attack on a North American vessel. Fidel Castro suspiciously suddenly observes – now! – formal diplomatic courtesies and offers excuses that are accepted. Before the broken agreement that Russia referred to in the note that we have made reference to [in point 1], Fidel Castro shot down [on 27 October 1962] an airplane that the unfortunate [US Major] Rudolph Anderson piloted, without any reprisals and it has tirelessly undertaken piratical actions, of real international delinquency, such as the continued robbery of airplanes, the attacks on North American fishing boats, the kidnapping of ten Cubans that live in a Key, far from the territorial waters of Cuba and the United States, the violation of law adding to his habitual insolence. Of course, he did not give explanations.

4) The categorical order that has been communicated to various compatriots confining them to [Florida's] Dade County.

5) The embargo on Cuban vessels, two of which belong to the Organizations of the Revolutionary Council, to immobilize them and, finally,

6) The strangest and most disconcerting of all the measures adopted: the warning to England for it to stop or pursue in each case, Cuban combatants that sail in territorial waters of its American possessions. In this way Fidel Castro [page cut off—trans.] Khrushchev's most sinister designs protected by the most efficient maritime police of the two most democratic powers in the world.

b) Critical analysis of the adopted measures

Wracked by uncertainty, I have thought about three reasons for the adopted measures. They are the following:

1) These measures are justified by the need to mask actions of an immediate warlike character with ones of apparent ostensible friendship. I discarded this, because in this case 240 Cuban patriots who had completed their period of training would have been held back in Fort Jackson. They told me in Washington that, despite my opposition, they would be graduates in a few days [i.e. not retained for immediate action];

2) The agreed measures are perhaps related to the fact that Cuban actions compromise a far-reaching strategy. I discarded this reason as well because, in accordance with what was

agreed, I should have been previously informed, a condition that was adhered to by cable on 22 October 1962.

3) The agreed measures are probably due to not wanting to interrupt the prolonged process of evacuation of the Russian technicians, (that comprise more than a division of soldiers of a Soviet army) or the freeing of North American prisoners. This did not satisfy me either, as the argument was contradictory. The reason is evident: On 22 October the Russian soldiers were to be found in Cuba, and North American and Cuban citizens in prison were freed a long time after this.

Faced with all the arguments the force of events leads to this conclusion: the Cuban struggle is in the process of being liquidated by the government [of the United States]. This conclusion appears confirmed, very forcefully confirmed, by the warning that every refugee has received with their monthly subsidy, forcing them to relocate. In its final part, it says: "Each Cuban refugee carries with them [i.e., him/her] a message of the real Cuban spirit, their love of freedom and longing to convert the sadness of leaving their homeland into the inspiration to prepare themselves for a brilliant future in the land of freedom." This provision that signals a brilliant future to Cubans in a Nation that is not their own, is not autonomous. I want to say that it is prepared by the Office of Coordination that, after 22 October, controls all, absolutely all, activities in relation with Cuba.

c) The trip to Washington

I left for Washington filled with intense anguish. My mood in these moments became known to a journalist friend of mine whom I respect and admire: Howard Handelman, editor of the magazine, "US News and World Report." "I am going, I said, to request that they revoke the orders issued against the brave expeditionaries and, principally, in search of clearing up grey areas in my thoughts." In the capital, free of the pressure that the ideas I had come up with had been agitating me over the course of 48 hours in Miami, after a serene analysis, I adopted, in principal, the decision that I am making known today. I made it conditional, however, on the result of my meetings. My frame of mind was permeable to the slightest argument in which they might offer me the minimum sense of security. The future Cuba was in dispute.

d) The Meetings in Washington

The answers that I hoped for to all the questions I raised, very calmly, but with real passion, did not alleviate the doubts that the United States had caused me to have. When I did not manage to get the necessary definitions, even

though after 17 April 1961 they had promised to discuss with me before any change of policy they were considering, my doubts were confirmed. All the circumstances that I have made reference to, by themselves constitute a series of rational indications, vehement indications, that lead, in an inevitable way to the following conclusions:

[e] Conclusions

First: The United States of America has been the victim of a masterful Russian game. With the scarecrow [*espantajo*] of installing missile bases, that necessarily had to be photographed and quickly accepting to withdraw them, at the first demand, Khrushchev proposed pacts that did not need to be agreed to and achieved his immediate objectives: a) to retain his barracks for attack and subversion in the Caribbean; b) strengthen the military capabilities of Fidel Castro to destroy the first attempt at insurrection; and c) consolidate the Communist Regime in [Latin] America, [through] the first step for peaceful coexistence, the immobilization of the United States and with the United States the rest of the Continent, [which is] as disappointed as the Cuban patriots and as bewildered as them with respect to the future.

Second: With the United States immobilized, Cuba became entrenched in the strange twists and turns of a willing psychological war between the two great powers of the world, [as a result of which] it has become necessary to also immobilize Cuban patriots, in an obscure agreement.

Third: Cuba, heroic and martyred, shattered and hungry, has been used as a bargaining chip, despite the Monroe Doctrine, the "Joint Resolution" of 1898, the Rio Janeiro [Inter-American] Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, the agreements of the Organization of American States, the Punta del Este Resolutions, the sovereign will of this nation expressed in the Resolution of Congress in September 1962 and the repeated offers of cooperation I have received.

Fourth: The Office of Coordination for Cuban Affairs, recently created and with headquarters in Miami, implementing a rapid liquidation of the Cuban process that is reflected, among other things, in the following facts:

- 1) the speedy relocation, outright dispersal of Cubans
- 2) the effort to stop at all costs the establishment, although transitory, of revolutionary Cuban bases of operation outside the Union's territory and its territorial waters
- 3) the persecution of revolutionaries in the ways I have outlined already, committed now to inquisitive interrogations

IV

General Considerations

These are, in grim reality, the facts. The repeatedly expressed assurances, the constantly renewed promises, have been suddenly broken, without notice – and without signaling new paths. Until today, I was encouraged, not by optimism without any basis, but rather by a rational feeling of security that Cuba would be liberated soon as a result of joint action by Cuban and North American forces with the unlimited support, moral and material, of the majority of the nations in the Hemisphere. But a violent and unexpected shift in the policy of the United States government has taken place – as dangerous and sudden as another previous one of sad recollection, that does not have any other reasonable explanation than the deal that refers to Russia's protest against Cuban action. It is necessary to understand this fact well: the attack on the Russian vessel was not carried out by North American forces nor in territorial waters of that country. Such a deal should be condemned with total vehemence, not only by the Cubans but by all free men of the Continent. No power can change the fate of our Homeland, because our freedom cannot be an object of negotiation.

Faced with this unexpected situation that destroys the patient work of the two years that I have been overseeing it in a minute, with the Council's total trust in me, I am left with no alternative but to resign the thorniest position that I have held. More so that my conduct can be judged fully throughout this long, interminable process that ends in distressing frustration, I should express the principles here in this instance that, in the midst of many compromises, I have rigidly upheld in the course of these two years.

a) The Alliance for Progress

First: I have maintained and I maintain that the "Latin American experts" do not sense the imminence of disaster for the whole Continent. They guarantee that the Alliance for Progress alone is the panacea for all the social ills of the common homeland. It is certainly a generous and necessary effort, whose success, in my opinion is conditional, on the eradication of the Cuban Communist Regime.

b) Isolation and the Economic Blockade

Second: I have maintained and I maintain that this is has a criminal purpose – [sentence missing—trans.] the economic asphyxiation that is exerted through a total embargo, prolong-

ing "without end" [*sine die*] the martyrdom of a people that has reached intolerable limits of its resistance to provoke an internal rebellion, can not be justified if the moment when it will end is not predetermined. To promote or attempt an insurrectional movement determined by desperation without coordinating it with warlike actions projected from abroad, among a population dominated by terror, will lead: 1) to rewriting the bleak story of Budapest [i.e. the Soviet crushing of the Hungarian revolt in 1956—ed.]; 2) to creating the myth of the invincibility of Fidel Castro; and 3) to bringing about negotiations for a coexistence that America has just condemned.

c) Feared World War and Permanent Revolution

Third: I have maintained and maintain that Khrushchev will not trigger a world war, due to the presence of North American troops combined with the efforts of Cuban combatants. Geographically, Cuba is outside the Soviet sphere of influence. Khrushchev will not provoke armed conflict. He showed this last 22 October. To the contrary, protected by his policy of threats, his hold over local communists in different parts of the Hemisphere will grow, day by day, and he will continue to extend his frontiers in [Latin] America. Permanent revolution is his objective. Venezuela is already burning thanks to Castro's decision, Colombia is burning thanks to Castro's decision, the convulsion in Argentina is consistent, and Marxist ferment in all other nations is a frightening sign of great cataclysms.

d) Cuba Outside the Regional System

Fourth: I have been opposed and I oppose the idea that the problem of Cuba is separated from the regional system and situated within a global strategy that leads the Comintern of imperial Russia towards achieving its unceasing hegemonic purpose. Cuba is essentially a regional problem. To isolate it from the American [i.e. hemispheric—trans.] community so that eventually, on any day of an uncertain year, Cuba's fate is unilaterally decided, is totally unacceptable for the decency of those of us that are proposing an honorable alliance. This would mean the nation's sovereignty would be devastatingly shipwrecked. I will never accept the idea of receiving an occupied island as a favor with attached conditions.

e) The alliance with the United States

Fifth: I have said and reiterated that the Cuban-North American alliance is justified by reasons that have deep historical roots and brings together the vital, permanent,

and reciprocal interests of both peoples perfectly: a) the Independence of Cuba and, b) the security of this nation, aspects that provide the tone and inform the political content of the Joint Resolution of 21 April 1898. "Cuba is and has the right to be free and independent," the legislative power of this nation [the United States] said on this historic occasion. By virtue of the "rough riders" under the leadership of "Teddy Roosevelt["] and the Mambises [the term used for Cubans who fought for independence—trans.] under the orders of Major General Calixto García they fought together in the hills of San Juan and put an end to Spanish power in America. This declaration is continuous. It is valid. Today our country has been converted into a Soviet province and the security of the United States is being threatened by a communist fortress in the Caribbean.

f) Our reiterated standpoints

Sixth: For the reasons outlined above and many others that could be added I have favored the alliance with the United States so that it is understood, with very good reason, that Cuba should be helped by the whole hemisphere. This obligation corresponds equally to all nations in the Continent because the survival of the essential values of man and of western civilization are being contested in these moments in Cuba: God, homeland, and family; as are as a consequence invaluable assets such as: democracy, independence, freedom, justice, and social well-being. The battle that Cuban patriotism is upholding is far more profound than the insurrection of a people against a typical [Latin] American dictatorship. It is a battle against a new phenomenon in America: the installation of a Communist Regime that demands everyone's assistance to destroy. This is what the unavoidable fulfillment of treaties demands.

f) Interventionism

Seventh: I am opposed to any type of intervention in the internal political affairs of another country when, as occurred in the past, the intervention is undertaken in favor of the intervening power. But in the Cuban crisis a completely reversed situation has arisen. With an extra-continental power having intervened evidently in our Homeland, the Rio de Janeiro Treaty [Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance] and other international instruments demand collective hemispheric action to put an end to this intervention. These instruments specifically state that this type of action does not constitute intervention.

f) Holocaust

Eighth: I have said and exhaustively repeated that we aim to raise, through joint effort, a monument to Victory, not an obelisk to martyrdom. As a result, in a constant way, with absolute clarity, I have suggested coexistence once again, the necessity of establishing an alliance on basis of mutual respect for a joint military action. This assumes "coordination of all forces" and "Cuban presence in the direction and execution of the plans that are agreed". To clarify my thinking: we are asking for coordination, we offer collaboration, but we will not allow Cuba to be excluded from the process. Our proposal was rejected in this opportunity. So we demanded, another time again, that we be given an analogous warlike capability to the one that Fidel Castro receives from the Soviet Union, so as to win a battle alone or succumb to a Holocaust together. The result was a sharp no. They closed all the doors. They have inexplicitly shut off our alliance from 1898.

V Final [Conclusion]

With the principles that have shaped my conduct in this process made clear I should say, so that it is known, not now by the Council, but rather by all compatriots, that after my last conversations in Washington, I can not believe in words that they outline, without defining, confused prospects for an imprecise and far-off liberation, denied by objective facts in the present. Dominated by the specter of uncertainty and the having lost trust in the realization of offered assurances, I cannot continue in the position of chair of the Council.

Cuba, however, cannot be delayed in its struggle. Today it needs, more than ever, all its forces to make the Homeland that its founders wanted a historic reality. The Revolutionary Council – that has offered exceptional work without publicity worthy of everyone's gratitude and that will be known in good time – should close ranks and confront adversity, as always, with resolve; examine the current reality with calm objectivity; study developing politics in relation to Cuba, Latin America, and the United States and continue the harsh road [ahead]. The sources of Cuban patriotism are inexhaustible, as inexhaustible as its moral reserves. God help everyone on this new journey!

I leave this post with the hope that another Cuban be appointed who, with the same love for his homeland but with more capacity and more ability than I, can achieve better auspices in the struggle that we are committed to. I leave this post, I repeat, but I do not desert the ranks. I will continue fighting as I have done until today, without measuring the hours, until I destroy Fidel Castro and his dishonorable

regime if, by the will of God, something does not happen beforehand to rescue us from all our anguish and suffering.

Miami, Tuesday 9 April 1963

José Miró Cardona

[Source: Archivo Histórico Diplomático Genaro Estrada, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City. Obtained by Jorge Mendoza Castro, translated by Anita Harmer and Tanya Harmer.]

Notes

1 The US withheld a formal commitment due to the lack of UN on-site inspection of the missiles' dismantling and removal, yet most observers—including Khrushchev—viewed JFK's vow as politically binding, at least on his administration.

2 Ed. note: Gen. Landsdale had been put in charge of the CIA's "Operation Mongoose" program of covert operations against Cuba in 1961.



Brazil and the Cuban Missile Crisis:

Documents from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Brasília

Documents obtained, translated, and introduced by James G. Hershberg¹

The translated Brazilian documents presented here, mostly ciphered telegrams from Rio's diplomatic outposts in Havana, Washington, and New York from October-November 1962, illuminate the foreign policy of South America's most populous and, arguably, most politically significant country during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Though often shortchanged (i.e., omitted altogether) in most narratives and the resulting historiography, Brazil actually played a quite active and interesting role in the missile crisis—an extension of its part as the confrontation between Washington and Havana expanded into not only a hemispheric conflict but a cold war flashpoint.

The documents were obtained during a 2000 research visit to the Archives of the Ministry of External Relations in Brasília and contributed to the author's 2004 analysis of Brazil and the missile crisis—particularly its quiet mediation effort between Washington and Havana—in the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, part of an ongoing project on the triangular US-Brazilian-Cuban relationship in the early 1960's.²

First some context. At the time of the crisis, Brazil was led by President João Goulart of the center-left Brazilian Workers Party (PTB), and beset by continuing political and economic instability. Relations with the United States were difficult. Goulart, who had taken over after his predecessor Janio Quadros' sudden resignation in August 1961, had in April 1962 visited Washington where he was hailed as a potential partner in the Kennedy Administration's "Alliance for Progress"—a program of economic aid intended to promote a democratic, reformist alternative to both right-wing military juntas and left-wing communist revolution. Yet, in the ensuing months, top US officials increasingly worried that Goulart might lead his country toward communism, either deliberately or through ineptitude and miscalculation, approved covert aid to his opponents, and flirted with a covert CIA plot to topple him.³

One factor that stirred US distrust of Brazil was its continued refusal to break relations with Havana, and continued promotion of a scheme to "neutralize" the island that would leave Fidel Castro's revolution in power. "I fear that Brazil underestimates the danger of Cuban ideological expansionism," JFK bluntly warned Goulart's ambassador.⁴ (Such apprehensions led Kennedy to term Latin America "the most dangerous area in the world."⁵) Nevertheless, Brazil had continued to resist Washington's efforts to rally the Organization of American States to approve harsh measures against Cuba—

for example, at the OAS conference in Punta del Este in January 1962—and consistently and strenuously denounced any intervention or interference in Cuba's internal affairs.

Hence, when the crisis erupted in October, both Washington and Havana looked to Rio de Janeiro—the capital was being moved to Brasília but most government business, including the work of Itamaraty, the foreign ministry, had not yet been transferred—for support. Brazilian leaders and diplomats, in turn, saw both danger—not only of an escalating conflict but potential reverberations in domestic politics and relations with Washington—and an opportunity to use its diplomacy to elevate their nation's standing on the world stage.

The documents below, in addition to relaying reports on developments and conversations in the US and Cuban capitals (and others) and at the United Nations and Organization of American States, offer information on several distinct aspects of Brazilian diplomacy at different locales related to the crisis.

The first relates to the politics at the Organization of American States (OAS), to which the Kennedy Administration turned on 23 October—the day after JFK announced the presence of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba—to seek support for the blockade ("quarantine") of the island to bar the entry of additional "offensive" weapons. Carefully hedging its bets, Brazil ended up voting for the "quarantine" but refused to endorse the use of force for any other objectives.

A second theme of many reports, especially but not only from Brazil's ambassador to the United Nations, concerns Brazil's promotion of a scheme to "denuclearize" Latin America (and possibly Africa) as a means to defuse the crisis over nuclear missiles in Cuba. As the documents show, at various moments Brazilian diplomats obtained encouraging hints from American and Soviet (and even Polish) officials that such a plan would be acceptable. Indeed, after Brazil advanced the idea at the UN at a time when Kennedy and his advisors were desperately seeking a way to get the Soviet missile out of Cuba without risking World War III, the denuclearization proposal received some favorable comment at the Excomm. After several weeks of diplomatic discussions, however, the plan ran into trouble: the Cubans insisted that any denuclearization plan also apply to US bases in Puerto Rico and the Panama Canal Zone, and be linked to a demand for the evacuation of foreign military bases in the hemisphere, including Guantanamo, as Castro had demanded as one of his

“five points” on 28 October. All this, of course, Washington rejected; and with Cuba so strongly opposed, Moscow also backed off; and by late November the plan had foundered, to Brazil’s considerable disappointment and chagrin.⁶ Yet it was not a total failure, as it foreshadowed the adoption, within five years, of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which was signed in Mexico City in 1967 (going into effect the following year) and prohibited nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁷

(In another ultimately futile initiative at the UN, Brazil also promoted the notion for ambassadors from neutral countries to inspect the dismantling and removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba in an attempt to sidestep Fidel Castro’s objections to formal UN inspection; Acting UN Secretary-General U Thant liked the idea, but failed to convince Havana to go along.⁸)

Perhaps the most mysterious Brazilian initiative during the crisis, however, concerned its sending of an emissary to Havana to meet with Fidel Castro just after the crisis climaxed, in an apparent “mediation” attempt (which the author described in depth in the *Journal of Cold War Studies* piece mentioned above). In fact, Brazil had periodically sought to mediate between Washington and Cuba’s revolutionary leadership since early 1960—both through its ambassador in Havana and various special missions—but it was during the missile crisis that this effort reached its climax. As reflected in the Chilean documents on this episode (see sidebar), many outside observers who noticed the sudden trip to Cuba by Goulart’s military aide, Gen. Albino Silva, presumed it was a purely Brazilian initiative, most likely in a misguided, vain, and even pretentious gesture to try to claim its relevance to the event that had seized the globe’s attention.⁹ What no one realized, however, was that in fact the trip had been inspired by a secret US appeal to Brazil on the night of 27 October to convey directly to Fidel Castro—in its own, not Washington’s name, and by a courier, without using diplomatic cables (which could be intercepted)—a potential deal: if the Cubans evicted the Soviet missiles (and broke off the wider military relationship with Moscow), they would be welcomed back into the hemispheric system, even by the (North) Americans. By the time Gen. Albino Silva made it to Havana, of course, Khrushchev had already agreed to remove the missiles, and exactly what transpired between him and Castro (who was unaware of any US inspiration for the Brazilian’s visit), and the consequences, if any, remain somewhat mysterious. The Cubans have not released any records on the visit, and the Brazilian’s own 14-page record has not been found. Yet, the Brazilian Embassy in Havana cabled a summary of the talk with Castro on 29 October, and it is included here.

The bulk of the cables reproduced here are reports from Brazil’s ambassadors in Washington, Roberto Campos, and in

Havana, Luis Bastian Pinto, who convey both their contacts with host government officials and other diplomatic colleagues, and their own interpretation of events. Both enjoyed fairly high-level access, which makes their cables particularly valuable; Campos had conversations with Dean Rusk and President Kennedy himself, while Pinto, during the crisis and immediately afterwards, had regular encounters with Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl Roa; an important talk with Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos on 27 October, amid fears of an imminent US invasion; and facilitated the visit of Gen. Albino Silva.¹⁰ The presence of a Brazilian embassy in Havana, contrary to US wishes, permitted an informed observer behind the “sugar cane curtain” to maintain ongoing contacts with not only Cuban government officials but also an eclectic group of diplomatic colleagues; Bastian Pinto worked closely with the Yugoslav ambassador during the crisis, and also—as the cables reveal—used contacts with communist diplomats to try to pierce the secrecy surrounding Anastas Mikoyan’s November conversations with his Cuban hosts. In addition to spot cables, several longer analyses of the impact of the crisis are also included.

It is also important to note what is missing from these documents. For one thing, as diplomatic cables, they do not discuss directly the Brazilian domestic political component of the missile crisis, which was very critical. US officials at many points suspected domestic political motives for Goulart’s actions (i.e., a desire not to alienate Cuban supporters and sympathizers on the Brazilian left).¹¹ Washington also closely (and happily) monitored what was widely believed to be a serious blow to Cuba’s image in Brazil sustained by the revelation that it had permitted the Soviets to station nuclear weapons on the island. In addition, as foreign ministry documents, they do not reveal much about decision-making processes or international contacts in other parts of the Brazilian Government, most importantly the president or prime minister’s office, although “Jango” Goulart in some cases directly communicated with his ambassadors in Havana, Washington, and New York during the crisis, as the documents do reflect. Finally, even within the foreign ministry materials, while I had considerable success obtaining cable traffic between Itamaraty and various Brazilian diplomatic missions, I was generally unable (with a few exceptions) to find the personal records of the foreign minister himself (i.e., contacts with other senior officials or with foreign counterparts or ambassadors) or the records of diplomatic contacts in Brazil itself—hence their absence from this collection.

It’s not clear whether additional Brazilian sources have subsequently become available (and there have been some disturbing reports of access to the Brazilian foreign ministry Archives shrinking since I visited in 2000¹²), but it *is* clear that

the Brazilian Archives—and those of other Latin American countries often marginalized in the historiography of the missile crisis (which focuses on US and Soviet actions) and even the now half-century-long US-Cuban confrontation—can greatly enrich the international history of both stories, and of the cold war as a whole.



Document No. 1

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Havana, 28 September 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

11674

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA

ON/28/28/IX/62

SECRET

DAC/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. Naval and aerial surveillance of the United States of America around Cuba.

319 – FRIDAY – 17hs45 – Supplementary to secret *ofício* nº 238. There does not remain any doubt that the United States is already exercising, in a systematic character, strict naval and aerial vigilance around Cuba. American ships are controlling at a distance of a few miles the entrances to various ports of this country. In the last days, the vigilance seems to have been reinforced, since, almost daily, the local press publishes photographs of Latin American planes flying over ships in the vicinity of Cuba. Ultimately, the aerial investigations also cover the movement of Cuban ships [*de cabotagem*]. According to a declaration to me, confidentially, the captain [*de caçadores*] of a French ship that just arrived in Havana (proceeding) from Russia, American planes, more than one time, requested that their ship identify themselves when it came near to Cuban waters. Until now, nevertheless, the only verified international incident was referred to in *ofício* nº 238. (I take the liberty to transmit a copy of this telegram to Ambassador Luiz Leivas Bastian Pinto in New York).

JOSÉ MARIA DINIZ RUIZ DE GAMBOA

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600. (24h)—SITUAÇÃO

POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962///,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasília, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 2

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Havana, 11:30 p.m., Tuesday, 2 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

11 817

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA

ON/2/3/X/62

SECRET

DAC/DOt/600.(24h)

Internal political situation of Cuba. Russian armament and military personnel.

323 – TUESDAY – 23hs30 – Supplementary to my secret *ofício* nº 239. Until now there is the following improved information in respect to the military situation in Cuba: 1) in the last two months there have arrived a great number of Czechoslovak and Russian anti-aircraft batteries already known here. Personally, I have seen on the quay of Havana roads, there are some already disembarked, of the models used here for transport of these armaments; 2) convoys of tanks and some launchers against torpedoes have been sighted in the early morning on the roads near the port of Mariel; 3) the latest news is up to that radar installations and electronic equipment are arriving, having, however, only speculation of what is its exact application; 4) there is no information about rockets of any type; 5) various news about the arrival and movement of paths of concrete [*caminhões de concreto*], that there appear to be significant application of known Cuban program of underground installations and anti-aircraft warehouses; 6) all indicates that the number of Russian military personnel recently disembarked already quite exceeds the total of four thousand and hundreds admitted by North-American sources. The true military technicians are, however, in a very limited number, The overwhelming majority are of an age little greater than 20 years and, according to agreement of all of the observers, do not constitute troops in the classical sense

of the word and, yes, young military personnel that have as their charge the operations of disembarkation, transport and installation of electronic equipment and of radar. Beyond the experts of the systems of communications, they have, also, chauffeurs, builders, etc.; 7) the Russian military personnel are seen in encampments of canvas in areas situated around Havana, Trinidad, Caibarien, and Banes. Before they are installed, the local residents have been evacuated. Arms have not been seen in the encampments. All wear ordinary sports clothes. This afternoon, I was personally this afternoon in two sites where some hundreds of them are camped. There is no doubt that they exist and that their physical type is unequivocally Russian. (I retransmit this telegram to Ambassador Luiz Leivas Bastian Pinto, in Washington).

JOSÉ MARIA DINIZ RUIZ DE GAMBOA

[Source: "ANEXO Secreto—600. (24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962///," *Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 3

Telegram from Brazilian Delegation at the 17th Session of the UN General Assembly (Afonso Arinos), New York, 9:15 p.m., Sunday, 7 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12 022

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS—NEW YORK

ON/7/8/X/62

SECRET

DEA/DNU/DAC/DOr/600.(24h)

Meeting of Chancellors. Interview with the Polish Chancellor.

46—SUNDAY – 21hs15 – Minister Geraldo de Carvalho Silos and I had today, by invitation, an interview with the

Polish Chancellor [Adam] Rapacki, who was accompanied by Ambassadors Winiewicz and Beustajn. The intention of the Polish minister was to hear the Brazilian delegation in respect to the informal meeting in Washington. I gave him an account that, not without touching on certain details of importance, did not go beyond which could be found published in the news sections and [*augerido*] in the editorials of the North American press. The Polish government seems seriously preoccupied with the consequences of what Rapacki called the "economic blockade" of Cuba, giving the impression that they fear Soviet retaliation which could prejudice their own commercial interests and the relative political flexibility of which Poland enjoys in the context of the socialist countries. Rapacki told us expressly that the closure of maritime routes to normal commerce might be followed by similar measures as for land routes in other regions. He gave credit to our thought that he reported watching carefully over the measures of isolating commerce of the Iron Curtain countries, including many of the nations of Eastern Europe. I tried to give him the impression that the current severity against Cuba may diminish after the American elections or with the progress of negotiations in other fields, including in the disarmament but he did not seem to me at all convinced. He told us that after the conversation that he had with Fidel Castro and other leaders, in his recent visit to Havana, he stressed the impression that the Cubans are in a phase of intense internal discussions to choose its own direction within the socialist orbit...they are very [*ciosos*] of the intellectual independence and withdrawal of everything that appears with a rigid external orientation even unsolicited advice. He gave the impression that Cuba could evolve in any case into a type of the Yugoslav regime. We are surprised with this declaration, but it was [*foi feita nos termos em que*] with us like I have indicated. To end the conversation I made the gestures solicited in your telegram, secret, nº 18, the Chancellor responded that he will inform his government about the fact and afterwards will give an answer whether here or in Rio de Janeiro.

EXTERIORES

[Source: "M.D.B.—CB OI—SECRETO—CONSULADOS DIVERSOS NO INTERIORE EXTERIOR—TELEGRAMAS—CTs—RECEBIDAS E EXPEDIDAS—1962," CX 49 (retransmitted to Brazilian Embassy in Warsaw on 22 October 1962: see "ANEXO Secreto—600. (24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//"), *Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 4

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Havana (de Gamboa), 4:45 p.m., Monday, 8 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12052

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA

ON/8/8/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DAC/DO_r/DAS/DEA/600.(24h)

Cuban situation. Soviet help.

330 – MONDAY – 16hrs45 – Supplementary to my telegram no 327. The speech of Cuban President Dorticós, in the UN, was extremely ponderous and even conservative, by Cuban standards. He alluded at length to the North-American threats against this country, evidencing therefore, one more time, the “complex of invasion” that has motivated in large measures the comportment of the revolutionary government in international politics. Enlarging the tones of the Cuban communication of the 30th [of September], Dorticós declared that his Government is ready to negotiate its differences with the United States and to challenge that country to introduce an identical proposition. He affirmed, moreover, that Cuba desires a “policy of peace and of coexistence” with all countries of the Continent, within an “absolute respect to the principle of non-intervention.”

JOSÉ MARIA DINIZ LUIZ DE GAMBOA

...

[Source: “MDB—Telegramas Recebidas—Havana—1962/1964,” CX 229, Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasília, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 5

Telegram from Brazilian Delegation at the 17th UN General Assembly, New York, 7:45 p.m., Monday, 8 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12.597

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS—NEW YORK

ON/6/8/X/62

SECRET-URGENT

DNU/DAC/600.(24h)

Informal Meeting of Chancellors. Question of Cuba in Council of OAS.

43 – MONDAY – 19hs45 – [CUBAN] PRESIDENT [OSVALDO] DORTICOS INVITED ME TO HIS HOTEL WHERE HE RECEIVED ME IN THE COMPANY OF [FOREIGN] MINISTER [RAUL] ROA AND THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UN. I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY [BRAZILIAN] AMBASSADOR [TO CUBA] LUIS LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO AND MINISTER ROBERTO ASSUMPÇÃO. DÓRTICOS SAID TO ME THAT HE CAME TO NEW YORK TO INFORM THE WORLD OF THE CUBAN SITUATION. A DEVICE OF AGGRESSION IS FORMING AROUND CUBA AT THE SAME TIME THAT A WORLD CAMPAIGN TO SHOW CUBA AS THE AGGRESSOR COUNTRY IS BEING MOUNTED. HE SAID THAT WHEN HE DENOUNCED THE GIRON BEACH [BAY OF PIGS] AS THE SAME MANEUVER HE WAS BELIEVED ALTHOUGH AFTERWARDS PRESIDENT KENNEDY HAS CONFIRMED HIS WORDS. HE OBSERVED THAT CUBA DOES NOT DESIRE TO BE ARMED MORE THAT IT HAS TO FOR DEFENSE. HE SAID THAT IT WOULD BE A FATAL ERROR TO BELIEVE THAT THE AGGRESSION WOULD BE RESOLVED IN THE CONTINENT. TO HIM IT WOULD BE THE BEGINNING OF A WORLD WAR. HE INSISTED THAT HE COULD NOT HELP BUT MAKE THIS DENOUNCIATION TO THE WORLD. HE ENDED REQUESTING MY OPINION ABOUT WHAT HE HAD SAID. I RESPONDED THAT

BRAZIL WAS IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE REST OF THE NATIONS OF AMERICA IN COMMON EFFORTS AGAINST IDEOLOGICAL INFILTRATION AND REVOLUTIONARY SUBVERSION OF COMMUNISM. THAT THIS LINE IS MAINTAINED, SINCE WE ARE ABLE TO RESOLVE OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INSTABILITY IN A DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT [QUADRO]. THIS REMARK OF SHARP FORM WAS HEARD WITHOUT COMMENTARIES, [AJUNTEI] THAT BRAZIL ALSO DEFENDED, I REPEAT DEFENDED, THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERVENTION AND OF SELF-DETERMINATION AND THEREFORE, [WOULD] NOT HAMPER WITH AGGRESSIVE SYSTEM AGAINST CUBA BECAUSE OF THE REGIME [ALÁ] IN FORCE. [AJUNTEI] THAT SUCH A PRINCIPLE WAS NOT OUR THEORETICAL POSITION BUT A UNIQUE FORM THAT WE CONCEIVE TO DEFEND THE PEACE. HE SAID THAT BRAZIL WITHOUT BEING A MILITARY POWER, WAS, HOWEVER, A COUNTRY WITH RESPONSIBILITIES IN DEFENSE OF WORLD PEACE AND THAT SUCH DEFENSE DEPENDS ON THE RESPECT TO THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF PEOPLES, SINCE IN A NUCLEAR ERA EITHER THIS WILL FOLLOW OR DISASTER WILL COME FOR ALL. THE PRESIDENT SAID THEN THAT HE UNDERSTANDS AND AGREES WITH OUR POSITION AND ASSURED THAT CUBA NEVER WILL CARRY OUT ANY ACTS OR ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE BRAZILIAN ORGANIZATION THAT RESPECTS THE FORM OF OUR WAY OF LIFE [ESCOLHIDA PARA VIVER]. HE REITERATED THE DESIRE OF CUBA TO RESOLVE PEACEFULLY ALL OF ITS PROBLEMS, INCLUDING WITH THE UNITED STATES AND CITED HERE THE CASE OF GUANTANAMO. HE SEEMED TO ME SERIOUSLY PREOCCUPIED AND TENDING TO NEGOTIATIONS. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TRY OUT [words undecipherable] SAID WITH A CONFIDENTIAL CHARACTER, [AJUTANDO] THAT HE HAS BEEN ALWAYS WORKING FOR PEACE, THAT HE HEARD FROM SECRETARY RUSK THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT ATTACK CUBA EXCEPT FOR IN EXTREME CASES, THAT HE QUOTED. THE PRESIDENT LISTENED ATTENTIVELY AND RETORTED THAT HIS VIEW THAT THE RISK CONTINUES SINCE THIS COUNTRY HAS RESERVED THE RIGHT IN CERTAIN CASES OF INTERVENTION AND CONSIDERING THAT SUCH CASES WERE ABLE TO BE MANUFACTURED [FORJADOS]. HE ENDED

SENDING WARM COMPLIMENTS TO PRESIDENT JOÃO GOULART. IN WHOSE NAME I RESPONDED.

AFONSO ARINOS DE MELLO-FRANCO

[Source: "M.D.B.—CB OI—SECRETO—CONSULADOS DIVERSOS NO INTERIORE EXTERIOR—TELEGRAMAS-CTs—RECEBIDAS E EXPEDIDAS—1962, MISSÃO DO BRASIL À ONU," Cx 49, Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 7 p.m., Monday, 22 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12619

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON
ON/22/23/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL—EXTREMELY URGENT
DAC/DAS/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

770 – MONDAY – 19hs00 – Since yesterday, Sunday [21 October], ...large and expectant in Washington, provoked by the sudden return to the capital of President Kennedy, who was on the electoral campaign, under the allegation that he had the flu; the return of President Kennedy coincided with the immediate meeting in Washington of the Vice-President [Lyndon B. Johnson], who was in Hawaii, of Adlai Stevenson and the Parliamentary [Congressional] leaders such as [Everett] Dirksen, [Leslie C.] Arends, [Charles A.] Halleck, Hinckenlooper and [J. William] Fulbright, the head [chair] of the Committee on Foreign Relations in the Senate. I observed also that since yesterday there have been frequent meetings and consultations between the principal members and organs of the government, especially of the Department of State and the Pentagon. Until this moment nothing has transpired, but all leads to the [belief] that an elaborate decision of great significance is in progress. It is speculated that this decision may refer to Berlin or to Cuba or to the situation of the con-

flict between India and China. The facts however appear, to indicate that it probably deals with Cuba; the aircraft carrier "Enterprise" was launched yesterday from the coast of Puerto Rico, sailing toward the south; one finds in the area of the Caribbean 20,000 men, 40 ships and 6,000 American naval riflemen in readiness; the Navy cancelled, suddenly, maneuvers that were planned, without much explication; the group of Cuban exiles, known as "Alpha 66," shows itself each time more aggressive, appears disposed to attack English [British] ships in the Caribbean, already having undertaken military actions against the coasts of Cuba. I continue to think on the hypothesis of [word cut off] have verified some of the predicted cases of President Kennedy, which justify drastic actions on the part of the United States of America, such as the supply of offensive arms to Cuba or exportation of military equipment of Cuba for some countries of the Caribbean. The Council of International Security [National Security Council] met today at 1500hs with the President, who convened the Cabinet at 1600hs today. It is expected that Senator Fulbright will make a declaration this afternoon and the president himself will speak to the nation this evening at 19hs00, speculating about the possibility that he will announce the initiation of a blockade of Cuba.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: MD—Washington—Telgr.—Cartas—Receb.—Exped.—1962 (7 à XII), (Cx 324), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the Annual Conference of CIES, Celso Furtado), Mexico City, 9 p.m., Monday, 22 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12.610

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF CIES – MEXICO
ON/22/23/X/62

SECRET—URGENT

DAC/DAS/DCET/DEA/600.(24h)

Return to Washington of the North-American Secretary of Treasury. Question of Cuba.

19 – MONDAY – 2100hs – In a conversation with him which I had today, the secretary of the treasury [C. Douglas Dillon] of the United States declared to me that he would return tomorrow for Washington, in view of the situation described in the speech of President Kennedy, relative to Cuba. As I pondered to him the repercussions that his departure can have on the Conference and made to him an appeal to remain here, at least until the representatives of Latin America have made their speeches, Secretary Dillon literally lost control, declaring, visibly upset, that the situation in Cuba was of such gravity that he could not say if there will be or not a world nuclear war by the weekend.

CELSO FURTADO

[Source: "ANEXO Secreto—600. (24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the Annual Conference of CIES, (Celso Furtado), Mexico City, 11:30 p.m., Monday, 22 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12611

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF CIES – MEXICO
ON/22/23/X/62

SECRET—URGENT
DAC/DAS/DOr/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

20 – MONDAY – 2330hs – Supplementary to my telegram no 19. In the conversation with [US Treasury Secretary C. Douglas] Dillon, I recall the impression that the American

government considers the speech of Kennedy as an ultimatum to the USSR on the Cuban question.

CELSO FURTADO

[Source: "ANEXO Secreto—600.(24b)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 6

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 1 a.m., Tuesday, 23 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12602

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON
ON/22/22/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL—URGENT
DAS/DAC/DOt/DEA//600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. Declaration of President Kennedy.

774 – TUESDAY – 0100hs – Adding to my telegram 773 and referencing the text of the speech of President Kennedy, already delivered by Ambassador [Lincoln] Gordon to the President of the Republic. I have been informed, after a meeting at the Department of State, that [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk justifies as follows the severity of the American reaction to the installation of remote-controlled missiles of medium and intermediate range, detected by aerial photography, only on the 14th [of October]: 1) Cuba and the USSR were warned by the United States that it would not tolerate offensive installations: North American inaction would undermine the credibility of the Western system of defense; 2) the remote-controlled missiles in Cuba are of the type never supplied not even to the satellite members of the Warsaw Pact, indicating a visible intention to intimidate Latin America, putting, in the first place, all the Caribbean and the north of South

America, reaching Lima, the Northeast of Brazil, Columbia and Venezuela under nuclear sight. Beyond this, the internal political press blocks Kennedy from any accommodating attitude. The plane of action is as follows: 1) to obtain the endorsement of the OAS on the base of article six of the Treaty of Rio for a naval quarantine and interception of ships of any nationality that carries offensive materials, with the hope not to permit the arrival of new offensive remote-controlled missiles, but, also, of nuclear warheads [*cargas*] for those already installed, not knowing, until this moment, if the respective missiles [*ogivas*] have already arrived in Cuba; 2) the resolution approved by the OAS, the Soviet government will be notified and be given several hours' time to return its ships to Russian ports, avoiding North American naval action; 3) the blockade will be suspended when the UN observers visit Cuba and monitor the dismantling of the offensive installations; 4) how many of the nuclear missiles [*porventura*] already arrived in Cuba, it is not specified which means of eliminating them, constituting a subsequent problem of the United States that, probably, must be resolved by an ultimatum to Cuba to destroy or return the missiles. The Council of the OAS will convene tomorrow, the 23rd, at nine o'clock in the morning and transforming in [to] a provisional meeting of consultation, the United States is hoping, also tomorrow, for approval of the resolution the text already transmitted to Ambassador Penna Marinho, authorizing individual and collective action, including the use of armed forces [.] for blocking the arrival of offensive armament or installation of missiles. I call attention to the language used in paragraph two of the resolution giving a blank check [*carta branca*] not only for the blockade but for any other military action, in the individual judgment of the country that adopts it, agreeing that we are alerted by not having specified the measures. Simultaneously, the United States convened the UN Security Council to pass a resolution, calling on the Soviet Union to cease its offensive shipments for Cuba and declaring that the blockade will cease when UN observers, admitted onto Cuban territory, verify the dismantling of the offensive remote-controlled missiles. In case of a probable veto in the Security Council the matter will be raised to the General Assembly. The situation is extremely dangerous, the State Department admitting of the hypothesis of nuclear war, with which it anticipates that one of the following hypotheses will prevail: A) Russian retreat, choosing the return of its ships; B) American interception without a Russian nuclear response; C) increasing the Russian pressure in other areas, without nuclear conflict.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: MD—Washington—Telgr.-Cartas—Receb.-Exped.—1962 (7 á XII), (Cx 324), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 7

Telegram from Brazilian Foreign Ministry to
Brazilian Delegation at the OAS, Washington,
Tuesday, 23 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS
TO THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES --
WASHINGTON
CONFIDENTIAL
On 23 of outubro de 1962
SSE/DEA/DAS/DAC/DAM/DOR/600.(24h)

Telegram No. to send
Index: Question of Cuba in Council of OAS.

- 221 -

SUPPLEMENTARY TO MY TELEGRAM Nº 220
COMPLEMENTING THE INSTRUCTIONS THAT
I TRANSMITTED IN THE MORNING. YOUR
EXCELLENCY IS AUTHORIZED TO VOTE, IN
CASE OUR SUGGESTIONS IN THE FORM OF AN
AMENDMENT ARE NOT ACCEPTED, FOR THE
PART OF THE NORTH-AMERICAN RESOLUTION
THAT PRESCRIBES THE ARMS EMBARGO AND THE
INSPECTION OF SHIPS THAT DEMAND PORTS
IN CUBA. THIS ATTITUDE IS JUSTIFIED AND
CONSISTENT WITH THE VOTE THAT WE CAST IN
PUNTA DEL ESTATE ON THE PART OF RESOLUTION
Nº 8 THAT DETERMINED THE EMBARGO OF
COMMCERCE OF ARMS AND WARLIKE MATERIAL
FOR CUBA. IN THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE COUNCIL
DECIDING FOR AN IMMEDIATE VOTE OF
PARAGRAPH 2º OF THE NORTH AMERICAN DRAFT
RESOLUTION, IN CASE THE USE OF ARMED FORCE
IS FORECAST, YOUR EXCELLENCY WILL DECLARE
THAT BRAZIL WILL BE ABLE TO DETERMINE ITS
POSITION AFTER AN INVESTIGATINO ON THE
PART OF UNITED NATIONS OBSERVERS, IN ORDER
TO PROVE THE ACCUSATIONS FORMULATED

IN THE DRAFT RESOLUTION AGAINST THE
CUBAN GOVERNMENT. YOUR EXCELLENCY
WILL ADD THAT AS I DECLARED TO PRESIDENT
KENNEDY, THE BASES FOR LAUNCHING REMOTE-
CONTROLLED MISSLES ARE STILL UNDER
CONSTRUCTION, THERE SHOULD NOT BE AN
IMMEDIATE RISK FOR THE SECURITY OF THE
HEMISPHERE IN THE TIME THAT SHOULD
ELAPSE NECESSARILY BETWEEN TO TAKE A FINAL
DELIBERATION ON THE PROBLEM AND THE
INVITATION OF UNITED NATIONS OBSERVERS. IF
IT IS STILL LIKE THIS YOUR EXCELLENCY CALLED
TO VOTE ON THE DRAFT RESOLUTION IN THE
CURRENT TERMS, YOU SHOULD DECLARE THAT,
WITHTOUT PREJUDICE TO OUR SOLIDARITY
WITH THE COUNTRIES OF THE HEMISPHERE
AND WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
AND THE FUTURE POSITIONS THAT WE WILL
ADOPT IN LIGHT OF THE MAIN EXPLANATIONS
REGARDING THE SITUATION, WE ARE UNABLE TO
PARTICIPATE IN VOTING FOR WE DO NOT HAVE,
IN OUR OPINION, THE COMPLETED PROCESS
NECESSARY FOR TAKING SUCH GRAVE DECISIONS.

EXTERIORES

[Source: "O.E.A.—Telegramas Recebidas e Expedidas—1962,"
Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil.
Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 8

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Washington
(Campos), 1 p.m., Tuesday, 23 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12 633

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON
ON/23/23/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL—EXTREMELY URGENT

DAS/DAC/DNU/DOr/600(24h)

Question of Cuba. Denuclearization of Latin America.

775 – TUESDAY – 13hs00 – THE CUBAN SITUATION PRESENTS A TEST TO PROPOSE FORMALLY [AT THE] UN DENUCLEARIZATION [OF] LATIN AMERICA TRANSFORMING INTO RESOLUTION SUGGESTION CONTAINED SPEECH SENATOR [BRAILIAN UN AMBASSADOR] AFONSO ARINOS OPENING [UN GENERAL] ASSEMBLY. ACCORDING TO A NOTE THE SOVIET VICE-MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FUEL [sic—FROL] KOZLOV, HAS AT LUNCH OFFERED IN MOSCOW [TO] [WITH BRAZILIAN] AMBASSADOR VASCO LEITÃO [DA CUNHA] SUPPORT [FOR] THIS IDEA. A UN DECISION TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE QUESTION WOULD PERMIT CUBA [AND THE] SOVIET UNION TO SAVE FACE[,] DIMINISHING THE DANGEROUS DIRECT CONFRONTATION.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: MD—Washington—Telgr.-Cartas—Receb.-Exped.—1962 (7 á XII), (Cx 324), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 9

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 7 p.m., Tuesday, 23 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12 652

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON
ON/23/23/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL—EXTREMELY URGENT
DAS/DAC/DOr/DNU/DEA/600(24h)

Question of Cuba.

777 – TUESDAY – 1900hs – [Assistant] Secretary [of State for inter-American Affairs Edwin] Martin addressed me with appeal to check the possibility of voting for a unanimous resolution alleging that Mexico [and] Chile have joined. In the company of Ambassador Penna Marinho I addressed the State Department proposing that we accept dismembering [aceitassem desmembrar] two distinct paragraphs the actual paragraph two for it to be unanimous to accept the blockade becoming only subject to the prior proof by UN observers of the character of the offensive arms already installed in Cuba by further measures intended to stop their nuclear activation. Ambassador Penna Marinho and I argued that this separation is harmless since the current draft was so full that to justify actions such as bombardment or invasion measures of such gravity that should not be taken before Cuba and the Soviet Union, under international pressure, have had an opportunity to interrupt the installation of remote-controlled missiles. Martin responded 1) That there is no time for further negotiations with a view to the unanimity of the text since it is necessary to have a solution even today preferably, before 16 hours [4 p.m.] when the UN Security Council will meet; 2) That they are not able to predict the rapid evolution of events which the necessary measures [quais as medidas necessárias] the North American government does not desire to be dependent on the UN and the OAS making new decisions if one admits various hypotheses as voluntary decisions of the Russians or Cubans to suspend the assembly of the remote-controlled rockets[;] pressure of the method/mood [modo] of the blockade to provoke an insurrection in Cuba[;] limited bombardments specifically on rocket bases[;] and invasion. Contrary to what seemed prior yesterday I have the impression that the American government foresees the possibility to have to undertake military action perhaps through non-nuclear very limited bombardment if it is proven that Cuba already possesses nuclear missiles and if these are not dismantled or returned to the Soviet Union; 3) That the Russians and Cubans have not since yesterday denied the offensive character of the equipment for which exists full confirmation from aerial photographic information; 4) That the American government gave instructions to its armed forces for the application of the blockade to make it possible to avoid bloodshed, [and] should in case of necessity shoot against the rudder of the ships that try to force the blockade; methods of intercepting aerial transports were also being studied, without revealing details. The OAS Council now starts the session headed to approve the North-American draft resolution. Ambassador Penna Marinho will vote [votará] in favor of the blockade, abstaining from voting on the second part of the second paragraph, giving the explanation of the vote and will vote in favor

of the body of the resolution. The Secretary Martin put forward that, soon, there will be fully disseminated, to convince Latin American public opinion of the gravity of the threat, photographs of the remote-controlled missiles in Cuba.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: MD—Washington—Telgr.-Cartas—Receb.-Exped.—1962 (7 á XII), (Cx 324), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 10

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 5 p.m., Wednesday, 24 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12.698

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON

ON/24/24/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL—EXTREMELY URGENT

DAS/DAC/DOr/DNU/DEA/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

781 – WEDNESDAY – 1700hs – Disconnected rumors continue about the possible Russian reaction. As for the negative aspects aggravating the tension, one can cite the refusal of Fidel Castro to accept inspection and the declaration of [Soviet Ambassador Valerian] Zorin in the Security Council that not one nation with *respect [que se respeita]* would tolerate interference with its ships. The journalistic speculation is divided into three courses: (A) that the Russian navies have received orders to continue on route, creating naval incidents with the Americans; (B) that the navies have been held on the high sea, awaiting the protection of the Soviet fleet; (C) that they are making preparations for an invasion of Cuba. There is not, however, any authorized indication of the Soviet reaction to the quarantine that is initiated today, at the 10 hours, except the suggestion of Khrushchev, in his letter to Bertrand

Russell, that the Soviet Union will not take hurried measures and would favor a summit meeting. There is an urgent necessity for creative formulas that, avoiding humiliation for both sides, reduces the tension. I return, for this reason, to suggest the possibility that the Latin Americans and the Africans present immediately in the UN, where Venezuela, Chile, the UAR [Egypt] and Ghana are seated on the Security Council a proposal for the denuclearization of Latin America and Africa under UN inspection. In case the question by virtue of a veto in the [S]ecurity Council, it can pass to the General Assembly, where Brazil itself could lead [*capitanear*] the pro-denuclearization movement, certainly all of Latin America and the neutral world would combine, with perhaps the exception of the UAR, [in view of--*dada*] the nuclear program of Nasser. In this hypothesis, the naval inspection would pass from American hands to an international force and maybe, still later ...possible to persuade Fidel Castro to accept the inspection on Cuban territory. A subsidiary hypothesis would be the denuclearization as well of the Middle East, that taking in Israel and ... the abandonment of NATO's nuclear installations in Turkey, today already considered obsolete. These measurements represent a smaller price to pay for world peace than concessions in Berlin, where the allied position is irreducible, and in Formosa, where it can become more difficult, [in view of--*dada*] the Chinese aggressiveness in relation to India.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: MD—Washington—Telgr.-Cartas—Receb.-Exped.—1962 (7 á XII), (Cx 324), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 11

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 5:15 p.m., Wednesday, 24 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12695

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON

ON/24/24/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL—EXTREMELY URGENT

DAS/C/430. (22)(42)

Postponement of visit of President Kennedy's visit to Brazil.

782 – WEDNESDAY – 1715hs – THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS JUST INFORMED ME THAT PRESIDENT KENNEDY IS SENDING A LETTER TO PRESIDENT GOULART SUGGESTING THE POSTPONEMENT OF HIS VISIT [TO BRAZIL]. IN VIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL TENSION, HOWEVER, NO DECISION WILL BE TAKEN REGARDING THE POSTPONEMENT BEFORE GETTING TO KNOW THE OPINION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: MD—Washington—Telgr.-Cartas—Receb.-Exped.—1962 (7 à XII), (Cx 324), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 12

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 5 p.m., Wednesday, 24 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13050

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA

ON/24/25/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL URGENT

DEA/DNU/DAC/DAM/600.(24h)

96†.

Question of Cuba. Lack of communications and of food. Retention of European navies for eventual departure of families of diplomats.

342 – WEDNESDAY – 1700hs – With the interruption of all routes of aviation for Cuba we find ourselves, now, totally isolated. The supply of foodstuffs and other articles for members of this Embassy and for the asylum-seekers will become a grave problem within a few days. It is possible, also, that at any moment telegram and telephone communications may be cut as has already happened here several times, including recently, during the attack on Havana, last August. The Western diplomats are very worried, including with the problem of eventual evacuation of their families; some are intending to hold back, in their efforts for this end, two European navies that one encounters here.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “MDB—Telegramas Recebidas—Havana—1962/1964,” (CX 229), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 13

Telegram from Brazilian Delegation to the OAS, Washington, 9:30 p.m., Wednesday, 24 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12729

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES -- WASHINGTON

ON/24/24/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DEA/DNU/DAM/DAC/DO†/600.(24h)

96†.

Question of Cuba in Council of OAS.

507 – WEDNESDAY – 2130hs – The Council met today, again, in ordinary session, to consider the matter to which was referred in my telegrams 488 and 496. The Council persisted, by decision of the president, to take as the basis of its deci-

sions the press communication of the Informal Meeting [of Foreign Ministers in early October], I made a long declaration protesting against the criteria adopted and whose text was sent by CT [*carta telegrama*]. Expressing my opinion afterward, about the merit of the motion presented by the American delegation, I said that I was unable to approve it in first place for referring to the “press communication,” a document of which we have not recognized the status as a final act or the basis of deliberation of the Council, and in the second place, for doubts regarding the possibility that the Consultative Commission of Security, still without statutes, can have other functions besides those clearly prescribed in the second Resolution of Punta del Este. At the proposal of Venezuela a modification was made, withdrawing the expression “press communication.” But, even so, I abstained. Accompanying me in abstention [were] Mexico and Chile that supported me fully and still without instructions Uruguay and Ecuador. With this position I wanted also, to demonstrate that our solidarity is not rhetorical [*irretorquível*] in that it is substantive, fundamental, but we guard our full freedom of action [except that?] which we consider adjective [*adjetivo*] and operational.

ILMAR PENNA MARINHO

[Source: “O.E.A.—*Telegramas Recebidas e Expedidas—1962*,” *Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil*. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 14

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 12:45 p.m., Thursday, 25 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12 761

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/25/25/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL—EXTREMELY URGENT
DEA/DNU/DAC/DAM/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. Declaration of Minister of External Relations.

345 – THURSDAY – 12hs45 – I have just been with the Minister of External Relations [Raul Roa] who requested me to assure Your Excellency of the total falsity of the accusation that, in Cuba, there exists any offensive armament and that Cuba solely desires effective guarantees in respect to its integrity and sovereignty and, in this case, is ready even to dissolve its Army. He appeared to be relatively cheerful with the latest news originating from the UN.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “MDB—*Telegramas Recebidas—Havana—1962/1964*,” (CX 229), *Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil*. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 14

Telegram from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry to the Brazilian Embassy in Washington, Thurs. eve., 25 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE
TO THE EMBASSY OF BRAZIL IN
FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS
WASHINGTON.

CONFIDENTIAL

DAS/Dor/DAC/DNU/DEA/600.(24h) Em 25 de outubro de 1962

Telegram No. To send
Index: Question of Cuba.

About the note of the Soviet government concerning the Cuban situation, [Brazilian] Ambassador [in Moscow] Vasco Leitão da Cunha has the following commentaries: 1) it seems to me less firm [*dura*] than expected and certainly less firm than the pronouncement of President Kennedy; 2) he feels that the Soviets fear war more than the North-Americans; 3) at no point [does the Soviet government] specifically refute the NorthAmerican affirmation that it is sending an amount of offensive armament with Cuba, limiting itself to reiterating

that the Cuban-Soviet accord of 3 September for defensive military help to Cuba continues in force [*de pé*]; 4) it does not say explicitly what this Government will do when the Soviet boats on route to Cuba are searched, limiting itself to the generic affirmation that such measures can have catastrophic effects for all of humanity; 5) before the extremely hard tone of the North-American note, the Government looked to [associate] itself, with evidently propagandistic proposals, in legal clashes [*embates jurídicos*], such as the illegality of the blockade and the alleged violation of the UN Charter; 6) the presence of warlike offensive material in Cuba has an objective more political than military, to dramatize in the extreme the question of military bases on foreign territory, a question that until the present moment has not been raised with due account for vast segments of world opinion; 7) at no moment does the Soviet note establish a counterpart to the declaration of Kennedy in the sense that the attack of the United States against Cuba will be considered an attack of the United States against the USSR. Ambassador Vasco Leitão da Cunha informs that even if diplomats accredited here manifest apprehension on the measures announced yesterday by this government, it is making difficult a retreat for considerations of international prestige and national pride. Others yes, manifest apprehension before the fact of that about two tens of Soviet ships if find the way to Cuba. The decisive test of intentions of this Government will be given at the time of the review of the ships by the North-American war vessels, in order to put in practice the points announced by Kennedy. I request to give knowledge of this telegram to Ambassador Afonso Arinos.

EXTERIORES

[handwritten approvals indicate it was sent on the evening of 25 October 1962, after 9 p.m.]

[Source: MD—Washington—Telgr.-Cartas—Receb.-Exped.—1962 (7 á XII), (Cx 324), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 15

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), Noon, Friday, 26 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12.830

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON

ON/26/26/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL—URGENT

DAS/DAC/DEA/DNU/DOr/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

795 – FRIDAY – 1200hs – SUPPLEMENTARY TO MY TELEGRAM Nº 790. AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF THE LAST EVENTS IN THE CUBAN CRISIS LEADS ME TO SOME CONCLUSIONS LIKELY TO AUTHORIZE A QUITE GRAVE FORECAST OF THE CURRENT SITUATION. TWO ...[*SÃO OS*] IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES OF THE NORTHAMERICAN GOVERNMENT ACCORDING TO WHAT WAS DEFINED IN THE SPEECH OF KENNEDY ON THE 22ND ARE CURRENT: A) TO BLOCK NEW OFFENSIVE ARMS FROM ARRIVING IN CUBA; B) TO OBTAIN THE DISMANTLING OR REMOVAL OF THE PRESENT WARLIKE INSTALLATIONS OF AN OFFENSIVE NATURE. VARIOUS FACTORS MAKE WITH WHAT TO BE ALMOST THAT EXCLUSIVELY WITH FOCUS ON THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: IMMEDIATE BEGINNING OF THE BLOCKADE, UNANIMITY OF SUPPORT OF LATIN-AMERICA AND GENERAL SUPPORT OF EUROPE, EFFECTIVENESS OF THE QUARANTINE, MODERATE REACTION OF THE SOVIET UNION AND TRANQUILITY OF THE FIRST CONTACT OF THE AMERICAN SQUADRON WITH THE RUSSIAN SHIPS, SOLID INTERNAL SOLIDARITY TO THE PRESIDENTIAL DECISION. THESE SAME FACTORS THAT ASSURE THE POLITICAL SUCCESS OF THE BLOCKADE, LINKED TO THE INCREDIBILITY THAT THERE WILL BE APPLIED DIRECT MILITARY ACTION AGAINST CUBA TO DESTROY THE CURRENT INSTALLATIONS TOGETHER WITH THE BEGINNING OF DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS IN THE UN WOULD MAKE WITH THAT WILL SHIFT AWAY FROM THE FOCUS SECONDARY OBJECTIVE OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. IT APPEARS TO ME UNDENIABLE, HOWEVER, THAT ONE WILL SEE THE PATH GRADUALLY PREPARING THE GROUND FOR SECURING [*CONSECUÇÃO*] THE SECOND OBJECTIVE THAT APPEARS TO REVEAL THE

FOLLOWING CHAIN OF CIRCUMSTANCES: 1) IN HIS SPEECH ON THE 22ND, KENNEDY HAS ESTABLISHED CLEARLY THE DEMAND OF TWO SIMULTANEOUS CONDITIONS AND NO ALTERNATIVES[:] NO SUPPLY OF NEW OFFENSIVE MATERIAL AND DISMANTLING OR DESTRUCTION OF PRESENT OFFENSIVE INSTALLATIONS – ADDING THAT THE AMERICAN ARMED FORCES ARE ALREADY PREPARING FOR WHATEVER EVENTUALITY; 2) PROPOSE TO THE OAS A DRAFT RESOLUTION [IN WHICH] THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT INSISTED INTRANSIGENTLY ON PRIOR AND IMMEDIATE ENDORSMENT OF ACTIONS CAPABLE TO REALIZE ITS TWO OBJECTIVES; 3) IN THE DAY, CONFORMING TO MY TELEGRAM 777 EDWIN MARTIN INDICATED TO ME, WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT, THAT THERE HAS BEEN [*QUE HAVIA*], INCLUDING, THE IMMEDIATE POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT ACTION AGAINST CUBAN TERRITORY; 4) IN THE LETTER THAT YESTERDAY HE DIRECTED TO THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL PRESIDENT KENNEDY INDICATED POSITIVELY THAT THERE WAS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR THE SUSPENSION OF THE MILITARY MEASURES IN PROGRESS AND IN THE FUTURE[:] THE PROMPT REMOVAL OF THE OFFENSIVE INSTALLATIONS IN CUBA; 5) YESTERDAY ALSO, IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL, TO EVADE FROM THE DIRECT QUESTION OF [ADLAI] STEVENSON, [VALERIAN] ZORIN PRACTICALLY ADMITTED THAT THE SOVIET UNION SUPPLIED AND IS INSTALLING OFFENSIVE ARMAMENT IN CUBA; 6) IN THE LAST TWO DAYS, SOME PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS, AFTER CONFERENCES WITH KENNEDY, HAVE DECLARED THAT IF THE INSTALLATIONS WERE NOT DISMANTLED SOON THE UNITED STATES HAS TO REMOVE THEM; 7) THE SUBSECRETARY OF DEFENSE, [ARTHUR] SYLVESTER, DECLARED THAT, ACCORDING TO AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY OF 17 HOURS INDICATED CLEAR EVIDENCE OF THE INSTALLATION OF REMOTE-CONTROLLED MISSILES CONTINUED AT THE SAME PACE; 8) UNIDENTIFIED VOICES OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAVE, INSINUATED CLEAR DEEDS, IN THE PRESS THAT IT WILL HAVE TO DESTROY THESE INSTALLATIONS, IN CASE THEY ARE NOT REMOVED BY THE CUBANS AND SOVIETS THEMSELVES ALREADY, THAT THE SAC [STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND] AERIAL BASES, RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GREAT PART OF THE AMERICAN NUCLEAR CAPABILITY, WILL BE EASILY

VULNERABLE TO MISSILES COMING FROM CUBA, ADDING THAT ALL THE NETWORK OF CANADIAN AND NORTH AMERICAN RADAR IS ORIENTED TOWARD THE ARCTIC, THERE IS NOT YET A FUNCTIONING SYSTEM OF UNIDIRECTIONAL RADAR THAT PERMITS, EVEN ON SHORT NOTICE, TO DETECT THE CUBAN MISSILES; 9) VARIOUS POLITICAL COMMENTARIES ALREADY SHOWS HOW THE DECISION WAS AGREED THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WILL PROCEED LIKE THIS AT WHATEVER COST. THIS CONJUNCTION OF CIRCUMSTANCES LEADS ME TO THE THOUGHT ON THE PROBABILITY THAT SOON THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WILL GIVE A DEFINITE TIME FOR INTERRUPTION OF THE WORK AND THE REMOVAL OF THE OFFENSIVE WARMAKING MATERIAL AND, IF ITS ULTIMATUM IS NOT HEEDED, PROCEED ALTERNATIVELY TO A) BOMBARDMENT OF THE LAUNCHERS [*RAMPAS*]; B) ORDER A TOTAL BLOCKADE, INCLUDING PETROLEUM, PARALYZING THE CUBAN ECONOMY; OR C) INVASION, HYPOTHESIS LESS PROBABLE [IF?] NOT TO BE IN SUPPORT OF AN INSURRECTION IN CUBA. OF THIS FORECAST EQUALLY RISKY AND THE SOVIET CONDUCT WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT IN THIS HYPOTHESIS. THE INTERPRETATION SEEMS ADMISSIBLE THE INTERPRETATION ...THEY HAVE THE FACT [*QUE SE TEM DADO DE QUE*] THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS ACCELERATING THE ARMAMENT OF CUBA FOR COMPLETING IT IN THE PERIOD OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ELECTIONS IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO, THEN, CREATE A CRISIS CAPABLE OF INFLUENCING THE PROBLEM OF BERLIN AND THAT A DRASTIC AMERICAN DECISION SURPRISED MOSCOW AND DISRUPTED ITS PLANS. THE APPARENT MODERATION OF THE SOVIET REACTION, SUCH AS REFLECTED IN THE DECLARATION OF ITS GOVERNMENT ON THE 23RD [OF OCTOBER] – THAT IN TRUTH CONSTITUTED ONLY A TYPE OF INTERLOCUTOR [PROBE?] – AS WELL AS IN THE BEHAVIOR OF THE SOVIET NAVY THAT PEACEFULLY RECOGNIZED THE NORTH AMERICAN BLOCKADE SEEMS TO PROVE NOT ONLY THAT IT WAS A SURPRISE, BUT ALSO THAT MOSCOW IS MARKING STEPS TO A CHANGE OF TACTICS. IT IS FITTING TO SPECULATE AT THIS POINT THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS ABLE TO SEE EVENTUAL CONCESSIONS IN CUBA AGAINST AMERICAN CONCESSIONS IN RELATION TO BASES IN OTHER COUNTRIES, SUCH AS TURKEY.

THIS POSSIBILITY, WHICH HAS BEEN ADVANCED ALSO IN THE UNITED STATES' ENCOUNTERS, HOWEVER, WITH INSUPERABLE DIFFICULTIES OF INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION, INCLUDING THOSE CONNECTED WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS OF GENERAL DISARMAMENT, STILL WITHOUT SOLUTION. OTHER ALTERNATIVES THAT THE SOVIET UNION COULD AIM AT WILL BE TO GAIN TIME FOR THE PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS IN THE UN, ACCERATING SIMULTANEOUSLY THE INSTALLATIONS IN CUBA, IN ORDER TO LEAD THE UNITED STATES TO A DIRECT MILITARY ACTION AGAINST THE CUBAN TERRITORY, VICTIMIZING CUBA AND OBTAINING WITH IT A POLITICAL AND JURIDCAL ETHICAL POSITION SUPERIOR TO THE UNITED STATES. FACED WITH SUCH POSSIBILITIES, THE ONLY HOPE IS TO STILL INTENSIFY THE DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE ON HAVANA AND MOSCOW, IN THE SENSE OF IF OBTAINING OR IN EXCHANGE FOR CONCESSIONS OR A RAPID ADVOCACY OF A PLAN OF DENUCLEARIZATION OF LATIN AMERICA THAT NOT BE POSSIBLE TO BE EASILY REFUSED BY ELEMENTS OF THE LEFT SO MUCH ON THE INTERNAL FRONT AS MUCH AS ON THE INTERNATIONAL.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: MD—Washington—Telgr.-Cartas—Receb.-Exped.—1962 (7 á XII), (Cx 324), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 16

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 6 p.m., Friday, 26 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12.851

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/26/26/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL—URGENT
SUBSTITUTION
DAC/DAS/DOR/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

346 – FRIDAY – 1800hs – Cuba continues totally mobilized, and the other activities are, practically, paralyzed, with incalculable damage for the economy of the country. Since yesterday, one can perceive a certain relief with the efforts of the Secretary-General [U Thant] and of numerous member-countries of the UN to avoid aggravating the situation. The Cuban press and radio give prominence to this news, while they continue to summon the people to prepare themselves for the defense, at the same time, insisting that world opinion is mobilizing in favor of Cuba. By the way, the Minister of External Relations [Raúl Roa] told me yesterday that they consider firm enough the position of Mexico and Bolivia in favor of Cuba, and even the same for Uruguay, meanwhile Chile seems to be vacillating; few references were made to Brazil, and nothing he told me when I returned to explain the sense of the suggestion of Your Excellency for Cuba to take the initiative to invite the UN observers. However, a high functionary of the chancellor said, still yesterday, to my colleague that Cuba considers Brazil more firm, in its favor, than Mexico.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “MDB—Telegramas Recebidas—Havana—1962/1964,” (CX 229), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 17

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 6 p.m., Friday, 26 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED

12856

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/26/27/X/62

SECRET
DAC/DAS/DNU/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

347 – FRIDAY – 1800hrs – The ambassador of Yugoslavia [Boško Vidaković] has just informed me that he was today, at 3 in the afternoon, with President [Osvaldo] Dorticós, in order to inform him about the gesture of President Tito to gather together various heads of state, including the Brazilian, and to probe regarding the receptivity for a proposal of a solution of the crisis. Dorticós, extremely perturbed, told him that American planes are making low-level [*rasantes*] flights over Cuba and, according to information obtained in recent hours, the American attack is imminent; it would even be a “miracle” if the attack does not come this evening, repeat: this evening. He said that Cuba is ready to negotiate any solution, including the disarmament, the denuclearization, and the neutralization, repeat the neutralization, since it would not surrender with tied hands to the United States of America. In case Your Excellency thinks it appropriate, it may be possible to get in touch with the president [Dorticós] to confirm the account.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” *Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasília, Brazil Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 18

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the OAS, Washington, 6:30 p.m., Friday, 26 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12 853

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES --
WASHINGTON

ON/26/26/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL
DEA/DNU/DAS/DAC/DOtr/964
663.00(04).

De-nuclearization of Latin America and Africa.
600.(24h)

515 – FRIDAY – 1830hs – [...] I was informed by the substitute deputy representative of the United States in the OAS [Organization of American States] Council, Mr. Ward Allen, that the State Department determined that the American Delegation at the General Assembly of the United Nations would enter into contact with the Brazilian Delegation to examine the proposal for banning nuclear arms in Latin America and Africa. It seems to me that the North American interest in the proposition aims at neutralizing the effect of the Soviet manifestation regarding the opportune Brazilian proposal, well-received on the part of some member countries of the United Nations. I am led to this supposition for it is obvious that the Soviet Union will see with great interest and sympathy the de-nuclearization of the above-mentioned regions, as I incidentally had an opportunity to confirm in a conversation with one of the secretaries of the Soviet Embassy, Mr. Goundarev, who saw this Delegation on a courtesy visit.

JOSÉ BARREIROS

[Source: “O.E.A.—Telegramas Recebidas e Expedidas—1962,” *Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasília, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 19

Telegram from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry to the Brazilian Embassy in Havana, 1 a.m., Saturday, 27 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
SENT

13 519
FOR THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/27/X/62

SECRET—EXTREMELY URGENT
G/SSE/DEA/DAS/DAC/DAM/DOr/DNU/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

170 – SATURDAY – 100hr – Responding to your telegram nº 347. I confirm my telegram nº-169 on what gestures can be made next to that government in order to paralyze [halt] the construction of the bases. It would be appropriate for Cuba to permit, at the choice of the Cuban government, a small commission of the United Nations to certify the paralization and dismantling of the bases that the commission judges necessary to dismantle. I reaffirm our full support to obtain guarantees for the territorial integrity of Cuba.

EXTERIORES

NOTE OF DCA – This telegram was dictated by telephone by the Mr. Minister of State.

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” *Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 20

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Mexico (Pio Corrêa), 7 a.m., Saturday, 27 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12.880

FROM THE EMBASSY IN MEXICO
ON/27/28/X/19[62]

SECRET
DAM/DAC/DAS/DEA/DOr/DNU/600.(24h)
Question of Cuba.

316 – SATURDAY – 700hs – Referring to my secret *ofício* nº 497. I have just had a long lecture with the under-Secretary of External Relations, who communicated to me his conviction that the United States is not disposed to negotiate [*em tórno*] on the Cuban question and has decided to intervene militarily on the island, since is it persuaded that the military and political base that has been established by the USSR disturbs the world equilibrium between the two blocs. The under-Secretary continued saying that, in the opinion of Mexico, the revealed facts about the existence of offensive arms in Cuba modifies substantially the situation, truly revealing a threat to the peace and the security of the continent that has affected the Mexican attitude. He told me even that Mexico judges that the recourses to avoid an anti-juridical solution of the Cuban case have been exhausted and will not oppose [*não se oporá*] a forceful solution that it will be unable to impede, but if will not cooperate in such a sense as for the situation in the long term; he finds indisputable that in case of an acute aggravation of the world crisis, historical, geographical and ideological reasons make doubtless the homogeneity of the position of the American countries, in spite of some possible internal dissent in some of them. Mexico does not anticipate any dissent, since the government has solid control of the internal situation.

MANOEL PIO CORRÊA

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” *Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 21

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 5:45 p.m., Saturday, 27 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12.884

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/28/28/X/62

SECRET—EXTREMELY URGENT
DEA/DNU/DAS/DAC/DAM/DOr/600.(24h)
961

Question of Cuba.

351 – 1745hs – SATURDAY – Due to lamentable confusion the telegram of Your Excellency nº 170 reached my hands [only] this afternoon, after I had been with the [Cuban] Minister of External Relations [Raul Roa]. I was unable, therefore, to speak to him about the permission for the coming of a small commission of the United Nations but requested him to try to do it with maximum speed. I remind Your Excellency that this matter is very delicate in view of the publicly reiterated affirmation, of this [Cuban] government, that it would not accept any type of audit [fiscalização] or inspection. However, already today, the response of Fidel Castro to the UN Secretary General, in his long initial section, strongly affirms to reject the blockade as the pretension of the United States of America to determine the sovereign acts of Cuba such as the type of defensive arms, [ellipsis/undecoded section in original] its relations with the USSR and the steps of internal politics; but does not make any reference to inspection or to an audit [fiscalização], which could indicate a softening in this matter.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

NOTE OF D.C.A. – This telegram was communicated by the Chief of Division to the Mr. Minister of State.

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 22

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 7:15 p.m., Saturday, 27 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED
12.883

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/27/28/X/62

SECRET—EXTREMELY URGENT
DEA/DNU/DAS/DAC/DAM/DOr/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. Invitation of Fidel Castro to the Secretary-General of the UN to go to Havana.

352 – SATURDAY – 1915hs – I request immediate transmittal to the Minister of State. In spite of the demand to lift the blockade, it seems to me that the response of Fidel Castro to UN Secretary-General [U Thant], offers favorable possibilities that should be explored. I believe that the immediate visit of the UN Secretary-General to Havana will be of major importance and, I have the impression that the Cuban government is disposed to make important concessions in direct negotiations with him. The Yugoslav Government still insisted today, with the UN Secretary-General so that he accepts the invitation of Fidel Castro. Permit me to suggest a similar gesture by Brazil, next to the UN Secretary-General.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

NOTE OF DCA: -- This telegram was communicated to the Mr. Minister of State by the Chief of Division.

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 23

Telegram from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry to the Brazilian Embassy in Havana, 12:30 p.m., Sunday, 28 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

SENT
13.530

FOR THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/28/X/62

SECRET—URGENT
SSE/DCA/DEA/DAS/DAC/DAM/DOt/DNU/346.2

Transmission of telegrams.
Question of Cuba.
600.(24h)

171 – SUNDAY – 1230hs – With reference to my telegram nº 168 and to the first part of yours of nº 351. We are of the conviction that the delays in the delivery to this Embassy of our messages, of vital importance at this moment, are deliberate. We are making an energetic protest here together with Radiobrás and I suggest to Your Excellency to act in the same form to the correspondent of this company there. I request to inform that there are in this capital European telegraph companies who would be able to have our telegrams sent.

EXTERIORES

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 24

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 2 p.m., Sunday, 28 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12895
FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON
ON/28/28/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL
DAS/DAC/DOt/DNU/DEA/DAM/600.(24h)
Question of Cuba.

799 – SUNDAY – 1400hs – The acceptance on the part of the United States and Russia of a temporary accord for a

limited-diversion of the Soviet ships, committing the United States to avoiding a direct confrontation – constitutes a brief alleviation, soon destroyed by the rejection by Kennedy of the second part of the proposal by Khrushchev, as is known, the simultaneous abandonment, under international inspection, of the Soviet installations in Cuba and the American [installations] in Turkey, with an exchange of commitments of non-aggression. The attitude of Kennedy is based on the following reasoning, accepted by the National Security Council, when it met yesterday: 1) Russia was dangerously altering the nuclear status quo, desiring now to obtain advantages in an exchange of incomplete installations in Cuba for operational installations in Turkey; 2) the NATO missiles in Turkey, in a number estimated at thirty, of the Jupiter type, of intermediate range, were openly installed, are not considered offensive, that are under the collective and defensive control of NATO and not unilateral of the United States; 3) there does not exist parity in the commitments of non-aggression, in that Turkey does not serve as a base of ideological infiltration, a step that Cuba, protected by a commitment of non-aggression, would continue with impunity in the task of infiltration and the subversive character of Marxist-Leninism; 4) the problem of the European bases could be negotiated in the general sphere of controlled disarmament, [but] any North American relaxation in the current crisis would generate future Soviet demands if not in relation to Berlin, known to be no negotiable, at least in relation to Northern Italy, where there exist roughly thirty Jupiter missiles. It is rumored that Washington already has made it known to Moscow and Havana that if within a few days, probably by the middle of next week, they will not cease the construction of bases and have admitted international inspection inside of, Washington will take “other measures,” most probable being the precision bombardment of the missile sites [*rampas*], combined, if necessary, with the launching of paratroopers to assure the destruction of the installations. The other possible measures, total blockade, support to guerrilla wars and invasion, the first two having a slow effect and the extreme danger before the previous declarations of Khrushchev, significantly not repeated since of the beginning of the current crisis, that the Soviet Union would intervene in defense of Cuba. The policy of rejection of the offer of the exchange of bases does not encounter unanimous support in this country, since in liberal circles, including influential journalists like [Walter] Lip[p]man, to whom I explained the Brazilian denuclearization proposal, have already been propagandizing for some time for the abandonment of the bases in Turkey, arguing: 1) that the ethical posture of the United States in international opinion would be weakened [by] the attempts to preserve the Monroe Doctrine in this hemisphere and the Truman Doctrine in Turkey; 2) that the bases in the

Middle East have become obsolete with the appearance of Polaris submarine projectiles. Exists in Latin American diplomatic circles in Washington (visible preoccupation) contrasting, before the State Department, the vigorous support that is being given to the OAS resolution, including the offer of ships and bases to support the blockade, with the call of the Brazilian [*tibiesá*], based, as some allege, on an insufficient comprehension of the essentially expansionist character of the Castroist ideology and the fundamental alteration in the balance of power in Latin America that would result in the contrast between nuclearized Cuba under adventurist leadership and the conventional armies of many countries. I denied tendentious news in the Miami newspaper according to which this Embassy is being pressured by the Soviet Embassy to obtain authorization for landing rights in Northeast Brazil for a Soviet airlift.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil (copy courtesy of Roberto Baptista Junior, University of Brasilia. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 25

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 2 p.m., Sunday, 28 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12 894

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON

ON/28/28/C[sic—X]/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DAS/DAC/DOt/DNU/DEA/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

800 – SUNDAY – 1400hs – Supplementary to my telegram nº 799. The White House still declares that it has not received officially the third proposal of Khrushchev, which he has already fully divulged on the radio. It implies a Russian retreat to accept: 1) immediate dismantling of the bases; 2) international inspection; 3) abandonment of the demand for reciprocity in Turkey. The first note of Khrushchev, respond-

ed to by Kennedy on Friday night, had been encouraging, for not having mentioned the Turkish *quid pro quo*. The second note, to which Kennedy has referred only indirectly, in the response to the first, opened the problem of reciprocity and specifically that a North American commitment of non-invasion did refer only to the North American forces, but to expeditions mounted in North American territory, or originating from other Latin American countries. The note of Kennedy accepted curtly [*secamente*] a commitment of non-invasion on the part of the United States, indicating that the Latin-American countries, probably, would agree with similar guarantees, without promising explicitly, however, to impede the operation of guerrilla war or infiltration on the part of the Cuban exiles. It is possible that the United States maintains the point-of-view that which, given the nature of Cuban ideological infiltration, it's not under absolute prohibition of counter-infiltration. The immediate demand of a *quid pro quo* in Turkey abandoned, the United States agreed to reexamine the matter of European bases in the general quadrant of disarmament and preferably through collective negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. It is rumored here that Castro is feeling betrayed by the Soviets, indications being in: a) that Havana radio until yesterday night did not give notice to the proposal of Khrushchev to bargain over Turkey; b) that Castro has limited the invitation to U Thant to go to Havana, demanding to avoid a purely bilateral discussion between Washington and Moscow over Cuba's fate, without mentioning international inspection; that Castro has made different conditions than the Soviets, since he also demanded the return of Guantánamo and the cessation of the economic blockade, not consistent with the note of Khrushchev. In Washington it is considered that the incident: 1) demonstrates the truth of the North American accusation of the existence of nuclear arms; 2) the judgment of the Pentagon to be correct that in at this moment the Russians recognize the North American nuclear superiority; 3) that after an extreme cost of efforts in the last four months, with expenses estimated at a million dollars per day, the Soviets have returned to the point of departure, extracting from the United States only a guarantee of non-invasion, a declaration that Washington had already made unilaterally...time [*sí tempoa*], since Cuba was maintaining a defensive posture it is recognized, however, that the moral posture of the United States suffered strain and that, in spite of having originated the crisis, Khrushchev appears in the eyes of neutralist world opinion as a peace-maker. It is admitted, also, the obsolescence of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey and in Italy and equally of the Thors in England, becoming thereby negotiable, in that: 1) in the general sphere of disarmament, preferably in collective negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact;

2) since the Soviets abandoned their intransigent opposition to international inspection, considering that it encouraged procedure created in Cuba. Convened by [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk, I will attend today at five hours [5 p.m.] [a meeting] at the Department of State with many Latin American Ambassadors.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil (copy courtesy of Roberto Baptista Junior, University of Brasilia). Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 26

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 5:30 p.m., Sunday, 28 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12893

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/28/28/X/62

SECRET—EXTREMELY URGENT
DAC/DAS/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

353 – SUNDAY – 1730hs – I request to communicate immediately to the Minister of State: This government will receive with much pleasure General Albino Silva. The flight authorization has already been granted, but, in view of the emergency measures, it is indispensable to know with all urgency the type of plane, the insignia [*indicativo*] and the name of the commander [pilot]. The secretary-general of the United Nations has just communicated to this government that he will arrive in Havana the day after tomorrow, Tuesday [30 October].

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 27

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 6:45 p.m., Sunday, 28 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12897

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/28/29/X/62

SECRET—EXTREMELY URGENT
DAC/DAS/DAM/DOF/DEA/DNU/600.(24h)
961.

Question of Cuba. Proclamation of Fidel Castro. Cuban demands.

354 – SUNDAY – 1845hs – I have just conversed with the Minister of External Relations [Raul Roa] and told him, in my strictly personal opinion, that I found excessive, at this moment, the demands formulated by Fidel Castro in his proclamation today, such as the evacuation of the American base at Gua[n]tanamo, etc. The minister of external relations told me, [*textualmente*] verbatim, that the proclamation was directed not only to the United States but also to the USSR, to show to both, that Cuba is not a toy in the hands of the great powers and should be heard in the coming negotiations; he also told me that, [*textualmente*] [verbatim?], that these demands would be, repeat, would be, an object of negotiations. He referred at length to the important and sympathetic role of Brazil in the present crisis. He informed me that the low-level American flights over Cuba have ceased since yesterday.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” Ministry of External

Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 28

Telegram from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry to the Brazilian Embassy in Havana, 6:45 p.m., Sunday, 28 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

SENT

13532

FOR THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA

ON/28/X/62

SECRET—EXTREMELY URGENT

SSE/DAC/DAS/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

172 – SUNDAY – 1845hs – Continuing here on the official mission of the government this night General Albino Silva, chief of the Casa Militar of the President, that I communicated personally the mission of which he/you is in charge. Your Excellency and the general have the necessity of an immediate encounter with Prime Minister Fidel Castro. Take actions already for the realization of the interview. I will communicate shortly the nº of the flight and hour of departure. I am requesting Your Excellency keep me informed by telephone.

EXTERIORES

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 29

Telegram to the Brazilian Embassy in Havana, 10 p.m., Sunday, 28 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

SENT

FOR THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA

ON/28/29/X/62

SECRET—EXTREMELY URGENT

DAC/DAS/DAM/DOF/DEA/DNU/600.(24h)

96†.

Question of Cuba. Proclamation of Fidel Castro. Cuban demands.

173 – SUNDAY – 2200hs – Panair Caravelle SE 210 prefix PP-PDU to leave Rio at 24 hours continuing to Belem, Port-of-Spain, Puerto Rico, Havana. The ambassador of Cuba and the president of the company will follow also. Arrival is forecast for 730hs tomorrow local time.

EXTERIORES

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 30

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the OAS (Barreiros), Washington, DC, 2:30 a.m., Monday, 29 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

12899

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES --
WASHINGTON
ON/28/28/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL URGENT
DEA/DNU/DAS/DAC/DAM/DOr/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. Messages between President Kennedy and Khrushchev. Position of Brazil in Meeting of [OAS] Organ of Consultation.

516 – SUNDAY [*sic*—actually MONDAY, the 29th] – 0230hs – I was called upon by Secretary of State Dean Rusk, together with the ambassadors, to the White House and the representatives of the Council of the Organization of American States, to transmit to our respective governments the development of provocative events in regard to the situation in Cuba. Secretary Rusk recapitulated the negotiations started by the UN secretary general [U Thant] and continued with the messages sent directly by Prime Minister Khrushchev, to conclude saying that the letter dated today, 28 of October, in which this chief of state presents real assurance to begin a compromise regarding the Cuban crisis to be an important contribution for peace. However, Secretary Rusk declared that one should not believe that the Cuban crisis is resolved, since is not impossible that another Soviet message could come to be published tomorrow, presenting other conditions. I understood this declaration of the secretary of state as a prudent position in case of new demands on the part of Soviet leaders who advocate a “harder line” [*“linha mais dura”*], making them, the conditions established by Fidel Castro in the pronouncement already published by the world press. As concrete fact, Secretary Rusk communicated the texts of the message transmitted today by Premier Khrushchev and the response of President Kennedy. In this last document, President Kennedy praises the efforts already developed by the UN secretary general and expresses hope that the necessary measures would be taken, immediately, through that organization, conforming to the suggestions of Premier Khrushchev, in order that the US might suspend the quarantine presently in force. It was said the president is leaving to the cognizance of the organization of American States the facts that were related in the letter directed to the “Soviet Premier.” Naturally the president is referring to a meeting of the provisional Organ of Consultation to call, there are a few hours, for tomorrow, the 29th at 15 hours [3 p.m.]. However, at the end of a meeting at the Department of State it was decided to postpone the Meeting of the Organ of Consultation, under the pretext that they already have all information and no new facts exist, before the visit of U Thant to Cuba, scheduled for

the day after tomorrow. I request to Your Excellency to orient me about the line of conduct I should assume in discussion of the next meetings of the Organ of Consultation.

JOSÉ BARREIROS

[Source: “O.E.A.—*Telegramas Recebidas e Expedidas—1962*,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 31

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 1:30 p.m., Monday, 29 October 1962
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12962

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON
ON/29/29/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL
DAS/DAC/DOr/DNU/DEA/DAM/600.(24h)
Question of Cuba.

801 – MONDAY – 13hs30 – In a meeting yesterday, Sunday, in the Department of State, [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk after accenting the decisive importance of the solidarity of the Latin American nations in the last meeting of the OAS, which had an obligatory impression on the Kremlin, until then confident in a schism within the continent, Secretary Rusk informed me: 1) that the first indication of the possibility of the abandonment of the bases was given in a private letter of Khrushchev to Kennedy, on 26 October, a letter that is still not published and that Rusk described as “long, vague and disturbing”; 2) that the second letter of Khrushchev, of the 27th, added the condition of the dismantling of NATO bases in Turkey; President Kennedy only responded to the first of these letters; 3) on the 28th by the hand of Moscow radio announced the letter in which Khrushchev communicated the decision of dismantling of bases; this letter was responded to by Kennedy in an affirmative tone, even before receiving the official text; 4) the United States of America has not made any bargain, not even

assuming a weak attitude, in any manner, of North American compromises with the inter-American system of defense.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil (copy courtesy of Roberto Baptista Junior, University of Brasilia); translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 32

Telegram from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry to the Brazilian Embassy in Havana, 3:45 p.m., Monday, 29 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

SENT
13 546

FOR THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/29/X/62

SECRET—URGENT
DCA/346.2(24h)
Transmission of telegrams.
Question of Cuba.
600.(24h)

174 – MONDAY – 1545hs – Supplementary to my telegram nº 171. I request to confirm receipt of my telegrams 172 and 173 transmitted by Western. We are no longer transmitting telegraphed dispatches by Raidobrás, that we transmitted Via Tropical-New Orleans.

EXTERIORES

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 33

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 11:30 p.m., Monday, 29 October 1962 (received 30 October 1962)

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS
TELEGRAM 12971
RECEIVED

FROM EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/30/30/X/62

SECRET – MOST URGENT
DAC/DOr/DAS/DEA/DNU/600.(24h)
Question of Cuba.

359 – MONDAY – 2330hrs – [For] Your Excellency to learn of and to transmit to the President of the Republic the following message: “We have just received in our Embassy in Havana a visit from Prime Minister Fidel Castro with whom took place a prolonged conference lasting more than one hour. On this opportunity Minister Fidel Castro manifested satisfaction regarding the interest demonstrated by President João Goulart in cooperating for an honorable solution to the present crisis, well translated by the initiative of sending his personal representative to this city. This action was received with visible gratitude, put forward by the prime minister, even before the meeting with other members of the Council, the favorable disposition of the Cuban Government. He affirmed his intent to keep the Brazilian envoy perfectly informed of the conversations of the secretary general of the UN with his government. He considers the evacuation of Guantanamo the basic point of understanding on course, which can lend a sense of demonstration of the sincerity of the decision to confer on Cuba a real guarantee against aggression. He rejected, *de plano* [on principle?], the unilateral inspection by the UN of the territory of Cuba as offensive to the self-esteem [*brio*] of his people. He viewed, however, with sympathy [the idea] of the realization of the same method of simultaneously [conducting inspections] on the territories where are situated frank threats to the integrity and sovereignty of this country; he explained that he would make a communication from this meeting to the Russian Embassy. I arranged a new conference after an understanding with the UN secretary general. He expressed to me, in particular, that he had all confidence in frank language and the objective of using [it] during the lecture that we held. General Albino Silva.”

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: "ANEXO Secreto—600.(24b)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 34

Telegram-Letter from the Brazilian Delegation at the Organization of American States, Washington, 31 October/16 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

LETTER-TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

11 580

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES— WASHINGTON
ON/31/X/16/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DEA/DAC/DAS/DO_r/DAM/DNU/600.(24h)

Situation of Cuba.

CT - 57 - ON THE MARGIN OF THE CUBAN CRISIS, IT WILL BE USEFUL TO MAKE SOME CONSIDERATIONS OF A DESCRIPTIVE NATURE, IN ORDER TO PORTRAY THE CLIMATE IN WHICH THE EVENTS DEVELOPED IN WHICH HAS PARTICIPATED THE O.A.S. AND THE VARIOUS DELEGATIONS. THE FIRST OBSERVATION THAT OCCURS TO US IS TO POINT OUT THE ABNORMAL AND DISAPPROVABLE PRACTICE OF [SEREM] THE REPRESENTATIVES IN THE COUNCIL OF THE O.A.S. CONSTANTLY BEING CALLED TO THE AMERICAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO HEAR THE MISTER SECRETARY OF STATE [DEAN RUSK], ALMOST ALWAYS TO TAKE COGNIZANCE "A POSTERIORI" OF EVENTS OR DECISIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES. NOW, SUCH REPRESENTATIVES ARE ACCREDITED AT THE ORGANIZATION, WHICH, BY MERE COINCIDENCE, IS SITUATED ON NORTH AMERICAN TERRITORY. WE JUDGE THAT THE INTERESTED DELEGATIONS SHOULD

ATTEND TO THE COUNCIL, IN ORDER TO ATTEND THEIR INFORMATION OR REQUESTS TO THE OTHERS. EVEN THOUGH ON SUNDAY, THE 28TH OF THE CURRENT MONTH, THE EXTREME URGENCY DEMANDED BY THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE CUBAN CRISIS COULD JUSTIFY THE AMBASSADORS GOING TO THE MEETING OF MISTER DEAN RUSK, NOW IS TURNING INTO NORMAL PRACTICE THE CALLING, INCLUDING WITH FEW HOURS ADVANCE NOTICE, FOR THIS TYPE OF MEETING. AS IF THIS IS NOT ENOUGH, THE OFFICIALS OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT THAT MAKE THE INVITATIONS HAVE RECENTLY TAX [FINAL SAY?] [ULTIMAMENTE IMPOSTO]. [IS A DEPARTURE] FROM DIPLOMATIC MANNER, IT IS CERTAIN, THE CONDITION THAT THE REPRESENTATIVES CANNOT BE ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR SUBSTITUTES. THIS DEMAND, FURTHERMORE, WAS PARTIALLY PLACED IN PRACTICE FOR THE OCCASION OF THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS, WHEN ADVISORS THERE WERE LIMITED TO TWO PER DELEGATION, HAVING INVOKED AS A PRETEXT THE SMALLNESS OF THE SPACE OF THE HALL OF THE SESSIONS. IF THIS ALLEGATION WAS TRUE, NO LESS TRUE WAS THE FACT THAT THE PRINCIPAL HALL OF THE MEETINGS OF THE "STATE DEPARTMENT" [in English], OF MUCH GREATER DIMENSIONS, WAS KEPT CLOSED, WITHOUT BEING UTILIZED, DURING WHICH THE COURSE OF THE INFORMAL MEETING. TO WHAT PURPOSE SERVED THE REJECTION OF A "CLASS" OF THE ADVISORS, OBLIGING THE AMBASSADORS TO DIVIDE THEIR ATTENTION BETWEEN LISTENING AND NOTE-TAKING? THE SECOND OBSERVATION REFERS TO THE BEHAVIOR OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE O.A.S., TO THE CONTARY OF WHAT IS STIPULATED IN THE CHARTER OF THE ORGANIZATION, THIS OFFICIAL HAS TAKEN INITIATIVES OF A POLITICAL CHARACTER, AS IN THE CASES OF HIS MEMORANDUM ABOUT THE PRESS COMMUNICATION OF THE INFORMAL MEETING (DOC: No C-D-1020, SENT WITH OFICIO-VERBAL No 325, OF 8 OCTOBER) AND THE PROPOSAL OF "CONDEMNATION" OF THE SOVIET UNION, ON THE EVE OF THE SAME MEETING. BEYOND THIS, HE HAS LEAKED DECLARATIONS IN A PARTIAL TONE, AS IN THE EIGHTH MEETING OF CONSULTATION, WHEN HE WAS CRITICIZED FOR THIS, AND IN THE MOST RECENT DECLARATION

TO THE PRESS, IN WHICH HE WENT TOO FAR "TEACHING" WHAT ONE SHOULD UNDERSTAND BY NON-INTERVENTION. FINALLY, TODAY, THE ADJUNCT SECRETARY-GENERAL, MISTER WILLIAM SANDERS, TO DIRECT THE WORD TO THE TRAINEES THAT COMPLETED THE "PROGRAM OF THE PAN-AMERICAN UNION FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE O.A.S.," TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE [ENSEËJO] TO AFFIRM THAT, ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 19 OF THE CHARACTER OF THE ORGANIZATION, THE COLLECTIVE ACTION WOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS INTERVENTION. THERE WERE PRESENT THREE BRAZILIAN TRAINEES AND TWO MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL.

JOSÉ BARREIROS

[Source: "O.E.A.—TELEGRAMAS RECEBIDOS E EXPEDIDOS—1962—Confidencial," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 35

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, 31 October 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
13053

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON
ON/31/X/1/XI/62

SECRET—URGENT
DAS/DAC/DEA/600.(24h)
Question of Cuba.

810 – WEDNESDAY – 1830hs – I am informed that the chief of delegation of Brazil in the JID and the Military Aides of this Embassy are suggesting today to [EMFA] and to the chiefs of the respective bigger states that the Brazilian government offers elements of our Armed Forces for collaboration in the blockade of Cuba, authorized by the OAS

and executed by the American government. I should explain that until this moment I have not received any request or pressure from the State Department in this sense. I have, yes, sensed the desire of responsible elements that the Brazilian government do so and a certain disappointment for not having done so until now. It is my opinion that if there is a political possibility for so much, the decision should be taken as soon as possible, in case a return to application of the blockade, because: 1) a gesture of cooperation, through an offer of elements of the Navy and auxiliary, the Air Force, constitutes a powerful factor capable of counterbalancing, in the Congress of this country, political currents unfavorable to our interests, especially as for application of the new foreign assistance law, holding a strong hand to the executive in its more liberal interpretation of the same with relation to Brazil; 2) the majority of Latin American countries have offered contributions, including [*pressurosamente*]; 3) the affirmative vote of Brazil for the blockade, in the OAS, and the new comprehension of the Cuban problem, on the part of the Brazilian left, conforming to the reflection in the recent declaration of Governor Brizola, is not a healthy foundation to explain [*não são de molde a explicar*], to American public opinion, the Brazilian abstention on the application of the blockade; 4) the eventual Brazilian offer will probably be a limited gesture of solidarity, if its implementation does not become perhaps necessary; 5) an eventual offer should precede any diplomatic management/gesture [*gestão*] either political pressure or of American public opinion in the same sense. I request to conserve the secret character of this communication.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: "ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962//," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 36

Brazilian Embassy in Washington, Analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1 November 1962

Washington, 1 November 1962

CONFIDENCIAL

Analysis of the Cuban Crisis.
600.(24h)
Mister Minister,

I have the honor of sending to Your Excellency the attached memorandum of analysis of the developments of the Cuban crisis until the 30th of last October, elaborated by the Political Sector of the Embassy.

2. As Your Excellency may verify, the work in regard is composed of an introductory episodic retrospective and of a rigorous analysis, for which permit me to solicit the attention of the Secretary of State.

I take advantage of the opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the protests of my esteem and my distinct consideration.

[signed]

Roberto de Oliveira Campos
Ambassador

To His Excellency Senior Professor Hermes Lima,
Minister of State of External Relations

LVP/zw

CONFIDENTIAL

Analysis of the Cuban crisis.

I – Retrospective

Chronological picture of the events that led President Kennedy to change his attitude in the face of the Cuban problem:

8 August – the press published that more than 4,000 Russian soldiers have arrived in Cuba. The administration said it did not have any information in this respect.

22 August – President Kennedy declared that he had information of the arrival in Cuba of technical equipment; but, in addition, he did not know for certain about the arrival of soldiers.

24 August – American government sources, not identified, declared that 20 cargo ships and an unknown number of passenger ships have, since July, transported technicians and equipment to Cuba. On the same day, President Kennedy declared that “we do not have any evidence of the arrival of

troops in Cuba. I believe it would be an error to invade Cuba. We do not have at our disposal complete information about what is happening in that country.”

31 August – Senator Keating affirmed that he had certain information that 1,200 men, dressed in the uniform of the Soviet army, have disembarked in Cuba, during the month of August.

1 September – The Soviet Union announced that it has decided to supply arms and specialists to Cuba, in order that this country possesses power to face “the threats of invasion.” Senators Keating and Thummond [sic—Thurmond] advocate the invasion of the island.

4 September – President Kennedy declares that Russia is supplying missiles to Cuba. However, he said, they do not have evidence that these are of an offensive character. If, subsequently, it is verified that they are of such character, the administration will consider the adoption of pertinent measures.

7 September – The President asked Congress for authorization to call up 150,000 reserves, due to the international situation, “principally in Berlin.”

11 September – The Tass Agency gave publicity to a communication in which the Soviet Union declared that it would retaliate with nuclear arms to any attack of the United States on Cuba or Soviet ships, sailing toward that island. It was added that the government of the Soviet Union would discuss the problem of Berlin after the American elections.

13 September – Kennedy said: “We are watching carefully the shipments of arms being done by the Soviet Union. The last shipments do not constitute a threat on any part of the hemisphere. A unilateral military intervention would not be justified.” He criticized what he described as “irresponsible conversation” about invasion.

18 September – Ex-Vice-President [Richard M.] Nixon called for a “quarantine” of Cuba.

26 September – Congress approved a resolution authorizing the administration to use force, if necessary.

2 October – President Kennedy declared to the Ministers of External Relations of Latin American countries, meeting in Washington: “that we have to act to avoid the exportation, to the other countries of the Hemisphere, of Cuban communism.”

10 October – The Administration revealed that it is elaborating its project for an economic blockade of Cuba. On the same day, Senator Keating said: “according to trustworthy confidential information that I have just received, there are being constructed, in Cuba, six ramps for launching rockets capable of carrying nuclear warheads, which can reach the Panama Canal.”

13 October – President Kennedy, speaking in Indianapolis, spoke *[verberz]* against the “self-appointed generals and admirals who want to send someone else’s sons to war” (sic) (published in the “Wall Street Journal”—24/X/62).

15 October – Secretary of Defense [Robert S.] McNamara examined the latest aerial photographs of the rocket launching ramps, under construction in Cuba, some of which had aroused suspicion.

16 October – President Kennedy ordered an intensification of aerial surveillance of the island.

18 October – President Kennedy received in the White House the minister of foreign affairs of the Soviet Union, [Andrei] Gromyko. He reiterated that the arms that were encountered in Cuba are of a defensive character. The president did not reveal to his interlocutor the information that he had in hand.

21 October – At 2:30 the President received information that missiles with a 1,000 [mile] range were in position of launching; platforms for launching missiles of 2,000 miles range, under construction.

22 October – President Kennedy called the party leaders urgently to Washington. He passes all the evening in conferences with Rusk, McNamara, Hille[n]brand, etc. At mid-day it was announced that the President would speak to the nation at 7 that evening, about a matter of high urgency. Ambassador [Anatoly] Dobrynin was invited to the White House and gives him knowledge of the points which were covered in the speech and delivered to him a letter for Khrushchev. Following that the Latin American chiefs of mission were invited to the White House, at 19 hours [Kennedy] addressed the Nation announcing the existence of offensive nuclear armaments in Cuba.

22 October – In the face of this, he determined a severe maritime blockade of the island and announced the eventual adoption of “other measures,” in case the referred-to bases are not dismantled. The crisis is reaching its “climax.” The United

States considers itself to be on the brink of war and waits anxiously for the Soviet reaction.

23 October – The Tass Agency described the American blockade as an act of piracy. The OAS approved the plan, presented by the United States, in the sense of avoiding by all means, including by use of force, which Cuba continues to receive armament from the Soviet Union. In the United Nations, Stevenson requested a withdrawal of the Russian bases from Cuba. Zorin called for the lifting of the blockade and proposed negotiations between the Soviet Union, the United States, and Cuba. The neutral countries did not show a disposition to support the American military action in Cuba and made pressure in the sense of realizing negotiations.

24 October – Responding to a telegram of Bertrand Russell, Khrushchev declared that his Government would not take any precipitous decision and suggested negotiations at a high level. Russian ships, transporting planes to Cuba would change course, avoiding thereby, for the moment, a confrontation with the American ships.

25 October – U Thant makes an appeal to Kennedy to lift the blockade, to Khrushchev to cease the sending of armament to Cuba and to Fidel Castro for an acceptance of negotiations. Khrushchev accepts the proposal of the Secretary-General and is ready to negotiate. Kennedy accepts, pointing out, however, that U Thant, in his appeal, did not mention the dismantling of the missile bases in Cuba.

26 October – U Thant received promises, from the United States and from Russia, of avoiding incidents with their respective ships. The White House declared that the construction of the bases, in Cuba, continues at an accelerated pace. Khrushchev sends a letter to Kennedy, whose text still has not been divulged. Dean Rusk referred to it as confused, making one think of internal difficulties inside the Kremlin. Kennedy said that the referred letter contained the following proposal:

- a) The Soviet Union agrees to withdraw its missile bases from Cuba, under inspection of the United Nations, and will not send more warlike material to Fidel Castro;
- b) The United States will lift the blockade and will give guarantees that Cuba will not be invaded, either by the United States, or by Latin-American countries.

27 October – A second letter of Khrushchev appears more firm. It offers to withdraw their bases in Cuba if the United States agrees to proceed in the same form in relation to its bases in Turkey. The White House declares that, before any negotiations, it is necessary to stop the construction of the

Soviet bases in Cuba and render inoperative the ones that exist [*porventura existentes*]. It gives publicity to the text of the letter of Kennedy to Khrushchev, responding to the two of his. Kennedy set out the following line:

- a) Russia should dismantle its bases in Cuba under inspection of the United Nations and suspends the sending of armaments to that country;
- b) The United States agrees to lift the blockade and to give guarantees that Cuba will not be invaded.

28 October – The text of Khrushchev's third letter to Kennedy is published. It announced that it has ordered the dismantling of the bases and the re-embarking of the same with the destination the Soviet Union.

29 October – Fidel Castro demands the return of Guantanamo as a basis for negotiations. The observation flights of the American planes continue over Cuba.

30 October – U Thant visits to Cuba in order to verify the dismantling of the Soviet bases. As a gesture of courtesy, Kennedy orders the lifting of the blockade during the stay of the Secretary General of the United Nations in Cuba.

II – Soviet Motivation

An analysis of the events seems to reveal that the Soviet motivation has been as follows:

- 1) The creation of an atomic offensive capacity in Cuba, before the American elections of 6 November, with the objective augmenting its ability to bargain with the United States in future crises of negotiations over Berlin and American bases in Europe, Africa and Asia;
- 2) the alteration, in favor of the Soviet Union, of the equilibrium of forces in the Western Hemisphere;
- 3) the creation of a capability of atomic retaliation against the United States, on the part as well of the Cubans, in case of an American invasion or [an invasion] by refugees;
- 4) the possibility of atomic "blackmail" in Latin America, with a view to favor communist infiltration.

Probably, it was assumed in this plan:

- 1) that the United States would not prove the installation of offensive capacity, before it was finished;
- 2) that the American government would not react drastically, in case of proof, in view:
 - a) of the proximity of the elections;
 - b) of world public opinion
 - c) of the previous behavior of the United States in other crises;
 - d) of the disagreements in Latin America.

3) that, if the United States reacted drastically, the North American government would lead a direct attack against Cuba, in case of which, in spite of taking the risk of losing Cuba, the Soviet Union would gain:

- a) the loss of prestige of the United States that appears in the eyes of the world as an aggressor nation;
- b) a definitive break in the unity of the Americas, since the United States would be against a [*sigmande*] part of the governors and the public opinion of the Latin American countries;
- c) the possibility of a split, other than in our governments, at least in the public opinion of the countries of Western Europe;
- d) the possibility of adopting parallel measures in other areas of tension, notably Turkey, Iran or Southeast Asia, otherwise Berlin.

III – American Action

In place of inaction or intemperate action, the North-American government:

- 1) fixed the basic principle that any nuclear attack on the part of Cuba on any nation of the Western Hemisphere would be considered an aggression of the Soviet Union on the United States and, as such, the Soviet Union would receive full retaliation (this principle is already being called "the Kennedy corollary of the Monroe Doctrine").
- 2) Established two imperative conditions:
 - a) cessation of supply of offensive material;
 - b) dismantling of the offensive installations that already exist;
- 3) to force the realization of the first condition:
 - a) it obtained the unanimous support of the OAS
 - b) it imposed a partial blockade, as an "initial measure;"
- 4) to realize the second condition it:
 - a) it obtained the support of the OAS
 - b) it made political and military preparations for direct action against Cuba ;
- 5) simultaneously, it raised the question to the UN, leaving the door open to negotiations.

IV – Soviet Reaction

The Soviet reaction to the American action seems to demonstrate the disorientation of the Moscow government, probably determined:

- 1) by the evident error of calculation how much the American action in itself;
- 2) by the "escalation" or "graduation" of the American action (partial blockade, possibility of negotiations, eventual direct action – and no immediate attack)

- 3) by possible disagreements within the Kremlin;
- 4) by possible disagreements within the Soviet bloc, especially with China;

The Soviet disorientation seemed to be demonstrated:

- 1) by the Soviet note of 23 October, clearly “interlocutorial;”
- 2) by the sudden return of Gromyko to Moscow;
- 3) by the rapid succession of different Soviet proposals and suggestions for a peaceful solution;
- 4) by the acceptance of the two conditions of Kennedy in a relatively short time;
- 5) in brief, by the lack of an immediate alternative plan: the Soviet initiatives became movements of adaptation.

The Soviet movement of adaptation seems to obey the following rationale:

- 1) There were no vital interests of the Soviet Union at stake in the Caribbean;
- 2) it does not have, therefore, reason to risk a nuclear war;
- 3) it does not meet the interests of Soviet expansion to have a war with the United States;
- 4) accepting the two conditions of Kennedy, it kept the United States impeded from the undertaking of direct military action against Cuba, that would destroy Castro;
- 5) it conserved Castro as a “political base” in the Americas, keeping a “spot on the flank” of the United States;
- 6) the Soviet Union could capitalize on its “Pacific action” and its bargaining position, although diminished.

V – Current Balance of Positions

If the dismantling of the offensive bases in Cuba is to be confirmed, in exchange for a non-invasion commitment on the part of the United States, it will lead to [*ter-se-ia*], broadly [*grasso-modo*], the following balance of positions:

I) The United States:

- i) has neutralized, in the strategic plan of the cold war, a tactical advantage of the Soviet Union in the Western Hemisphere;
- ii) has, in the first place, secured the unity of opinion of Latin America with relation to the danger of Soviet penetration in the continent;
- iii) has shown to Latin America that Cuba is not only a socialism of nationalist source, acceptable, as Rusk in Punta del Este, as an economic regime, but also an internationalist sectarian socialism;
- iv) in the Afro-Asian and neutralist world, if it did not have political gains, at least not did suffer a substantial loss;
- v) with relation to its NATO allies, has increased its prestige and proved its determination to face the Soviet Union on

these points on which it has vital interests at stake;

- vi) not having destroyed the Castro regime, will continue suffering the pressures of Cuban refugees;
- vii) on the plane of internal politics, the Democratic administration will come off, gaining prestige, with positive consequences in the elections of 6 November.

II – The Soviet Union

- i) will capitalize on the withdrawal of its bases in Cuba as an attitude for the salvation of world peace;
- ii) has introduced the problem of Cuba definitively in the general sphere of the cold war, making it more clear that it is no longer controversial, that is, that the United States is not able to obtain a unilateral solution of the problem;
- iii) has dramatized the problem of bases in foreign territory, provoking, even in the North American press, a strong current against the existence of bases (obsolete) in Turkey;
- iv) formalized the American guarantee of non-aggression toward Cuba, assuring, at least temporarily, the existence of a socialist regime in the Americas;
- v) has spent, only in operations, US \$.....1,000,000 per day from July onwards, which, adding up the expense and wear and tear of material and the cost of return transport, able to make any political advantage very onerous in terms of economic costs;
- vi) has suffered a great political stress and strain in the communist area, principally in relations with China; the satellites of Europe and China, beyond the natural resentment for not possessing the more modern arms that exist[ed] in Cuba, considering the Soviet climb-down as a demonstration of weakness in the communist bloc before the United States;
- vii) has suffered a loss of prestige in non-radical sectors of the left in Latin America.

III – Fidel Castro

He will be the great loser of the whole crisis, if he does not get, as is almost certain, the major advantage, which would be the return of the Guantanamo base, since:

- i) he will lose the mystique of the leader of a socialist revolution of a national character, passing to be a figure of the third plane in the United States-Soviet Union dispute;
- ii) he will run the risk of losing part of the Soviet economic help, in view of the heavy onus that the crisis represents for the Soviet Union and the high cost of maintenance that Cuba represents;
- iii) it will be proved that his regime, before being a socialist

revolution aiming at nationalization and statization of the means of production, is, above all, a communism of a propagandistic and sectarian character, becoming confused with an instrument of foreign policy of the Soviet Union; iv) with the loss of the mystique of a hero of the national revolution, with the loss of prestige in the international sphere, with the aggravation of the economic crisis, he will run the risk of, if he does not counter with an adequate political mechanism and instruments of efficient propaganda, having to face with the recrudescence of the internal guerrilla war.

VI – The Brazilian Position in the OAS and UN

I have in the view that the American action itself, that brings the problem of the aggravation of the Cuban crisis for the field of negotiations in the OAS and UN, that Brazil adopted, in these two organizations, measures that were able to call, in the first of these, for immediate consequence [*alcance*] and, in the second, for more long-term objectives. Such measures, although considering the modification that ... [*advinha*] in the Cuban problem as a consequence of the installation of offensive missile bases, were subordinate to the main directives of Brazilian foreign policy, which are the respect to commitments freely assumed, the defense of certain basic juridical postulates, and the objective of world peace.

1) Position in the OAS

Consistent with the position assumed in the Conference of Punta del Este and in compliance to the stipulations of the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil:

- a) supported the resolution presented by the Delegation of the United States, in the sense of convening the Organ of Consultation, in agreement with the provisions in the Inter-American Treaty of Mutual Assistance, and authorizing the OAS Council to function, provisionally, in that quality;
- b) defended the necessity of the Council to make a distinction between the measures the United States requested against Cuba, in other words, between:
 - i) defensive measures aimed to impede that Cuba continues to receive the potential Sino-Soviet armaments that can threaten the peace and the security of the Continent, that is, measures that are equivalent to the maritime blockade of offensive arms;
 - ii) other measures to be taken in Cuban territories for impeding that offensive armament that exists can be converted into an active threat to the security of the continent, any military action that the United States would want to take, including invasion;
- c) voted favorably on the partial maritime blockade, but

abstained from voting “other measures,” in which it was accompanied by Mexico and Bolivia, making quite clear its position against measures of bombardment or invasion of Cuban territory.

2) Position in the UN

With the immediate objective of lessening the crisis in the Caribbean and, in the longer term, as part of its policy favoring progressive and controlled disarmament, with the freeing of funds for programs of assistance to the economic development of underdeveloped countries, Brazil presented, on 29 October, to the Political Committee of the General Assembly a draft resolution [handwritten: “(approved)”] in the sense of denuclearization of Latin America and Africa.

3) Long-run consequences of the Brazilian position

The serene and firm attitude of Brazil in the OAS, abstaining from supporting more violent immediate measures against Fidel Castro, [handwritten inserted word illegible; “aimed”?] to contribute for alleviating the international tension (that in the UN it obtained with its denuclearization project), aimed to not alienate Cuba totally from the inter-American system, that would eventually permit, as soon as the currently exacerbated emotional climate ceases, a return to the position defended in Punta del Este, that is, the thesis that Cuba, neutralized and not infiltrationist, could coexist competitively with the representative democracies of the continent. Such a coexistence would be subordinate to the condition that Cuba (a) accepts a statute of negative obligations, with the effect of renouncing the techniques of subversive propaganda, infiltration, and sabotage, (b) abandoning its subservience to Soviet foreign policy and military interests (c) respecting the interests of continental security and the right of other countries of realizing their own political experiment.

VII – Appreciation of the Brazilian Attitude in the United States

Although part of public opinion and a portion of the Administration recognized the positive aspects of the Brazilian performance in the OAS and UN, certain sectors of the press and of Latin-American diplomatic hands in Washington commented unfavorably that:

- a) Brazil still does not realize the existing difference between communism of national character and internal communism, sectarian, infiltrationist, and instrument of Soviet foreign policy and, [the danger] this last type of regime represents for

countries such as Bolivia, Colombia, and Venezuela, through stimulation of internal agitation from leftist sources;

b) that Brazil, perhaps due to its geographic distance from Cuba, did not sense the disequilibrium of power in the hemisphere –and the consequent danger – that Fidel Castro in plain possession of atomic arms would certainly produce; and that any doctrinal orientation that would be encouraged, such disequilibrium will produce a strong reaction, at least in the Caribbean.

c) that the development of national communism not aggressive will be difficult to conceive of without a substitution of leadership, since Fidel Castro is so excessively involved with the Marxist-Leninist line and, by his previous attitudes, has aroused irreconcilable antagonism not only in the United States but in various areas of Latin America, making impossible the production of formulas of coexistence.

Washington, on 1 November 1962.

[Source: *Maço “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1,962/16223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 37

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 7 p.m., Thursday, 1 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS
13087

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON
ON/1/3/XI/62

SECRET – URGENT
DAM/DAS/DAC/DEA/DNU/Dor/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

815 – THURSDAY – 1900hrs – [Anastas] Mikoyan requested a private meeting with the American negotiators and today dined in New York in the house of [John J.] McCloy, with Undersecretaries [of State and Defense] George Ball and [Roswell] Gilpatric, [and] apparently

confirmed a conciliatory disposition toward the United States of America. White House sources, which cannot yet be identified, have expressed suspicion [*suspiciência*] in relation to the mission of General Albino Silva, which is interpreted as helping facilitate the survival of Castro, all the more since Brazil and Italy have been in the Western world the least cooperative countries in the present crisis. This reaction appears hardly comprehensible [*pouco comprensível*], since, according to information from the Secretary of State [Dean Rusk], Ambassador [Lincoln] Gordon was fully informed of the results of this action, with which he expressed agreement. Before receiving the day before yesterday the High Military School [National War College?] [*Escola Superior de Guerra*], President Kennedy and I conversed privately for some minutes, but he was limited to requesting to be transmitted to President Goulart his disappointment that he must postpone his voyage [to Brazil], impossible now due to the international situation, and that whatever manner will be more useful in the coming year, when the institutional problem will be resolved by plebiscite and our economic planning will be more advanced. He referred in passing to the mission of General Albino, asking about the ideological inclinations of the official in question. I responded that his affiliation is to the anticommunist nationalist line and that he gave support to the mission of U Thant for maintaining the system of international inspection. I added that, according to the telegram of Your Excellency, Ambassador Gordon was fully informed of the objectives of the mission and certainly the State Department was kept current on the result of the Brazilian gestures with Cuba. In view, however, of the rumors referred to above, it would be appropriate, beyond the work of explaining that was carried out here privately, that Ambassador Gordon was informed of the misunderstanding that appears to be emerging here. With reference to the meeting next Monday [5 November] of the Organ of Inter-American Consultation, already communicated to Your Excellency through the mission at the OEA [OAS], permit me to call attention to my telegram nº 810.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: *“ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—OUTUBRO DE 1962/,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 38

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the United Nations, New York, 8 p.m., Friday, 2 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13094

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII SESSION OF THE GENERAL-ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS—NEW YORK
ON/2/3/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DNU/DEA/DAS/DAC/DAM/DO~~r~~/604.(04)

953.(00)

953.(04)

Denuclearization of Latin America and of Africa.
600.(24h)

119 – FRIDAY – 2000hs – Adding to my telegram nº 116. I exposed, today, before the Latin American group, the motives that underlie the Brazilian draft about the denuclearization of Latin America. I explained that the fact that the Brazilian Delegation has presented the draft only with its signature as a result of the extreme gravity of the situation created with the introduction of nuclear arms by the Soviet Union on Cuban territory and the urgency of presenting a proposal that could constitute a solution for the crisis. The Delegate from Panama praised with enthusiasm the Brazilian initiative and raised a question of great importance relative to the second subparagraph, in paragraph 3. The Delegation from Panama desired that the draft extend the explicit way the prohibitions mentioned in the referred subparagraph to the territory of the Panama Canal. The Nicaraguan Delegation supported that of Panama. The Panamanian suggestion was counterpoised with the North American [i.e., US] desire, since [Arthur] Dean already has declared to me that the American Government desires to reserve the right to transport nuclear arms through the Panama Canal. Obviously I did not reveal the opinion of Dean. Belaunde, Head of the Peruvian Delegation, raised vague doubts about the opportunity of the project, alleging that the rockets-anti-rockets [anti-missile missiles] could carry nuclear warheads and that, however, the denuclearization could see the continent deprived of an important arm of

defense. The Argentine Delegate also expressed reservations to the draft, alleging: 1) that it did not appear to him clear the notion of denuclearization; 2) that, if denuclearizing, Latin America would tie its hands from the future onwards, since the technological development would perhaps transform the nuclear arms into defensive arms. I perceived, behind the long exposition of the Argentine Delegate, perhaps a glimpse of the intention of that country to develop a nuclear potential for non-pacific aims. I responded to all the objections and made in a special manner in relation to the reflections of the Argentine Delegate, pointing out that in my view Latin America should dedicate itself to the utilization of nuclear energy solely for peaceful ends. I recalled that any nuclear competition on the continent, in view of the tremendous financial cost of the same, would imply a gigantic delay in economic development in the entire continent. The Haitian Delegate, after praising the Brazilian initiative, recalled the necessity of coordination with the African countries, in order to increase the electoral base of our proposal [in the UN General Assembly]. All the Delegations recalled the Brazilian initiative and showed profound interest in the same [.] Given the exceptional importance of the matter, it would stay combined [and] that the group would meet again in order to study it.

AFONSO ARINOS DE MELO—FRANCO

[Source: “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962/6223,” *Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 39

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Warsaw (Valente), 4 p.m., Monday, 5 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13166

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WARSAW
ON/5/5/XI/62

SECRET

DAC/DO~~r~~/DAS/DNU/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

250 – MONDAY – 1600hs – In an interview today in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they revealed great Polish interest in moving to the mission of General Albino Silva in Cuba. According to my interlocutor, Brazil is the only country capable to mediate, although “the rigidity” of Fidel Castro constitutes the major obstacle. After pious [*piadosas*] words about Khrushchev’s “desire for peace,” he admitted that Kennedy was under pressure from “reactionary circles” and from the Pentagon not to abandon the base at Guantanamo. Poland looks with sympathy on the Brazilian motion in the United Nations about the denuclearization [*desatomização*] of Africa and Latin America and its possible favorable reflection in a solution of the Cuban crisis. Continuing on a “tour d’horizon” [French in original] of the international situation, the same source told me that the intransigence of Adenauer’s in not having diplomatic relations with Warsaw provoked a hardening of Poland in the sense of its joining the German Democratic Republic to demand express recognition of the Oder-Neisse frontier, under which De Gaulle realistically would accept to recognize that the “status quo” could only be modified through war. The Polish position, contrary to that of Bonn, is that the frontier is definitive, not being an object of negotiations. Passing to the Chinese intransigence, which I took to be similar [*procurer assimilar*] to the Cuban intransigence, my interlocutor admitted as inexplicable the aggression toward India. Before departing for Brazil, I requested an interview with [Polish Foreign Minister Adam] Rapacki to inform myself better about the Polish position in relation to Cuba.

MAURY GURGEL VALENTE

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA—Novembro à dezembro de 1962/,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 40

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Moscow (da Cunha), 4:15 p.m., Monday, 5 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED

13.144

FROM THE EMBASSY IN MOSCOW
ON/5/5/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DOTr/DAC/DAS/DEA/DNU/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. Visit of Novotny, Ulbricht and Gomulka to Moscow.

232 – MONDAY – 1615hs – In the last days Novotny, Ulbricht and [Polish First Secretary] Gomulka visited Moscow and held encounters at a high level with the Soviet authorities. These rapid encounters with those who have not counted before now leave no doubt that the principal motive is the Cuban crisis and its repercussions. The recent international events ought to have brought a reasonable [dose] of confusion between the leaders of countries of the socialist bloc, above all because the reactions and likewise the concessions of this government were excessively rapid for which, certainly, it did not have time to consult its allies. On the other hand, the relations with China have encountered the edge of new important events by cause simultaneously of the questions of India and of Cuba. There is the impression that the recent international events have created a state of disorientation in the community of socialist countries and that the great challenge of Khrushchev will be to accommodate this state of affairs in the short term. Since the question of Hungary [in 1956] the leadership of Khrushchev has not suffered a more difficult test.

VASCO TRISTÃO LEITÃO DA CUNHA

[Source: “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 41

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 4:45 p.m., Monday, 5 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED
13167

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/5/5/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL—URGENT
DAC/DAS/DEA/DOr/DNU/600.(24h)
Question of Cuba.

367 – MONDAY – 1645hrs – It is noted here, in the last days, a general relief that the most acute phase of the crisis has passed, considering remote the immediate danger of bombardment or invasion. The speech of [US President John F.] Kennedy on last Friday [2 November] contributed to this, above all for not having threatened to adopt new measures against Cuba. On the other hand, the speech of [Cuban Leader] Fidel Castro, on last Thursday [1 November], was skillful, since he led the facts, with frankness, to the knowledge of the people and, at the same time, was conciliatory in its relatively moderate tone. Still it is difficult to perceive what will be the effects of the last events regarding the internal prestige of Fidel, but it does not appear to have had a noticeable effect on his popularity. In the last days the official propaganda has concentrated on the “five points” of Fidel, transmitted in my telegram nº 363. The Minister of External Relations [Raul Roa] intends to travel soon to the UN in order to defend personally the Cuban position that the solution to the crisis only can be attained on the basis of the Five Points. Therefore, this government insists, during the dispute, on separating the immediate problems (removal of the Soviet bases and inspection) and solution of the more long-term problems, “above all the guarantee of the integrity of Cuba.” But in view of the accord between the American and Soviet governments about some immediate questions, in the present moment, I have the impression that the crisis has entered a less critical phase and will go on in a type of status quo, in case it does not return to become suddenly aggravated.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: *Maço “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1,962/196223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 42

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana
(Bastian Pinto), 5:30 p.m., Monday,
5 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED
13.153

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/5/5/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL URGENT
DAC/DOr/DEA/DAS/DNU/600.(24h)
Question of Cuba.
Visit of A. Mikoyan.

368 – MONDAY – 17hs30 – Mikoyan intends to remain in Cuba, at least, one week. This will permit a complete review of relations between Cuba and Russia, in face of the last events. Until now I have not obtained information of interest about these negotiations, but the declarations of Mikoyan in New York and the optimism demonstrated by some authorities, with whom I conversed, seem to indicate that the prospects of future Soviet aid are good for Cuba.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: *“600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962/196223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 43

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana
(Bastian Pinto), 6:15 p.m., Monday,
5 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13.151

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/5/5/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL
DAC/DNU/604.(04)
920.(42)(24h)

New Representative of Cuba in the UN Carlos Lechuga.
600.(24h)

369 – MONDAY – 1815hs – The new representative of Cuba at the UN, Carlos Lechuga, enjoys prestige in this government beyond being an experienced diplomat. I believe that he could be useful for contacts that Brazil, eventually, desires to establish with Cuba in the ambit of the UN.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: "600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, 6 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
13182

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/6/6/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL
DAC/DAS/DEA/DOr/DNU/600.(24h)
Question of Cuba.
Proclamations of China.

370 – TUESDAY – 1030hrs – I am calling to attention the rude and violent tone of the proclamations of support to Cuba on the part of China contrasting with the relative moderation of the USSR and of its satellites. As there is no signal of a major presence or effective approach of China with

Cuba, it appears that one should treat this as more of a shot [*picuímba*] of [Chinese Communist Party Chairman] Mao [Mao Zedong] at Khrushchev.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: *Maço "600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1,962//6223," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 44

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the United Nations (Afonso Arinos), New York, 8 p.m., Tuesday, 6 November 1962
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
13073

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII SESSION OF THE GENERAL-ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS – NEW YORK
ON/6/6/XI/62

SECRET – EXTREMELY URGENT
DNU/DEA/DAS/DAC/DAM/DOr/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.
Brazilian mediation.

128 – TUESDAY – 2000hs – For the exclusive information of the Minister of State and of the Secretary General, Ambassador Carlos Alfredo Bernadares. I was received by Secretary General U Thant who gave me the following confidential information about the situation in Cuba: 1) the Soviets and Americans are combining to effect an inspection on the sea of Soviet ships or [ships] rented by the Soviet government; the Red Cross accepts, in principle, to make an inspection but is reluctant to accept a review of possible alleged arms that its regulations do not permit this; 3) the discussions continue about this point; 4) Fidel refuses to authorize a UN inspection in Cuba alone declaring that it is not against the UN but considers it blocked from heeding this suggestion due to acts by the United States;

5) Khrushchev did not consult Fidel about his decision which was communicated to the Cuban government after its transmission to Washington; 6) Fidel responded with his legendary [*lendo*] declaration against inspection three hours after receiving the note from Khrushchev; 7) Fidel is strongly supported by China; 8) the situation is aggravated between Peking and Moscow to the point that China will not send a delegation to the commemoration tomorrow of the anniversary of the Russian Revolution; 9) in the American delegation [Adlai] Stevenson and [John] McCloy will meet this afternoon with the Russian delegate [Vasily] Kuznetsov [sic—Kuznetsov]; 10) Stevenson is more conciliatory and McCloy more firm; 11) the American government focuses entirely on the problem of inspection in Cuba, which the Cubans reject; 12) until today U Thant has not seen any progress in the negotiations of [Anastas] Mikoyan. In making this explanation U Thant asked me if Brazil, which is “the country most respected in Latin America,” was not able to make some contribution. I took advantage of the opportunity, however, to repeat to him the suggestion that I made already some days ago in a personal character to the Cuban ambassador [Carlos] Lechuga, who promised to send it to his government. This suggestion was as follows: 1) Fidel invites the diplomatic representatives of some countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Switzerland, Sweden, India and perhaps, others, to comprise a group of inspection in order to bear witness to the dismantling and the departure of the arms considered offensive; 2) these representatives will supply a report to the American and Soviet governments and to the secretary general; 3) the solution will not represent neither foreign inspection nor an American imposition; 4) after mediating, U Thant declared that he considered my suggestion worthy of examination and asked me if I received a response from Lechuga; 5) I told him that [I had] not and explained that Lechuga accepted [it] well but feared an American rejection; 6) U Thant asked me if I desired that he pass on the proposal to the Americans; 7) I told him that yes but that would ask such a thing of him [*que o fizesse como coisa dele*], because it would give more authority and because I did not have authorization of Your Excellency; 8) without hesitating U Thant responded that he would take on the initiative and requested me to maintain secrecy until he called on me again. As U Thant spoke to me of the importance of a personal demarche of [Brazilian] President [João] Goulart, I consult Your Excellency [whether] it would not be appropriate for the president of the republic to telephone the prime minister of Cuba.

AFONSO ARINOS DE MELO FRANCO

[Source: “M. D. B.—CB OI—SECRETO—CONSULADOS DIVERSOS NO INTERIOR E EXTERIOR—TELEGRAMAS—CTs—RECEBIDAS E EXPEDIDAS—1962,” CX 49 (also in “ANEXO Secreto—600. (24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA—Novembro à dezembro de 1962/”), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 45

Telegram from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry to the Brazilian Delegation at the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 5 p.m., Wednesday, 7 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

SENT

13 882

FOR THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII SESSION OF THE GENERAL-ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS—NEW YORK
ON/7/XI/62

SECRET—EXTREMELY URGENT

SSE/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

46 – WEDNESDAY – 17hs00 – Response to your telegram nº 128. I approve the suggestion of Your Excellency to the secretary general agreeing also in that the scheme will gain visibility if it is presented to the directly interested parties by U Thant. Your Excellency, however, should coordinate your action with that of the secretary general, insisting together to the Cuban representatives about the advantages that a solution of this nature would have for the Government of Havana. As for the intercession of the president of the republic, that would depend on the progress made in these first contacts.

EXTERIORES

[Source: "ANEXO Secreto—600.(24b)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA—Novembro à dezembro de 1962/," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 46

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, 7 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13269

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/7/8/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DAC/DAS/DOr/DEA/DNU/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

372 – WEDNESDAY – 1730hs – The country continues entirely mobilized for the defense. The attitude of the Government seems to be more cautious. Habituated for years of the threat and with the blockade in front of Havana, the revolutionary government is plainly conscious that the danger has not passed and can reemerge at any moment; it is also conscious that, after the [US] elections of yesterday, it could produce in the United States of America at most a favorable pull for negotiations, but that the American Government has not given up its intentions. The young Cuban rulers are not losing their impetus of struggle, as Fidel Castro showed on 28 October to respond in a few hours to the Soviet decision to dismantle the bases; as far as the inspection on Cuban territory, Fidel Castro is very busy before public opinion, that it is difficult to find an acceptable formula; and continues here the insistence on the "Five Points" of Fidel Castro, even supported yesterday by the Soviet Ambassador [Aleksandr Alekseyev] in a speech; but the revolutionaries comprehend the gravity of the situation and some are visibly affected in the most acute moment of the crisis and know, for survival, they will have to make concessions. In this sense the conversations of [Anastas] Mikoyan are certainly decisive, that continue in maximum secrecy; until now I have not obtained any positive

information in this respect, but I hope to be able to transmit to Your Excellency some impression in the next hours.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: "600.(24b)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 47

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 5:30 p.m., Thursday, 8 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13.310

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII SESSION OF THE GENERAL-ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS—NEW YORK
ON/8/8/XI/62

SECRET

DEA/DAC/DAS/DAM/DNU/DOr/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

135 – THURSDAY – 1730hs – [CUBAN] AMBASSADOR [CARLOS] LECHUGA COMMUNICATED TO ME YESTERDAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CUBA IS EXAMINING OUR SUGGESTION CONSISTANT [WITH] THE SECRET TELEGRAM SENT TO YOUR EXCELLENCY AMONG OTHERS THAT HE WAS PRESENTED AND WHICH DESERVED ALL OF THEIR ATTENTION. HE SAID TO ME ALSO THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL U THANT HAD SPOKEN TO HIM OF THE MATTER AS HE MADE THE SUGGESTION AS HIS OWN. I TOLD THEN ABOUT MY CONVERSATION WITH U THANT, ALREADY REFERRED TO YOUR EXCELLENCY, AND LECHUGA APPEARED FULLY SATISFIED. NOT HAVING

OTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH PROCEED IN GREAT SECRECY. HOWEVER THE PROBLEM OF LOCAL INSPECTION CONTINUES TO BE THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE TO THE FINAL ACCORD.

AFRONSO ARINOS DE MELLO FRANCO

[Source: "ANEXO Secreto—600.(24b)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA—Novembro à dezembro de 1962/," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 48

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 11:30 a.m., Friday, 9 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
13.369

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/9/9/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL
DAC/DAS/DOr/DNU/DEA/600.(24h)
Question of Cuba.

374 – FRIDAY – 1130hrs – The conversations with [Anastas] Mikoyan proceed in total secrecy. The day before yesterday, in the Soviet Embassy, I conversed with Mikoyan and Fidel Castro, both expansive but we did not speak on this matter; Mikoyan made long and elegiac references to the independent policy of Brazil and of President [João] Goulart. The [Cuban] Minister of External Relations [Raul Roa] told me that the secrecy was indispensable to not prejudice the result of these conversations and the negotiations in New York. On the other hand, from a fairly sure source, we obtained information that the declarations of Governor Brizola profoundly impressed the Cuban leaders and Fidel Castro, that they are utilizing them to explain to Mikoyan the necessity of the Cuban Government maintaining a minimum of its own demands as

a signal of its independence in relation to the Soviet Union; it is the same to suppose that the reaction of independent Latin American leaders has contributed to the crystallizing of the position of Fidel Castro in terms of his program of five points. In these conditions, while the Soviets pay more attention to his politics of the maintenance of peace, Fidel Castro was [estava] conscious that in Latin America public opinion is much more concerned with the sovereignty and the independence, not having in this continent important pacifist movements. According to the same source, Mikoyan is demanding to demonstrate the necessity of Cuba permitting the Soviet solution to the benefit of the unity of the socialist camp; the divergence in position perhaps can be resolved by a systematic compromise [sistematizando compromisso] by which the Soviet Union would accept to support the Cuban intentions [pretensões] in the UN on future occasions, while Cuba would accept the Soviet formula for a solution to the immediate crisis. However, I do not have the ability to confirm this information, I transmit it with due reservations.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: Maço "600.(24b)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1,962//6223," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 49

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the UN General Assembly, New York, 2:30 p.m., Friday, 9 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
13 364

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS—NEW YORK
ON/9/9/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL—URGENT
DNU/DAS/DAC/DOr/DEA/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. Denuclearization of Latin America.

139 – FRIDAY – 1430hs – In the session in the morning, the Delegates from Canada, Sweden, and Ghana referred exhaustively to the Brazilian draft about denuclearization of Latin America and expressed support to the ideas it contains. The Delegate from Ghana formulated an appeal to the government of Cuba in the sense to accept the idea of inspection on the part of the United Nations. Given the reticent attitude, although cordial, of Padilla Nervo, I suggest a gesture together with the government of Mexico in the sense of obtaining its support to the Brazilian draft.

AFONSO ARINOS DE MELO FRANCO

[Source: “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 50

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 7:30 p.m., Friday, 9 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13383

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII SESSION OF THE GENERAL-ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS—NEW YORK
ON/9/9/XI/62

SECRET

DAC/DAS/DNU/DEA/DOF/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. Russian-American negotiations.

144 – FRIDAY – 1930hs – [Soviet deputy foreign minister Vasily] Kuznetsov invited me today for a conversation in the headquarters of the Soviet Mission. There he appeared with Ambassador Silos and we heard from the Soviet Vice-Minister the following: he wanted to inform us about the development of the Russian-American negotiations on the Cuban case. He considered that they have arrived to a deadlock in virtue of

the Soviets having complied with the obligations assumed by Prime Minister Khrushchev without the North-Americans having complied with the commitment relative to the guarantees of non-invasion of Cuba. According to Kuznetsov, the American insistence on the question of inspection is becoming moot [*ociosa*] since the United States has declared satisfaction with the removal of offensive material existing in Cuba, it is only a pretext to postpone indefinitely the commitment of non-invasion and suspension of the economic blockade against Cuba. [*Ajuntou*] considered a delicate situation because in brief the Soviet Union is not able to accept more indeterminate prolongation and there are risks of “the situation becoming worse than it was before.” He observed that it was a moment for peaceful and prestigious countries like Brazil to reflect about this and offer suggestions in this respect. He praised highly the efforts of non-aligned countries in the Geneva Conference, especially of Brazil, and the peaceful initiatives of our Government in the Cuban crisis. I have the impression that the Soviet Minister insinuated our manifestation in the sense of exposing to the Washington government our disquiet faced with the possibility of a return of the crisis that was so difficult to surmount. By the way of the situation in Cuba I am able to inform Your Excellency that there are already various signs in the sense of compliance by the North American government of the promise relative to the non-invasion of Cuba and the suspension of the coercive measures against that country. In a meeting with a Latin American group, [US Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai E.] Stevenson alluded to the possibility of the Organization of American States to meet and, having verified the compliance of the commitment of the Soviet Union and the Cuban Government, to suspend the coercive measures taken in the last meeting of Consultation of the Chancellors. Stevenson alluded equally “to the return of Cuba to the American family.” In another meeting, with European delegates, Stevenson repeated his previous declarations and, according to what I collected from various sources, had even referred to the reestablishment of economic help to the Cuban government. These declarations transpired this morning and were commented on in private conversations by various correspondents accredited to the United Nations.

AFRONSO ARINOS DE MELLO FRANCO

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA—Novembro à dezembro de 1962/,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 51

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 7:45 p.m., Friday, 9 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
13387

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/9/9/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL – URGENT
DAC/DAS/DO_r/DEA/DNU/600.(24h)
Question of Cuba. Declarations of the Cuban Minister of External Relations.

377 – FRIDAY – 1945hrs – My lengthy conversation with the [Cuban] Minister of External Relations [Raúl Roa] this morning confirmed my impressions, transmitted by my telegram nº 372, in the sense that the Cuban government, conscious of the gravity of the situation, is disposed to make concessions to reach a minimal guarantee; he requested anew the support of Brazil that Cuba “has the right” to present in the UN its program of Five Points only, I repeat, as a basis for discussion; he insinuated plainly the disposition to renounce the fifth point relative to the [US] Naval Base of Guantanamo; he did not hide the fear how much the measures that were proposed to the OAS and insisted in the present confidence that Cuba reposed in the attitude of Brazil that he knows will be very firm; and judged, however, that the discussions in the UN will be decisive. He told me that [Anastas] Mikoyan will be here some more days then following [he will go to] New York. The minister himself intends to appear before the Security Council as soon as it will meet.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: *Maço “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1,962//6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 52

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 6:15 p.m., Monday, 12 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
13466
FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/12/13/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL
DAC/DAS/DO_r/DNU/DEA/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

382 – MONDAY – 1815hs – The general mobilization of the country causes great damage to production, although the Government affirmed that its effort to reduce its effects, though emergency measures. The shipping is diminishing progressively by pressure of the United States regarding other countries, by the attitudes of dockers of various ports, who refuse to operate ships that stop in Cuba, and, now, by the blockade, which greatly damages foreign commerce. There is contradictory information that it is possible to obtain how much is the reserve of gasoline, foodstuffs, and consumer goods. Evidently, the damage that the Cuban economy is suffering is turning this country still more dependent on Soviet help in the immediate future.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: *“600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 53

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 7 p.m., Monday, 12 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13 458

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII SESSION OF THE GENERAL-ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS—NEW YORK
ON/12/12/XI/62

SECRET—EXTREMELY URGENT
DNU/DEA/DAS/DAC/DO_r/DAf/604(04)
Denuclearization of Latin America.
600.(24h)

151 – MONDAY – 1900hs – I REQUEST TO TELEPHONE INCONTINENTE [sic—IMMEDIATELY?] MINISTER OF STATE OR AMBASSADOR [CARLOS] BERNARDES OR MINISTER GUERREIRO: TELEGRAPHIC BULLETIN 38 ADDRESSED TO THIS MISSION CONTAINED THE FOLLOWING: “BRAZIL MODIFIED PROPOSAL DENUCLEARIZATION LATIN AMERICA AND AFRICA PRESENTED IN THE LAST DAY TWENTY NINE [i.e., 29 October 1962] GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS. PRINCIPAL ALTERNATION WAS CIRCUMSCRIBED DRAFT ONLY LATIN AMERICA, EXCLUDING AFRICA BEYOND SMALL ALTERATIONS OF THE TEXT. BRAZILIAN DELEGATION TOOK THE DECISION TO ALTER DOCUMENT PRESENTED INITIALLY TO AVOID INTRODUCTION OF AMENDMENTS BY DELEGATIONS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, WHICH WOULD MODIFY ENTIRELY THE SPIRIT OF THE PROPOSAL. SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES WOULD MAKE RESTRICTIONS OF THE PROPOSAL, GIVING IT TO STAND OUT FROM IT POSSIBLY SOME NUCLEAR ARMAMENT. FRANCE ALSO HAS AN INTEREST TO UTILIZE THE SAHARA DESERT AS A TESTING GROUND AND WOULD NOT ACCEPT DENUCLEARIZATION. THE ACTION OF THESE TWO COUNTRIES [sic—other country besides France not identified—trans.], WHO LEAD GROUPS IN THE UN, WOULD EVEN BRING DOWN THE PROPOSITION. THEREFORE IT WAS APPROPRIATE TO ELIMINATE THE PART RELATIVE TO AFRICA. AS FOR THE

TEXT, IT HAS MODIFICATIONS IN THE SECOND PARAGRAPH HAVING BEEN ABOLISHED THE ITEM WHICH CALLED ON ALL MEMBER STATES TO ABSTAIN FROM USING TERRITORY, TERRITORIAL WATERS AND AIR SPACE OF AFRICAN AND LATIN-AMERICAN COUNTRIES FOR TESTING, STORAGE, TRANSPORTATION OF NUCLEAR ARMS OR THEIR DELIVERY VEHICLES. THE SUPPRESSION OF THIS ITEM OWED PRINCIPALLY TO AN ACTION OF ARGENTINA, WHOSE MILITARY GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THE ITEM RESTRICTIVE OF OTHERS, AND ALSO SOME CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES, NEXT TO UNITED STATES TESTING AREAS WHO USE THEIR TERRITORIAL WATERS AND THEIR AIR SPACE TO TRANSPORT NUCLEAR ARMAMENT TO TESTING GROUNDS. BRAZIL DECLARED YESTERDAY IN THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT ITS PROPOSAL TO DENUCLEARIZE LATIN AMERICA WAS NOT MOTIVATED BY THE CUBAN CRISIS. AMBASSADOR AFONSO ARINOS CHIEF OF THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATION SAID THAT THE INTENTION OF THE BRAZILIAN INTENTION [sic—PROPOSAL?] IS TO GENERALIZE INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION OF NUCLEAR ARMS. ARINOS ADDED THAT THE ORIGINAL BRAZILIAN DRAFT, WHICH REQUESTED TOGETHER THE DISATOMIZATION OF AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA AND WHOSE LAST VERSION THE AFRICA QUESTION WAS REDUCED TO RECORDING THAT ON TWENTY FOUR NOVEMBER NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY [24 November 1960] IT HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE ASSEMBLY THE NECESSITY TO CONSIDER THE AFRICAN CONTINENT A DISATOMIZED ZONE. [sic—trans.] WE CONSIDER THE PUBLICATION OF THIS NEWS OF MAJOR GRAVITY BEING ABLE TO HAVE UNFAVORABLE REPERCUSSIONS IN THE GENERAL-ASSEMBLY AND TO PREJUDICE APPROVAL OF THE BRAZILIAN DRAFT ON DENUCLEARIZATION. THE GRAVITY OF THE MATTER IS INCREASED BY THE FACT THAT THE NEWS SEEMS TO BE BASED PARTIALLY ON MY TELEGRAM Nº 140 THAT TRANSMITTED INFORMATION AND COMMENTARIES OF A STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL CHARACTER. I TAKE EVEN THE LIBERTY TO SUGGEST THAT YOUR EXCELLENCY TO COLLECT INFORMATION TO VERIFY IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCE THE INFORMATION SERVICES DIVULGED THIS NEWS AND AT THE SAME TIME I ASK YOUR EXCELLENCY TO INSTRUCT IMMEDIATELY THE EMBASSIES RETRANSMISSIONS

IN THE SENSE TO ELIMINATE THE BULLETIN THE PASSAGE TO WHICH I ALLUDED IN ORDER TO AVOID DIPLOMATIC DIFFICULTIES WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS.

AFONSO ARINOS DE MELLO FRANCO

[Source: "ANEXO Secreto—600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA—Novembro à dezembro de 1962/," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 54

Telegram-Letter from Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 10-13 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13488

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON

ON/10/13/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DAS/DAC/DEA/DNU/DOt/600.(24h)

Cuban situation.

CT 370 – In addition to my *oficio* nº 994 of 1^o November of 1962. In conversation with a high officials from the State Department about the prospects of the Cuban situation, he announced three hypotheses about the future Soviet com-
partment: (1^o) abandon entirely the government of Fidel Castro to its own fate; (2^o) limit itself to leave constituted in Cuba a socialist regime, based on a well-structured commu-
nist party and endowed with a repressive political machine, as a political base of propaganda and infiltration in Latin America and (3^o) to intensify Soviet technical and economic assistance in a manner to transform Cuba into a living dem-
onstration of the efficacy of communism as an instrument of economic development in Latin America. The first hypoth-
esis seemed to him impractical since it would demoralize all the communist efforts in Latin America. Also he did not believe plausible the third hypothesis due to the following

motives: (a) the raised cost of operation of development, that it would only have efficacy as a long-term measure and demand a minimum of 500 million dollars per year; (b) the present disorganization of the Cuban economy, whose industrial machines of North American origin will have to be completely re-equipped under penalty of facing an in-
active period due to a lack of parts; (c) difficulties of personnel and organization, given the low organizational talent of the revolutionary leaders [and] the escape of the great part of the technical and professional class; (d) the opposition of other Iron Curtain countries, who need their own support [and] will protest against a greater Soviet engagement in an area considered distant and insecure; (e) Soviet responsibility in Asia, where the Chinese rivalry obliges the Soviets to an intense economic and military effort under penalty of losing the leadership of the socialist states; (f) permanent risk of subversive movements in Cuba, even as the risk of invasion attenuates as a part of the Kennedy-Khrushchev under-
standing about dismantling the bases. In these conditions it would seem to him more reasonable the second hypothesis, that would bring a tolerable economic effort to assure the economic survival of Cuba without transforming it into a model of development. I argued that this policy does not seem to me viable without a combination of hypotheses two and three because (a) the economic un-success or stagnation of Cuba will turn the Castroite movement unexportable (b) it would aggravate the prospects of internal subversion in Cuba. To these arguments the alluded functionary respon-
ded that one the great conquests of communist technique has been the creation of systems of rapid communications, of military units' movements and of the political apparatus of espionage of such order that communist regimes of medio-
cre economic "performance" such as Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Viet-Minh [sic] have managed to maintain themselves in power. He added that these conditions seem already to exist in Cuba. The electronic and telecommunica-
tions equipment set up to serve the remote-controlled rocket bases probably will continue in Cuba, improving the system of communications on the island. The various military units were highly mechanized and have become capable of rapid movement to liquidate subversive movements that can arise in any part of the island. Finally, through the committees of political vigilance in the villages, factories and cooperatives constitute an efficient apparatus of espionage. All of this will facilitate the indefinite maintenance of the repressive regime. As for the economic model of development, the Soviets will renounce this, ...ing [*fiando-se*] more in the eventual success of the local communist movement, that will demand access to power through the mechanism of popular fronts and of infiltration in other democratic parties. Likewise they will

not [*lograssem*] the conquest of power they will get perhaps the more moderate objective of pointing out the capitalist development. As for the North American attitude in the present negotiations about dismantling the bases in Cuba, he indicates that, for internal political motives, it would be extremely difficult for the United States to abandon the demands of international control, since, the dissatisfaction of this requirement, would increase the political resistance, already enormous, to the commitment of non-invasion. In any case, if the impossibility of the assembly of a system of international inspection is verified, by virtue of the resistance of Fidel Castro, the Russians agreeing however to the verification on the high seas of the return of the missiles evacuated from Cuba, it would be possible to keep the general lines of the Kennedy-Khrushchev understanding. However, beyond the qualifications that already have figured in the declaration of Kennedy of the 12th of September [sic—November?] – preservation of Guantanamo, Cuban abstention from aggression to other countries of the continent, non-installation of offensive capacity that would increase other conditions limiting [*limitativos*] the commitment of non-invasion such that as the maintenance of the blockade with international inspection and periodic overflight by American or neutral planes of Cuban territory in order to document the non-reestablishment of aggressive equipment. The functionary stressed that [*en causa*] these were all observations of a personal character, seeing that the policy of the American government has not yet crystallized, in view of the constant evolution whether of the Soviet position or of the Cuban.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 55

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 12:15 p.m., Wednesday, 14 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13576

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA

ON/14/14/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL—EXTREMELY URGENT

DNU/DEA/DAS/DAC/DOt/Daf/600.(24h)

Denuclearization of Latin America and Africa.

384 – WEDNESDAY – 1215hs – Response to the telegram of Your Excellency nº 179. I was this morning with the Minister of External Relations [Raúl Roa], who told me that, in attention to our request, the Cuban government examined yesterday, thoroughly, the Brazilian draft and yesterday evening sent instructions to its ambassador in the UN to support the draft of this government, to which he would present the following amendments: 1) denuclearization, as quickly as possible, of Puerto Rico and the Panamá Canal Zone; 2) the commitment, on the part of all nuclear powers, to not use these arms against Latin America; 3) elimination of military bases of the powers in Latin America, which refers to Guantanamo, without citing. I said that Cuba does not give up, in this third amendment; I did not know until this point [that] this affirmation is valid; it can be one of the frequent Cuban contradictions or a new position, after the beginning of the negotiations with Mikoyan; until now, I was fairly sure that Cuba would give up its demand of the elimination of this American naval base (see my telegram nº 377). I recalled that the denuclearization of Africa was an initiative of Fidel Castro in the UN in 1960, and he praised the Brazilian draft, saying that, with the Cuban amendments, it would be an effective guarantee for Latin America and an important step toward disarmament and the suspension of nuclear tests.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 56

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana
(Bastian Pinto), 3:15 p.m., Wednesday, 14
November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13610

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA

ON/14/14/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL—URGENT

DAC/DEA/DNU/DAS/DAM/DOr/600.(24h)

Substitution

Question of Cuba.

Conversations with Mikoyan.

385 – WEDNESDAY – 15hs15 – The tight secrecy continues to surround the conversations with [Anastas] Mikoyan. However, from a generally well-informed source, I obtained in this respect the following information: 1^a) Fidel Castro, before the arrival of Mikoyan to Havana, held various meetings with Raul [Castro], [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos, [Ernesto] “Che” Guevera and Carlos [Rafael] Rodriguez, in order to fix a monolithic position around the questions that would be discussed with the Russian leader; 2^a) this position was revealed to be extraordinarily rigid in the course of the conversations. The Cubans began to complain that during the first weeks of the crisis they were not consulted nor informed by the Soviet Government. They pointed out, [word illegible], it had been an error [to make?—word illegible] the Russian proposal to trade the Cuban bases [for those—words illegible] in Turkey, since, in the first place, Cuba is a socialist country, that it could not be, however, an object of negotiations with the West. The Cuban leaders stressed that the referred position lessens the prestige of the Cuban revolution on the continent. The result would have been otherwise, better [*acrescentaram*], if, in place of Turkey, the Soviet Government had thought of Guantanamo. With indelicacy, they complain that the Soviet Government did not previously consult the Cuban Government about the international inspection of this country; 3^a) Mikoyan retorted with identical violence, explaining that the Soviet Union worried itself with saving the peace, but also created conditions that guaranteed the integrity of Cuba. The Soviet Government did not make concessions and also felt, in the end of the first week of the crisis, exactly as the Cuban Government, that the inva-

sion of Cuba was a question of hours. In the second place, Mikoyan made clear that the Soviet Union did not admit that Cuba interferes in its international politics. He criticized strongly the speech of Fidel Castro of 28 of October, in which he rejected the international inspection, affirming that its result was to complicate the crisis, aggravating the danger of war; 4^a) the conversations were extended to plan the general strategy, having Mikoyan invested against the declaration of Havana, which he considers suicidal politics that tend to deprive Cuba of the support of other Latin American countries. The anti-American ideological line advocated in this document is prejudicial to the left on the continent and in this respect various complaints have arrived to Moscow. The USSR is against the declaration of Havana, which was in frank disagreement with the doctrine of peaceful coexistence. The affirmative Cuban response, [words illegible], was that the peaceful coexistence is an adequate policy for the maintenance of world peace, and should permit Cuban support to the anti-imperialist revolutions beginning on the Continent; 5^a) the basic proposal of Mikoyan was that Cuba should accept a formula [words illegible] solution of the immediate crisis and therefore to create conditions for, in the following moment, to obtain the adequate guarantees against a North American aggression; 6^a) the Cubans refuse to accept the international inspection and, in a rigid and even extremist manner, want consciously to make difficult a solution of the crisis with the objective to give a public demonstration of its independence in the face of the USSR obligating it to assume a more concrete responsibility in relation to the created situation. I transmit this information with due reservations, although I believe sufficiently in its veracity. I judge it usable to understand the Cuban position and the antecedents of the joint Cuban-Soviet proposal presented, yesterday, to the Secretary General of the UN.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 57

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana
(Bastian Pinto), 4:30 p.m., Friday,
16 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13671

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/16/16/XI/1962

CONFIDENTIAL—EXTREMELY URGENT
DAC/DOr/DAS/DEA/DNU/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

388 – FRIDAY – 1630hs – In his letter of yesterday to the UN secretary general, Fidel Castro accepted the “unilateral inspection,” when, beforehand, he always rejected inspection of this character. This seems to confirm the rumor that circulated, here, in recent days, in the sense that Fidel is inclined to accept some type of inspection that is not limited to Cuba, perhaps including Guantanamo or other territories; it coincides, also, with what he told to General Albino Silva (see my telegram nº 359). But, faced with the continuing surprises that Fidel Castro offers, this observation should be taken with reserve.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “MDB—Telegramas Recebidas—Havana—1962/1964,” (CX 229), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasília, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 58

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Havana
(Bastian Pinto), 6:30 p.m., Friday,
16 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13680

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/16/17/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL—EXTREMELY URGENT
DNU/DEA/DAS/DAC/DOr/DAf/600.(24h)
Denuclearization of Latin America and Africa.

389 – FRIDAY – 1830hs – I am very thankful for telegram nº 180, in which was retransmitted to me the telegram of the Embassy in Moscow. From what it is possible to observe in Cuba, I agree entirely with the considerations and conclusions of Ambassador Vasco Tristão Leitão da Cunha. Also, in his direct relations with Cuba, Khrushchev has shown an attitude [that is] pacificating and open to compromise. I have pointed out to Your Excellency that this country depends each time more on Soviet economic help; but Fidel Castro feels sure of that there will only be an overthrow due to an American invasion or by a prolonged total blockade, that will have more grave international implications; for this and perhaps for to be convinced that the USSR will not leave to help it, Fidel Castro [*timbra*] to show his independence and even arrogance. It is each time more ostensible the Cuban [*frieza*] for with Mikoyan that, in the last days, which are not mentioned in the newspapers; however his presence here, for fifteen days, is evidently proof of Soviet goodwill. The Cuban intransigence, similar to the Chinese line (although there has not been here direct political influence from China), contributed without doubt for making difficult the conciliatory position of Khrushchev and, to what seems, is leading the Russians to admit, at least in part, the basic Cuban line expressed in the program of Five Points. Some foreign observers here judge, however, that the USSR will have in the near future to modify radically its policy for [dealing] with this country. In this isolation and before the surprising reiterations of the Cuban Government it is each time more difficult to make forecasts and even precise observations, but all of these observers are convinced that the United States will not yield its intention to overthrow Fidel Castro; it is also [...] and is certainly influences his attitude.

LUIZ LEIVAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasília, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 59

Telegram from the Brazilian Delegation at the United Nations General Assembly (Afonso Arinos), New York, 7:30 p.m., Friday, 16 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13603

FROM THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII GENERAL-ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS—NEW YORK
ON/16/16/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DNU/DAM/DAC/Daf/DOtr/DEA/DAS/600.(24h)
~~604(04)~~

Denuclearization of Latin America and Africa.

167 – FRIDAY – 19hs30 – [CUBAN] AMBASSADOR LECHUGA CAME TO SEE ME TODAY IN THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE MISSION AND COMMUNICATED TO ME THE POSITION OF HIS GOVERNMENT WITH REFERENCE TO THE DENUCLEARIZATION DRAFT. IT IS THE FOLLOWING: CUBA WILL PRESENT AMENDMENTS INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY PUERTO RICO AND THE PANAMA CANAL IN THE DISPOSITIONS; PROHIBITING FOREIGN BASES IN LATIN-AMERICAN TERRITORIES, THAT AIMS AT GUANTANAMO; AND ADDING A PROVISION IN WHICH THE NUCLEAR POWERS WILL COMMIT THEMSELVES NOT TO EMPLOY NUCLEAR ARMAMENT AGAINST ANY LATIN AMERICAN TERRITORY. I OBSERVED TO HIM SINCE AS SOON AS THE AMENDMENTS WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED AND THAT, EVEN GETTING A MAJORITY OF THE COMMISSION, IT WOULD NEVER ARRIVE TO OBTAIN TWO-THIRDS OF THE VOTES IN THE PLENARY. I ARGUED QUITE A BIT, SEEKING TO DEMONSTRATE TO HIM THE CONVENIENCE OF CUBAN SUPPORT TO THE PRESENT TERMS OF THE DRAFT. LECHU[G]

A, IN RESPONSE, DECLARED TO ME THAT HE WOULD SUPPORT THE IDEA OF THE DRAFT IN HIS SPEECH TOMORROW, BUT THAT AS FOR THE AMENDMENTS HIS FORMAL INSTRUCTIONS ARE TO PRESENT THEM. I ASKED HIM, HOWEVER, IF CUBA WOULD APPEAR AT SOME CONTINENTAL MEETING AIMED TO ELABORATE A TREATY OF DENUCLEARIZATION, IN CASE OUR DRAFT IS APPROVED. HE DECLARED TO ME IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO HAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPOND, BUT THAT PERSONALLY HE UNDERSTANDS THAT YES, [AT] ONE TIME THAT THE IDEA IS CONSIDERED WELL BY HIS GOVERNMENT. I FEAR THAT THE CUBAN ABSTENTION WILL PROVOKE THE DEFECTION OF OTHER COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA THAT CONSIDER THE COMMITMENT OF CUBA NECESSARY FOR THE SECURITY...FOR THIS REASON I [PEÇO] YOUR EXCELLENCY THAT EXAMINE THE CONVENIENCE OF AN INSTANT AND FINAL JOINT “DEMARCHE” TO THE HAVANA GOVERNMENT, AT A HIGHER LEVEL, REQUESTING THAT IT SUSPEND THE PRESENTATION OF THE AMENDMENTS.

AFRONSO ARINOS DE MELLO FRANCO

[Source: “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962/6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 60

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos), 9 p.m., Friday, 16 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13 679

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON
ON/16/17/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DNU/DAC/DAS/DEA/Daf/DOr/604(04)

Denuclearization of Latin America and Africa. Aggravation of the Cuban situation.

600.(24h)

167 – FRIDAY – 2100hs – The Cuban situation, which has been the object of contradictory information, has been aggravated, for the following reasons: A) the threat of Fidel Castro, apparently transmitted by [Cuban UN Ambassador Carlos] Lechuga to U Thant, in the sense of that American observation planes, that overfly Cuba, will be attacked; B) the American declaration that, if necessary, these planes will have a military escort; C) the Cuban intention to suggest amendments to the denuclearization proposal, impossible to be accepted by the United States of America, already that reopen the problem of the bases and the denuclearization of so-called dependent territories (Panama and Puerto Rico); D) the position of [West German Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer favorable to the strong line in relation to Cuba.¹³ Not knowing the results of the Mikoyan Mission, having the following interpretations: Mikoyan has gone to Cuba in order to assure the necessary cautions for the removal of the missiles to be made without violation of the military secrets, that would have to be effected, whether by American espionage, or by Cuban interference, if it is attempted to hold the dismantling; B) he has gone to make a complete evaluation of the state of the Cuban economy to calculate the economic and political cost for the Soviet Union of: I) maintain the present level; II) increase [*promover*] its development; III) abandon her to her own fate. This evaluation would serve as a subsidy for the formation of Russian foreign policy with relation to Cuba, today the object of stiff criticism, whether by Stalinist elements of the Soviet Union, or by China, a controversy that may be reached in the Meeting of the [CPSU] Central Committee, on the (next) 19th. The American position will be, probably, to abandon the blockade in exchange for the removal of the bombers, that, according to the latest aerial photographs, continue to be uncrated; it will maintain the aerial inspection and the non-invasion commitment, linking some form of effective inspection that will not be controlled through neutral diplomatic representatives in Havana, a formula apparently suggested by Lechuga and [Soviet deputy foreign minister Vasily] Kuznetsov and judged unsatisfactory. In a meeting with Latin American Ambassadors in the Department of State, I had to intervene in defense of the Brazilian denuclearization proposal, which was being criticized by the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Venezuela, because: A) they associate, erroneously, the idea of mediation and reintegration of Cuba in the inter-American system, considered

unacceptable by these countries, the Dominican Republic declared that it would present, in brief, proof of subversive activities fomented by Cuba, joining it [was] Venezuela in the demand of stronger sanctions [against] Castro; B) because the draft has been presented in the UN and not in the OAS. I responded, explaining, that the Brazilian proposal in the UN had an objective more limited, not seeing the reintegration of Cuba in the OAS and yes [rather?] A: I) to avoid the proliferation of nuclear armaments; II) to avoid competition in Latin America in bases of nuclear arms, with the diversion of necessary resources to economic development; III) to facilitate the maintenance of a system of international inspection, that Cuba would be able to accept, without suffering what it calls a national humiliation. As, principally, the proposal contemplated, also, Africa and the continuation, even, in expectation of Cuban acceptance, the UN was the more appropriate forum, not having, however, hindered the participation of the OAS in the regulation of the implementation of the project. The Uruguayan Representative recalled the convenience of our coordination with the Joint Inter-American Defense [JID], with fear that it had seen the proposal of the utilization of tactical nuclear arms as part of the program of defense.

ROBERTO DE OLIVEIRA CAMPOS

[Source: "600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962/6223," *Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasília, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.*]



Document No. 61

Telegram from the Brazilian Foreign Ministry to the Brazilian Delegation at the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 9 p.m., Friday, 16 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

SENT

14343

FOR THE DELEGATION OF BRAZIL AT THE XVII GENERAL-ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS—NEW YORK

ON/16/16/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL

SSE/DNU/DAS/DAC/DO~~r~~/DAf/604(04)

600.(24h)

Denuclearization of Latin America and Africa.

64 – FRIDAY – 2100hs – Your Excellency is authorized to postpone the voting on the draft resolution about the denuclearization of Latin America in order to await the deliberations [*ponderações*] that were made to you by the North American government. We insist, however, in that the same draft will come to be voted in the Commission and in the plenary before the present period of sessions of the General Assembly is closed.

EXTERIORES

[Source: “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 62

Telegram from Brazilian Embassy in Belgrade,
12:30 p.m., Monday, 19 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13733

FROM THE EMBASSY IN BELGRADE

ON/19/19/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DO~~r~~/DAC/DAS/DEA/DNU/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. Increase of Chinese political influence.

83 – MONDAY – 12hs30 – Reference to my telegram nºs 76 and 77. In line with the confidential conversation that I had with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the current thinking in the Government is as follows: 1) it is the Chinese that are the instigators of the intransigent position of the Cuban

Government; furthermore, it is believed that the action of Peking in Cuba is in line with broader plans, as tested in the support of the Albanian communists against the USSR, the attempts to replace in Asia, in general, the historical influence of Soviet communism and, now, the military operations against India; 2) Fidel Castro has shown his political skill and guaranteed the permanence of his regime if, [word unclear] to reply with the challenge of the five demands, [word unclear] however in accord with the UN secretary general on the basis of the word emphasized to the Head of the Russian Government by the North-American President in his solemn message of 27 October [word unclear] climate of conciliation, that the opportune Brazilian mediation still more favorable.

BUX RIBEIRO COUTO

[Source: “600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 63

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Moscow
(da Cunha), 6 p.m., Monday, 19 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13.736

FROM THE EMBASSY IN MOSCOW

ON/19/19/XI/62

CONFIDENTIAL

DO~~r~~/DAC/DAS/DEA/DNU/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. No revelation in the Soviet press about the Cuban problems.

253 – MONDAY – 1800hs – I believe it is interesting to point out that the Soviet press has hidden from its readers the recent evolution of the Cuban problem, and, systematically, informed only on the collateral aspects of the visit of [Anastas] Mikoyan to Cuba. I am led to believe that the Soviet readers ignore the problems or the rising divergences between this

Government and Fidel Castro, above all, the rejection of Castro to permit the local verification. The recent letter of Fidel Castro to U Thant about the threat of downing North American planes was not published here.

VASCO TRISTÃO LEITÃO DA CUNHA

[Source: "600.(24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA de novembro a dezembro de 1.962//6223," Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 64

Brazilian Foreign Ministry Memorandum, "Question of Cuba," 20 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

MEMORANDUM for Mr. ADJUNCT SECRETARY GENERAL FOR AMERICAN AFFAIRS

CONFIDENTIAL

DAS/36.

On 20 of November of 1962

Question of Cuba

600.(24h)

Permit me Your Excellency to recapitulate, in a manner more succinct and focused, only, on aspects of the question that interest the aims of the present Memorandum, the current development of the Cuban crisis, in that it refers particularly to the three parties directly involved – United States of America, USSR and Cuba.

I – UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2. In that which concerns the United States of America, it appears to have fully attained the objective of its naval and aerial blockade, which was to impede the entry, to Cuba, of warlike material of an offensive nature. Moreover, even, the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw, or dismantle, *sur place*, the armaments which had been installed on Cuban territory, under its control. On the other hand, in the bilateral negotiations that have been between the United States of America and the USSR, the Washington government gave guarantees of non-invasion of Cuba.

3. To reach a final solution to the Cuban question, the American Government, still, demands: a) the withdrawal by the Soviets, of additional armaments – long-range bombers – b) the inspection, by an international group, on Cuban territory, of the works of dismantling and withdrawal of the offensive and nuclear war material. As for the first demand, Moscow alleged that it is not a fitting initiative in the matter, since the planes at issue have already been incorporated into the Cuban air force. In this case, the Government of Cuba has to agree to return to the Soviet Union the machines at issue.

II – U.S.S.R.

4. Beyond the direct action of the USSR in the question, already mentioned in previous paragraphs, there is to consider the current position of the government of Premier Khrushchev, in view of the information received by the Embassy in Moscow.

5. Ambassador Leitão da Cunha commented on the immediate effects that the events in the Caribbean have had regarding the line of foreign policy of Moscow. It appears to have fixed on a new idea of "compromise," in solution of international disputes in which the Soviet Union is a direct party. Still according to Ambassador Leitão da Cunha, the line followed by Khrushchev of "peaceful coexistence" has undergone a change of direction, which approximates the Brazilian idea of "competitive coexistence."

6. This new philosophy was not adopted without the Soviet Premier having to overcome obstacles, in front of difficulties and criticisms, above all on the part of its more radical allies. The current intransigence of Fidel Castro to gestures of Mikoyan, causes discomfort in the Soviet environment [*meios soviéticos*]. On the other hand, it has inspired that he will be [*inspirada que seja*] – certainly he is – in egotistical motives and of the momentary strategy, the current attitude of Khrushchev has been conciliatory, pacific, and, evidently, all solutions should be searched that would not put them to lose ground already conquered or compromise future negotiations.

III – CUBA

7. Pressured by the Soviets, Fidel Castro has ready now conformed in abdicating certain demands that he initially made – withdrawal of the Americans of the naval base of Guantanamo – as conditions for agreeing with an international inspection on his territory. The most recent communications received from our Embassy in Havana permit one to deduce, [*s.m.j.*], that the government of Fidel Castro is disposed to accept an

international solution for the question, within which would be, in part, protecting his prestige next to the Cuban people. It may not be, therefore, that he would be led to assume a position of intransigence, compromising irremediably the conciliatory solution that he searches to reach.

8. In these conditions, and on a merely speculative basis – a time that, as is natural in case, there is not the DAS, up to date with the intentions of the Government, in that it respects its direct and future participation in the unrolling of the events in the Caribbean – permit me to recall to Your Excellency the possibility of Brazil suggesting the path of a conciliatory solution for the question of Cuba, in which would participate the Governments of the United States of America, the Soviet Union and of Havana.

9. The idea would be to launch in an informal manner, for example, in an interview granted by the Mr. Minister of State with a highly-regarded foreign correspondent. It would not assume the form of an offer of good offices or of mediation on the part of Brazil, but an indication of a formula that all would be able to accept. Another form of action in this sense would be of a gesture together or isolated on the part of Latin American Governments that maintain diplomatic relations with Fidel Castro.

10. Such a solution would consist in the mentioned Governments assuming a commitment of “negative obligations.”

11. Already on the occasion of examining the matters that would be tackled by President João Goulart and Kennedy, was thought of a high hierarchy in this Case that the attitude in front of the Cuban Government that would bear better fruits for the community of the Hemisphere would be for them to realize gestures together to Fidel Castro in the sense of assuming negative obligations, instead of following the path of isolation of Cuba, and of reprisals.

12. In synthesis, this compromise, that would be the object of a formal declaration, together or isolated, of the three interested Governments, would extend to the following negative obligations:

on the part of the United States of America:

– not to intervene, directly or indirectly, in Cuba.

on the part of the Soviet Union:

I – not to supply offensive armament to Cuba.

II – not to intervene, directly or indirectly, in Cuba.

on the part of Cuba:

I – not to install offensive armament.

II – not to intervene, directly or indirectly, in the politics, of other countries of the continent.

13. The suspension of the naval and aerial blockade of Cuba, on the part of the United States, as well as agreement of the Havana Government to withdraw the bomber aircraft and in relation to inspection by an international commission, is obvious, precedes the formalization of such a compromise or there will be a concomitant process.

14. The initiative of the Brazilian Government on the above lines indicate that it would be perfectly coherent with its position toward the events in the Caribbean, and, more still, would present an opportunity for us to reaffirm certain principles that [*norteiam*] our foreign policy in the hemisphere; the self-determination of peoples; the opposition to armed methods [*corridas armamentistas*]; and the rejection of infiltration and imposition of political ideology [*infensa*] to our democratic system.

Respectfully,

[signature]

(Jorge Alberto Seixas Corrêa)

Chief of Division of [*Setentrional*] America

[Source: Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil, copy courtesy of Roberto Baptista Junior (History Department, University of Brasilia); translation from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]



Document No. 65

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana
(Bastian Pinto), 9:30 a.m., Tuesday,
20 November 1962

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM

RECEIVED

13848

FROM THE EMBASSY IN HAVANA
ON/20/21/XI/62

SECRET—URGENT

DAC/DAS/DEA/DOF/DNU/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba.

394 – TUESDAY – 930hs – My arrival here, in December of last year, coincided with the preparations for the meeting of Punta del Este and it was constant, then, emphasis of the Cuban government to prod Brazil and obtain our support on the international plane. After Punta del Este, perhaps because it was already excluded from the Inter-American system and coinciding with the beginning of a new phase in its relations with the U.S.S.R., the Cuban attitude in relation to Brazil shifted. Since then, the Cuban Government always manifested its recognition to Brazil and its confidence in that we would not alter our policy favorable to Cuban autonomy. It requested, at times, support for questions of less importance; treated me, personally, with exceptional amiability, but, in truth it was that this Government has not demanded or solicited our support or intervention in that it referred to great international questions, on which depended its very survival. In the present crisis this attitude became, still, more evident.

Twice on 23 and 27 of October, the gravest moments of the crisis, and, according to the instructions of Your Excellency, I requested this Government, in order to transmit to it the suggestion and even appeal of the Brazilian government that, if heeded, without doubt would have altered the course of events. My appeal was received with attention and deference, but with total refusal. I do not refer to the Mission of General Albino Silva, which had an exceptional character and about which the General himself informed Your Excellency, but I call attention to the [fact that the] Havana press has not made, practically, any mention of this special mission and, still more, that the Cuban censorship has cut, totally, the telegrams sent from here, in this respect, by foreign correspondents. I consider very strange that, in the present circumstance, the Cuban government has not taken advantage of the opportunities Brazil offered to it and our evident sincerity to help it on the path to a solution acceptable for Cuba. I judge that I should bring to the knowledge of Your Excellency these observations, which I believe will be useful. In the following telegram I transmit some impressions about the probable causes of this attitude.

LUIZ LEITAS BASTIAN PINTO

[Source: “ANEXO Secreto—600. (24h)—SITUAÇÃO POLITICA—CUBA—Novembro à dezembro de 1962/,” Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasília, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.]

Notes

1 Professor of History and International Affairs, George Washington University (jhersh@gwu.edu).

2 James G. Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962,” pts. 1 and 2, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and 6:3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67; for the best Brazilian source, see, in Portuguese, Luis Alberto Moniz Bandeira, *De Martí a Fidel: A Revolução Cubana e a América Latina* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1998).

3 See esp. the transcript of the secretly-recorded 30 July 1962 White House conversation involving President Kennedy, his ambassador to Brazil Lincoln Gordon, and aide Richard Goodwin and other sources in Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962,” pt. 2, pp. 11-12.

4 Roberto Campos, *A lanterna na popa: Memórias* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1994), pp. 446-53.

5 See Stephen G. Rabe, *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

6 Interestingly, the Brazilians also sensed some Argentine reluctance to back its denuclearization plan, and behind that potential nuclear ambitions—piquant evidence of the traditional South American rivalry. “I perceived, behind the long exposition of the Argentine Delegate, perhaps a glimpse of the intention of that country to develop a nuclear potential for non-pacific aims,” observed Brazil’s UN ambassador in a 2 November 1962 cable reporting a discussion of the denuclearization proposal with his Latin American colleagues.

7 The Treaty barred the “testing, use, manufacture, production or acquisition by any means whatsoever of any nuclear weapons” and the “receipt, storage, installation, deployment and any form of possession of any nuclear weapons.” According to Wikipedia, “Cuba was the last country to sign and to ratify, in 1995 and on 23 October 2002, completing signature and ratification by all 33 nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. Cuba ratified with a reservation that achieving a solution to the United States hostility to Cuba and the use of the Guantánamo Bay military base for US nuclear weapons was a precondition to Cuba’s continued adherence.”

8 See, in particular, Brazilian UN ambassador Afonso Arinos' 6 November 1962 report of his conversation with U Thant after the UN leader returned from Havana.

9 In fact, as one Brazilian cable shows, international awareness of the Brazilian emissary's mission was limited at the time by Cuban censorship, which suppressed mention of it in reporters' dispatches. See the 20 November 1962 cable from Brazil's ambassador in Havana, Luis Bastian Pinto.

10 Two other Brazilian ambassadors represented in the collection also deserve particular mention: Afonso Arinos, at the UN, had formerly been Brazil's foreign minister, and the translations here include records of his meetings with such figures as U Thant, Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos, and Cuba's ambassador to the UN; and in Moscow, Vasco Leitao da Cunha sent analyses of the Soviets and the crisis informed by his prior experience as Rio's ambassador in Havana during the Cuban Revolution, when he had close contacts with the Castro leadership.

11 Goulart actions that caused some US officials in Washington to roll their collective eyes included waffling on the American-backed OAS measures; what they viewed as

insufficiently supportive language in Goulart's correspondence with JFK during the crisis; and Goulart's touting of the alleged success of his mediation efforts (which to US officials seemed non-existent). At the same time, Goulart seemed to express strong support for JFK's actions in his talks with US ambassador Lincoln Gordon. See Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962," pt. 2.

12 For example, a colleague who visited the foreign ministry Archives in Brasília several years after I did was unable to see previously opened files of records of Brazilian diplomacy in Chile during the Allende period (1970-73).

13 Ed. note. Adenauer was then visiting Washington. For translated West German records of his discussions with US President Kennedy regarding Cuba, on 14 November 1962, see elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

Brazilian Foreign Policy toward the Cuban Issue A Secret Foreign Ministry Conclave, 26-27 December 1961

Documents obtained and introduced by James G. Hershberg

Ed. note: On 22-31 January 1962, foreign ministers of countries belonging to the Organization of American States (OAS) gathered in Punta del Este, Uruguay, to discuss Cuba—specifically, harsh steps recommended by the United States and other like-minded states to punish the island nation for its close and expanding ties to the Soviet Union, including its possible expulsion from the OAS.¹ (These proposed diplomatic measures were part of a broader US effort to isolate Cuba and if possible topple the Castro regime, including an economic embargo, covert operations—“Operation Mongoose” had been devised but not yet formally started—and assassination plotting.) In Brazil, the need to formulate an approach for the impending Punta del Este conference led Foreign Minister Santiago Dantas to convene a secret two-day meeting of senior aides and diplomats on 26-27 December 1961. As shown by the translated (and apparently verbatim) record below, the planning sessions offered an opportunity for candid discussion of the conflicting pressures on the issue, and the policy options available. An official ally of Washington by virtue of the 1947 Rio Treaty, Brazil clearly belonged to the US sphere of influence, politically and economically, and formally opposed Soviet or communist penetration of the hemisphere. Yet, within Brazilian domestic politics there was considerable leftist admiration and sympathy for the Cuban revolution, and a widespread belief that the island should be left to determine its own destiny—without interference or intervention from the United States or anyone else. Moreover, Brazil’s diplomats represented a nation eager to show a more independent posture to the world (it had recently even sent an observer to the first conference of the “nonaligned” movement in Belgrade²), even as it had to safeguard its crucial relationship with Washington. Behind closed doors, Dantas and his colleagues could hash out bluntly many of the pertinent issues in a way they could not in either public forums (susceptible to press attention) or diplomatic channels where a stray word might exacerbate US fears. Ultimately, at Punta del Este, the Brazilians, led by Dantas, would resist and significantly water down the sanctions promoted by US Secretary of State Dean Rusk.³—J.H.



Document No. 1

MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION ON SUBJECTS RELATED TO THE VIII CONSULTATIVE MEETING [OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES] – 26 December 1961

State Minister [Santiago Dantas] – The reason for asking you to meet here was to discuss the matter brought forward at the VIII consultative meeting. I get the impression that we will have to get prepared to stipulate very clearly what Brazil’s position is and examine all implications brought forward by it, not only with regard to the inter-American system but also the development of our bilateral relations with the United States.

So far there is no indication that the United States is committed to the bilateral relations maintained with our country, especially regarding financial help, to any kind of political attitude adopted by us concerning the large hemispheric problems, notably the Cuban problem. Nevertheless we cannot discard such an hypothesis in just a simple manner. However, we should be able to admit it and make use of such an element for study purposes, inasmuch as it is undeniable that the visit of President [John F.] Kennedy to two of the major countries in South America is an event that cannot be left unnoted.⁴ Moreover, we need to take into consideration that, at present, one of them has severed relations with Cuba, putting itself into a position of an anti-Cuban policy center, while the other has assumed the position of intermediary of the State Department at the OAS.

To this date the enunciation of our government policy towards Cuba has been very explicit and simple: unconditional respect to the principle of non-intervention; unconditional respect to the principle of nations’ self-determination, considering that only people are the legitimate instrument for the choice of a regime, especially if such a regime is a democratic one. If the goal to achieve is the re-democratization of Cuba, whatever could be considered an imposition from outward would certainly represent a real contradiction to the democratic principles themselves, aside from being the violation of the self-determination principles.

It can be said that such is the line inherited from the Jânio [da Silva] Quadros administration [January – September

1961]. However, I have been insisting that there is a slight difference between what we have been trying to do and what characterizes Jânio Quadro's line towards Cuba. Along that line there seemed to be a slight trace of ideological sympathy and a systematic denial and sometimes kind of evasive position to hold opinion of the democratic character of Fidel Castro's government. This point was considered a matter of fact. Even Minister Afonso Arinos in one of his visits to the parliament, categorically declared that he had not seen any evidence that Fidel Castro's regime was a communist one, leaving the impression that the fact of such proofs existing or not could be of great importance. Moreover, attitudes such as awarding Commander [Che] Guevara with a decoration showed that his sympathy had nothing to do with self-determination, rendering to such an official attitude a rather more controversial characterization than what we have been trying to notice.

Ours was an opposite idea. We started with the sincere recognition that the Cuban regime was not a democratic one. No matter whether it was either a communist or a socialist regime. This, because it is very difficult to define whether a regime is in fact a communist or a socialist one. What really mattered was to classify it as a non-democratic regime according to the Santiago's declaration pattern. Thus, the problem of ideological sympathy was eliminated. The Brazilian government is not in ideological sympathy with Fidel Castro's regime. Even though there might be political groups within the government, the latter has only sympathy with what is part of the Constitution or its treaties.

The non-intervention principle and the respect of self-determination have gained new force because they acquired more absolute character once the question of knowing whether the regime was a socialist or democratic one ceased to exert any influence on them.

From this point on we begin to look for a solution due to the increasing probability that the countries be convoked for a consultative meeting. We were afraid of such a gathering as it was set from the start by calling upon the Rio de Janeiro Treaty and only for two purposes: either to find out a potential offense by the Cuban regime and, consequently, conform to violation of the Article 6; or else, characterizing the regime as a communist one. The latter being the case, as per Resolution 93 of Caracas, it is marked as an amplification or addendum to the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, namely, a presumed aggression. The simple fact of being communist and being affiliated to the international communism presumes the regime's aggression and brings forth the application of sanctions.

Based on our fears we started to develop a series of possible reasoning which con-substantiated, I believe, in the Meeting at Casa das Pedras.

At Casa das Pedras we worked out an idea based on a suggestion of Ambassador Leitão da Cunha which started gaining many improvements. I will recapitulate the idea notwithstanding the fact that is within the spirit of many of us. First we tried to postpone the consultative meeting the utmost. In consequence of said adjournment we tried a diplomatic move towards the United States to obtain from their government a compromise of a pledge for the non-use of violence against Cuba. At that time there were signs of a planned invasion of Cuba launched by Nicaragua or Guatemala, or both countries altogether. There was a great number of trained Cuban volunteers in the United States army; works or preparation at ports and airports in Guatemala that could be related to the new invasion attempt. There was also an extremely confidential information [report] that a prestigious governor had attended a conference with President Kennedy insisting on the idea of an invasion.

We were under the impression that Cuba feared such invasion twice as much: as one fears an invasion and because it knew that its possibilities of counting on a support of the Soviet Union were becoming smaller every day. On one hand, because from the USSR's economic point of view the purchase of more than a million tons of sugar for a country that has an excess of such a product was too expensive; on the other hand, because the Soviet Union never left any doubts in the air that it could not come to Cuba's defense. All it could offer would be a retaliation in a country close its boundaries or by adopting other more symbolic policies.

We were under the impression that should we manage to obtain from the United States a non-violence pledge, we would be able to count on Cuba itself to obtain from Fidel Castro's government a progressing observance of Santiago's Declaration. Said Declaration plays a very important role because it is the sole document signed by Fidel Castro's government in which the recognition of democratic principles is clearly indicated. We could ask Fidel Castro's government, strengthened by the non-violence pledge, to accept a gradual evolution for its observing the Santiago Declaration.

If such binomial non-violence vs. Santiago's Declaration could eventually take root, we would try to further develop the scheme and move in the direction of some kind of neutralization of Cuba, maintaining their basic social achievements, the establishment of a democratic state, and the break of their ties with the Soviet Union. This was the idea resulting from the meeting at Casa das Pedras and which was the subject of two good investigations. The first one with [US] Ambassador Lincoln Gordon, who praised such an idea. There was no written reaction of the State Department, but the ambassador conveyed a rather complete memorandum about the matter insisting, as he still insists, on the convenience of a personal understanding between the [US] Secretary [of State Dean]

Rusk and myself. The second one was with Cuba's ambassador who also highly praised the idea and informed the Havana government accordingly.

This third stage, however, ended with Fidel Castro's speech with the well known statement of ideological affiliation which turned any kind of understanding based on Santiago's Declaration as something he could ever return to. So our scheme can be considered useless. The importance of that speech was not to reveal anything but to preclude a scheme of diplomatic action which was to make a return to free elections possible. It occurred sometime before the meeting of 4 December. Although having a small project articulated with Argentina and Chile to postpone the meeting to allow some time for the understandings about violence, we took the decision not to present any project at all and exerted upon abstention.

Here I have to open some brackets to cover the question of the remaining South-American countries. During a trip to Buenos Aires our impression was that the position of Argentina, coincident with ours, has become much stronger. This because President [Arturo] Frondizi [Ercoli] fully agrees with it although if he encounters difficulties in sustaining same it is due the opinion among the military forces which is much more divided among right and left than ourselves. The fact of having had that agreement with us became a cause of strength in his hands. Thereafter, although we keep being reticent with regard to the duration of the Argentine position, we lack concrete facts pointing in the direction of weakness. With regard to Chile, Ambassador Vale was present shortly after the Buenos Aires meeting in Chile and had a productive conversation with Chancellor Martinez Soto Mayor. He shared the same tendency and Chilean attitudes have been firmly in line with ours. Mexico has adopted an independent line. We have only had the opportunity to establish coincidence. Uruguay's vote in favor of the consultative meeting was explained as voting against instructions received from the Chancellery. Bolivia shows the same position with a good left public opinion to support it. Ecuador is the one I consider, at this moment, the more dubious because the government is extremely unstable, characterized by a line of opportunism trying to take the support of Velasco Ibarra's government position. Also, according to some information the present Ecuadorian chancellor would have taken many initiatives with the ex-president of the Republic in favor of a severance with Cuba. This entire group voted for abstention, with exception of Mexico that voted against and, in other words, left not doubt about its position contrary to the consultative meeting.

In the United States the reaction to this attitude is not sympathetic. Ambassador Gordon is an ambassador of exceptional value, an intellectual, a man concerned in making a

good-will diplomacy which has positive and negative aspects. One of the negative ones is that he hides from us a little the hostile reactions in American environment with respect to our attitudes. Very kindly he insinuated that our consultations reiterated with Argentina, Chile, and other American countries had been considered by the State Department as an effort of our chancellery to sabotage the consultative meeting. In fact, up to now the North American reaction to our attitude consisted of two notes, both giving strong support to the Colombian proposal and both duly retorted by us with other notes in which we clearly demonstrated that the Colombian proposal is unacceptable.

As far as the present is concerned: the meeting is set for 22 January in Montevideo and our long elaborated plan at Casa das Pedras is out of use. What we now have to do is to set a line of conduct and the impression is that we have first to set it under the form of an internal philosophy for the motivation of our own conduct. Secondly, under the form of tactical measures to be adopted at the consultative meeting. It is about the aforementioned that I would like the Planning Commission integrated by the Working Group organized for the consultative meeting to meditate, by means of intensive meetings so that we could altogether reach a very clear definition. If we succeed such a definition would be taken to the Cabinet at one of its meetings, in a written form to be submitted to the President of the Republic, to the prime minister and finally submitted for the approval of the Cabinet. The next step would be running the risks of its execution.

The following is what I have been thinking about the subject. I think that the Meeting of Consultation comprises many dangers. The first due to the fact that it was convoked based on the Rio de Janeiro Treaty which means, minimally, to deliberate on sanctions. We already go to it with 13 American countries having their relations with Cuba broken off and a great probability that Ecuador will be the 14th. We already have a two-thirds majority necessary to make decisions mandatory. It is evident that countries like Brazil, Argentina, Chile as well as Mexico, cannot go to the meeting just to be presented with an already taken decision and to be bound to a legal norm without having had any possibility of re-discuss it. The second risk has to do with a preliminary which already involves the value of the subject. This is the difference we have to make between obligation and aspiration within the American system. Every system has developed in the sense that there are defined obligations in treaties and aspiration in defined declarations. It has been admitted as a development of the regional international law that normally aspirations are the prior forms or else, a period of germination of future obligations and that the system develops while changing aspirations into obligations. The principles of non-

intervention and of self-determination are the field of obligations and are not only of regional obligation as they belong to the world's public international law. Commitment to the democratic representative government belongs to the aspiration field instead.

I do not believe that Resolution 93 might have changed that. It is a resolution of difficult legal interpretation. Santiago's Declaration that came thereafter reaffirmed that the principles it enunciated were mere aspirations and qualified itself as an instrument of public opinion for educational action over the nations of the hemisphere.

What happens when a Latin American country breaks a commitment to with the organization? If the break causes aggression or danger of aggression it is within the scope of the Rio Treaty for a sanction to be found. If not there, in any other text.

And what happens if a country evades from the common aspiration defined in Article 5 of the treaty or Santiago's Declaration? This is the Cuban case. We have to reason about it as an example because we are not free from seeing other American countries becoming socialists in the next years. Conditions do not seem calm enough to prevent us from witnessing similar movements in other countries. We are taking Cuba as an experimental case. The decision taken will be for all.

The first hypothesis would be that when a Latin country would become or declare itself communist, with risk to the hemispheric democratic unity, the remedy would be to defeat the government by force. If this were true there would be no difference between aspirations and obligations. To this legal argument political arguments should be added as well: the loss of moral authority of the inter-American system, the automatic conversion of the independent regional system into a satellite system, the low capacity to think of seriously developing the inter-American system. Moreover, the severance of relations is not justified, at a time when Brazil re-establishes relations with socialist countries as other countries do maintain relations.

At the moment the idea that seems worthy of a study would be:

The OAS is a regional organization. Not necessarily all countries of this hemisphere are its members due, in the first place, for reasons of geographical location. There are also other conditions for a membership. Canada, **FIO** [not further identified—ed.] are not members, for example. Other countries could also share the same status. It is an organization based on obligations and aspirations. The obligations are the ones that no country can fail to comply with. The charter, in its Article 5 indicates the membership purposes, and thanks to it conditions of co-operation between OAS

countries that are difficult to accept by countries that have different social and economical goals have been accepted. It is understandable that between Brazil and the Soviet Union might exist a change of commercial relations, but said regime is communist: what is given is what is received. On the other hand, within the inter-American system it has been admitted that the most developed states should give more than what they receive in the benefit of the strengthening of social and economic characteristics that belong to the system's aim. A country that gives up such an aim declaring itself as communist and adopting an anti-democratic government and economic pattern cannot possibly have its government defeated by force. It cannot as well be condemned to diplomatic isolationism by means of its relations being severed. However, there is a speculation to be made about the repercussion caused by such an attitude within the Organization mainly with regard to the share in rights and advantages which are the result of the common search of a democratic life and government level. We have to admit the possibility of a socialist country in America. The idea that the emergence of a socialist country involves a military action or economic blockage to discard it is practically unsustainable due to the internal structure of all the other American countries' public opinion.

However, the idea of living in America with socialist countries may involve another consequence that cannot be overlooked, namely, that any relation that such a country might establish with the Soviet camp would cause a latent military danger. Thus, the presence of a socialist enclave in a hemisphere of countries strongly linked by defensive alliances of democratic basis would call for the need of neutralization. Here we have the Finland's parallel, which was mentioned during the first phase of our studies at Casa da Pedra.

If in the socialist world a democratic enclave like Finland is accepted at the price of neutralization, it does not seem out of the question to admit that also in the democratic world may exist a socialist enclave protected by neutralization. Such a neutralization does not happen without a series of difficulties. From the Soviet point of view there seems to be no interest in maintaining a military commitment in Cuba. Neutralization is accepted and considered the best business such a socialist spear-head within the Eastern world. From the Cuban point of view I think there will be no major difficulties, although I would rather leave my comments for later on. From the American point of view there remains the problem that a neutralization may involve Guantanamo Base. Maybe through a constructive agreement one could find a solution similar to that of Bizerta, of a gradual retreat.

When [Cuban] Ambassador Olivares paid us a visit we were hoping to obtain some information or receive a proposal, but the conversation only showed interest in finding

out how the consultative meeting was going to be carried out. From here he visited with President João Goulart and the next morning had an appointment with Minister Tancredo Neves. From both he obtained the same information, namely, that Brazil was inflexible with respect to the non-intervention principle; that we would not turn our backs on defending the inter-American system.

As far as the method in which that attitude would be converted into a diplomatic action was concerned, they would have to obtain that information from the Ministry of Foreign Relations. Neither the President of the Republic nor the Prime Minister offered a single word about this. On his way back Olivares showed sympathy with the idea of neutralization.

I gave Ambassador Gordon a general idea of that scheme. Although the ambassador was also favorably impressed by the idea he did not feel in a condition to discuss it any further here. He insists on the invitation he made to me in order to discuss it with Secretary Rusk in Washington. This is a point I leave to this group to speculate.

Ambassador [sic; White House aide Richard] Goodwin arrived two days ago. I will have a conversation with him today and it seems that he wishes to discuss the consultation.

We now have the problem of the line to follow at the consultation. At this point I must say that there are already signs that the American point of view is not favorable to the approval of the Colombian proposal. Instead, there is an interest in a document of sanctioning character which allows that after a period of time the conduct of the Cuban government be established with the help of a commission. Sanctions would be applicable thereafter.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the idea of invasion by neighboring countries has been declining in recent weeks. There are no signs of increased militarization and apparently what is expected is an internal revolution. It is possible that such a revolution may already have started at the time the Consultation Meeting takes place and in that case it will have to change all arguments conceived so far. We could follow the methodology described below:

1. Revise the philosophical line that I have recapitulated in general terms;
 2. Examine the Consultation considering:
 - a) the possibility that when it takes place no revolution has yet broken out and
 - b) the possibility that the Consultation takes place after the revolution. For either hypothesis we must have at least an acceptable and flexible tactical solution.
- Another point to check is about the suitability to proceed with the consultations around these practical suggestions.

Under-Secretary Renato Archer – It looks like the consultation should be preceded by a formal condemnation. Should Brazil, before declaring itself contrary, follow what others are doing might give the impression that we are willing to divide responsibilities.

Minister Carlos Duarte – Would appreciate it if Deputy Renato Archer were to provide clarification. Shall he speak now or during the Meeting.

Under-Secretary Renato Archer – This would indicate a type of behavior that would reward Brazil. At the time of President Jânio Quadros statements took effect before any consultation. These statements strengthened Brazil's position which was firm and of its own regarding the involved subjects. He can carry on his conversations on the basis of a position he already has. Trying to divide the responsibility with other countries will weaken our position.

Ambassador Dias Carneiro – I would like to say a few words about a legal question. To which an extent are obligations and aspirations conceptually different when included in the same Treaty?

State Minister – Sometimes the distinction is very easy, sometimes it is not. It depends on the reason why the subject is formulated. For example, in the case of the Santiago's Declaration it clearly enunciates that it covers aspiration. In the Rio de Janeiro Treaty it is an obligation. The OAS charter presents some doubts. Some subjects are explicit while others are dubious.



Document No. 2

MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION ON SUBJECTS RELATED TO THE VIII CONSULTATION MEETING – 27 December 1961

Minister Maury Valente – As I have a certain difficulty in expressing myself verbally, I am replying to your yesterday's order by some notes which I request your permission to be read (he reads):

As a final suggestion, the end of the year is a good opportunity for an encompassing speech revising the position taken by Brazil with regard to the different problems. I think that this government will obtain a good average.

State Minister – I think that rather than considering the Cuban problem as a separate issue we would profit by includ-

ing it in the general picture of our position towards various other problems. We have some problems with France, Portuguese Africa, the Common Market and the Cuban problem should be dealt with by means of integrating same into these problems. The next point to withdraw is the final thought. It has more to do with the relation of the government towards public opinion than the relations between governments.

Ambassador Gibson – I consider Minister Maury's statements worthy of greatest consideration. I really think he offered a good contribution to the committee's concerns. However, I would like to ask for permission to go back in time a bit regarding the Cuban problem, after having pondered his complete explanation of yesterday and recall what all of us still have on our minds but which, perhaps, may not always be remembered. We have gone through two essential phases concerning the Cuban problem: the first, which I would call the most constructive and positive one. The second, the one we are just facing, a negative and evasive phase. To conclude, I would propose that we tried to achieve or merge that second phase into the first or else, get back to the first stage.

At the beginning, the Cuban problem was just bilateral – between Cuba and the United States. There is no doubt about that and we, in Brazil, when the question arose, tried to situate it as such because we considered it to probably be the best way for an approach, with a view to find a positive and constructive solution for the problem. The United States always reacted and tried to deal with the problem in a continent-wide framework. In fact, it became a continental problem, not so much because of Cuba but by influence of the United States. After the failure of the invasion attempt the United States clearly understood that the only way to treat the problem was in a continent-wide manner. Thenceforth, by a strange coincidence, they started to note a flexibility between various American countries *vis-a-vis* Cuba.

From the moment on it became of continental interest it turned into a problem of diplomatic tactics for each country other than the United States. Today we are not in search of a solution for the Cuban problem, but a solution to the menaces in the form of the crisis of the inter-American system, which is negative. It is of great importance but negative. At best, if we continue this line of reasoning we shall find a way to save the system and, at the same time we, Brazilians, will come honorably out of a situation which places us in a minority position. This is a negative "optimum" because the real "optimum" is a solution for the Cuban problem.

If our efforts were towards forgetting the dazzling sensation we are feeling at present with these two problems of undeniable magnitude – the diplomatic situation in America

and the public opinion about the impending menace to the American system – I would ask why we should not use some sunglasses to protect ourselves from the two suns and go back to a solution for the Cuban problem that might provide the key for both questions. I cannot assure that the answer will be affirmative but it would certainly be worth its try. There would at least be an advantage: it would demonstrate our seriousness concerning the subject. I would go as far as saying that in the present stage it would be a novelty. What in June and July was just common would now become a novelty: a country in America that was in fact looking for a solution of the Cuban problem rather than looking for the system's solution as it stands now.

Minister of the State – What was the June or July solution?

Ambassador Gibson - Our line was turning around the feasibility getting the United States to accept intervention offered by these countries. It was not a good plan. My opinion was that the matter requesting a maximum of discretion and a modesty of any country's action before making approaches to the United States with a view of obtaining acceptance of the latter regarding an understanding with Cuba. Because the problem was located in Washington and not in Havana. It has always been the American government that demonstrated an attitude of intransigence in dealing with the problem. Until the invasion phase, even though the aggressive actions had started in Washington, it was more approachable than Havana.

It looked to me that a country like Brazil could, on that occasion, have presented an idea to the United States with regard to the problem that could have convinced some of its interest to solve the problem in such terms. For that purpose it was necessary for Brazil to refrain from any kind of publicity (the reverse of "OPA" [Alliance for Progress?—trans.]) trying its best to reach a solution for the problem. This for a simple reason. The State Department would never accept facing the public opinion with a confession that it had been led by the Brazilian, Mexican, or Argentine diplomacy. The idea had to have had its origin in the United States. It had to be seen as a generous act by the United States. Around this point arose the action of Ecuador, Mexico, and Argentina which damaged the history a little bit. It was a matter of three countries and one of them being Ecuador, a country which lacks seriousness because of its involvement in a conflict with Peru, aside from playing a prestige game. Mexico did not accept much. Colombia was sympathetic. Argentina immediately brought in Brazil. Thereafter came Chile. There was a possibility to handle the question on that occasion. The idea of details was in mind at that time. We undertook conversations about this matter in detail like how negotiations between Cuba and the

United States could materialize in regard with the expropriated domains, whether they would leave this for a system that would relapse into the Bogota Treaty.

I am not optimistic with regard to any success of a behavior within this line but it seems that we would not have much to lose if we considered the possibility of a conversation on this subject now, maybe only between ourselves and the United States. It does not look like an idea to be discarded without some examination. I am not too enthusiastic about it, though.

State Minister – It is a little overtaken by the events because at the stage when one thought that everything seemed to turn around a possible matter of re-absorption, so as if the problems were of indemnity for expropriation of confiscating nature or the absence of certain guarantees to private rights. Now everything denotes that we are dealing with an extra-hemisphere problem besides how Fidel Castro's posture adjusted itself to such an American interpretation of the events. The core of your idea encloses two points that impressed me. You think we are leading to an evasive attitude. What is your understanding of it? Escaping from the Cuban problem means evading the same kind of problem of the hemisphere or evading the problem's responsibility itself?

Ambassador Gibson – Evasion in two directions. Evasion because we are no longer looking for a solution to the problem as we think that the phase for a solution of the problem is too late. Also in the sense that being the minority within the organization we are seeking for the less unfavorable position for Brazil, in particular. To conclude, in my opinion, all that has happened in the last four months and culminating with Fidel Castro's speech excluded almost irreparably a solution of the problem. I see the problem as a bilateral one: United States-Cuba. It is possible that such a position may not be feasible anymore. This is the way it placed itself towards the continental public opinion. It is very difficult to convince people that the problem does not concern the United States alone, but the hemisphere. If the United States succeeded in obtaining an agreement term with Cuba there would be no more problem in the hemisphere.

Ambassador Henrique Valle – The placing of the problem developed from a flexure to the establishment of a communist regime within the hemisphere. This is its present position at the consultative meeting. (I take the opportunity to say that the United States presented a memorandum stating that during that meeting the severance subject would not be considered.) We have just received from the Embassy of Bogota the American proposal ordering that relations be severed

within 30 days if the OAS Council, after the Resolution is approved, does not state that it has returned to the system and has refrained from having relations of that sort with the Soviet block, etc. On the other side another proposal of various other countries orders that relations be severed immediately. (He reads the note.)

Ambassador Araújo Castro – I will try to summarize my impressions. I can understand Ambassador Gibson's frustrations. We, at this stage, are no longer concerned with the solution of the Cuban problem but with a solution for the inter-American problem. More specifically, making use of a Brazilian diplomatic solution, not only with respect to what is of the latter's interest but how we are to explain it to the public opinion which, in this case, is split. The matter is maximizing and in January the Cuban subject will become the great issue of the Brazilian politics. It is in fact impressive to note the problem of the left wing's pressure in Brazil. It gives the impression that they are mobilized about the Cuban problem. The other subjects are of secondary importance. In the case of Goa, for example, the reaction was null. Even our abstention in the case of Argelia was unnoticed, which demonstrates the public opinion's mobilization about the Cuban subject, be it the parliament or the press.

I go under the impression that it may be a personal reaction although I would rather place the Cuban problem within the Brazilian diplomatic field in order to explain our position. Evasion is unfeasible. The present situation does not belong to the past. There has been an invasion; there has been an American position which we all know will put an end to Fidel Castro.

State Minister – I was told by Ambassador Goodwin that he only believes in an internal revolution within the next six months.⁵

Ambassador Araújo Castro – The public opinion was poisoned by the State Department itself. The Department thinks to be a prisoner of pressure groups which he himself helped to create. The change of the American position in relation with Russia involves, at least, a political power game; as far as Cuba is concerned the problem is of an ideological nature and a more serious one. On the other hand, we are well acquainted with the importance of semantics in the American politics. They are terrified of the word "revolution". As a highly collectivized country they are horror-struck with the word "socialism". The fact of Fidel Castro having characterized himself as a Marxist-Leninist regime has a fundamental relation in the United States. In my opinion, any possibility to attenuate the American position in respect with the Cuban

problem seems non-existent. This being the case, in addition to the United States failing to assume any compromise of a non-violence method, makes it obvious that any mediation on our part would be fruitless, suspicious and would place us in a position where we would be left at the mercy of two groups: either the United States or Fidel Castro. I also consider the latter's statement of the 3rd inst., as a desperate attempt to qualify the Cuban problem as a cold war and an East-West problem. It is not the case of having faith in what Russia is going to do but the lack of alternative. He thinks the American position heads toward invasion and not toward an unlimited confidence with regard to the efforts of Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, not only concerning its strength but also its stability. They think the problem should be situated as a cold war instead. Taking this smallest possibility into consideration we should reflect on the Brazilian position. I think we cannot have an evasive attitude. Our attitude should be firm and previously defined. We should arrive with a determined position. I would not, at this point, try a new attempt of approach with Cuba or United States. Not even sounding the matter out or trying a large diplomatic articulation against the project. I would declare to be against it and vote against it. As a matter of fact, I would neither assume total responsibility for the solution of the Cuban problem nor for the inter-American system in a case which seems already lost. I think this case will turn out badly for the Pan-American system.

State Minister – Do you think the inter-American system is finished off?

Ambassador Araújo Castro – That is what I think. We hold a solid position. Let us proclaim it to the countries that followed us without influencing to the point of a plot of conspiracy. Thus the Brazilian diplomacy would remain dissociated from the Cuban one. We would have no more contacts with them inasmuch as at this point mediation seems almost impossible. Furthermore, if we maintain coherence until the date I think we will be in a position to face the storm with the required serenity. Once resolved we would have complied with the determinations. Otherwise we would have failed to consider the Rio Treaty.

A statement trying to establish the Brazilian diplomatic concept should be considered as well. Under the guise of general action principles we could take advantage of the colonial question showing that the Brazilian diplomacy is all around independent. Intrinsically it does not seem the right time to concentrate the Brazilian position in face of the problem. By trying to conciliate and adjust a position we will reach but indecision which may create an accusation from either side.

An accusation against Brazil from the State Department will produce large internal effects.

On the other hand, if we define that Brazil is against either the application of sanctions, or the severance, if voted against we shall comply with it while staying in a very safe position. However, shall we make any attempt of mediation it will result in our impairment, in our hesitation until the last moment and, thereafter, position ourselves so as to be hit by both sides.

State Minister – The problem is the following. I think that the moment we start taking a public attitude giving it all determination and a clear-cut characterization there are two or three matters on which we cannot fail to comment about.

One of them concerns the existence of the socialist regime clearly linked with the hemisphere. This, because by stating that we are against the application of sanctions, severance of relations, in favor of the "status quo" maintenance is a position that no matter how much it may gain by its perseverance, by being clear and firm still opens a very large flank to inquiries that cannot remain without an answer. The Brazilian public opinion is completely convergent to the examination of the problem and will not fail to question us: your position is against the relations severance but what is your opinion? The more Marxist or Leninist the better? To what extent besides the manifestation of being against do our explanations have to go.

Ambassador Araújo Castro – I am under the impression that it would be vital that we reach a position about what we are going to do and enunciate it in the best possible manner. The emphasis given was against the thought that the diplomatic action is still possible. Maybe the opposite side has kind of exaggerated. It is not the fact that I do not consider Cuba as a real danger. My emphasis, however, is about the unfeasibility of an arbitrating action and about the excess of conducts on our part.

State Minister – Do you think that in our clear statement we should also immediately say what we think of a communist country in the hemisphere?

Ambassador Araújo Castro – Yes, I do.

Ambassador Henrique Valle – We should clarify our position, make it really clear. We would as a first attempt find a neutralization. We should accept a socialist country within the continent and outside of the system. Otherwise, we have an open flank.

State Minister - It is time that we choose our enemies. I am making reference to the internal enemies. By means of taking from three to four positions, we should say who are the ones that shall throw the stones at us.

Ministry Maury Valente – It would be favorable to Brazil to guarantee a formula of declaring at once that Cuba is outside the inter-American system because it dissociated itself from the aspirations.

Ambassador Henrique Valle – Even the consequences of non-intervention lead us to admit it within the continent but outside the system.

State Minister – One thing is Brazil going to a conference ready to comply with its deliberations. The other is going to a conference where there is no longer any deliberation to be taken and where the proposal that has just been read is co-sponsored by 14 countries whereas our role is to offer our approval of the application to the system.

Ambassador Gibson – I think I need to make a clarification. I did not intend to say that we should, for example, start an offer of mediation to deal with the Cuban problem. I have no fancy optimistic ideas with regard to any success. But it is my opinion that we moved from the constructive to the negative phase. It was in this respect that I had requested your attention. The confirmation of this fact, when I mentioned a Brazilian conversation this year, is that I was thinking of a conversation between you and Rusk or with the ambassador here. I was not meant with a view of offering mediation or insinuating same but the statement must also be made to the United States. This bears a character of seriousness to the Brazilian politics and covers a certain field of repercussion of our attitude. Moreover, because what will be resolved will not present any solution to the Cuban problem.

State Minister – Ambassador Gibson would like to clarify that in case the proposal is approved, the very next day the Cuban problem would still be the same. The only thing we could think of it is that the resolution would have had the aim of placing Cuba even more outside the defense and more in defense of another action.

Ambassador Valle – This is the first step to agree with a collective action. Once the relations have been broken off the second step would be much easier.

Ambassador Gibson – We shall reach a situation where constructive and affirmative elements must be assembled and

it seems to me that this is one of them. We shall reach a moment when we will have to give full explanation of our position because the military intervention does not solve the Cuban problem.

State Minister – The military intervention works as a power of great destruction. It will involve the overthrow of the Government, the defeat of a great number of party members. A slaughter always breaks a path to something. It would bring forth new problems because to massacre Cubans, causing the overthrow of the government by force, would create in other American countries totally incurable reactions of internal character. Each countries internal political fight will be exclusively marked by it. From the communist point of view it is the splitting being brought up and the transformation of the hemisphere political fight into an ideological fight.

Ambassador Araújo Castro – The communism in Latin America has never born a continental subject. However in this manner it would be converted into it. They are much more interested in a gradual and methodic penetration than in penetrating into Cuba where they know that the problem cannot last.

Ministry Maury Valente – The best would be that the inter-American system be prepared to accept an eventual existence of a Finland in the hemisphere.

Ambassador Dias Carneiro – I have some remarks: 1 – We cannot back out, especially of our non-intervention and self-determination with regard to Cuba. That seems totally impossible. 2 – We must recognize that the Cuban danger exists. 3 – We must give the Americans a pre-notice. 4 – In our consultative meeting we must take an affirmative and a drastic position of our disapproval of the Colombian proposal. 5 – Total repudiation, which already exists, to the pre-fabricated position. 6 – These are feasible positions before the Cuban revolution takes place and in case it gains a victory. In the case of a revolution the matter changes and maybe becomes different. In brief: unfeasibility of backing out of the position we have taken; recognition of the Cuban problem; need of a pre-notice; our position would be of disapproval of the Colombian proposal and our repudiation to the pre-arranged solution for this meeting; need of neutralization of Cuba, that can be made through Cuba's membership identification within the inter-American system.

State Minister – With regard to the pre-notice given to the United States, I go under the impression that what could

most deteriorate our relations would be the lack of such a pre-notice and taking them by surprise.

Ambassador Dias Carneiro – Also, the fact of not going to Washington and the lack of a pre-notice would be a hostile attitude.

Ambassador Araújo Castro – A vivid diplomatic articulation some days preceding the Conference would ruin our relations.

Ambassador Gibson – We have already fallen under this line.

Minister Carlos Duarte – I would like to make reference to the practical aspect of the subject as far as the facts we are facing are concerned. To my knowledge there has been no open dialogue so far with the North Americans and Colombians in objective and practical terms. We shall not forget that, whether we are willing to or not, we will have to face these resolution projects that will be voted at Punta del Este. Thus I would ask whether it would not be a more tactical attitude, instead of ignoring it, that we try to talk with the Colombians and the American in objective terms, stating that we were unable to give our approval for one or another reason.

State Minister – This will lead us to end up agreeing with something.

Minister Carlos Duarte – Argentina itself, according to a memorandum that has been given to us and which was presented by Frondizi to the Canadians offers a series of suggestions (he reads the memorandum).

Ambassador Henrique Valle – I would like to ask whether I can talk with Goodwin who is going to have luncheon with me now and inquire if he has knowledge of said memorandum.

Ambassador Gibson – Is there any general consensus about it being suitable that we comply with the resolutions that will adopted?

State Minister – I make a distinction.

Ambassador Henrique Valle – If we do not comply with it the inter-American system ends by being “de juris.”

State Minister – I make distinction between the fact of going to a consultation at which we make deliberations and reach a conclusion, in which we are a defeated vote, and going to a pre-fabricated conference. The Rio Treaty only admits a two-thirds rule for the unchained or imminent aggression. The

simple fact of coming with a resolution that within the next 30 days....proves that we are misusing the Treaty.

Ambassador Gibson – I do not say we should not comply but I preliminarily am of the opinion that we should not let our conversations with the United States demonstrate our conviction that we shall comply with what is approved. We shall leave the greatest doubt in this respect.

State Minister – Anyway, we must keep in mind that we have to protect the position in the most dramatic manner.

Ambassador Araújo Castro – We are reaching the time when we either internally or through our declaration at the Chancellors Conference shall use rather hard words with Fidel Castro. I believe we can no longer ignore the communist regime characterization and, maybe this is the moment to undertake a position against violence as far as Cuba is concerned.

Ambassador Leão Moura – I agree with the general consensus about the position that Brazil shall adopt. I was very concerned with the pre-notice. This has already been asserted by you. I consider it essential that they might not be taken by surprise. With regard to the matter that Ambassador Araújo Castro has just mentioned about our statement concerning Fidel Castro, I think there is a need for a more explicit declaration.

Ambassador Henrique Valle – I would like to go back to what Minister Maury Valente said with regard to the statement about external politics. I do not say it should necessarily be made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. It could eventually be taken over by the President of the Cabinet. A statement about this matter by the prime minister is also missing.

State Minister – I am sure that the prime minister will accept that suggestion and shall make a speech, however, our line of conduct has been to attract on us the problems of external politics. The President of the Cabinet has already a great problem on his shoulders which is to support the government. He cannot take a position. We have no interest in having him make a statement that may possibly reduce the cabinet's political support basis. This is our conduct in case relations will be re-established. We succeeded in avoiding that the criticism raised by the re-establishment of relations was divulged to the cabinet. It remained confined. There was a proposal to take a censorship motion to the minister of foreign relations but at no time any one thought about including the image of the prime minister and the cabinet

as a whole. This makes sense at a time like the one we have to face. On the other hand, the president of the Republic cannot make statements in that respect, going beyond his constitutional limitations. I think I will have to make such a statement myself.

Ambassador Dias Carneiro - In this respect you mentioned before that it is suitable to know from where we shall expect the stones to be thrown at us. Is it appropriate to have a few or many stones thrown at us?

Ambassador Henrique Valle – The best would be a few stones coming from the same direction.

State Minister – Ours is a critical situation. In regard with the Brazilian external politics our position is more or less the following: we do not have restrictions inside the army. I have carried on conversations with General Segadas Vianna, with the Minister of the Navy and with some Admirals and have also had some contacts with the Air Force through General Travassos and two or three other Generals. The re-establishment of relations did not produce a negative effect within the military forces. Amidst the people the external policy is well accepted. It is not very popular because the Quadros government was a more admired one. Today the external policy lacks an interpreter with the needed positive reputation in the country. President João Goulart is not in charge of the external policy. Tancredo Neves has been very careless in the external policy. And, as far as I am concerned, due to the fact that the position of the minister of foreign affairs is rather limited and also because I am not much that type of a statesman. I am known as a man with positions skills rather than one who sublimate positions.

Ministry Maury Valente – Would there be any interest for taking a firm position with regard to characterizing the inter-American crisis? Stating that the inter-American right is incapable to face the situation would be a legal argumentation that might penetrate well.

Ambassador Araújo Castro – We lack the courage of failure. It is the government's general intention by reason of internal political convenience to consider that certain politics was a success when this was not the case. I do not consider it inopportune to state that we are concerned about it, that we no glimpse of a solution.

State Ministry – Our victory will consist of gradually giving up such a success towards the public opinion. This was the

Jânio Quadros government pattern which I feel was sometimes impressing because once in a while this success corresponds to a wrong demeanor. It does not represent a reward for good politics. The great advantage for us was to have our self-respect being flattered a little bit.

Ambassador Araújo Castro – It is not the purpose that is important but the means. If there would not exist the least of opinion's support regarding a determined type of politics there would be no support to achieve such a politics.

State Minister – What we have to consider with respect to the consultative meeting is giving the impression of great determination. We cannot hesitate about anything even though such a resoluteness may cause us to face a decrease in popularity. No need to say that it must remain within the bounds of safety, beyond which our government may sink. However, always aware that our position must bear a character of determination.

Summarizing our conversation, the following ideas are worth being considered:

We shall completely give up the idea of an elaboration through consultations. We have to develop our own lines and stipulate them with our particular moral and political authority;

Make sure that such a line be no surprise to either Cuba or the United States or even to Brazil. Consequently, it cannot be elaborated for presentation on a given date but must be made apparent and face any and even a prior criticism impact that it might arise.

Minister Carlos Duarte – My intervening was just with the purpose of pursuing a line of frankness.

State Minister – Another point is that in that statement we shall preferably seek for a general solution. We shall not only position ourselves with regard to Cuba. We shall situate the matter within the general picture of the Brazilian external politics and clearly show that one part suggests the other.

Ambassador Araújo Castro – In our statement, possibly by means of a newspaper interview, there would be no need for a specific backing up of the enclosed project because some of these projects are trusted to diplomatic means. However, a definition of Brazil in Montevideo will maintain the principle of non-intervention.

State Minister – I am considering some kind of statement that may extend itself to the point of containing the analysis

of all that has been presented at the consultative meeting and not the solution of the problem. I think that such a thesis is too strong and, consequently, we cannot give our authority's support to a certain amount of measures which in itself do not hold any outcome as this runs the risk of only being a stage before something else comes up. We would be heading towards giving the American politics a continental ideological theme which the communist propaganda failed to offer. We are not evading from sanctioning Fidel Castro in a strong manner. It is not our intention to act as his body-guards. What we are doing is to be aware that an inaccurately performed surgery in that spot will open a new incurable problem of large proportions.

Ambassador Araújo Castro –Something that must be stated with special care is the idea about the external politics problem. In fact, problems are more serious now than a year ago. At that time we were in the stage of principles enunciation while now everything deals with making use of such principles. The Jânio Quadros Government did not really have an external politics problem except the matter of Santa Maria.

[Source: *National Archives of Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, San Tiago Dantas Papers. 47(34) pacote 5 1961/1962, obtained by James Hershberg.*]

Notes

1 This Punta del Este gathering followed a separate OAS foreign ministers' gathering at the Uruguayan resort, in the summer of 1961, at which Washington presented its plans for the Alliance for Progress.

2 See James G. Hershberg, "High-spirited Confusion': Brazil, the 1961 Belgrade Non-Aligned Conference, and the Limits of an 'Independent' Foreign Policy during the High Cold War," *Cold War History* Vol. 7, No. 3 (August 2007), pp. 373-388

3 On triangular US-Brazilian-Cuban relations at this juncture, two publications that use Brazilian archival sources are Luis Alberto Moniz Bandeira, *De Martí a Fidel: A Revolução Cubana e a América Latina* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1998); and James G. Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962," pts. 1 and 2, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and 6:3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67.

4 Kennedy had recently visited Venezuela and Columbia.

5 Ed. note: A reference to Kennedy aide Richard Goodwin, who had visited Brazil earlier in December 1961.

Chile and Brazilian Mediation during the Cuban Missile Crisis:

Secret Documents from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Santiago

Documents obtained and translated by Eduardo Baudet and Tanya Harmer

In the three documents which follow, obtained by Tanya Harmer from the Chilean foreign ministry archives in Santiago, the Chilean embassy in Rio de Janeiro reported on a mysterious “mediation” effort undertaken by the Brazilian Government at the climax of the Cuban Missile Crisis.¹ In particular, Brazil’s president, João Goulart, dispatched his top military aide, Gen. Albino Silva, to Cuba on 29 October 1962, a day after Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev agreed under American pressure to withdraw the nuclear missiles deployed to the island. During his two-day stay in Havana, Gen. Silva met with a variety of figures, including Fidel Castro and UN Secretary General U Thant (then on his own visit to Cuba), but what, if anything, he accomplished on his mission remained unknown. Sharing the widespread puzzlement on what had prompted Goulart to attempt this diplomatic intervention into a global crisis, Chile’s ambassador quoted newspaper editorials ridiculing the government for a pointless, futile, and misguided exercise, and clearly indicated his own skepticism toward the action. What the Chilean and most other observers (especially diplomats, including the British ambassador, who cabled London with a comparably skeptical report²) did not know was that Washington had secretly requested that Brazil send an emissary to Castro, to carry a proposition—evict the Soviets and good consequences would follow, including a welcome back into hemispheric institutions (Cuba had been effectively sanctioned by the Organization of American States at the January 1962 Punta del Este conference) and a lifting of the economic and political isolation campaign by the United States. Though the Brazilians were supposed to convey this offer on their own authority, it had in fact been fashioned in Washington, and delivered to Brazil’s prime minister (and acting foreign minister), Hermes Lima, on Saturday night, October 27, by US ambassador Lincoln Gordon (before Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles the next morning). Although the role undoubtedly suited Brazil’s belief that it deserved to play a major role in world affairs—and in the United Nations the country had promoted a scheme to denuclearize Latin America (and possibly Africa as well) as a method to defuse the crisis—in this case, it was seeking to cooperate with the North American power with whom it had sometimes uneasy relations, and was willing to endure a modicum of diplomatic

discomfort in the process. The Kennedy Administration’s secret use of Brazil to indirectly and circuitously send a proposition to Fidel Castro remained hidden until it emerged in declassified documents and was described by historians decades later.



Document No. 1

Telegram from Chilean Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Ruiz Solar), 1 November 1962

REPUBLIC OF CHILE
Ministry of Foreign Relations.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT
9184
From Rio de Janeiro
Mr
Minister of Foreign Relations
Santiago, Chile

Nº 303
1 November 1962 -

Fulfilling instructions of your telegram No. 183, I met with heads of Itamaraty [Brazilian foreign ministry—ed.] who agreed [that it was] necessary to keep close information and exchange points of view on the Cuban case as they have done so far in all the international problems, also adding: Brazil will maintain [its] proposal before the United Nations for the denuclearization of Africa and Latin America, [with] the assurance [that it] will obtain approval by a large majority

.
SECOND. - Questioned about true reach of the so-called “Brazilian mediation” led by General Albino [Albino Silva], [the military] Representative [of] President [João] Goulart, I have been informed that it consisted of the following: a) Demilitarization of Cuba to the point of eliminating offensive weapons and limiting defensive ones; b) Prohibition of ideo-

logical exportation from Cuba; c) Acceptance of the installation an observation [verification] commission. As a legitimate cause Cuba will be given non-intervention assurances for its territory.

THIRD - When asking him whether these statements coincided exactly with the United Nations Secretary General's effort they recognized in a confidential manner that the Brazilian effort did not exactly constitute a mediation but rather straightforward support for U Thant's intervention.

FOURTH - They also told me that Brazil maintains its decision not to break relations with Cuba, but that if that Government does not accept the dismantling of base, [Brazil] will support immediate employment of armed force in accordance with article eight of the Rio Treaty (TIAR [Tratado Interamericano de Asistencia Reciproca]).

As a result of prolonged conversations I was able to verify that [the] Government is maneuvering [this] so-called "mediation" in order to impress on public opinion the "important action and global position [of] Brazil," consequently diverting _____ accusations of [a] weakly defined policy [regarding] the Cuban case. - [MARCELO] RUIZ SOLAR.-

[Source: Archivo General Historico, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Santiago, Chile. Obtained by Tanya Harmer and translated by Eduardo Baudet and Harmer.]



Document No.2:

Telegram from Chilean Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Ruiz Solar), 8 November 1962

Chilean Embassy
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT
Political Affairs
Beginning and end of
Brazil's "mediation" in the Caribbean
Rio de Janeiro, 8 November 1962

Confidential

No. 1342/63

Minister:

The whole big display of publicity, classified by one commentator as diplomatic pyrotechnics, with regards to the so-called "mediation" of Brazil in the Caribbean crisis, has had fleeting existence.

The personal representative that President [João] Goulart sent to Havana to "act at the same time with the United Nations Secretary General [U Thant] and with Fidel Castro himself" has returned very discreetly, trying to explain that his action was the result of the "opportunity that presented itself, but -that - given the international situation - [we lacked] the background information on Brazilian diplomacy that it [is] the custom to examine in crisis moments." With those expressions, General Albino Silva makes an unquestionable reference to the surprise that the announcement of his trip received, even though within government circles, efforts to send some experienced diplomat to Havana for this type of negotiations were already known beforehand .

In his desire to define the reach of his effort more precisely, General Albino [Silva] has officially explained that "the exact meaning of the mission carried out by Brazil in Havana was to move the problem of military action into the sphere of the United Nations." He added that in order to avoid his action having the character of mediation, he had separate conversations with U Thant, Fidel Castro, and [Cuban] Foreign Minister Raul Roa and that, thanks to the idea that exists with respect to Brazil, due to the coherence of its attitudes in the international organizations defending principles and not systems, the reception of its action by Cuba and by the Secretary General of the UN was made a lot easier.

His satisfaction at the accomplished work was illustrated by the humorous remark he made when he arrived [saying] that he brought "the World Cup of Diplomacy," adding that "he came very impressed with the U Thant, who heard me lecture for one hour without even blinking or saying anything, with an impassivity to be expected of an oriental."

The apparent frivolity of this *oficio* [report] is born of the lack of importance that the return of President Goulart's personal representative has had, following the rousing announcements by the press about the Brazilian action to save world peace. Moreover, as one can gather from the editorial from the "Estado de Sao Paulo," one of the most prestigious journals in Brazil, the fact that the intervention of General Albino did not achieve the impact that was expected is not being hidden. This editorial contains the following:

"Brazilians should reflect before forming an opinion about facts that have been built up around the Government's action in relation to the international crisis provoked by the Cuban case.

We understand the unease with which the readers of newspapers are made aware, upon opening the pages of their preferred newspaper, to keep up to date with the news, of actions and official expressions which in all honesty the [several words illegible—trans.] to its sisters of the Continent, but that it perseveres in acting against the legitimate and general interests of the Hemisphere.

The political primacy of the improvised governors responsible for the awkward position in which Brazil was placed in that encounter is not denied. The verbal intemperance of the Prime Minister [Hermes Lima] in affronting the national conscience with expressions that run contrary to traditional beliefs of the country is not debated. Even less is the insufficiency unacknowledged, of those that, in the circumstances, thought to assume the direction of Brazilian diplomacy and extend the definition of our international political diplomacy precisely at the moment when facts served to undermine their assurances and prove their obvious unimportance. That – political primacy, the verbal intemperance, the insufficiency – is what in the first place clashes with the sensibility of those who are made aware of such a lamentable path of events. This is already a lot, but at the same time it still falls short of explaining the enormity of the ‘gaffe’ made by the Brazilian Government, taking [an] initiative without anyone asking it to and without any prior consultation with anyone, of proposing ‘mediation’ with Fidel Castro, in the reaffirmation of the curious doctrine of the self-determination of dictators [so that they can] bloodily enslave the people – with the goal of solving a conflict between the United States and Russia: The whole world smiled at such a provincial presumption. However, in official declarations that represent a humorous spark in an uneasy international moment, the President of the Republic declared himself to be euphoric and proud of the success in Havana, of General Albino [Silva], his special envoy, in the efficient leveling of the terrain for the salvation of world peace, giving pause to two formidable giants in dispute.”

Another important and circulated publication, “O Globo,” comments on the mission in the following terms:

“All the movement of our diplomacy, if we consider a call by [Yugoslav leader] Marshal [Josip Broz] Tito that was made to Brazil, when a *circular* went out to all countries that claim to be ‘neutral,’ seemed without content. If we went to ask for the dismantling of the nuclear bases that Russia had already agreed to withdraw, we went through an open door.

From that simple withdrawal one cannot deduce that Cuba will reintegrate itself within the democratic coexistence of the Continent. This would only result from a consultation with the people – similar to what the President of the Republic wants to do– as to whether it accepts or rejects Castro’s regime. Since this one [Castro] does not admit international organizations’ scrutiny even over the withdrawal of the nuclear bases, he will surely reject an identical evaluation process over a possible plebiscite ...

Therefore, ‘what did we go to do in Cuba, with a special emissary of the President of the Republic?’

Nothing.

It was not worth the effort that Itamaraty prepared itself for angrily, launching a discharge as occurs after a great diplomatic feat in war or in peace...

Pyrotechnic diplomacy, to fool the idiots. That is what we have done in this entire episode.”

* * * * *

Be what they may, the commentaries about “Brazilian mediation to save world peace,” objective or exaggerated, the truth is that General Albino Silva’s trip to Havana has had a silent official epilogue, born out of the laconic communiqué delivered after the representative gave [his] account of his mission: “The President of the Republic and the Prime Minister received General Albino Silva returning from Havana. The Head of the Military Office [“Casa Militar”] of the Presidency reported on the conversations in that capital with the Head of the Cuban Government and with the Secretary General of the United Nations. The Brazilian government trusts that the serious situation that concerns us all will find a solution in the realm of the UN. The international organization, where all the parties directly interested are gathered, has all the elements to bring about the negotiations that are deemed indispensable on good terms.”

God save you.

Marcelo Ruiz Solar
Ambassador of Chile

[Source: *Archivo General Histórico, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Santiago, Chile. Obtained by Tanya Harmer, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Harmer.*]



Document No. 3

Telegram from Chilean Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Ruiz Solar), 17 November 1962

REPUBLIC OF CHILE

Ministry of Foreign Relations.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

9607

From Rio de Janeiro

Mr. Minister of Foreign Relations

Santiago de Chile -

No. 321

17 November 1962.-

[Not] Finding the Foreign Minister and concurrently Prime Minister [Hermes Lima] in Brazil, [and in] fulfillment

of instructions in your telegram no. 203, I met with Undersecretary [Carlos A.] Bernardes whom I made aware of all your arguments and observations. He answered in the following way:

FIRST.- He finds great similarity in proposals contained [in] your telegram with [regards to] points of view held permanently by Brazil as well as with the current efforts of [U] Thant which, according to reports in his possession, is on its way to being accepted.;

SECOND.- According to the Undersecretary, Thant's proposal mainly consists in establishing permanent inspection in Cuba by representatives of neutral countries chosen by the Cuban Government.

THIRD. - He believes that Castro's government has no other alternative other than accepting the aforementioned proposal.

FOURTH.- He qualified your proposal as "very good" and added that he inclines towards collective action through a separate note of equal tenor to the one you propose. However, he stated his opinion needed to be confirmed by that of the Minister who would later call Brasilia, promising to give me his answer as soon as possible.

FIFTH.- He ended by telling me that, should the effort be accomplished, very careful language would need to be employed, given Castro's arrogant character.

He referred to letter g) of your proposal the text of which I previously paraphrased and had left in his possession, that in his view could be considered a veiled threat. The rest of the text in principal did not merit observations for him. I will keep you informed. RUIZ SOLAR

[Source: Archivo General Histórico, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Santiago, Chile. Obtained by Tanya Harmer, translated by Eduardo Baudet and Harmer.]

Notes

1 On this episode, see James G. Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962," parts 1-2, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and 6:3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67.

2 See comments of British ambassador G.A. Wallinger, quoted in Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962," pt. 2, pp. 49-50.

The Malin Notes: Glimpses Inside the Kremlin during the Cuban Missile Crisis

Introduction by Timothy Naftali¹

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library's October 1996 release of the White House recordings made by President Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis revolutionized our understanding of how the American side handled the most dangerous nuclear crisis of the Cold War.² Some months earlier, the late Aleksandr Fursenko, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, had learned about a collection of official notes from the meetings of the Presidium—the top decision-making body of the Soviet communist party and therefore of the USSR—during the missile crisis. These notes, which were written out in longhand by Vladimir Malin, the chief of the General Department of the Central Committee, formally recorded the Presidium's decisions and, occasionally, the discussion and justification behind the decisions. Fursenko was able to get access to a few, but by no means all, of the notes relevant to the Cuban missile crisis for our 1997 book, *One Hell of a Gamble*.³ In 2003, the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), published a more complete collection of the Cuban Missile Crisis notes in Volume 1 of *Arkhivii Kremlya*, an edition overseen by Fursenko and edited by a team of RGANI archivists supervised by Director Natalia Y. Tomilina and Vitali Afiani.⁴

Whereas the Kennedy tapes are an exhaustive (and occasionally exhausting!) real-time resource, the Malin notes are fragmentary, but unless and until we discover that there was a Khrushchev Kremlin taping system, they are the best evidence we have on Soviet deliberations during the Crisis. For this special edition of the CWIHP *Bulletin* we have excerpted the notes of Presidium discussions related to the Cuban missile crisis from May through December 1962. The University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs, in agreement with RGANI, produced English translations of the notes for the Khrushchev era (1954-1964) and also of the small number of stenographic accounts of Presidium meetings also held by RGANI. Since 2006 most of these materials have been available in English on the website of the Miller Center's Scripps Library and Multimedia Archive. Professor Jim Hershberg and I are grateful to the Miller Center for its assistance with putting together this collection of Malin notes on the Cuban Missile Crisis. Dr. Mark Kramer, Director of the Harvard Project for Cold War Studies and a Senior Fellow of Harvard's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, and I worked together to update the Miller Center's translations, which were done by Olga Rivkin, a native speaker but one without a detailed knowledge of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Mark, who

did the bulk of the updating, also contributed translations for two notes not currently on the Miller Center's website.

What do the Notes Tell Us?

In 1969 former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in his introduction to Robert F. Kennedy's *Thirteen Days* laid out a basic research agenda for students of the Kremlin side of the Cuban missile crisis: "why did the Russians risk so much? What was their ultimate purpose? Why did they withdraw? Why did they not retaliate at other, but equally sensitive, points?"⁵

On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, how well do the Malin notes help us answer Macmillan's questions? And do they suggest any others?

Why did the Soviets risk so much? What was their ultimate purpose?

Let's take these questions together. In his dictated memoirs, Khrushchev credited himself with the idea of putting nuclear missiles on Cuba and ascribed two motives to the ploy: "The main thing was that the installation of our missiles in Cuba would, I thought, restrain the United States from precipitous military action against Castro's government. In addition to protecting Cuba, our missiles would have equalized what the West likes to call 'the balance of power.'"⁶

The notes underscore that the missile gambit was, indeed, Khrushchev's idea and, also, that it was a hard sell. Protocol 32 (21 and 24 May, 1962) shows that it took Khrushchev two meetings and four days to get his colleagues to approve the plan.⁷ Although the sole leader of the USSR, especially since he survived a failed palace coup in 1957, Khrushchev still needed formal approval of the Presidium before moving ahead.

The question of the origins of the nuclear missile decision is more complex than Khrushchev remembered; but here, too, the notes are helpful, if less conclusive. Evidence that emerged in the 1990s, largely unearthed by Aleksandr Fursenko in the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), strongly suggested that the missile decision in May 1962 had come at the end of a long reexamination of Soviet military support for Cuba. In September 1961, the Cubans had asked for conventionally armed Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAMs), the SA-2s, and shore-based Sopka missiles and a Soviet deployment of 10,000 troops. Initially, Moscow had set this request

aside. But, in March 1962, the Kremlin came back to the six-month-old Cuban request and decided to reconsider the entire problem of Cuban defense. In early April, the Soviets concluded that the best way to secure the Castro regime was to help the Cubans defend themselves. The Presidium approved additional military supplies, a medium-term training program for the Cuban military, and a symbolic Soviet detachment of 3,000 troops. The only missiles the Kremlin intended to send at that time were the non-nuclear SAMs and the Sopkas.⁸ This new chronology effectively posed two new questions for scholars: if the Kremlin had made up its collective mind about Cuban defense in April, why did it choose to re-examine the issue in May 1962? And, more importantly, why did the Kremlin, which seemed satisfied with a non-nuclear approach to defending Cuba in April and the involvement of only 3,000 of its own men, approve dispatching Soviet nuclear weapons and over 50,000 Soviet troops to the island a month later?

Malin apparently took no notes for the April decisions regarding Cuba and his notes of the 21/24 May meeting do not reveal why Khrushchev sought to re-examine the issue of Cuban defense. They do, however, provide evidence that Khrushchev understood in May that he was proposing a big shift in how the Kremlin dealt with the problem of securing Cuba. On 21 May, Khrushchev introduced the nuclear missile proposal by saying, “[t]his will be an offensive policy.” According to Malin, the question before the Kremlin at the time was “How to help Cuba so that it can remain firm.” Why would one need an “offensive policy” to achieve what was essentially a defensive objective? Did Khrushchev misspeak or did Malin mishear? It seems likely that Khrushchev meant what Malin recorded him as saying. Two weeks later, as seen in Protocol 35, once the Cubans had agreed to the offer of the nuclear missiles, Khrushchev added, in the same spirit, “I think we will be victorious in this operation.” Khrushchev’s use of the terms like “offensive” and “victorious” implied that he knew that he was suggesting a radical and risky shift in dealing with a more powerful United States.

One has to look beyond the Malin notes, I believe, to see what might be behind Khrushchev’s risktaking. In the same volume as the Malin notes, RGANI also published in 2003 a much smaller collection (less than 50) of stenographic transcripts of Presidium discussions from 1958 through 1964. These included a remarkable monologue by Khrushchev before the Presidium on 8 January 1962, during which the Soviet leader set out his foreign policy strategy for the year. Well aware that the Soviet Union lagged behind the United States in strategic power, Khrushchev recommended a policy of aggressive containment. With the international balance of power favoring the United States, Khrushchev believed that

the Soviet Union had to exert pressure on the weak points of the US alliance system to restrain Washington. Subsequently, in February he approved the buzzing of Allied aircraft in the air corridors to West Berlin and in March he unleashed the Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese, who had wanted to violate the ceasefire in Laos to allow the Pathet Lao to approach closer to the Mekong river in northwestern Laos.

By May, this approach—which Khrushchev likened to creating a liquid meniscus by pouring enough wine in a glass to reach the brim but not a drop more—was not working. The US had stood up to Soviet provocations in Central Europe, had sent troops to Thailand to shore up the Royal Government of Laos, had resumed atmospheric nuclear testing, and there were indications of a continuing Kennedy interest in overthrowing Castro. Meanwhile Soviet production of intercontinental missiles had hit a snag. Did Khrushchev lobby his colleagues to upgrade Soviet plans for the conventional defense of Cuba so that he could add some more water to the glass, bring international politics even closer to the brim? Is this what he meant by it being “an offensive policy?”⁹

Malin’s notes for the 1 July meeting (Protocol 39) do provide some evidence that Khrushchev was thinking about more than Cuba that summer. After discussing the timetable for sending the missiles to Cuba, Khrushchev led his colleagues in a re-examination of the Soviet Union’s policy on West Berlin. Berlin had not been a topic of discussion for months. In January 1962, during his “meniscus” monologue, Khrushchev had told his colleagues that the balance of power was probably not conducive to getting a Berlin agreement in 1962. He predicted that a “final fight on the issues of West Berlin” was inevitable, but not yet.¹⁰ Why did Khrushchev return to the Berlin issue in July?

Although a matter of interpretation, I believe that the timing of the raising of the Berlin question reflects something other than a Soviet desire to use Berlin to distract John F. Kennedy from the Cuban missile gambit. From the notes, we see that in July Khrushchev associated the idea of bringing the Berlin question to the UN with “the path of creating tensions.” And from other sources we know that by September he had chosen the path of renewed political crisis over Berlin. As the summer progressed, the Soviet foreign ministry began preparing to bring the question to the UN and, in September, Khrushchev began to tell foreigners, most notably the West German Ambassador Hans Kroll, that the USSR would be bringing the Berlin matter to a head at the UN in November and expected to prevail.¹¹ It seems likely that more than coincidence was involved in the fact that Khrushchev chose the path of renewing political confrontation with the United States over Berlin just as his missiles were reaching their

launch sites in Cuba. In *Khrushchev's Cold War*, Aleksandr Fursenko and I argued that though we don't believe that the Berlin question inspired Khrushchev's risk-taking in sending nuclear missiles to Cuba, it seemed probable that as he gained confidence that his ploy would succeed, he began to consider how the new balance of power would allow him to solve problems like Berlin.¹² In this way, the missile gambit was politically but not militarily "offensive."

Why did they withdraw? Why did they not retaliate against other, but equally sensitive, points?

The notes are much more revealing on these two questions. Let's take the second question first. At no time does it appear that Khrushchev or his colleagues considered threatening or attacking West Berlin—the main "sensitive" point Macmillan was probably thinking of—to counter the military advantage that the US held in the Caribbean. According to the notes, the Kremlin considered using force only twice during the crisis, and in each case it would have been in response to a US attack on Cuba. On 22 October, according to Protocol 60, as the Soviets awaited Kennedy's public announcement of what he planned to do about the Soviet missiles found in Cuba, Khrushchev and some of his colleagues briefly considered using tactical nuclear weapons in the event of a US airborne assault. But, at the suggestion of Soviet defense minister Rodion Malinovsky, the Kremlin postponed its consideration of a nuclear response pending details of Kennedy's speech. On 28 October, according to Protocol 63, when Khrushchev probably assumed that Kennedy's patience was at an end and the crisis might either be resolved or spin out of control, the Kremlin again considered how it might respond to a US attack. If anyone suggested a preemptive strike, or even a retaliatory strike, against a target outside of the Caribbean, Malin did not note it for the official record.

The notes also underscore the wisdom of Kennedy's choice of the blockade option. As the blockade's advocates in Washington—namely, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara—had argued, imposing a naval quarantine before possibly taking military action gave Khrushchev time to think. The continuation of Protocol 60 (when the Kremlin reconvened at 10 a.m. on 23 October) shows that once the Kremlin had seen a text of Kennedy's speech and knew for sure that Washington was not about to launch a "blitzkrieg," it wasted no time in taking steps to reduce the risks of confrontation. It ordered some ships that were still in the Mediterranean to turn around. The Aleksandrovsk, the ship carrying the nuclear warheads for the IRBMs (the R-14s), was ordered to keep sailing, however, because it was close enough to Cuban shores to dock before

the blockade went into effect. Not all decisions taken that day, however, showed a desire to reduce risks. The four diesel submarines, each of which carried one nuclear-tipped torpedo, were told to proceed.

The Malin notes make clear that Kennedy's crisis team, known as the ExComm, met more often as a group than did the Presidium. The long session of 22 October continued into 23 October. But there are no notes for 24 October or 26 October and there is no break in the numbering of the protocols. This does not mean that Khrushchev and his colleagues went for carefree walks in Moscow's lovely parks on those days, just that the Presidium, for whatever reason, was not brought into formal session.

By 25 October, Malin noted in Protocol 61 that Khrushchev was taking even bigger steps away from the brink. Perhaps after informally canvassing the opinions of his colleagues on 24 October, Khrushchev decided that the ships carrying the IRBM missiles (the R-14s) on the high seas should turn around and come home. In addition, he floated a proposal for ending the crisis: when the time seemed right he would offer to dismantle the missiles already on the island (the MRBMs or R-12s) if Kennedy pledged not to invade Cuba. In laying out this proposal, Khrushchev partially answered one of Macmillan's 1969 questions. The missile ploy, he argued, had succeeded in scaring Kennedy and in insuring that the world was focused on the plight of little Cuba. As a result, he argued, the missiles already on the island could be withdrawn if the price of their removal was a public pledge from the United States not to touch Cuba in the future. Khrushchev may have had greater goals in mind when he proposed this "offensive policy" in May, but three days into the crisis a non-invasion pledge had become an acceptable return on this investment.

Khrushchev did not wait long to make that offer to Kennedy. The next day, 26 October, without having to reconvene the Presidium, he sent his famous "knot" letter to Kennedy suggesting the trade of the missiles for a US pledge not to invade Cuba. Something then happened, because when Malin resumed his note-taking on 27 October, Khrushchev clearly thought he could get Kennedy to pay a higher price for ending the crisis. The notes do not explain why he changed his mind. Ever the gambler, perhaps Khrushchev had recalculated the odds of a US invasion and thought he could risk pushing Kennedy a little harder. In any case, on 27 October he suggested to his colleagues that the USSR up the ante. Khrushchev proposed a new demand: the removal of US military bases from Turkey and Pakistan. In presenting this, he also used, for the first time since June 1962, the trope of victory: "if we receive in return the elimination of the [US] base in Turkey and Pakistan, then we will end up victorious."

When the Kennedy administration officials heard a few hours later that the Kremlin had increased its terms for a diplomatic settlement, they feared that the Soviet leader had lost a battle with some hawks in Moscow. Protocol 62 effectively puts that theory to rest. It was Khrushchev who decided to raise the stakes and the notes indicate that he dictated the new letter to Kennedy. What the notes do not indicate was when, or how, the Kremlin decided to narrow the new demand to just getting the US to agree to removing its “Jupiter” IRBMs from Turkey. Khrushchev would ultimately not mention Pakistan in his 27 October letter to JFK.

The acute crisis ended on 28 October, and the notes for that day (Protocol 63) have already spawned some historical controversy.¹³ As in the case of those for 22-23 October, the structure of Malin’s notes suggests that there was a break in the meeting. In the first part of the meeting, Khrushchev proposed reacting positively to Kennedy’s response to his 27 October letter. Kennedy, in his response, had ignored the demand to remove US IRBMs from Turkey and offered only a non-invasion pledge in return for Moscow dismantling the missiles. The structure of the Malin notes for 28 October suggests that Khrushchev may have made this decision to end the crisis before knowing that late on 27 October (Washington time; after midnight in Moscow), the President’s brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, had told the Soviet ambassador in Washington, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, that JFK was also prepared to order the removal of the Jupiter missiles from Turkey. The meeting recessed after Khrushchev reacted positively to Kennedy’s letter. When it resumed, there were fewer participants and, at that point, Khrushchev discussed the message from Dobrynin. Without more information, the notes do not make clear whether Khrushchev received the message from Dobrynin only after the recess or that Khrushchev, who already knew about Kennedy’s secret offer, recessed the meeting and excused some of the participants because he wanted to discuss Kennedy’s Turkish concession in front of a smaller group. The latter explanation is not wholly satisfactory. Although President Kennedy had requested through his brother that Khrushchev keep this concession secret, it is not clear why Khrushchev would have felt that he could not mention it in front of Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, who would have seen Dobrynin’s dispatch at some point anyway, and his Minister of Defense, Rodion Malinovsky. According to Malin, Gromyko and Malinovsky were among those who left after the morning session.

The timing of when Khrushchev learned about Kennedy’s secret offer remains unclear and it is extremely significant. Would Khrushchev have ended the crisis without that additional US concession? The structure of Protocol 63 raises but does not settle this important question.

Even though fragmentary, the Malin notes suggest strongly that except on the long night of 22 October, Khrushchev took steps to minimize the risk of war. The time offered by Kennedy’s quarantine policy allowed the Soviet leader to come to grips with the need to withdraw the missiles. It took the Kremlin only three days to devise the basic structure of an agreement and it appears that it was Khrushchev who suggested it. With the possible exception of the resolution of the question of tactical missiles on 22 October, there is little that appears from the notes to have been forced upon Khrushchev by the rest of the Presidium, and here one needs to be careful. Other sources, such as notes made by Anastas Mikoyan at some of these meetings, suggest much more give and take than is reflected in Malin’s official record.¹⁴ This does not mean that the Malin notes are an unreliable source for the decisions taken. We already know that Malin’s recording technique smoothed over disputes. There can be no doubt that the two-day session of 21/24 May 1962, for example, involved a debate and none of that is in the notes that we have. Regardless of the arguments that may have preceded the final decisions, however, Malin’s notes are powerful evidence that Khrushchev was the key player on the Soviet side during the missile crisis. He caused the crisis in the first place and once he got enough from Kennedy, he brought it to an end.

After the crisis ended, it was Khrushchev who was the chief spinner in defining its ramifications. On 3 December (Protocol 71), Khrushchev explained why he viewed the outcome of the crisis as a success. “The USA,” he said with evident satisfaction, “was compelled to recognize that we, too, have our interests in the Western Hemisphere.” He also stressed his pleasure at seeing that the Soviet Union could scare the United States “They themselves got frightened,” said Khrushchev adding that if the Kremlin had held out a little longer they might have been able to get Kennedy to pay a higher price. It was as if the missile crisis had redeemed his beloved meniscus strategy. Curiously, when listing the successes of the missile gambit to his colleagues that December, Khrushchev said nothing about extracting the Turkish missile concession from JFK.¹⁵

The notes do, however, add new questions to those posed by Macmillan. The pre-crisis notes from October 1962 (Protocols 58 and 59), which show an intense focus on the Sino-Indian confrontation, suggest that the Kremlin was completely taken by surprise by the crisis. In light of Khrushchev’s personal interest in the Gary Powers’ incident of May 1960, it remains a mystery why the Kremlin did not begin to worry that the missile sites would be seen by American U2 surveillance before the SAMs were fully operational. And it is not that the Kremlin did not ask questions about US intelligence efforts regarding the missile play. In

July, as shown by Protocol 39, Khrushchev discussed the importance of getting the US to stop flying over the ships heading to Cuba. The notes also provide significant details on the effect that the missile crisis had on Soviet-Cuban relations. Thanks to Castro's so-called Armageddon letter and his five points, by December 1962 (Protocol 71), Khrushchev was calling the Cubans "unreliable allies."¹⁶ As we all know, that relationship would ultimately become close again.

It has been forty-five years since Harold Macmillan launched his challenge to explain what he termed "this strange and still scarcely explicable affair." Scholars can now explain much more about Khrushchev's motives and his actions during the crisis, in part thanks to the Malin notes. Huge gaps, however, remain in the Soviet record of the crisis, ensuring many more years of lively, interpretive debates and major discoveries.



Notes from Sessions of the CPSU Presidium Pertaining to the Installation of Soviet Nuclear Missiles in Cuba, May-December 1962

Translated and edited by Mark Kramer, with Assistance from Timothy Naftali

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: My warm thanks to James Hershberg for his extensive, very helpful comments on earlier drafts. Working with him again in zany, light-night sessions to put out the *Bulletin* — as he and I often did in the 1990s — was a real pleasure. I also want to acknowledge the Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, for having sponsored earlier translations by Olga Rivkin of most of the notes. I have redone the translations for inclusion in this special issue of the CWIHP *Bulletin*.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

**Protocol No. 32
Session of 21 May 1962**

Present: Brezhnev, Voronov, Kozlov, Kirilenko, Kosygin,

Kuusinen, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Shvernik, Grishin, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Gromyko, Malinovsky, Biryuzov.

I. Cde. Khrushchev's informational report about the delegation's trip to Bulgaria.¹⁷

Approve the work of the delegation

Regarding assistance to Cuba. How to help Cuba so that it can remain firm.

Khrushchev

Come to an agreement with F[idel] Castro, conclude a military treaty regarding joint defense.
Station nuclear missiles [there].
Carry this out secretly. Then declare it.
Missiles under our command.
This will be an offensive policy.

Cdes. Malinovsky and Biryuzov are to make calculations and look [at sites] in time.¹⁸
Compose a letter to Castro.

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 15-16.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

**Protocol No. 32 (continued)
Session of 24 May 1962**

Present: Khrushchev, Kozlov, Brezhnev, Mikoyan, Suslov, Kuusinen, Kosygin, Polyansky, Voronov, Kirilenko, Shvernik, Gromyko, Malinovsky

Endorse Cde. N. S. Khrushchev's proposal concerning matters involving Cuba.

Adopt the plan

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 15-15ob



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

Protocol No. 35
Session of 10 June 1962

Present: Brezhnev, Kirilenko, Kozlov, Kosygin, Kuusinen, Suslov, Khrushchev, Rashidov, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Malinovsky, Grechko, Chuikov, Biryuzov, Zakharov, Epishev, Gromyko, S. P. Ivanov.

I. Cde. Rashidov's informational report about the trip to Cuba.

Rashidov, Biryuzov,
Khrushchev

Proceed to deciding the question.
I think that we will win this operation.
Cde. Malinovsky is to prepare a draft resolution.
Approve the draft resolution.
Cdes. Kosygin and Ustinov are to examine the proposals from a practical standpoint.

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 21-22



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

Protocol No. 39
Session of 1 July 1962

Ogarevo

Present: Brezhnev, Voronov, Kirilenko, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Suslov, Khrushchev, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin,

Grishin, Gromyko, Malin.

On the negotiations with R. Castro

Cde. Khrushchev
Entrust Cdes. Khrushchev, Malinovsky, and Gromyko with pursuing the negotiations.

II. Concerning Berlin

Cdes. Khrushchev, Mikoyan,
Gromyko, Kosygin, Brezhnev,
Suslov, Ponomarev

Continue (to prepare proposals):
Western countries reduce their troops by half in W. Berlin.
The remaining half — stay under the UN flag for six years.
Within two years troops of the Western powers are to be replaced by UN troops, and the UN troops are to remain in W. Berlin for four years.

A second variant: Either we ourselves or the neutrals raise the question of Germany before the UN.
The debates would be in our favor.
But this is the path of creating tensions.

Under the first variant — the question about access is not linked to an international control organ.
An international organ is unacceptable.

I. Regarding the speech by McNamara.¹⁹
Take a gamble.
They are not equal, but they were saying that the forces are equal.
Strikes not against cities — this is aggressiveness.
What is the goal when they put this forward? How many bombs are needed?
Inure the population to the idea that there will be a nuclear war.
Cde. Gromyko will prepare for the trip to Geneva

III. Concerning Cuba

The schedule of transfers up to 1 November 1962.²⁰
Regarding the flights buzzing our ships — say that this impedes shipping.
On the draft treaty with Cuba.
Cde. Gromyko reads it.
The draft is adopted.²¹

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 16-16ob



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

**Protocol No. 40
Session of 6 July 1962**

[.]

Matters Concerning Cuba

Cde. Pliev — the commander.²²
Regarding practical matters.
Defense equipment, then other equipment.
Speak out in criticism of Kennedy and Rusk for their speeches marking Independence Day [4 July].²³

Look at drafts of monuments.
Concerning the subway.
Concerning metal,
concerning tires —
the republics must be responsible.

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 25-26



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

**Protocol No. 41
Session of 12 July 1962**

[.]

II. On the dispatch to Cuba of a group of advisers on economic matters.

Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Suslov

Provide a group of economic advisers who would not be

subordinate to the ambassador, take them from Cent. Asia.

Cde. Titov	Cde.
Cde. Perekhrest	Usmanov
Cde. Bondarchuk	Yasakov
Cde.	V. N. Somakov

Invite them to the CC to discuss it.

It is disgraceful — we provided tractors to the Cubans, we are not providing agric[ultural] machinery.

Include also other advisers, and those who were there — bring them back as the organizers.

We sent five ships.

Perhaps send a hundred or two hundred of the best ships for fishing.

Cdes. Mikoyan, Rashidov, and Shelepin are to prepare it.

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 27-28.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

**Protocol No. 58
Session of 11 October 1962**

Present: Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Malinovsky, Kuznetsov

On relations between the PRC and India.

Join in, and for both of them prepare a nuanced document.
The Min of For Aff is to prepare it.
Search for reconciliation.
The McMahon Line.²⁴
It is hard for China to agree to this.
The PRC proposal for troop withdrawals is reasonable.

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 33-34.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

Protocol No. 59
Session of 14 October 1962

33. [On the Indian-Chinese conflict]

The proposals are being readied by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev

1. Delay the shipment to India of MiG-21 aircraft.
2. On instructions to the Soviet ambassador in India, Cde. [Ivan] Benediktov. Say to [Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal] Nehru: "We are disappointed."
Are they thinking about how this conflict will end?

By whom was the McMahon Line created?
By whom was it recognized? When was it introduced?
But the circumstances have changed.
The PRC's proposals for troop withdrawals spanning 20 km are reasonable.
India's demands for troop withdrawals spanning an additional 20 km are humiliating for the PRC.

We are in favor of eliminating the conflict, it will not bring any benefit.
India is hardly going to gain anything from the conflict.

[. . .]

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 35.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

Protocol No. 60
Session of 22-23 October 1962²⁵

Present: Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Polyansky,

Suslov, Khrushchev, Shvernik, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin.

I. On defining positions toward further steps in regard to Cuba and Berlin

Khrushchev, Malinovsky,
Ivanov, Mikoyan, Kozlov,
Brezhnev, Kosygin,
Ponomarev, Suslov

Cde. Malinovsky. I do not think that the USA right now could embark on blitzkrieg operations. It is not such a country (concerning Cuba). Apparently, the speech on the radio is a pre-election stunt. If an invasion of Cuba will be declared, this will be after another 24 hours has passed in order to get ready.

I think that we will not end up in a situation in which the missiles are placed on high alert.

Cde. Ivanov. Reports at what stage the delivery of property [weaponry and other military equipment] is to Cuba.

Cde. Khrushchev. I agree with Cde. Malinovsky's conclusions. Gromyko responded to Rusk for the most part from an ethical standpoint.

The point is that we do not want to unleash a war, we wanted to intimidate and restrain the USA vis-à-vis Cuba.

The difficult thing is that we did not concentrate everything that we wanted and did not publish the treaty.

The tragic thing — they can attack, and we will respond. This could escalate into a large-scale war.

One scenario: they will begin to act against Cuba.

One scenario: declare on the radio that there already is an agreement concerning Cuba.

They might declare a blockade, or they might take no action.

Another scenario: in case of an attack, all the equipment is Cuban, and the Cubans declare that they will respond.

And another: not yet use the strategic weapons, but use the tactical.

Give Pliev instructions — bring the troops up to combat readiness.

All the forces initially should not use atomic [weaponry].

If there is an airborne assault — the tactical atomic weaponry, but the strategic [not] until orders are given (excluding use of the means in Stetsenko's²⁶ custody).

Conclusion (is being made):

An attack is being organized against Cuba.

Cde. Malinovsky says: wait until 1:00 a.m., or else they will be given grounds for using atomic weaponry.²⁷

I. On the USSR government's draft statement concerning Cuba.

Kuznetsov, Khrushchev,

Mikoyan, Kosygin, Polyansky,

Ilichev, Grechko

The USSR gov't is appealing to the peoples of the USSR — and is informing them.

Work. Measures so that we are not caught unawares.

Accept.

I. On the instructions to Cde. [Soviet UN Ambassador Valerian] Zorin

Cde. Kuznetsov

Affirm.

Draft Security Council resolution.

Affirm.

I. On information to F. Castro about our further steps in events around Cuba.

We need to tell our friends where we are heading.

It was halfway successful, and half not.

It is positive that the whole world is focused on Cuba. Now.

It is not essential for Cuba but is essential for the USA.

Time will pass, and if needed, it [weaponry] will again be sent.

I. On the letter to Kennedy.

Regardless of the class of weaponry, it has been delivered.

It has been delivered with the aim of defending Cuba against aggression.

The ships that are moving in the Mediterranean Sea, return them to the Black Sea.

The armaments and military formations are not to be sent for now, return them from their voyage.

Keep the boats on their approaches.

On the measures for increasing combat readiness. Through a gov't decision, an order has been given to the minister of defense.

The Min. of For. Aff. is to brief the ambassadors of the Warsaw Pact countries.

Invite the commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact and the representatives and exchange views with them.

On the treaty — do not announce it (unanimous opinion).

Issue a command for the return of ships (the ships that have not yet reached there)

(Everyone says that this is correct.)

Compose a statement by the USSR government — a protest.

The USA has set out on the path of preparing and unleashing a third world war.

American imperialism has taken upon itself the right to dictate its will to others — we protest.

All countries have the right to defense and to conclude alliances.

Warn the gov't it is taking upon itself great responsibility.

The USSR also possesses weapons, we protest the reckless actions.

This is lawlessness and unprecedented treachery — demand an account from the other gov't.

The directive to Zorin²⁸ — along these same lines.

The peoples of all countries must raise their voices.

For preservation of the UN.

The laws and Charter of the UN are being trampled on.

All issues in dispute — by means of negotiations.

The USSR gov't is bringing the matter to the Security Council.

Let the four submarines move ahead. The "Aleksandrov[sk]" is to head to the nearest port.²⁹

Send a telegram to Castro.

We received Kennedy's letter.

Crude interference in Cuba's affairs.

We are raising the matter in the Security Council against US treachery, and Cuba should come to the Security Council.

[. . .]

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 36-41.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

Protocol No. 61 Session of 25 October 1962

Present: Brezhnev, Kozlov, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Shvernik, Kosygin, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Gromyko, Kuznetsov.

On the return of the ship carrying special cargo.

Khrushchev
Return it.

I. On the response to Kennedy

Khrushchev, Gromyko

Do not get into a petty exchange of insults with the same arguments.
Compose a letter to Kennedy as dictated.
Get accustomed to it. How [to proceed] further.
Dismantle the missile installations.
We have made Cuba a country that is the focus of the world's attention.
You give a commitment not to touch Cuba, and we will give our consent to the dismantling and then will permit UN inspectors to verify it.

Kozlov, Mikoyan,
Ponomarev, Brezhnev, Suslov,
Kosygin

A correct and reasonable tactic. Now Cuba is not the same as it was before the events. Do not aggravate the situation. In this manner we will strengthen Cuba.

On the instructions to Cde. Zorin concerning the resolution introduced by Ghana and the U[nited] A[rab] R[epublic]³⁰ at the Security Council

Gromyko, Mikoyan, Kozlov,
Kuznetsov, Khrushchev,
Brezhnev, Ponomarev,
Polyansky, Ilichev

Mikoyan. He proposes not to abstain in the vote for the resolution introduced by Ghana and the UAR, and instead to vote "in favor."

Cde. Zorin has proposed this correctly. Affirm the

instructions to Cde. Zorin.

III. On the response to UN Secretary General U Thant

The text proposed by the Min. of For. Aff. is not suitable.
Say briefly: "We agree with your proposal."
Affirm the response to U Thant.

VI. Cde. Gromyko's message about the delegation's work at the UN's XVII Session

Approve the delegation's work

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 42-42ob.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

Protocol No. 61 Session of 25 October 1962

Those who took part: Members of the CC Presidium Cdes. L. I. Brezhnev, F. R. Kozlov, A. N. Kosygin, A. I. Mikoyan, D. S. Polyansky, M. A. Suslov, and M. N. Shvernik; Candidate member of the CC Presidium Cde. V. V. Grishin; and CC Secretaries Cdes. P. N. Demichev, L. F. Ilichev, B. N. Ponomarev, and A. N. Shelepin; and also A. A. Gromyko and V. V. Kuznetsov. Chaired by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev.

Point 1. On the response of the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers Cde. N. S. Khrushchev to the letter of US President Kennedy

Cde. N.S. Khrushchev says he decided to convene a session of the Presidium in connection with the further events in Cuba.

The further course of events is proceeding in the following way. The Americans say that the missile installations in Cuba must be dismantled. Perhaps this will need to be done. This is not capitulation on our part. Because if we fire, they will also fire. There is no doubt that the Americans became frightened, this is clear. Kennedy was sleeping with a wooden knife. [To

Cde. A. I. Mikoyan's question (in jest), "Why with a wooden one?" N. S. says, jokingly, that when a man goes bear hunting for the first time, he takes with him a wooden knife so that it will be easier to clean his trousers.]³¹

Cde. N. S. Khrushchev goes on to say that we have now made Cuba a country that is the focus of the world's attention. The two systems have clashed. Kennedy says to us, take your missiles out of Cuba. We respond: "Give firm guarantees and pledges that the Americans will not attack Cuba." That is not a bad [trade].

We could pull out the R-12 [SS-4] missiles and leave the other missiles there. This is not cowardice. This is a fallback position, it is possible we will have to meet with them at the UN. We have to give the opponent a sense of calm and, in return, receive assurances concerning Cuba. Beyond that, it is not worth forcing the situation to the boiling point. We can strike the USA from the territory of the USSR. Now Cuba will not be what it was previously.

They, the Americans, are threatening an economic blockade, but the USA will not attack Cuba. We should not inflame the situation and should conduct a reasonable policy. In this way we will strengthen Cuba and will save it for 2-3 more years. Within several years it will be harder [for the Americans] to deal with [Cuba].

We have to play, but we should not get out and lose our heads. The initiative is in our hands, there is no need to be afraid. We began and got cold feet. It is not to our benefit to fight. The future depends not on Cuba but on our country.

That is correct.

All the members of the Presidium and the Secretaries endorse and support Cde. N. S. Khrushchev.

Cde. N. S. Khrushchev proposes to think about information [to give to] F. Castro.

We must draft a document in which we say where we are heading. Some things worked out well, others did not. What we have right now is a positive moment. What is the positive side of this? The fact that the entire world is focused on Cuba. The missiles played their positive role.

Time will pass, and if need be, the missiles can appear there again.

Perhaps Cdes. Gromyko, Ponomarev, and Ilichev will think a bit about this document.

Notes taken by A. K. Serov³² on 25 1962.

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 165, L. 170-173.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

**Protocol No. 62
Session of 27 October 1962**

Present: Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Shvernik, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Malinovsky, Gromyko, Grechko, Zakharov, Ivanov, Kuznetsov, Malin, Chernukha, Serov.

Cde. Fomin's telegram from Rio de Janeiro No. ___ of 25.X.62.³³

Adopt measures.

Cde. Pavlov's telegram from Trostnik No. ___/II of 27.X.62.³⁴

Affirm Cde. Pavlov's proposal

Informational report concerning telegrams about Cuba.

Cde. Malinovsky
The informational report indicates the complexity of the situation

I. About further steps concerning Cuba

Khrushchev, Mikoyan,
Malinovsky, Gromyko,
Brezhnev, Kozlov, Ponomarev,
Grechko, Kosygin, Suslov

The correspondence with U Thant can hardly be a restraining mechanism in conditions when negotiations have begun. They will not embark on an invasion, but it is impossible to make a guarantee.

Could they attack us right now?
I think they will not bring themselves to do it.
Of course, it is impossible to make a guarantee.
Kennedy's dramatic speech on radio and television, it was not out of bravery.
They are heaping all the blame on us, they had decided to settle accounts with Cuba, but now, in my view, they have reassessed this decision.
The steps we had undertaken until this were correct.
Further steps.
We will not eliminate the conflict if we do not give satisfaction to the Americans and do not tell them that our R-12 missiles are there.
I think that we should not be obstinate.
Did we commit a mistake or not?
This can be assessed later on.
We must take into account that the US did not attack Cuba. And if we receive in return the elimination of the [US] base in Turkey and Pakistan, then we will end up victorious.

We agree to verification when we pull out the missiles.

All the comrades speak in support of Cde. Khrushchev's proposal.

Continuation of the discussion concerning Cuba

The letter to US President Kennedy

Gromyko, Khrushchev,
Mikoyan, Malinovsky,
Kozlov, Suslov, Brezhnev,
Kosygin
Dictation of the text of the letter to US President Kennedy is under way.
Cde. Khrushchev is dictating it.

Discussion of the text of the letter to US President Kennedy.

Affirm the text of the letter.
Entrust it to the US ambassador in the USSR
Broadcast the letter on the radio at 5:00 p.m. on 27.X.62 and publish it in the press.

On the letter to F. Castro

Ponomarev, Khrushchev

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 43-44.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

Protocol No. 63 Session of 28 October 1962

Present: Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Suslov, Khrushchev, Shvernik, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Gromyko, Malinovsky, Grechko, Zakharov, S. Ivanov, Malin.

On further steps concerning Cuba.

Cde. Khrushchev
1. If an attack is provoked, we have issued an order to inflict a retaliatory strike.
2. We agree to dismantle the missile installations.

I. On the letter to US President Kennedy

Cde. Khrushchev is dictating the text of the letter.

V. On the letter to F. Castro

The text of the letter is being dictated by Cde. Khrushchev.

On the telegram to Cde. Pavlov³⁵

Cde. Khrushchev is dictating the text of the telegram.

II. On the letter to U Thant

Protocol No. 63 (continuation) Session of 28 October 1962

Present: Kozlov, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin

III. Cde. Dobrynin's message from Washington about the discussion with R. Kennedy and the telegram of the KGB station chief No. __from³⁶

Send the informational report and letter to F. Castro.
About the instructions to Alekseev.
Instructions to Zorin
We can show U Thant that we are dismantling the missile installations.

IX. On the instructions to Cde. Pavlov

Instructions to Pavlov to show to U Thant
About the ships.
Reach out to the Red Cross (so that Red Cross representatives look) during the [ships'] voyage and on a neutral vessel.
Letter to Castro so that he will give his consent to letting in Red Cross representatives [to Cuba's ports].³⁷
Compose an informational letter to Kennedy.

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 45-46ob.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

Protocol No. 66 Session of 16 November 1962

Present: Brezhnev, Voronov, Kirilenko, Kozlov, Kosygin, Kuusinen, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Grishin, Demichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin.

On the message from US President R. Kennedy³⁸ about further steps concerning Cuba.

Khrushchev, Gromyko,
Brezhnev, Kosygin, Kozlov,
Ponomarev, Suslov³⁹
About Castro's position — unreasonable and screechy
Let this be a lesson for us.
We are coming to the crunch point: Either they will cooperate or we will let our people go.
Cde [Anastas] Mikoyan's letter requesting a conversation with Castro.

Respond that we agreed to the withdrawal of the Il-28s (orally).⁴⁰

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 49.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

Protocol No. 71 Session of 3 December 1962

Present: Voronov, Kirilenko, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Efremov, Demichev, Andropov, Ilichev, Rudakov, Polyakov, Titov, Shelepin, Satyukov, Gromyko, Malinovsky, Troyanovsky, S. Ivanov, Shuisky, Lebedev, Shevchenko.

I. Cde. Mikoyan's report on his trip to Cuba.

Mikoyan, Khrushchev,
Gromyko,
Consider the line to be correct.
We preserved Cuba as a hub of the rev[olutionary] move[ment].
The USA was compelled to recognize that we, too, have our interests in the Western Hemisphere.
Whoever says that we retreated — this is malicious feebleness.
We pulled out the missiles — that is correct. We assembled a large-scale force.
We are participants of the world club. They themselves got frightened.
If we had held out for a while longer, then perhaps nothing would have come of it.
[Fidel] Castro, when he was speaking — open atomic fire.⁴¹
Now he is backing away from this and glossing over it.
A treaty with him is not needed, within a certain time we should consider some sort of declaration.

Malinovsky, Kosygin
The Cubans are unreliable allies.
We should be careful in dealing with our gains.
We should treat our obligations strictly and responsibly.
Help Cuba, strengthen its army.
We are our own side, let them answer for their own actions.
Kennedy, I think, will keep his word.

Our tactics in relation to the C[hinese] C[ommunist] P[arty] leadership — do not burn bridges.

Cde. Mikoyan brilliantly handled the CC's mission and upheld the line and coped with⁴²
He did it well.

Approve the activity and the work carried out under difficult circumstances in our country's interests and the interests of Cuba.⁴³

Regarding plans for the withdrawal of troops from Cuba (Malinovsky, Khrushchev), do not consider it for a while yet.

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 53-53ob.

Notes

1 Dr. Naftali, the former director of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, is a Senior Research Fellow at the New America Foundation.

2 Two transcripts, from the missile crisis meetings of Kennedy and his advisors (a group that became known as the Executive Committee [ExComm] of the National Security Council), on 16 and 27 October 1962, were released earlier, in the mid-late 1980s, but without audio files. For the original publication of excerpts from the 16 October meeting, accompanied by Marc Trachtenberg's important article, "The Influence of Nuclear Weapons in the Cuban Missile Crisis," please see *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 1 (Summer 1985), pp. 137-, 163, 164-203; and for the 27 October meeting (transcribed by McGeorge Bundy, edited by James G. Blight), see *International Security*, vol. 12, no. 3 (Winter 1987/1988), pp. 30-92. Ernest May and Philip Zelikow produced the first collection of transcripts for the entire set of ExComm conversations in 1997. Two years after their book, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.), appeared there was some controversy about the quality of these transcripts, e.g., Sheldon Stern, *Averting the 'Final Failure': John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003). With the help of a group of scholars (I was among them) at the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs in 2000, May and Zelikow reworked their transcripts. In 2001 W.W. Norton published these transcripts as part of a three-volume reference set, *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy*. A year later Norton issued a revised edition of the *Kennedy Tapes* that included the revised May/Zelikow transcripts. The Norton edition of *the Kennedy Tapes* also included transcripts of conversations related to the Cuban missile crisis that were not in the Harvard edition. The Miller Center scholars transcribed these pre-October 1962 and non-ExComm October conversations from scratch. Controversy over the authoritativeness of the May/Zelikow transcripts remain but the revised transcripts that appeared in 2001 and 2002 were a vast improvement over those that

appeared in 1997. The transcription process is extremely difficult and the fact that excellent transcripts only emerge as the result of a collaborative, evolutionary process is one of the key lessons of this story. As technology improves and more time is invested in listening to these recordings, scholars will continue to improve the Cuban Missile Crisis transcripts. In any case, there is no substitute for listening to the actual recordings.

3 Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, "*One Hell of a Gamble*": *Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

4 Aleksandr A. Fursenko, General Editor, *Arkhivii Kremlya: Prezidium Tsk KPSS, 1954-1964, Tom. 1, Chernovye protokolnye zapisi zasedanii; Stenogrammi* [Archives of the Kremlin: Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communists Party of the Soviet Union, 1954-1964, vol. 1, Notes of State Meetings; Stenographic Accounts], (Moscow: Rosspen, 2003). An updated edition, with some corrections, appeared in 2004. In the years since, among other books, Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), and Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Knopf, 2008) have drawn upon the Malin notes to analyze the missile crisis. The notes were originally held by the closed Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF) and were transferred to RGANI in 2001.

5 Harold Macmillan, introduction to Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Mentor (paperback), 1969), pp. 17-19.

6 *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1970), p.493-4.

7 In consulting the Malin notes for the book *Khrushchev's Cold War*, I do not recall any other instance of Khrushchev having to drag out a meeting over four days to get a proposal approved.

8 See Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of A Gamble*.

9 *Ibid.*, Chapter 17.

10 Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, pp. 412-416 ("final fight" quotation on 416).

11 Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, Chapter 18.

12 *Ibid.*

13 In *One Minute to Midnight*, Michael Dobbs suggests that not too much should be read into the structure of this note and that "it seems probable, therefore, that the [Anatoly F.] Dobrynin message arrived during the early part of the meeting, before Khrushchev dictated his letters to JFK and Castro, but became the subject of detailed discussion at the second session." [digital edition, footnotes to Chapter 14, location 8604 of 8728]. The timing of the Dobrynin message needs more study because getting this right would alter the debate over whether Kennedy needed to make the Jupiter offer to end the crisis peacefully.

14 Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, Chapter 19 (Paperback edition); see also, Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, Chapter 2.

15 The explanation may be, as it might be for the strange structure of the 28 October session, that Khrushchev considered the December 3 meeting too large to hear about JFK's secret promise. The December 3 meeting included people who were neither full nor candidate members of the Presidium.

16 Please see Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, Chapter 20.

17 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Khrushchev headed a large Soviet delegation that visited Bulgaria from 14 to 20 May 1962 to discuss a wide range of political, economic, and security issues. For a detailed account of the visit and its context, see RFE Research and Evaluation Department, Bulgarian Unit, "Khrushchev's Bulgarian Visit: A Summing Up," Background Report, 5 June 1962, in Open Society Archive (Budapest), Box 108, Folder 2, Report 66, pp. 1-11.

18 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky (1898-1967), a legendary Soviet World War II commander who had been elevated to the highest rank (Marshal of the Soviet Union) in 1944, served as Soviet minister of defense from 1957 until his death in 1967. Sergei Semenovich Biryuzov (1904-1964), another well-known Soviet commander in World War II who became a Marshal of the Soviet Union in 1955, served as head of the Soviet Strategic Missile Forces (which had jurisdiction over SS-4 and SS-5 missiles, among others) from April 1962 until March 1963, when he was appointed chief of the Soviet General Staff. Biryuzov died in a plane crash near Belgrade in October 1964, just five days after Nikita Khrushchev was removed from office in Moscow. The reference here in Malin's notes is to a secret visit that began roughly a week later (at the end of May) by a high-level Soviet delegation, which included Biryuzov. The delegation was ostensibly headed by Sharaf Rashidov (a candidate member of the CPSU Presidium), but Biryuzov was the one who handled the crucial negotiations with Castro about the missile deployment scheme. The delegation returned to the Soviet Union on 8 June 1962.

19 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This section is referring to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's commencement address at the University of Michigan on 9 June 1962. In that speech, McNamara declared that "basic military strategy in a possible general nuclear war should be approached in much the same way that more conventional military operations have been regarded in the past. That is to say, principal military objectives, in the event of a nuclear war stemming from a major attack on the Alliance, should be the destruction of the enemy's forces, not of his civilian population." By taking such an approach, McNamara argued, "we are giving a possible opponent the strongest imaginable incentive to refrain from striking our own cities." Much of the speech was intended to stress the need for NATO's nuclear deterrent to be based predominantly on US nuclear forces rather than on multiple small forces akin to the ones already developed by Britain and France, but the targeting priorities laid out in the speech proved controversial in Moscow.

20 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This is referring to the sea-bound transfers of weapons and logistical supplies to Cuba in support of the planned missile deployments. The schedules were frequently updated and revised.

21 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: A draft "Treaty between the Republic of Cuba and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Stationing of the Soviet Armed Forces on the Territory of the Republic of Cuba" was initialed in Moscow in early July 1962 by Cuban Defense Minister Raul Castro and Soviet Defense Minister Malinovsky. The document underwent further minor revisions over the next several weeks, and a revised version was presented to Fidel Castro on 13 August 1962. Castro proposed some small changes, which were incorporated into the final version. See Anatoly Gribkov, *Im Dienste der Sowjetunion: Erinnerungen eines Armeegenerals* (Berlin: edition Q, 1992), esp. chs. 2-4.

22 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Issa Aleksandrovich Pliev (1903-1979), a much-decorated Soviet commander in World War II, had been elevated to the rank of Army General in 1962 shortly before he was appointed commander of Soviet forces on Cuba.

23 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: President John F. Kennedy spoke at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on 4 July 1962, urging Americans to "be ready for a Declaration of Interdependence . . . to discuss with a united Europe the ways and means of forming a concrete Atlantic partnership . . . to throw off the yoke of poverty . . . balance our world-wide trade . . . and deter any aggression in order to achieve a world of law and free choice." See "Address at Independence Hall, July 4, 1962," in US Office of the Federal Register, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: President John F. Kennedy*, 1962, Vol. 2, pp. 591-593. US Secretary of State Dean Rusk joined the president in Philadelphia and voiced similar themes in his own remarks there.

24 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The McMahon Line covering the eastern sector of the Indo-Tibetan border was a demarcation line drawn by the British government for the Treaty of Simla in 1914. In later decades the Chinese government claimed that it had never formally accepted the line. During most of the 1950s, the McMahon Line served as the de facto border between India and eastern Tibet, but official Chinese maps purported to show that some 65,000 sq. km. of territory south of the McMahon Line (i.e. in India) were still part of China. Those regions remain in dispute to this day.

25 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Because of the 7-hour time difference between Moscow and Washington, DC (a difference that increased to 8 hours on 28 October when the United States moved its clocks back an hour to Daylight Standard Time), this session of the CPSU Presidium necessarily began before President John F. Kennedy delivered his 18-minute address announcing the discovery of Soviet missile installations on Cuba. That address, broadcast over television and radio, started at 7 p.m. US east coast time on 22 October 1962, which in Moscow would have been 2 a.m. on 23 October 1962. According to Aleksei Serov's notes of this Presidium session, the deliberations began at 10 p.m. Moscow time on 22 October 1962, some four hours before Kennedy delivered his address. By that time, Soviet intelligence officials and diplomats had learned that President Kennedy would be making a major announcement about Cuba later that day. The first part of the CPSU Presidium meeting occurred before Kennedy's speech. Nikita Khrushchev received the text of Kennedy's address from the US government roughly an hour before Kennedy went on the air. According to Serov's notes, the Presidium

session temporarily adjourned after the arrival of the text of Kennedy's speech, and it resumed at 10 a.m. on 23 October, Moscow time. The first part of Vladimir Malin's notes (through the statement by Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) covers the discussion that occurred before the arrival of the text of Kennedy's address. The remaining part of the notes is from the deliberations that began at 10 a.m. on 23 October, Moscow time.

26 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The surname of Igor Dem'yanovich Statsenko (1918-1987), the major-general who oversaw the Soviet R-12 (SS-4) and R-14 (SS-5) missile regiments on Cuba, is mistakenly rendered as Stetsenko in the notes.

27 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This is the last recorded comment prior to the arrival of the text of Kennedy's address. The remaining part of the meeting occurred at the resumed session on the morning of 23 October 1962.

28 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Valerian Aleksandrovich Zorin (1902-1986) was the Soviet ambassador to the United Nations from 1952 to 1953 and again from 1956 to 1965, when he also served as Soviet deputy foreign minister. He was involved in the celebrated confrontation with US ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson on 25 October 1962 regarding the Soviet missiles in Cuba.

29 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The four submarines in question were carrying nuclear torpedoes. The Aleksandrovsk, a large, Swedish-built cargo ship, was carrying 24 1-megaton nuclear warheads for the R-14 (SS-5) missiles that were supposed to be deployed on Cuba and 44 14-kiloton warheads for Soviet tactical cruise missiles. The Aleksandrovsk was originally supposed to dock in the Cuban port of Mariel, but the outbreak of the crisis caused the ship to be diverted to the much closer Cuban port of La Isabela. Four other Soviet surface ships, including the *Almat'evsk*, which was escorting the Aleksandrovsk, were also allowed to proceed to the nearby Cuban port. But all Soviet surface ships that were further away, including those carrying the R-14 missiles themselves, were ordered to turn back.

30 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Egypt was renamed the United Arab Republic (UAR) from 1958 to 1972, but the UAR as an entity essentially ceased to exist after the planned merger between Egypt and Syria broke down in 1961. From then until 1972, the UAR and Egypt were one and the same.

31 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The bracketed portion was crossed out in A. K. Serov's notes.

32 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Aleksei Kapitonovich Serov (1918-1993) was the head of the first sector of the CPSU General Department from 1961 to 1963. Sometimes when Vladimir Malin, the head of the CPSU General Department, was absent, either Serov or V. N. Chernukha (Malin's deputy) would take notes of the CPSU Presidium meetings. In this particular instance, both Malin and Serov took notes of the 25 October 1962 meeting, just as they had at the session on 22-23 October 1962.

33 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Andrei Andronovich Fomin (1918-1983), the Soviet ambassador in Brazil, was conveying the Brazilian authorities' ideas for a peaceful settlement of the crisis. For a detailed, insightful review of Brazil's role during and after the missile crisis, see James G. Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban

Missile Crisis (Part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20; and James G. Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis (Part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67. See also translated Brazilian documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

34 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: "Pavlov" was the pseudonym used here for Aleksandr Ivanovich Alekseev (1913-1998), the Soviet ambassador in Cuba at the time. (Alekseev had been elevated from embassy counselor to ambassador in the summer of 1962, replacing Sergei Kudryavtsev, whom Fidel Castro had grown to dislike. Upon taking over as ambassador in mid-August, Alekseev became a key figure both before and during the crisis.) Alekseev's cable of 26/27 October conveyed Fidel Castro's proposal that the Soviet Union announce that Soviet weaponry on Cuba (including the missiles) was under exclusive Soviet control. Castro thereby hoped to preclude a US attempt to portray the confrontation as one solely between the United States and Cuba. The pseudonym "Pavlov" in some other contexts was used for General Pliev, and confusion can at times result. The term "Trostnik" was the codename for Havana.

35 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Here, once again, "Pavlov" is the pseudonym used for Ambassador Alekseev. The same is true of the heading of section IX below.

36 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The Soviet ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Fedorovich Dobrynin (1919-2010), had met with US Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy (the brother of the president) on the evening of 27 October US east coast time. Kennedy indicated that after all Soviet missile installations in Cuba were dismantled, the United States would agree to eliminate US Jupiter nuclear missile bases in Turkey, provided that the Soviet leaders kept this offer strictly secret and unwritten. (A few days later, Robert Kennedy rejected a communication from Khrushchev that mentioned the arrangement.) The explicit tradeoff was glossed over in Robert Kennedy's posthumously published, fanciful account *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), and it was not acknowledged by any of President Kennedy's other advisers until many years later.

37 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The three words in brackets were crossed out in the notes. The question of whether international inspectors should be allowed in to Cuba to verify the dismantling of missile installations became a major point of contention between Moscow and Havana — Fidel Castro vehemently rejected the idea beginning with his "Five Points" statement on 28 October 1962 — and stoked bilateral friction for years afterward.

38 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Malin mistakenly includes the "R." here. The confusion may have arisen because on 12 November (four days earlier) Robert Kennedy, speaking on behalf of his brother, had orally conveyed to Dobrynin the president's willingness to allow up to 30 days for the removal of the Il-28 bombers from Cuba and to lift the naval quarantine against Cuba even before the UN gave confirmation of the dismantling of the Soviet missiles. The CPSU Presidium had already dealt with this offer on 14 November, but the issue kept coming up as the two sides sought a mutually acceptable arrangement.

39 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The listing of speakers mistakenly mentions Ponomarev and Groyenko twice each. The extra occurrences of their names have been omitted here.

40 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: See the next document's description of Mikoyan's visit to discuss this issue and others.

41 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This is clearly a reference to one of the most remarkable (and disconcerting) events during the Cuban Missile Crisis. At a critical moment on the night of 26-27 October, Fidel Castro (who believed that a US invasion of Cuba was imminent) sent an urgent cable to Khrushchev calling on the Soviet Union to launch a nuclear strike against the United States if US forces embarked on a full-scale invasion of Cuba. Such a step, Castro declared, would be "an act of the most legitimate self-defense," and "no matter how harsh and terrible [this option] would be, there would be no other." Khrushchev promptly sent a blunt reply turning down Castro's suggestion. Castro's cable was first publicly mentioned by Sergei Khrushchev (Nikita's son) at an international conference in Moscow in January 1989 and was then recounted in print in 1990 in a supplementary English-language volume of previously unpublished segments of Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, ed. by Jerrold L. Schecter and Vyacheslav V. Luchkov (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1990), pp. 176-178. The disclosure prompted a strong reply from the Cuban authorities, who published the text of the cable in the Communist daily *Granma* on 25 November 1990. For an overview and an English translation of

the document (as well as of other cables between Khrushchev and Castro in 1962), see Appendix 2 of James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993). In 1992, after the Soviet Union broke apart, the document (along with other declassified Soviet cables exchanged with the United States as well as with Cuba in the fall of 1962) was published in Russian in a special issue (*spetsial'nyi vypusk*) of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's monthly journal *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*. Translations of these documents have also been published in the CWIHP *Bulletin* and in numerous anthologies.

42 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The line breaks off here unfinished.

43 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The phrase "difficult circumstances" is an understatement. Throughout Mikoyan's visit, Fidel Castro made clear his extreme displeasure with the Soviet Union's handling of the crisis, including Moscow's consent to the US demand for the withdrawal of Soviet Il-28 bombers. For a riveting account of the tense negotiations, see Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Missiles of November*, ed. by Svetlana Savranskaya (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), which is a revised and more concise version of Sergo Mikoyan's huge *Anatomiya karibskogo krizisa* (Moscow: Academia, 2006). See also the translated documents presented by Svetlana Savranskaya elsewhere in this special issue of the CWIHP *Bulletin*.

A Trigger for Khrushchev's Deployment?

Alexei Adzhubei's Report on His Conversation with John F. Kennedy, 30 January 1962

Introduction by James Hershberg

From the moment US officials learned in mid-October 1962 that the Soviets were deploying nuclear-capable missiles to Cuba, a major topic of speculation and debate has been: What prompted Nikita Khrushchev to take such a risky decision? Most theorizing at the top of the Kennedy Administration, at the Excomm and elsewhere, centered on the idea that the Soviet premier had made the move to recoup Moscow's now evident inferiority in the nuclear balance;¹ as part of ongoing tensions over Berlin (perhaps to lay the groundwork for some sort of Cuba-for-Berlin trade, some speculated); or some broader Cold War challenge to the United States and its young president, who had endured a tough meeting with the wily, blustery Soviet communist a quarter-century his senior the previous year in Vienna. During and after the crisis, the only motive for placing missiles in Cuba that Khrushchev would admit to, publicly and privately, was to defend Cuba from the threat of US aggression, already demonstrated at the Bay of Pigs, by deterring a potential American attack—an aim that enabled the Kremlin boss to claim a measure of success after the crisis ended with JFK's non-invasion pledge, but which was widely scorned (at least in the United States) as a transparent propaganda ploy to salvage some face after a humiliating retreat. Over the past half-century of evolving historiography, all these explanations have remained plausible and won adherents, and some others have also emerged to one degree or another—most or all them compatible with other, and all generally wedded to reference to Khrushchev's rash or impulsive personality and leadership style.²

Over the past two decades or so, especially as Cuban perspectives have more actively entered the debate and more evidence has been declassified concerning US covert actions, assassination plotting, and military planning to topple Castro in 1962, the one motive that has clearly gained traction in debates over Khrushchev's nuclear decision is the defense-of-Cuba argument that the Soviet leader advanced at the time. While certainly not incompatible with other motives—from redressing nuclear inferiority to strengthening his hand to possible re-open the Berlin Crisis ultimatum he had issued in Vienna and then suspended, to showing up the Chinese—Khrushchev's nuclear gambit clearly also reflected a genuine sense of commitment to Fidel Castro's revolutionary, and now self-described as communist, leadership in Havana.

Clarifying the timing of Khrushchev's nuclear decision, it has long been known, ever since his smuggled-out memoirs (*Khrushchev Remembers* and *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*) were published in 1970 and 1974, that the Soviet leader acted to gain approval for sending nuclear missiles to Cuba—first from his Kremlin associates, then from Fidel Castro—in the spring of 1962 following a visit to Bulgaria, and that one factor in that move was his fear of impending US military action against Cuba. But what might have caused him to believe such a danger existed to the survival of Castro's regime in Havana? In their 1997 book, *“One Hell of a Gamble”*—the most important secondary account of the missile crisis to appear since Graham T. Allison's *Essence of Decision* (1971)—Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali identified a specific trigger for Khrushchev's belief that the United States, and John F. Kennedy in particular, would not long countenance the upstart Cuban revolutionaries running this traditional playground of the North Americans' so near to Florida. In particular, they cited a private conversation with the American leader at the end of January 1962 conducted by Khrushchev's son-in-law, Alexei Adzhubei, the editor-in-chief of *Izvestia* (the leading Soviet state newspaper, along with *Pravda*), in which President Kennedy had—according to the Soviet—forcefully, even angrily, likened Cuba to Hungary, which the Soviets had invaded in 1956 to crush an uprising.³ The clear implication was, a superpower must act to suppress such a blatant challenge in its own sphere of influence, and, JFK was quoted as saying, after banging his fist in anger at CIA director Allen W. Dulles' failure to vanquish the Cubans as efficiently as the Soviets had squelched the Hungarians (“in just three days”), that the United States “should learn from” its Soviet rival. Fursenko and Naftali, judiciously, observe that Adzhubei may have “exaggerated, misinterpreted, or misrepresented Kennedy's words,” though the American record (published in *Foreign Relations of the United States* a year after *“One Hell of a Gamble”* appeared) confirms that Kennedy in fact made the Cuba-Hungary analogy.⁴ In any event, they conclude, the Kremlin leadership “came to believe not only that Kennedy spoke those words but that he was seriously considering a second, even bigger [than the Bay of Pigs] invasion of Cuba, this time involving US troops...After Kennedy compared Cuba to Hungary in a private talk with Khrushchev's son-in-law, whatever hope there might have

been that this administration might tolerate a communist country off American shores evaporated”⁵

Though Adzhubei was nominally a journalist, his interview with Kennedy was not for publication, and according to Fursenko and Naftali, he first reported the “explosive bits” of JFK’s comments, including his comparison of Cuba to Hungary, only orally to his father-in-law. But, “to cover himself,” they write, Khrushchev had Adzhubei expand his report for wider circulation within the Kremlin and CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) leadership.⁶ That report, dated 12 March 1962, appears below.⁷ After the missile crisis, in a January 1963 letter to Fidel Castro, Khrushchev would cite JFK’s purported allusion to the Soviet invasion of Hungary in his conversation with Adzhubei as a factor prompting him to believe that it was necessary to take stronger measures to safeguard Cuba’s security, in the end, by sending nuclear missiles. The Americans, Khrushchev wrote Castro, had “often referred to the 1956 events in Hungary, viewing them as a model of a decisive measure from which to derive justification for their actions against Cuba’s revolution...They said to us, ‘You did it in your own interests because Hungary is close to you; but we also have the right to undertake the same decisive action against Cuba, which is close to us.’”⁸ From this entire report, which also contains a seemingly ominous reference by Kennedy to West German nuclear aspirations in the context of ongoing tensions over Berlin, readers can help gauge the Kremlin’s mindset as Khrushchev prepared to roll the nuclear dice in Cuba.



Adzhubei’s Account of His Visit to Washington to the CC CPSU

12 March 1962

TOP SECRET

During my visit to Washington, Brazil, and passing through Mexico, I had a few meetings with US President John Kennedy, his brother, Robert Kennedy, and a few other figures from the President’s circle. In Brazil I met with President [João] Goulart, Prime Minister [Tancredo] Neves, Minister of International [Foreign] Affairs [San Tiago] Dantos, and a few other officials. In Mexico I had a short conversation with President [Adolfo] Lopez Mateos. Telegrams were dispatched to Moscow from these countries in which the character of these conversations was reported. I would like to report to the Central Committee a few more details and circumstances

about the meetings and conversations which occurred in the USA which will help to complete the picture.

Firstly, what surprised American journalists and journalists of other Western nations accredited to Washington was the heightened interest of American society in the very fact, as [columnist Walter] Lippmann expressed it, of the contact between the USA and the USSR on various levels. When I was in the United States this concerned M. Kharlamov’s meeting with [White House press secretary] P[ierre]. Salinger. The newspapers made a lot of noise about the possibility of J. Kennedy making a trip to the USSR. Finally there was talk of the president’s inviting me to breakfast. There were a number of conjectures on this account and many direct questions at the time of the reception at the embassy, at which many notable American journalists were present: Lippmann, [*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* correspondent Marquis] Childs, [*New York Times* reporter James] Reston, [*New York Herald-Tribune* correspondent Marguerite] Higgins, directors of television and radio companies, etc. It was possible to understand from the conversations with these journalists, from the announcements of the services, that in the United States there is now a heightened nervousness and extraordinary interest in taking any step, which could occur in one way or another, that from the point of view of Americans promotes the possibility of reconciling American-Soviet differences. Much has happened to me in America, but I have never seen such agitated anticipation for the improvement of relations between our countries as exists now.

Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev said that the hour has come—the American nation is beginning to wake up and Americans are ceasing to be lazy seals that warm themselves on warm shores. It is clear that the time is approaching. In any case, as the most experienced American journalists say frankly, in many respects they can’t figure Americans out. Thus Childs has said about the persecution of the Communist party in the USA: “If it was not for this occurring, it is possible that in the past thousands of Americans, especially the youth, would not have demonstrated a large interest towards Marxism and your ideas. Even now when I [visit] universities, because I am familiar with Russia in a way, they don’t ask me about my travels in other countries but what I think about communism.” When I told Lippmann that there is a very positive atmosphere at the Soviet embassy, he laughed and rejoined:

“And how! You’ve signed the German peace treaty, established a border in Berlin, put a gate there, and since you signed the agreement a war hasn’t started, and now everything is settling normally.”

I gave the appearance that I did not understand Lippmann, and said to him:

“The agreement is still not signed. You are clearly getting ahead of events.”

“No, it is you who have gotten ahead of events,” Lippmann remarked, “you understand everything wonderfully, and most importantly, your premier understands this.”

At this very moment a few other American journalists approached us, including Childs and Reston. Hearing what was being said, one of them remarked:

“I am sure that you will not sign the German peace treaty for a long time yet.”

“Why?” I asked.

“Because it is very convenient to have a callus on the foot of your neighbor who you don’t particularly like. There is always the possibility in such cases of unintentionally disturbing this callus and doing your neighbor harm, but then [you can] excuse yourself and say that it was an accident.”

At the time of the conversation about Germany and the problem of West Berlin it was perceived that the American journalists lacked the level of interest they had only a few months ago.

Violating all norms of protocol, a few dozen American journalists and Kennedy advisers stayed at the Soviet embassy until almost midnight. If I were to summarize the conversation that occurred that night it would go something like this. Eisenhower became president of the USA at first because in the eyes of the American people he was considered to be a hero of the Second World War. But the second time, in this very capacity, Eisenhower came forward like a peacemaker in the Korean War. His announcement that if elected he would succeed in achieving a Korean peace practically won him the presidency. Kennedy did not have many of Eisenhower’s advantages with regard to popularity. Kennedy’s administration, and the journalists and newspapers which supported Kennedy, including a number of prominent newspapers like the *New York Times*, tried to do his political business for him. The newspapers were full of various articles telling the story of the ascent of John Kennedy. They talked about his service in the navy during the war, and there were big advertisements on the occasion of his various appearances and speeches; there was [also] the story about the Kennedy family as being the ideal American family. One of the journalists even said to me as a joke: “We know that the Soviet Union struggles with the cult of personality. It is clear that we have begun our own cult of Kennedy and it may be that at some point we will have to struggle with this cult.”

It goes without saying that Kennedy was often worried and was preoccupied with the idea that it would be difficult for him to win the votes [needed] for a second term. Kennedy had already announced his candidacy and his administration was ready to actively cultivate public opinion; of that there

could be no doubt. However, Kennedy himself, his brother, and those people closest to him until that time were extremely alarmed that Kennedy had not won the election with a very large advantage over the Republicans. Now they are making every effort to start a new election campaign and gain a firmer position from which to go to the polls against the Republicans more boldly. This circumstance is forcing Kennedy and his closest people to take various measures in connection with all of the following methods. I’ve already spoken about one of these, the Cult of Kennedy. A second is to present the affair in this manner – Kennedy has gathered around himself the most intelligent Americans and that he organized a dynamic administration. Not without obvious pleasure, journalists announced that Kennedy himself and those closest to him openly mocked Eisenhower who was now openly called the Golf President. In connection with this, Reston told me a joke, which as he expressed it, he tried not to tell to foreigners during the reign of Eisenhower: “When Ike planned to go to meet you, the Soviet Union, there were rumors in America that Mister Khrushchev prepared a field to play golf somewhere in Moscow.”⁹ In that connection we said: “When Ike plays golf in the USA that is only half the trouble. When he wins or loses in America it concerns only us Americans in the end. Premier Khrushchev will surely lose to Eisenhower at golf in the Soviet Union, and along with this victory, the old man will lose to Khrushchev in completely different terms.”

This was one extremely important thing for Kennedy and any other future American president. The President of the United States must be able to speak, so they say, with Soviet leaders. In the end, this advantage seemed to be the most important. With good reason, so they say, during agitation at meetings many voices really rallied around Kennedy, saying: “[Eisenhower’s vice president, Richard M.] Nixon cannot talk with Premier Khrushchev, and if he can it is only in the kitchen (in that way, the conversation between Nixon and N. S. Khrushchev in the kitchen of a typical American household during the American exhibition in Moscow [in July 1959] was ironically ridiculed.) Kennedy knows how to speak with Premier Khrushchev.”

The Kennedy administration has persistently influenced the American people in the manner described above. Kennedy himself and his circle, however, are worried that he will not be able to prove to Americans in time his ability to make agreements and reconcile the continuous questions about the Soviet Union. When Childs and I said goodbye to one another (Childs and I have been acquainted for a long time. We participated together in the New Year’s discussion in 1959 in Paris), he frankly said: “We came to the Soviet embassy today [and] spent so much time here because we supposed that Kennedy had obviously decided to show that he is seriously

beginning a serious dialogue with Khrushchev.” I answered that I could not vouch for Kennedy but that as concerns the Soviet government it is always prepared for serious conversations regarding the resolution of differences. Childs added: “As you know, I sympathize with the Democrats and am worried about Kennedy. He maintains approximately 125,000 reservists in the army. This is 125,000 votes against him, plus their wives, fiancés, mothers, and fathers, that is, around half a million votes. In November 1962, elections will be held for the House of Representatives and one-third of the seats in the Senate. Although in the United States the president can do without a majority in either the Senate or the House, it is better to nevertheless have this majority. In this fashion, the November 1962 elections,” continued Childs, “will be a kind of rehearsal before his re-election campaign, which Kennedy will begin sometime in 1963.”

The day after my trip to Washington the president had me over for breakfast [on 30 January 1962], at which his wife, her sister and [Georgi] Bolshakov and his wife were in attendance.¹⁰ This detail drew my attention. When I exchanged greetings with Kennedy he almost immediately directed the conversation towards Cuba and how I liked it there. Receiving a suitable answer, he paused a little and said:

“How is Che Guevara?”

I answered that he didn’t seem to look bad, although I didn’t see him often, and asked him in turn, why was the president suddenly interested in one of the participants of the Cuban revolution?

“I read some dispatches to the press,” answered Kennedy.

In turn I remarked: “You are interested in the events in Cuba, that is your right. But when we read that the USA plans to invade Cuba, we don’t think that this is your right.”

“We are not planning an invasion of Cuba,” Kennedy answered.

I reminded him: “And what of the mercenaries from Guantanamo and those other countries? You already changed your opinion regarding the landing in April 1961, that it was a mistake for America?”

Kennedy hit his fist on the table and said:

“Once I summoned [then CIA director] Allen Dulles and rebuked him. I said to him: ‘learn from the Russians. When they had a tough situation in Hungary [in 1956], they put an end to the conflict in just three days. When they didn’t like the events in Finland, the president of that country went to meet with the Soviet premier in Siberia, and everything was worked out. And you, Dulles, couldn’t do a thing.’”

I answered the President:

“With regard to Hungary, your analogy with Cuba is entirely untenable. With regard to Finland, well maybe this is the case, which should make the United States aware that they

need to learn to respect Cuba. After all, we respect Finland. Even though Capitalist elements exist within it, the president of a bourgeois government retains good relations with the Soviet Union.”

Kennedy became quiet, and then with earnestness said:

“From a psychological point of view, it is very hard for the American people to agree with what is going on in Cuba. After all it is only 90 miles from our coast. It is very hard,” he repeated, and then added, “Cuba fell from within.”

“It is necessary to become reconciled with a great many things,” I remarked to the President. “And there are a great many things to become accustomed to, and it is clear that there are a great number of new things that the American people must get used to. Only do not meddle in events in Cuba, this is most important. But your people understand this.”

Kennedy remarked sharply:

“We will not meddle with events in Cuba.”

“It’s a very big shame, Mister President,” I said to him, “that your words are not allowed to be published in the newspapers.”

Kennedy asked the question: “How would Castro react to the fact that you were invited to Washington from Havana?”

I said that Castro was very happy about this, he has an appreciation for peaceful coexistence which would include an improvement in US relations.

“We can talk more about this after breakfast, if you permit it.”

Then, as I have already written, Kennedy sent Salinger and [US interpreter Alexander A.] Akalovsky away, and asked Bolshakov to be the interpreter. The conversation continued for almost two hours. The content of the conversation has already been announced from Washington.

In the course of the conversation, Kennedy said that he was going to a press conference the following day, one which was usually held at the State Department. At the press conference there were more than 400 journalists present. There was a heightened sense of interest towards it. Although this conference occurred immediately after the completion of the conference in Punta-del-Este, Kennedy was, however, literally tongue-tied and uttered only a few words about the inter-American conference.¹¹

He was not asked one question in connection with this conference. In the corridors American journalists asked: “What is there to ask the president, when the United States has failed? Brazil, Mexico and other nations gave us a slap in the face.”

There was one question asked which frustrated Kennedy. One of the journalists asked: “In connection with the conclusion of the conference at Punta-del-Este, did the United States return to normal trade relations with Cuba, or will it

still not be possible to buy cigars there?" In a malcontented tone, [Kennedy responded] "I am not involved in the proceedings of that event. It seems that there is some talk about the sale of some medical supplies. Maybe we will receive cigars in return." And that prompted an explosion of laughter in the hall.

A few questions about Soviet-American relations were asked, which included one question about whether Kennedy is planning to visit the Soviet Union and whether or not he has some kind of invitation to do so. Kennedy was troubled by this question, and was feeling particularly clumsy because of the presence of Soviet journalists. His answer was evasive, meaning approximately that he would like to [visit the Soviet Union], but he was not invited.

At that time the theme of Kennedy traveling to the Soviet Union and meeting with N. S. Khrushchev appeared continuously in American newspapers. Americans with whom I have had the opportunity to speak ask this question if they are in some way interested in political questions.

I would also like to point out one more fact in connection with Kennedy's press conference. He was asked many empty, overtly demagogic questions on third-rate problems. This created the impression that this "waste of time" is a very "American tradition" created by the imperial propaganda machine for the befuddlement of the people.

After the press conference, Kennedy asked about one more meeting, which as he expressed it would be of a strictly confidential character. This has already been reported to Moscow.

Mind you, the president has a fear of being simple and open before Soviet journalists. Through Bolshakov, Salinger agreed that at 6:00 that evening he would send a car for me from the White House, in which I would ride around the city so that journalists would not discover the president's new meeting with a Soviet editor. And sure enough, the car carried us down some long streets, and at last we arrived at the White House at the president's private entrance. The gate opened quickly, we were asked for no documents, and the car went immediately through the entrance.

Kennedy was waiting and walking around the corridor. He immediately came into the room and in a nervous tone began the conversation. Gesticulating, he said: "Your armies are in Europe. I know the strength and potential of your military machine. Khrushchev can, of course—and Kennedy made a gesture with his hands—"can take West Berlin. But then this would possibly provoke a rupture of relations between the Western nations and your nation and lead to tension."

"I want to emphasize to you again with all seriousness that it is my plan to find some [mutually] beneficial solution to this problem, which does not encroach on the positions that you cannot give up, as well as those positions, from which we

cannot retreat. I ask you to report, and if possible, to do it [only] orally, that the US, England, and France are opposed to German reunification. Such a dynamic and powerful state would be a cause of concern for us. We realize that unification is unrealistic; however, [publicly] I must speak about unification. And because of this there could be no talk about recognizing the GDR [German Democratic Republic; East Germany], and neither the border on the Elbe, [i.e. the border between the two Germanys]. With respect to other border questions, it is completely possible that steps intended to regulate our disputes will lead to an announcement of the recognition of borders on the Oder and Neisse."

Kennedy very insistently, as in the first conversation, harped on the idea that in the next several years it will be necessary to work out some mutually-agreeable relations that will lead to some softening of the general world situation and permit, as he expressed it, a more composed perspective from which to observe the state of affairs in the world. In connection with this he said that in Laos he will "tie Boun Oum's arms" if for our part we guarantee him the Pathet Lao's equanimity.¹²

Kennedy is clearly worried about the situation in Southeast Asia and particularly, of course, in South Vietnam. He did not answer any questions about South Vietnam and the position of the United States in South Korea and did not want to continue the conversation on this theme, uttering the general phrase that neither the USSR nor the USA had any major interests in that region and we have to keep this in mind before all other things. He once again repeated the idea previously addressed that the United States of America and the Soviet Union send many weapons there, but these weapons and these complications can be used by a third power more interested in a conflict between the USA and the USSR.¹³

Then Kennedy long-windedly talked about how he emphasized with utmost urgency the Berlin problem. Continuing the previous conversation, he said that he would like a more constructive and, as he stated it more precisely, a more personal dialogue between [Soviet Foreign] Minister [Andrei] Gromyko and [US Ambassador in Moscow Llewellyn E.] Thompson insofar as they now only exchange general declarations. "We would like," Kennedy said, "for them to sit at a table, have in their hands the map of Germany and begin to look for possibilities for a settlement, which would be equally agreeable to the Soviet Union and the United States of America. I want your government to understand: it is impossible for us to leave West Berlin or to permit a Soviet military presence there." In connection with my question, Why can't the question of a guarantee come from the United Nations or the neutral nations[?], he said that this is also not possible, that it would lead to the total collapse of the Western Bloc. "You

understand,” he began to say in a concerned way, “the more complex our relations become in Berlin and Germany, the more insistent [West German Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer becomes. For the time being I am restraining him and have sufficient arguments for not giving him atomic weapons. However, these high-level complications that are arising between us are prompting retaliatory forces in West Berlin.” Kennedy was obviously calculating that this phrase on some level would, if not frighten us *per se*, intimidate us.

Kennedy answered: “It is not that we are afraid of West Germany and the president understands this perfectly.” Maybe this is a delicate question – I asked Kennedy whether the United States was afraid of West Germany, or still more whether England and France were afraid of West Germany.

“It is possible to be afraid of the Germans,” Kennedy answered. Then he said: “I understand that you and your allies can’t use the words ‘occupation force.’ But with regard to a small contingent of soldiers, it would be possible to find a different name. Now about the access,” Kennedy continued. “I see things realistically. Insofar as you object to international control of the highway [between West Berlin and West Germany], it is senseless for us to insist on it. After all the officers of the GDR are already (I thanked the president for pronouncing the full name, the German Democratic Republic, before me for the first time) putting their stamps [in documents]. The important thing is not who is affixing the stamps. Could you and I fantasize a bit (this is exactly what he said) about some compromise steps regarding Western powers’ access to West Berlin? We are ready to meet the Soviet Union halfway and we will not have political ties with the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany; West Germany]. Maybe you too could meet us halfway in terms of some softening on the Western positions in the issue of access.

Then the president developed this idea: the situation could arise that the Soviet fleet was carried by storm into the waters of [Francisco] Franco’s Spain. “In such a case you would not be able to make contact with Franco, but would you not ask that a third power somehow intercede on your behalf?”

“We already tried to do this, when the question arose about the Soviet tanker *Tuapse*, which was seized in a bandit fashion by your friend Chiang Kai Shek [Jiang Jieshi] and nothing came of out it.”

“Let’s not talk about the past,” the president said. “We also have friends we don’t like. So, if an American caravan of freight cars gets into a conflict on a highway, we cannot – and don’t not try forcing us to do —do it – beginning a dialogue with [GDR leader Walter] Ulbricht. It would clearly mean being pulled into recognizing the GDR. To whom would we turn in such a case to deescalate, to untie this crisis?”

I answered that if it was defined by this simple analogy, it was obvious [that the US would turn] to some sort of third power.

Kennedy said: “Now maybe it will be worthwhile to fantasize around this.” Once again he emphasized: “We understand we cannot win international control, and of course it is foolish to cling to that which will not be put in writing.”

Then Kennedy spoke about how they worked out with [British Prime Minister Harold] Macmillan a new pretext for disarmament, which he considers would meet with a constructive response from the Soviet government side.

(One can imagine how stunned Kennedy was when he heard about our plan to convene the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee at the highest level. This undoubtedly struck out Kennedy and Macmillan’s hopes to [have the] initiative.) Then Kennedy said that he personally welcomes the contact which existed between Bolshakov and Robert Kennedy, insofar as it gives him the possibility to manage without the services of a translator from the State Department. These observations show that surely in the presence of Akolovsky and even Salinger – a person closer to him the president speaks with a completely different tongue and is visibly more tense.

He asked: “Was your conversation with Robert Kennedy after breakfast interesting?”

I answered that his brother was quiet and said almost nothing about international problems. Then I matter-of-factly asked the president:

“I recently saw in *Life* magazine a big portrait of your brother, Robert Kennedy, below which was a passage: ‘The number 2 man. The hard-line, unrelenting, younger brother.’ Is this accurate that Robert Kennedy has become the #2 man in the USA?”

Kennedy was surprised:

“Even you turned your attention to this? I spoke with my brother on this subject and said to him that if he is planning to become No. 1 this would not be so easy for him, and that he would sooner become No. 3, No. 4, No. 5, No. 6.”

“By the way – remarked Kennedy – there was quite a scandal with regard to [my] brother’s [proposed] trip to the Soviet Union. We are now trying to find a person in the State Department, who [could] make it public that Robert might visit the Soviet Union as a private citizen. I very much wanted him to meet with Chairman Khrushchev. But when the American press created a scandal, we were forced to deny it. Clearly, here we need to arrange all these things more simply,” remarked Kennedy. “Look here, you invited Salinger to Moscow and the Republicans are already attacking Salinger and me.”

Saying goodbye after the conversation, he asked me to give his greetings to N. S. Khrushchev in the hopes, as he said smiling “of the possibility of a calmer meeting than in Vienna, where I was more concerned about how to behave in front of a whole pack of journalists.”

Then Kennedy asked me how I spent my day in Washington. I answered that Washington is always boring because there is nowhere to go here: there are no theaters, no good concert hall. “But tomorrow you will have a violin concert—I noted—it will be quite interesting to attend.”

“Yes,” Kennedy confirmed, “Washington is certainly a capital without theaters. As you know, we plan to build a large cultural center in Washington, but this would require nearly 30 million dollars. Right now my wife and I are occupied with writing letters to various parties to give donations for the construction. But it is going very slowly. People don’t want to part with the money.”¹⁴

“But why wouldn’t you, Mr. President,” I asked Kennedy, “give the money from your own private means? After all your family is very rich, and if you made such a grand gesture you would probably obtain a good many kind words for your own household.”

Kennedy smiled and said completely frankly:

“Yes, but here we are talking about my own money.”

The next morning when I was intending to leave for New York to board my flight for Mexico, [former US ambassador to Moscow and now State Department official W. Averell] Harriman unexpectedly called me and said that he was prepared to go to the Soviet Embassy to see me for a few minutes or, if it was more convenient, asked me to see him. I answered that it would be better if I dropped in on Mr. Harriman. The conversation with Harriman took 15 or 20 minutes and was of a general character. Harriman was concerned with Laos, and reiterated Kennedy’s idea a few times that it would be good to agree about Laos. Then he asked me to send Khrushchev a big hello and said that he remembered the meeting with Nikita Sergeevich and was happy to welcome him at his home.

“All our family remembers this visit and remembers that the Chairman carried the conversation lightly and nonchalantly,” Harriman said. “I am an old man but I dream about a new meeting with Khrushchev and am sure we will certainly speak about US-Soviet relations.”

Harriman asked permission for several journalists and photographers to come into his office and repeat his greeting for N. S. Khrushchev and to say again in the presence of the press that he would like to meet with N. S. Khrushchev to discuss many important problems. This was all obviously done with the consideration that Harriman’s name would once again appear in print, especially in connection with

[the fact] that he is acquainted with and has spoken to N. S. Khrushchev.

Adzhubei

[Source: *Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF)*, Moscow, Special declassification, April 2002; translated by Adam Mayle (National Security Archive).]

Notes

1 In October 1961, US deputy defense secretary Roswell Gilpatric had publicly asserted a substantial American advantage in strategic striking power, thereby casting aside notions of a “missile gap” favoring the Soviets.

2 For enumerations of Khrushchev’s motives in sending the missiles, see, e.g., Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, “*One Hell of a Gamble*”—*Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: Norton and Co., 1997), chap. 9; William Taubman, *Khrushchev, The Man and His Era* (New York: Norton and Co., 2003), chap. 19; James G. Hershberg, “The Cuban Missile Crisis,” in O.A. Westad and M.P. Leffler, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 65-87.

3 For their account of the 30 January 1962 Adzhubei-Kennedy conversation, see Fursenko and Naftali, “*One Hell of a Gamble*,” pp. 151-54.

4 After noting that Adzhubei had wondered whether the United States “realized that by its unfriendly attitude toward [Fidel] Castro it was pushing Cuba farther and farther away,” the minutes record:

President Kennedy emphasized that the strong reaction in the United States toward events in Cuba was due to the fact that over the past hundred and some odd years, the United States had had no hostile power close to its borders. Therefore, when a group which preached hostility toward the United States seized power in Cuba the reaction in the United States was bound to be very strong. The US was psychologically unprepared for such a change. The President pointed out that the USSR would have the same reaction if a hostile group arose in the vicinity of its borders. In this connection, the President referred to the Soviet reaction to the Hungarian uprising.

See record of Kennedy-Adzhubei conversation, 30 January 1962, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Vol. V: Soviet Union* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1998), doc. 150. It should be noted that JFK’s taping system did not go into operation until exactly six months later, so no recording is known to exist.

5 Fursenko and Naftali, “*One Hell of a Gamble*,” pp. 153, 183.

6 Fursenko and Naftali, “*One Hell of a Gamble*,” p. 156.

7 Fursenko and Naftali cited and quoted a few passages from the document in “*One Hell of a Gamble*” in 1997; it was previously translated and circulated by the National Security Archive for the October 2002 conference in Havana to mark the 40th anniversary

of the missile crisis; and it can be found on the National Security Archive website. Until now, however, it has not appeared in print.

8 Khrushchev to Castro, 31 January 1963, quoted in Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, p. 326. This translation of this letter, released at the January 1992 Havana conference on the missile crisis, appears in Peter Kornbluh and Laurence Chang, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (New York: New Press, 1992; revised paperback edition, 1999).

9 Ed. Note: An Eisenhower visit to the Soviet Union was planned for the summer of 1960—reciprocating Khrushchev's visit to the United States in September 1959—but the trip was cancelled after the collapse of the May 1960 East-West summit in Paris as a result of the Soviet downing of a US U-2 reconnaissance plane and Eisenhower's refusal to apologize for sending it.

10 Ed. note: Bolshakov, a Soviet military intelligence (GRU) officer at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, had established a cordial liaison to JFK through the president's brother, Robert F. Kennedy. The link ruptured later in 1962, at the time of the missile crisis, when US officials concluded that Khrushchev had used him to mislead the Kennedy Administration the secret deployment of

nuclear missiles to Cuba, thereby destroying his credibility and ending his usefulness. His place was, in effect, taken by the Soviet ambassador, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, who met with RFK during the crisis and became a new back-channel conduit between Kennedy and Khrushchev.

11 Ed. note: This refers to the meeting of Organization of American States (OAS) foreign ministers in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 22-31 January 1962, at which US Secretary of State Dean Rusk pushed for measures to further isolate and sanction Cuba, achieving some limited success.

12 Ed. note: The reference here is to the opposite sides in the Laotian civil war that the United States and the Soviet Union were, respectively, supporting; in a rare sign of agreement, Washington and Moscow were able to reach agreement in Geneva in July 1962 on a pact to neutralize Laos, which failed to end the simmering conflict there but for the most part removed it from the superpower agenda.

13 Ed. note: Amid signs of a Sino-Soviet schism, Kennedy is here making an evident allusion to the People's Republic of China.

14 Ed. note: A reference to what would become known as the Kennedy Center after its namesake's assassination.

The Polyansky Report on Khrushchev's Mistakes in Foreign Policy, October 1964—Excerpt on The Cuban Missile Crisis.

Translation by Svetlana Savranskaya

Ed. note: *When Nikita Khrushchev was ousted as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in mid-October 1964, many outside observers connected his downfall at the hands of his Kremlin associates to what was widely viewed as his humiliating defeat in the Cuban Missile Crisis exactly two years earlier, when under pressure from US President John F. Kennedy he withdrew the nuclear missiles he had secretly deployed to the island.¹ Khrushchev had alienated many members of the Soviet party Presidium (Politburo) with a variety of policies, actions, and behaviors, so his failed Cuban gambit was hardly solely responsible for his ouster. However, as Timothy Naftali and Aleksandr Fursenko comment, it indeed left him “vulnerable” to attack.² The indictment prepared to condemn Khrushchev at the climactic 14 October 1962 CPSU Central Committee plenum, by Politburo member Dmitri Polyanski, indeed included a scathing denunciation of Khrushchev’s “adventurism” in sending the missiles to Cuba, causing the “deepest of crises [that] brought the world to the brink of a nuclear war.” Ridiculing Khrushchev’s claims of having achieved a successful “penetration” of Latin America, Polyanski dismissed his contention that the crisis had in fact ended with a Soviet victory. The full text of Polyanski’s report is now available; here is the section on the missile crisis—or what Soviets knew as the “Caribbean Crisis”—translated by Svetlana Savranskaya of the National Security Archive.*

Now on to the Caribbean Crisis. Cde. Khrushchev stated that Stalin was not able to penetrate Latin America, but he succeeded. However, first of all the policy of “penetration” is not our policy. And secondly, only an adventurer could insist that in the current situation our state could provide real military assistance to the countries of that continent. It is many thousands of kilometers from us, and oceans separate us. How would we transport our troops there, and how would we ship supplies? Missiles will not work in such a case — they would only burn a country we want to help — that’s all. You can ask any one of our marshals or generals, and they will tell you that the plans for military “penetration” of South America are just delusions leading to a greater danger of war. And if we, in order to help one of the Latin American countries, had delivered a first nuclear strike against the US, not only would we have made ourselves a target of a [retaliatory] strike, but everybody else would have shunned us.

The adventurism (recklessness) of the policy toward Cuba is particularly obvious in light of all this. In one of his speeches, Khrushchev stated that if the US touched Cuba, then we would deliver a strike against them. He insisted that our missiles be sent to Cuba. That [action] led to the deepest of crises, and brought the world to the brink of a nuclear war; it also scared the organizer of that idea himself greatly. Having no other way out, we were forced to accept all the demands and conditions dictated by the US, including humiliating inspections of our ships by the Americans. The missiles, as well as most of our troops, were withdrawn from Cuba after the US demand.

This event also damaged the international prestige of our country, our party, and our armed forces, while at the same time helping to strengthen US prestige.

Soviet-Cuban relations deteriorated seriously. Castro and the Cuban people understood the withdrawal of the missiles as abandoning Cuba to its fate. Serious cracks emerged in the Cubans’ attitude toward us and our country, and we still feel them.

However, you know that Cde. Khrushchev portrays his defeat in the Caribbean Crisis as his victory. Moreover, he intends to proceed in the same manner, i.e. in a reckless manner. Recently he said the following to the members of the CC Presidium: “We should sign a mutual assistance treaty with Cuba. They will scream that it is a reckless action. To hell with them, let them scream.”

[Source: Volkogonov Collection, US Library of Congress, the Manuscript Division, Reel 18. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya, (National Security Archive).]

Notes

1 For a dramatic account of the culmination of the Kremlin conspiracy, see *William Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2003), chapter one (“The Fall: October 1964”), pp. 3-17.

2 Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *“One Hell of a Gamble”—Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1997), pp. 353-55 (quotation on 355). See also Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 193-94.



Fidel Castro, Nuclear War, and the Missile Crisis— Three Missing Soviet Cables

Obtained by the National Security Archive and introduced by James Hershberg

Some past issues of the *CWIHP Bulletin*, particularly in the mid-late 1990s, have featured extensive compilations of translated telegrams from Soviet diplomats during the Cuban Missile Crisis, in particular from Moscow's ambassador to Cuba, Aleksandr Alekseev.¹ Since then some additional contemporaneous documentary materials have become available in Moscow, including a special release of material from the Russian Presidential Archive (APRF). A translation and commentary of one of these important sources, the notes of Kremlin discussions taken by Nikita Khrushchev's secretary, V.M. Malin, appears elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.² Presented below are three documents obtained from the Russian archives and translated by the National Security Archive in connection with its role in co-organizing a conference in Havana in October 2002 to mark the 40th anniversary of the crisis. However, the documents were not widely circulated then, and are printed below for the first time. There are only three, all ciphered telegrams from the Soviet ambassador in Havana, but they are significant additions to the existing record.

The first document contains a fairly extensive report on Alekseev's 23 October 1962 conversation with Fidel Castro, together with two other members of the Cuban leadership, the day after the public crisis began when US President John F. Kennedy announced in a televised address the discovery of Soviet nuclear missile sites in Cuba and the impending imposition of a blockade ("quarantine") to block any further shipments of arms. Presented with the official Soviet statements on the crisis, Castro reviews the situation and confidently vowed defiance to the US "aggression" which he said was doomed to failure. At that moment the Soviet-Cuban front seemed firm, and—significantly, given the emerging Sino-Soviet schism—at the end of the conversation Castro even rapped Beijing; he criticized their actions along the disputed border with India, where the Chinese reported to have launched fresh attacks, and said China's actions "complicate" Cuba's position both domestically and internationally.³

The second document, dispatched from the Soviet embassy in Havana early on the morning of Saturday, 27 October, alerts Moscow to the fact that Fidel Castro was at the embassy and composing an important "personal" message for Nikita Khrushchev. Foreshadowing the contents of that controversial letter (more on which below), Alekseev said the alarmed

Cuban leader anticipated an "almost inevitable" US invasion in the next "24-72 hours."

The third document, a lengthy and sensitive message from the Soviet ambassador on 2 November, is probably the most significant, for it bears on the circumstances surrounding Fidel Castro's controversial 27 October letter (dated 26 October, but clearly sent after midnight in the early morning hours) to Khrushchev. Its existence was first disclosed in 1990 in the publication of Khrushchev's third volume of memoirs—the extensive series of reminiscences drawn from his tape-recorded recollections after his ouster in 1964, that were smuggled to the West. *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes* contained materials that were deemed (by his associates and family) too sensitive to be published in the first two volumes, *Khrushchev Remembers* (1970) and *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (1974), with the Cold War still actively raging. Against the backdrop of Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and an evident warming of US-Soviet ties, these portions were now revealed—including a section on the Cuban Missile Crisis, omitted from the early volumes, that included some harsh criticism of Fidel Castro, especially the allegation that the Cuban leader had urged Moscow to make a preemptive nuclear strike on the United States in a communication received as the crisis was nearing a climax. In a September 1990 speech following the publication of *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, Castro strongly denied that he had urged Khrushchev to make a preemptive nuclear strike, and two months later the Cuban communist newspaper *Granma* published the full texts of the Castro-Khrushchev correspondence from late October 1962.⁴ In the actual letter, it emerged, Castro had indeed counseled Khrushchev to never allow circumstances to develop in which "the imperialists" (i.e., the Americans) carried out the first nuclear strike—any means, "however harsh and terrible," were justified to preclude this from happening and to "eliminate this danger forever."⁵ By the time of his 2 November cable, which of course followed Khrushchev's 28 October decision to withdraw the offending nuclear missiles from Cuba under US pressure and Castro's angry reaction to that step (i.e., his "Five Points" declaration rejecting UN inspections accepted by Khrushchev and demanding the Americans abandon Guantanamo, among other things), there had been a spurt of disagreement-filled correspondence between the Soviet and Cuban leaders over the resolution to the crisis. Castro's clear displeasure had already prompted Khrushchev to send his

most trusted associate on the Presidium (Politburo), Anastas Mikoyan, to Cuba to explain Moscow's thinking and try to smooth the ruffled feathers and chart a path forward in Soviet-Cuban relations.⁶ But Mikoyan had not reached Cuba yet (he stopped in New York City en route), and in his cable Alekseev provides considerable and candid background on Fidel Castro's actions and attitudes at the peak of the crisis, and especially his nocturnal visit to the Soviet embassy and preparation of his letter to Khrushchev on the night of 26-27 October. The Soviet diplomat, aside from advising Moscow on how to handle the angry Cuban leader, offers some analysis of the emotions and moods of Fidel Castro and his closest associates at that moment of acute tension—not only in the Cold War as a whole, but in Soviet-Cuban relations and in the history of the nuclear arms race. Historians can only hope that authorities in Havana will also more fully contribute their side of the story, so we can better understand the mutual perspectives during the Soviet-Cuban crisis of late October 1962 and beyond.⁷



DOCUMENT No. 1

Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to Cuba
Alekseev, 23 October 1962

TOP SECRET
Making Copies Prohibited
Copy No.12
Ciphred Telegram
Spec. No. 1643-1644
Top Priority

Your No. 811, 812-813 were presented to F. Castro in the presence of [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos and [Emilio] Aragones. At the same time I transferred to them what was received through TASS, a full text of the announcement of the Soviet government and a report about the measures adopted by the USSR Minister of Defense [Rodion Malinovsky] regarding the combat readiness of the Soviet Army and the announcement of [Warsaw Pact Commander-in-Chief] Marshal [Andrei] Grechko to be the representative of the nations of the Warsaw Pact. Castro thanked the Soviet government for its assistance and expressed his complete assurance that the new plans of US aggression were doomed to fail. He announced that the United States at the present time did not have sufficient strength for a sudden attack on Cuba. In order to avoid possible attempts at direct intervention, the

Cuban government has prepared every military division for combat readiness and is hastily attempting to mobilize the members of the national militia. According to Castro, among the populace there is universal enthusiasm and no sign of any sort of elements of panic. In the mills and factories, meetings are being held with regard to the implementation of mobilization. In Castro's opinion, the USA's new threats serve to rally further the Cuban people and rouse their determination in the conflict against American imperialism. Castro says that he fully approves of the Soviet government's tactics, the tone of the documents sent to him, and the aim to unmask the US leadership as an international gendarme before public opinion and to show the unlawfulness of their domineering actions.

Castro supposes that the USA is succeeding in persuading several Latin American governments to break diplomatic ties with Cuba, but this measure against the Cuban Republic does not reflect on the development of the Cuban revolution and only arouses the intensification of the anti-imperialism movement in the countries of Latin America.

Castro considers that the actions of American imperialism against Cuba gives the Cuban government the moral right to establish on practical grounds the demand for the liquidation of the legal right for the American base at Guantanamo and to use this circumstance in its anti-imperial propaganda.

In this connection, the presence of Soviet military specialists is not a secret for the imperialists or for the Cuba people and Castro expressed the idea about possibly creating their own separate divisions to be included in our military formations.

According to him, this measure will arouse huge enthusiasm among the Cuban population putting the USA in an even more difficult position.

Expressing these considerations, Castro also cited the need to consolidate discipline among our military specialists, insofar as there are many marked occurrences of public agitation [one word unclear], panic, automobile accidents, etc, arousing unpleasant reactions in the backward stratum of the Cuban public.

In connection with these signals raised by our Cuban friends with reference to this concern, our command has planned today to hold a general conference with the commanders who will be responsible for coming forward to R. Castro regarding the questions of maintaining discipline. However, the result of the situation has forced the conference to be postponed.

The command accepts the need to answer this question with every possible measure and considers this one of the main problems at present.

Fidel Castro asked me to assure the Soviet government of the firmness and the composure of the Cuban leadership

and to express his complete trust in those measures that the Soviet government is taking and will take with regard to the defense of Cuba.

At the end of the conversation, Castro touched upon the Chinese-Indian conflict and said that the actions of our Chinese comrades complicate the positions of the Cubans both internally and in its international plans. He said we cannot approve of the PRC's politics in this matter and are otherwise forced to consider these to be insults on the part of the Chinese, and that they are gradually hinting to us to hush up our press about this event.

23. X. 62 Alekseev

REFERENCE: NO. 811 / No. 29127 / from 23. X. 62. Cde. Kuznetsov sent F. Castro's dispatch to N. S. Khrushchev about the USA government announcement and Kennedy's 22 October appearance with regard to the coarse interference in Cuban affairs.

No. 812-813/ No. 29128/ from 23. X. 62 Cde. Kuznetsov sent to F. Castro for presentation a copy of USA President Kennedy's letter to the Chairman of the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR N.S. Khrushchev concerning Cuba.

[Source: Obtained and translated by National Security Archive for the October 2002 conference in Havana.]



DOCUMENT No. 2

Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Aleksandr Alekseev, 27 October 1962

TOP SECRET
Makings Copies Prohibited
Copy No. 12

CIPHERED TELEGRAM
SPEC. No. 1666

Top Priority

F. Castro is with us at the embassy and is preparing a personal letter for N.S. Khrushchev that will immediately be sent to him.

In F. Castro's opinion, the intervention is almost

inevitable and will occur in approximately 24-72 hours.

27/X-62 Alekseev

[Source: Obtained and translated by National Security Archive for the October 2002 conference in Havana.]



DOCUMENT No. 3

Ciphered Telegram from Alekseev to CC CPSU, 2 November 1962

Telegram

50390 50396 50397
50474 50424

Special # 1717-1722
Top priority

Special

To our [telegram] # 1710

When Fidel Castro was writing his letter, he was clearly irritated and experienced the influence of the revolutionary in form, but backward in substance, the mood of a certain part of his circle [of officials] and the electrified masses of people, to whom up to the last moment the Cuban leadership has not explained the essence of the decisions made by us, and thus objectively encouraged the emerging confusion and even anti-Soviet feelings.

The silence in the press about the responses in the world to the decision of the Soviet government, stimulation of militant anti-American feelings and in particular the wide mobilization of the public opinion in support of the five points of Fidel Castro's [28 October 1962] statement gave the people the grounds to think about the existence of serious differences between the governments of Cuba and the USSR.

As should have been expected, the Chinese have not missed a chance to exploit the temporarily unfavorable for us situation.

The government and the press of the People's Republic of China made pseudo-revolutionary statements, which started appearing in the Cuban newspapers, which flattered the excited Cubans.

Officials of the Chinese Embassy “went to the masses” and began calling them for resistance to the aggressor with their own forces.

In the attempt to influence the sentimental feelings of the Cubans, many of those [Chinese] came to the blood donation centers so that they could give blood and thus “cement the Chinese-Cuban friendship with blood.” However, these cheap methods of propaganda did not have much success, although they strengthened the confusion of the Cubans even more.

One has to state the fact that this confusion affected not only common people, but also a number of the Cuban leaders. According to our information, members of the national leadership Guillermo Garcia [Frias], A. Santamaria [Haydée Santamaría Cuadrado], and partially [Raúl] Curbelo [Morales] and R. Valdez [Ramiro Valdés Menéndez] voiced criticism of our decisions at the last session of the ORI [Integrated Revolutionary Organizations] leadership.

[Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos also expressed his dissatisfaction with our methods of resolving this issue.

J.[oaquín] Ordoqui and C. R. Rodriguez spoke in defense of the decision. [Ernesto “Che”] Guevara and [Emilio] Aragonés did not speak, and R. Castro was not present at the session.

Fidel Castro apparently has not drawn any conclusions, and just let everybody, who wanted to speak out do so, while he himself did not take any definite position.

Apparently, they achieved an agreement to consider the decisions made by us the business of the Soviet government.

They also agreed not to interfere in our subsequent decisions about the remaining troops and military equipment and not to present any requests regarding leaving them behind [in Cuba].

It was recommended that Fidel Castro should not subject our decision to analysis in his speech, and speak only in defense of the five points of his statement, negotiations with [Acting United Nations Secretary-General] U. Thant and that he should put an end to the anti-Soviet feelings, which emerged among the people, by placing an emphasis on the indestructible and permanent nature of friendship with the USSR.

If Fidel Castro himself was convinced that the Cuban revolution had gained a lot and became stronger as a result of the Soviet Union making such a courageous decision, then one could be sure that the entire population would have supported him and that would have removed all the confusion and stopped accusations against us. However, up until recently Castro was a prisoner of his delusion, and only after his meetings with U Thant and after having received the last letter from comrade Khrushchev, he seems to be assuming the correct realistic positions.

Castro’s misunderstandings were caused by the following circumstances:

He is convinced that after the first concession to the imperialism others might follow (this is how he interpreted the decision of the Soviet government).

Castro has no doubt that the imperialists will press new accusations against him and will be searching for an opportunity for provocations.

In some of his remarks in his inner circle, he expressed the idea that the Cuban question had shifted from the international sphere to the local sphere, and that they should be prepared for a local war, in other words, with their own forces. He believes that in the period of the highest peak of the revolutionary transformations one should not be cooling down the Cuban people and imposing on them the illusions of reconciliation with imperialism. However, I see the main problem of Castro’s confusions not so much in his still insufficient ideological preparedness and the absence of party experience, but in his special very complex and excessively sensitive and easy to offend character. The smallest incorrect expression, which has a double meaning or efforts of putting pressure on him, is perceived very painfully. This is what happened with the response to the letter from comrade Khrushchev that was sent to you. He “picked” on every detail and composed his response in a very emotional state. Here is the history of Fidel Castro’s letter from 27 October:

On 27 October, at 2 a.m. Dorticos called me at my apartment and informed me that Castro is coming over for an important meeting. Castro stayed at my place until 7 a.m. trying to explain the critical nature of the moment, dictating and re-dictating dozens of times the letter that was later sent to you. Castro took turns dictating and making some notes before he finally decided on the full text. In the beginning, I could not understand for a long time what did Castro want to say with his quite intricate phrases, and in order to find out his opinion I directly asked him: “Do you want to say that we should deliver a first nuclear strike against the enemy.” “No, said Castro, I do not want to say it directly, but under certain conditions, without waiting to experience the treachery of the imperialists and their first strike, we should be ahead of them and erase them from the face of the earth in the case of their aggression against Cuba.” F. Castro was convinced that the attack was inevitable, saying that there were only 5 percent out of 100 that it would not happen. While reading the letter from comrade N. S. Khrushchev, he made two comments about which I already wrote to you (see #1701).

Castro was especially disappointed by the following phrase in the letter: “In the telegram from 27 October, you suggested

that we should be the first to deliver a nuclear strike against the enemy's territory."

Castro thought that you decided in Moscow that he is calling for a strike not after the invasion of Cuba but now, during the crisis. He suspected that we incorrectly translated his idea, and asked [me] to give him a translation of the telegram that we sent and his drafts, which we of course did, and he could see that we passed his thoughts on correctly.

From the letter that had been sent to you, Castro's confusion is obvious. The second item that offended him, and probably the main one, is that he does not believe that the telegram, which he had sent to us could be considered evidence that we had consulted him before making the decision.

He also expressed to me some friendly objections regarding sending "worrisome telegrams about the situation" (in reality I did not write such telegrams, but I did not tell Castro about it) and regarding my information that among some Cuban comrades the opinion exists that the Cuban people would have wanted a different [Soviet] statement, in any case not about the removal of the missiles." "You know better than me then not just certain comrades, but the entire people wanted that," he said.

By the way, the Russian text of the letter contains an unfortunate mistake, which we had to correct in the interest of our cause.

The text said: "Dear comrade Castro, when you sent us telegrams one more worrisome than the other, and finally the last telegram from 27 October . . ."

We translated and passed the following text to Castro: "When we received telegrams one more worrisome than the other and finally your telegram from 27 October . . ."

In reality, Castro had not written anything to Moscow with the exception of the telegram from 27 October. Had we not corrected that mistake, one should have no doubts about the directness of Castro's reply that would have followed.

In the most recent days, I think, Castro has understood that Cuba was really able to avoid the war and destruction and that the prospects of peace and independence emerged now, and he began to reconsider his mistaken positions and regained his spirit.

Due to his character, he has not rejected the old opinion yet, but the crisis I think is over now, and in the future he would repeatedly express his gratitude to us for the wisdom of the decision that we took.

Knowing Castro's sensitive nature, I believe that we should not hurry or push him, and especially we should not start any polemics with him yet.

The last letter from comrade Khrushchev and the future conversations of comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan with Castro will work its course.

When he understands his mistakes, he will move even closer to us and will strengthen his party spirit even more, especially if we do not remind him of [his mistakes].

Taking all this into account, I would consider it possible not to respond to his letter, which was caused by a momentary irritation, or to send him a response, in which to express approximately the following ideas:

We were glad that you expressed your thoughts frankly as it is appropriate for a Marxist-Leninist.

Only on these conditions true friendship is possible. We will not argue who of us is correct, history will judge that.

We fully share your assessment of imperialism and this is why we are doing everything in order to complicate its aggressive actions, not only directly, but also through the diplomatic channels.

You could always rely on us in your just struggle. It is possible that we do not cry against imperialism as loudly as some, but with our actions we deliver much more sensitive blows against it. (This should be said in such a way that Castro would not perceive the last thought as directed against him, but understand that it was directed against the Chinese.)

It would be desirable to emphasize the courage of the Cuban people and the personal courage of Castro and his concern about the future of his people and the cause of socialism.

It would be better not to enter into an argument with him on other small issues, and maybe we should even admit that the complex nature of the circumstances did not allow us to conduct consultations, because we always do it under normal conditions.

I am convinced that a response along such lines would be received by Castro with great satisfaction and that he will repeatedly regret having written that letter.

I start from the assumption that we would need one or two years of especially careful work with Castro until he acquires all the qualities of the Marxist Leninist party spirit. However, currently he is the main force in Cuba and the living program for the people, and therefore we should fight for him, educate him, and sometimes forgive him some of his mistakes.

The potential danger, I believe, is hidden not in Castro's ideological confusions but in the qualities of his character. If I am mistaken, I am asking you to correct me.

2 November 1962 Alekseev

50389

Reference: # 1710 (entry # 50273) from 1 November 1962

Comrade Alekseev transmitted translation of F. Castro's

letter to Khrushchev in response to his letter of October 30 of this year.

#1701 (entry # 49971) from 31 October 1962. Comrade Alekseev reported about his meeting with Fidel Castro and delivery him a letter from N. S. Khrushchev.

[Source: Obtained and translated by the National Security Archive for the October 2002 conference in Havana.]

Notes

1 See, e.g., “Russian Foreign Ministry Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 58, 63-77; and “New Evidence on the Cuban Missile Crisis: More Documents from the Russian Archives,” *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 8/9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 270-338.

2 An earlier version of most of these translated Malin notes was put on-line by the Kremlin Decision-Making Project (run by Timothy Naftali) of the Presidential Recordings Project of the University of Virginia’s Miller Center for Public Affairs.

3 For more on China and the Cuban Missile Crisis, see the compilation of translated Chinese documents, introduced by Sergey Radchenko and James G. Hershberg, elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

4 Translations of these materials can be found in James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), pp. 474-91.

5 Fidel Castro to Nikita Khrushchev, 26 [sic; actually 27] October 1962, in Blight et al., *Cuba on the Brink*, p. 481.

6 On Mikoyan’s November 1962 mission to Cuba and negotiations with Fidel Castro and associates, see Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Missiles of November*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC: Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

7 Although the Cuban government has released selected materials on the Cuban Missile Crisis, including a substantial tranche for the October 2002 conference in Havana (see the website of the National Security Archive for further details), much of the record of Soviet-Cuban exchanges before, during, and after the October 1962 events remain off-limits in Havana—inevitably warping the resulting history, since the most extensive contemporaneous sources are Russian and American. On post-crisis tensions between Moscow and Havana, see, in addition to *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis* (cited above), Philip Brenner and James G. Blight, *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba’s Struggles with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis:

Documents on Anastas Mikoyan's November 1962 Trip to Cuba

Translated and introduced by Svetlana Savranskaya

The following three documents come from a forthcoming book by late Sergo Mikoyan edited by Svetlana Savranskaya: *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Missiles of November* (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 2012). Sergo Mikoyan was the son and personal assistant of the Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Anastas Mikoyan, who was number 2 in the Kremlin under Nikita Khrushchev. Anastas Mikoyan was the Kremlin's emissary to all the "hot spots" in the socialist bloc, including China, (North) Vietnam, Poland, Hungary, and others. He was also the man who essentially discovered Cuba for the Soviet Union on his trip there in February 1960. He signed the first series of trade agreements with the Cuban revolutionary government and established friendly relations based on a mutual person

In November 1962, after Khrushchev and Kennedy exchanged letters ending the visible part of the Cuban Missile Crisis (i.e., the US-Soviet showdown over the Soviet deployment to Cuba), the Soviet Union still had the less visible but not less dangerous part to deal with: How to extricate the weapons from the hands of a reluctant and bitter ally who had been barely consulted about the installation of the weapons and who had not been consulted about their removal. The task of persuading the Cubans to relinquish the weapons, in such a way as to keep them as allies fell to Anastas Mikoyan, whom Khrushchev dispatched to Cuba in November to mollify and explain Soviet policy to Fidel Castro and his associates. Mikoyan had to go back to the island and use all his diplomatic skills, patience, and the human capital that he built on his earlier trip to bring the Cubans back from the brink.

When the Soviets agreed to remove the "offensive" weapons from Cuba, they told the Cubans that the rest of the weaponry, equipment and personnel would stay in Cuba and would be gradually transferred to the Cuban army. That was the message that Mikoyan brought to Cuba on 2 November. Difficult negotiations followed, but a week later the Cubans were reconciled to the new situation. However, on 11 November, Mikoyan got new instructions from Khrushchev in a personal telegram—telling him to inform the Cubans that in the interests of the entire socialist camp, the nuclear-capable IL-28 bombers would also be withdrawn from Cuba. The telegram, written in Khrushchev's rambling style, gives the rationale behind the decision: It was much better to end the crisis by giving up planes that were already obsolete—to

show that the Soviet Union and Cuba had fulfilled all the promises Khrushchev had given Kennedy—and consequently to expect, and demand, full compliance with the non-invasion pledge on the part of the United States, than to retain the planes and give the Americans a justification to violate their pledge. The telegram also spells out, in Khrushchev's words, of the reasons why the weapons were deployed to Cuba in the first place.

The second document is a memorandum of a key conversation between Mikoyan and Fidel Castro two days later, on 13 November, after the Cuban leader refused to see the Soviet envoy for three days in a reaction to the new demand. In this conversation, Castro starts by declaring his disagreement with the decision to remove the IL-28s but then assures Mikoyan that the revolutionary leadership discussed the issue and agreed to the removal. Mikoyan presents all his arguments to show that the withdrawal of the planes would end the crisis and make the US non-invasion pledge more credible. He acknowledges the "negative psychological effect" of the decision and reiterates that all the rest of the weapons would stay in Cuba so its security would be guaranteed without the obsolete planes. They also agree on the rules of verification of the withdrawal. Mikoyan saves the day once again, resolving another crisis within the crisis.

The third document is a unique record of a 16 November conversation between Mikoyan and Che Guevara on Soviet-Cuban economic and trade relations. The conversation takes place soon after the IL-28 crisis, which gives Mikoyan a chance to patch up the relationship with band-aids of trade agreements and promises of future aid and industrial cooperation. Guevara points out sharply that the estimates of the cost for building a Soviet refinery are "approximately twice as much" as the US-built plants in Cuba. Mikoyan admits problems with inflating the costs and promises to reduce them. Mikoyan suggests that the Cuban government should not worry about the debt to the Soviet Union and to continue to trade "on the basis of trust." When Guevara lights up, Mikoyan notes that it is bad for his health and tells Guevara how he himself quit smoking, and then proceeds to offer to buy tobacco from Cuba (but only cheap tobacco). He offers help on purchases of barley to increase production of Cuban beer and proposes to send Soviet engineers to set up production of parts for the American cars that were left on the island. Near the end of the conversation, Guevara and Mikoyan discuss the theory of revolutionary struggle. Guevara shares

his vision that “further development of the revolutions in Latin America must follow the line of simultaneous explosions in all countries.” Mikoyan cautions him, pointing to the Soviet experience and using the metaphor of the rebellion on the battleship “Potemkin.” Hinting at further disagreement ahead, he gently registers his disagreement with the Cuban leader’s drive to ignite revolution in the hemisphere.

The three translations presented here are part of a far larger complex of translated Russian documents from November 1962, many from Sergo Mikoyan’s personal collection, that offer a virtually complete Soviet record of Mikoyan’s contacts in Cuba and dialogue with Khrushchev in Moscow (as well as of his meetings in New York and Washington en route to and from Havana), that readers may find in the appendices to *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*.



Document No. 1:

Telegram from Nikita Khrushchev to Anastas Mikoyan, 11 November 1962

11 November 1962 (Sunday)

The following telegram from N. S. Khrushchev for Comrade A. I. Mikoyan was received in the morning (Special No. 1013):

In connection with the last letter from President Kennedy which was sent to you, and the issues which he raised, we are informing you about our considerations and the steps we are planning to take with the goal of achieving a favorable result and fulfilling the obligations undertaken by the United States, as set forth in the president’s letters and in our October 28 letter to the US president. We are passing them along to you for your consideration and reflection. We would like to know your opinion, since by now you are almost like a Cuban.

We discussed these issues before the full quorum of our collective leadership and our military, and all those present arrived at the unanimous conclusion that it would be reasonable to act as follows—to agree to the removal of all Il-28s from Cuba; we have forty-one of them altogether.

What do we lose and what do we gain as a result of the removal of the Il-28s from Cuba? There are no particular losses. There will be only moral losses for Cuba. From the military perspective, there are almost no losses because these planes, as is well known, are obsolete and do not play any role in the armed forces; we have already discontinued their production a long time ago, and are breaking up the Il-28

units. The remaining planes, which we still have, exist as a result of US actions and our response to these actions. If there had been no such action by the president when he demanded authorization to mobilize 150,000 reservists, we would not have had these planes and units supporting them; those planes would already have been removed from service.

We can imagine how difficult it would be to impress such an understanding on our friends. But therein lies the art of politicians—when encountering difficulties to show the ability to overcome such difficulties.

We take into account the fact that our agreement on the removal of the Il-28s from Cuban territory will inspire internal counterrevolution in Cuba, and will inspire aggressive forces in the United States to turn this to their advantage and exaggerate this as their own success.

After all, we could [choose to] not agree with the US demand and remove the Il-28s. We are confident that this would not cause a military conflict or an immediate invasion of Cuba, although this can never be guaranteed, of course, when one has to deal with lunatics. However, we think that in the present conditions it would be difficult for the United States to take such a step.

The insistent demand of the United States to remove the Il-28s can be explained first of all not because they are worried about their presence in Cuba, or because they want to remove them from Cuba, saying that they are offensive weapons. This is an argument they made up because the United States themselves, the American military, understands that this is a weapon that is completely not suited for use abroad because, due to its slow speed Il-28s need antiaircraft cover. But the main problem is not the speed but the ceiling, because their ceiling is only 12,000 meters, and such planes, as you know from your sons’ reports, have already been rejected by us even as flying targets, because they do not satisfy the requirements. We cannot use them for training troops for antiaircraft cover.

The Americans, of course, are aware of all this.

Why are they focusing attention on these planes now? Here, so to speak, two factors play a role. First is that the president mentioned the planes—the bombers—in his proclamation. And before that, as you will see from the letter, in his speech on 22 October, he spoke about the “jet bombers capable of carrying nuclear arms,” and so on. This is one point. This is an issue, so to speak, of prestige—an issue of presidential prestige, and of the prestige of the country. However, the main issue, we think, is that currently criticism of the president’s position is growing in the United States because the president, in his correspondence with us, bound himself by the following obligation: If the other side fulfills certain conditions, then the United States will undertake an obligation not to invade Cuba and to restrain its allies—that

is, countries in the Western Hemisphere—from doing so. This is the main concern that worries Kennedy now because the fire of his [domestic] opponents' criticism is targeted exactly on this point.

Therefore the president now wants to do a maneuver: either to obtain full satisfaction of those conditions he put forward—to remove missiles and Il-28 bombers from Cuba—or alternatively, to abrogate the agreement, i.e., not to fulfill the obligations he undertook in his letters from 27-28 October, justifying this before world public opinion by saying that we do not fulfill our obligations. This is his main point.

Now we are faced with the following task: We have to assess the situation as revolutionaries and as leaders, to weigh what is most important and what factor should be given preference in the interests of Cuba—to leave the bombers, and consequently to undermine the fulfillment of the obligations that were given on condition of the removal of the missiles, but to keep the Il-28s in Cuba, or to remove the Il-28s as we removed the missiles, but to have an agreement on noninvasion of Cuba both on the part of the United States and on the part of other Latin American countries surrounding Cuba.

All this should be weighed. When we were thinking about and discussing these issues, all those present arrived at the indisputable conclusion that these [two alternatives] are not equivalent. The Il-28s are no longer any good for offensive action, as we have already explained, and the Americans understand that. As far as defense is concerned, Il-28 planes are not absolute weapons that would make the territory where they are deployed impenetrable to the enemy. We understand this very well, and we are able to estimate the situation, and we think that this would be a persuasive argument for our friends as well. If our enemy, for example, had the weapons Cuba has, including Il-28s, then for the Soviet state, assuming we have the weapons we do, it would not be an obstacle to aggressive actions by us because it would not be possible to resist the might that we possess. With these weapons one can exhibit heroism, but to achieve the main goal—to repel aggression—these means are insufficient. They are sufficient for repelling aggression like that in 1961, and even aggression by more powerful forces, but not all those forces in the possession of the United States.

Through diplomatic channels we are aware that the US representatives, while agreeing that Il-28 planes are indeed obsolete weapons, and that they do not represent a great danger for the United States, justify their demand for the removal of Il-28s from Cuba by saying that this weapon represents a great threat for Latin American countries. They therefore state that there should be a guarantee that there would be no threat to countries in the Caribbean. That should also be taken into consideration, because the removal of Il-28s from Cuba gives

serious grounds to demand that there should be a guarantee from the other side as well, that is, a guarantee through the United Nations that no Caribbean country would undertake actions of aggression, attack, or sabotage against Cuba. These would be mutual obligations for all Caribbean countries.

Therefore, we believe that if our friends would understand us correctly then from the point of view of cold reason we should agree to withdraw Il-28s from Cuba with all service personnel, and, as the United States demands, with all the equipment. As a result, we would create such conditions for the United States that it would be forced to fulfill its obligations as set forth in the president's messages of 27 and 28 October. And we believe that this is more important than a show of resolve in retaining the Il-28s in Cuba.

It is true, some people can say that the appetite grows at mealtime and that the United States would pose new demands and insist on their fulfillment. But we will resist that in our negotiations.

With respect to the question of our instructors' staying in Cuba after the removal of the missiles and Il-28s, there would be no weapons that the Cubans could not master on their own. Therefore, the question regarding the Soviet instructors in Cuba is not a problem, not for today.

We shipped some weapons to Cuba that were required to protect the people operating the missiles; now that the missiles have been removed the need for this protection is no longer there.

But the weapons that were shipped to Cuba are already there, and nobody is thinking of removing them. Later, when the situation is normalized, most likely it would be expedient to transfer those weapons to the Cubans. They are quite capable of mastering them (tanks, armored personnel carriers, and other types of weapons) themselves. A portion of the antiaircraft systems is already in Cuban hands. In the future, a situation could emerge where, we think, there would be no need to have our troops operating these anti-aircraft systems. (But this is for you [personally]; this is, so to speak, for the future.)

Now, about the Il-28s. From the point of view of ensuring Cuban security and using them for defensive purposes, the fighters they already have are a better means than the Il-28s. But those are fighter planes; we are not talking about them now. The Americans, to the contrary, are saying (Robert Kennedy in his conversation with Dobrynin on November 5), that they are not raising the issue about the recall of the fighters from Cuba, and by the way, the fighters are more modern weapons.

We are mentioning the fighters to you so that when you talk to our friends, tell them that the fighters that are already in Cuba would carry out the same defensive functions, for

which the Il-28s were intended—and more successfully. Moreover, they are more versatile because they can take part in aerial combat, of which the Il-28s are not capable.

Not now but later, depending on how events develop, if there is a need we may have to give reinforcements to the Cubans, but not in the form of bombers, but in the form of fighters, about which they should be informed.

We believe that on the question of verifying fulfillment of the agreement on removing the Il-28s, we would be able to agree with Americans that this verification would be based on the same conditions mutually agreed upon in relation to the missiles—inspections on ships in neutral waters. This order would not require inspections on Cuban territory.

This is how we understand the issue of verification. Of course, when we start concrete negotiations about this, obviously the United States will exert some pressure on us, but this should be anticipated, and we think that the precedent that we already have will be applied for this weapons system as well.

Regarding the presence of our military instructors in Cuba: This question, as we understand it, was set forth in the US president's letter not as a condition for the resolution of this conflict but as a suggestion for the future in order to finally normalize the situation. It seems as if it is an acceptable suggestion for the future, and it would not create difficulties either for Cuba or for us on the condition that the agreement is reached on the same basis as was laid out in the letters, and if that agreement is followed.

The psychological side of the issue is the most difficult one. And each person's psychology reveals itself in a special way; you cannot prove [*dokazat'*] it completely; the issues are resolved in discussions about the possible and the impossible. When our Cuban friends say that they cannot trust the United States, this is true—one cannot disagree with this; we know it from our own experience. But on the other hand, so far we have no alternatives other than to rely on these words and the assurances we have received. In fact, this is basis of coexistence between two state systems with different sociopolitical structures. While exhibiting vigilance and caution, we should build normal relations between states because there are no other alternatives.

If we start from the assumption: I do not believe, I do not tolerate—that would mean to deny the possibility of peaceful coexistence. That would mean, so to speak, permanent war, until one side emerges as the absolute victor.

However, we have our own understanding on this issue. It is set forth in the decisions of the congresses of our party in the Program of the CPSU, and it found its own expression in the Declaration of Communists and Workers Parties of 1957, and in the Statement of Eighty-One Parties of 1960.

We live in a time when two worlds exist—the socialist world and the world of capitalist countries, as well as intermediate transitional states, which at decisive moments unfortunately do not vote with us at the UN on the main issues.

We must take all of this into consideration. I think that our friends understand that if we now chose exacerbation of the situation in the Caribbean, and did not make compromises and mutual concessions, that would be a movement towards a dead end. We do not want that. Apparently, our enemies—the imperialist camp—are being forced to accept the fact that if they do not exhibit understanding and restraint on their part, the matter could end in catastrophe.

Therefore, we believe that for our camp, precisely for our camp and not only for Cuba—but for Cuba primarily—the elimination of the tensions that have been created in the Caribbean by means of an agreement based on conditions set forth in the exchange of letters between the United States and the Soviet Union would be a positive result. Moreover, there would be other pluses for us, and for Cuba, because this is an unequal and uneven agreement: on the one hand, the obligations undertaken publicly and solemnly by the United States that they and other countries of the Western Hemisphere will not invade Cuba, and on the other hand, withdrawal of the Il-28s from Cuba.

A person who is free from a certain moral psychological factor, and who with his mind's eye could get a wider view of the situation that has emerged in connection with Cuba, would understand the clear benefit of such an agreement for us and for Cuba.

Let's return to the Cuban statements to the effect that the United States cannot be trusted. In general this is correct, and this is what we call vigilance. But we think it is hard to believe that the United States now, having entered into an agreement with us, would decide to invade Cuba after the removal of the Il-28s. To think like this means to not understand the importance of the Il-28s, to overestimate their capabilities as a weapons system, and at the same time to underestimate the capabilities of the enemy and the weapons they possess.

According to the considerations of our Cuban friends, the situation looks like this: The Americans cannot be trusted, and if we remove the Il-28 planes after removing the missiles, that would create better conditions for aggression against Cuba. This picture does not correspond with reality, because if the United States had indeed intended to invade then the Il-28s would not be a deterrent factor. To think otherwise would be not to comprehend the real state of affairs.

Of course, the removal of the Il-28s is a concession on our part. We wanted to separate that weapon from the missiles, but to some extent it fits under the category of offensive weapons because it is a bomber and it has quite a long range.

In its time, about twelve years ago, it was the best bomber in the world and we publicized it widely. But now it has already become obsolete, and we retired it from service.

We are telling you all this so that you yourself, so to speak, will comprehend it, and if something is unclear to you, you can ask us for additional explanation in order to help you prepare to conduct discussions, and to try to persuade our Cuban friends that this step we are suggesting is a step toward the stabilization of the situation in Cuba.

For us sitting here in Moscow, and for you there, it is clear that if we drag out the debate now we will postpone an agreement, prolong an abnormal situation in the Caribbean, and maintain tensions.

Now difficulties have been created for the movement of ships to Cuba. And in general, of course, with the blockade of Cuba, there is no possibility to send ships to Cuba under protection in order to break through the blockade, because the distance and geographical situation of Cuba—and our Cuban comrades should understand that themselves—are very unfavorable for us. Therefore, Cuba would suffer from the continuation of the blockade because it needs uninterrupted communications with the external world, and most of all with the Soviet Union. This is also a factor that the enemy is taking into account, and it wants to exploit this factor—that is, to prolong the blockade, or, as the United States calls it, the quarantine (but it is a blockade). The United States can maintain this situation for a long time, and maybe even indefinitely. But for Cuba—I don't know how Cubans see this—we think that it would be very hard to live through this.

They can say we will handle it, we will die. . . . We know this ourselves; we have handled things for forty-five years already, and we were under a blockade—barefoot, hungry, living on 250 grams of porridge—and battled on. Therefore, such arguments for us are something we have already experienced in the past. We marched on and we died, and many more of us died. But after all we were not fighting in order to die, although our song went: "We all will die as one for the power of the Soviets." Those who went into battle sang that song, but the people sent their representatives to battle in order to survive and to win. And we have achieved that.

And Cuba will survive and win, too. But in this struggle, we must now rely not only on weapons or act too forcefully. No, we must show flexibility, taking the current situation—and first of all Cuba's peculiarities and geographical location—into account. The question is not and cannot be defined the same way in relation to Korea or Vietnam—we are not even talking about the European socialist countries—these countries have already been written off for capitalism. However, in the Western Hemisphere the imperialists, of course, will do everything possible to achieve their goal. But

we should not make it easier for them to exploit the benefits of their situation. And to exacerbate the situation to the extreme, to armed conflict, would do exactly that. This is one approach. And there are some forces in America that would desire such a development of events.

But obviously the most important method that the president of the United States and his circle have chosen for themselves is to strangle Cuba economically by isolating it commercially. They want, as the US press put it before the crisis, to make Cuba too expensive an experiment for the Soviet Union so that it will exhaust the resources the Soviet Union has available for aid, and therefore undermine the economy of Cuba and to make Cuba not only an unattractive but even a repulsive model for the Latin American peoples. They want living standards in Cuba to drop even lower than they were before the revolution, when Batista was in Cuba.

These stakes are not new for us. Some time ago, similar calculations were made in relation to Soviet Russia when they tried to strangle our revolution with the bony hand of hunger. The imperialist interventionists, when they were thrown out of Soviet territory and lost the opportunity to crush the revolution with armed force, also believed that their main approach would be to create conditions of economic disaster and undermine the socialist revolution in Russia by economic means. They are currently pursuing the same goals in relation to Cuba.

If the Cuban comrades, our friends, correctly understand us and trust our conclusions, if they agree with the steps that we are planning, then Cuba will live. We will not abandon Cuba—we are Cuba's brothers; we have said this publicly, and we repeat it now. We will do everything in our power so that Cuba will rise again—and it has the ability to do so. Along with sending military assistance, we also sent our technicians, agricultural specialists, veterinarians, irrigation specialists, and scientists so that they could focus their efforts on strengthening Cuba's economy. This is the main factor. And Cuba can demonstrate before the entire world its economic capacity, which emerged as a result of the expulsion of the US monopolies and the seizure of power by the people under the leadership of their chief, Fidel Castro, and his comrades in arms.

Strictly speaking, this is how the question stands now in our understanding.

If we look back to the history of our state, during Lenin's period, Lenin was willing to undertake serious maneuvers, compromises, and mutual concessions. And this was correct and justified by history. One cannot submit to a loud revolutionary phrase. That is perhaps as useful as lightning in darkness: It flashes, illuminates the road, and disappears immediately. It is good on the barricades. But when the barricade battle ends, that means that the period of acute struggle

is over and that it is passing into a phase of protracted struggle and a period of prolonged coexistence. And this prolonged coexistence necessarily carries with it mutual struggle because the social systems confronting each other are antagonistic and it is impossible to reconcile them. On this long historical path—and there is no measure for how many years this path would take—we must be guided not only by feelings but also by facts, by our theoretical Marxist-Leninist principles, and by the successes in the development of the economies of socialist states—and on this basis we should show our skill in this struggle. If cannons do not fire, then diplomacy carries out the functions of the cannons. One must not exclude the other: not just cannons, and not just Il-28s. No, that is incorrect. At this point, a rational step that puts the enemy in an unfavorable position before the entire world would often be more useful than 100 cannons.

The law is on Cuba's side. Cuba wants to be an independent sovereign state, and all the states of the world understand this. Even the unbridled imperialists cannot openly trample upon this right and cannot deny such aspirations of the Cuban people. It is precisely this that will create even greater problems for the imperialists when the independence and sovereignty of Cuba are protected by an agreement affirmed through the United Nations.

If one talks about whether to trust or not to trust the United States, then history teaches that there was the League of Nations, then it collapsed, and then there was a world war. Could the UN now collapse? We give no guarantees. Yes, it could. Could world war break out? It could, and we are close to this. But we, as people, as politicians, as Communists, who enjoy the trust of their own people—and not just our own but of the peoples of other countries as well—should utilize everything in order to preserve peace and ensure the independence of their own states and the right of every people to develop in a direction chosen by the people of each country.

This should be understood. Therefore, the words “to believe or not to believe” have meaning only at a rally, and a very transient one at that. And in politics, we should rely on factors of a more constant character, acting over a longer term. This is the meaning of the agreement at this stage.

We learned from your letter that Fidel Castro, in his impulsiveness, said that if the Cuban position (on the issue of inspections) jeopardizes peace throughout the world, then the Soviet side may consider itself free of its obligations. What can we say to that? Only one thing: We are very disappointed by this understanding on the part of our friend, Fidel Castro, toward whom we feel limitless trust and respect, as to a real hero selflessly devoted to the Revolution. And when he said that, we think that he himself understood that we of course have such a right—to free ourselves from obligations, just as

the other side has the right to tell us about it. This is logical and understandable to us. But to say it at this moment and in this connection, understanding us incorrectly, means to injure us, to force us to suffer deeply.

Ask Fidel and his friends: What motivated us to come to an agreement with them and to send our people to Cuba; what motivated us to send our weapons there, what motivated us to send our technical specialists, to send our fishermen, what motivated us to send them oil and other goods and to buy their sugar? How could the Cuban comrades think that we pursued any commercial aims, that we got any sort of economic benefit from that? Apart from material expenses, this gives us nothing, and this is known to everyone and is known to our Cuban comrades.

We sent our people to Cuba when an invasion was expected. We knew that if there was an invasion the blood of both the Cuban and Soviet peoples would be spilled. We did that. We did that for Cuba, for the Cuban people. Yes, we also did it in our own interests. But our interests here were expressed as common revolutionary interests, the interests of the revolution, the interests of the international worker's movement, and Marxist-Leninist teaching. We did it only in the name of all that.

And now that the situation we expected has developed—and we expected it when we took this step, almost all of us foresaw this—this is how they see us [i.e., as caring only about Soviet interests]. It was painful for Mikoyan to listen to that and for us it was no less painful to read about it.

Tell Fidel and our other friends that we could have adopted “the most revolutionary” position as some do now. And how would that, so to speak, revolutionary character be expressed? In empty phraseology. When the crisis erupted and a threat hung over Cuba, we could have passed a resolution, an address with the most abusive words against imperialism, the United States, and world imperialism, and we could have written there that they were capable of every base act, that they were mean and ignoble and we could have broadcast it on every radio station in all the languages of the world. And we would have considered that our revolutionary duty toward heroic Cuba had been fulfilled.

So what? Would it have had great significance? As we know, the imperialists don't lose weight from our insults—we have cursed them for forty-five years. And if our efforts had been limited only to cursing imperialism without undertaking any measures for the real strengthening of the forces of socialism, the forces of revolution, then most likely we would have stopped cursing them long ago. They would have physically compelled us to shut up, as they are capable of doing. They would have dealt with us as they have [previously] dealt with more than one revolution in more than one country.

Under Lenin's leadership in the first years of the Russian Revolution, when we did not have diplomatic relations with anybody and when diplomatic channels for expressing the will of the Soviet government were completely unavailable, then we only had one opportunity: to curse the imperialists. And then we had only one radio station; it was called "Named after the Comintern" [*Imeni Komintern*]. And then we, so to speak, would plaster the imperialists and capitalists of all countries with curses in every language. That was the extent of our diplomatic activity.

But we got through those times. We developed different kinds of relations with the outside world. Now not only the Soviet Union but one-third of the world lives under the banner of Marxism-Leninism. We have diplomatic relations with most of the countries of the world. Therefore, now the resolution of issues depends not only on the correlation of forces, although the correlation of forces—economic and military—is of course the main factor. But when the cannons are silent, diplomacy is assigned a sufficiently large role, and it would be unreasonable for us to reject this instrument that has been developed and tested for ages. One has to have weapons. But weapons bring extermination, especially in our age. Therefore, there is a great deal of work for diplomacy here.

Of course, it would have been easy for us to fulfill our revolutionary duty if we had done like certain others: showed our solidarity with the Cuban people and offered to give our own blood at donation centers so they could mix it with Cuban blood. That is quite a cheap revolutionary gesture. We could have sent a lot of blood once the war had begun; but this blood would have been mixed not with blood but with Cuban soil. And it is doubtful that it would have helped the Cuban people.

We have undertaken steps of a different character. We upgraded the armed forces of the Soviet Union and our missile technology to combat readiness, and set in motion the diplomatic machinery. And we believe that we achieved [our] goals in the interests of Cuba, in the interests of the people of the Soviet Union and of all the people of the world. We demonstrated the aggressiveness of the United States of America; we showed the peace-loving nature of the socialist countries and the Soviet Union, as the most powerful among the socialist states. And that is not the least factor in the struggle for the minds of the people today.

That's why we are disappointed that our friends obviously did not understand that; we took these steps in the name of friendship. They not only did not value this, but even said words that hurt our noblest feelings and our noblest revolutionary outpourings of friendship to the Cuban people.

Fidel Castro in a conversation with you expressed the idea that the deployment of our missiles in Cuba was carried out in

the interests of the entire socialist camp. Explain to Fidel that this is not our understanding of the situation. The interests of the defense of the socialist camp, and the USSR as the most powerful socialist state, did not require the deployment of our missiles in Cuba. We possess sufficiently powerful missiles on the territory of the USSR to ensure this defense, and we can use them against the imperialist aggressor.

In deciding to deploy the missiles in Cuba, upon our agreement with our Cuban friends, we pursued the goal of rendering assistance to Cuba, of defending it in the face of the threat of aggression. We understood that this would cause a great shock among the American imperialists, and it did cause such a shock. They drew a conclusion regarding non-invasion guarantees to Cuba, which were expressed in Kennedy's letters. We believe that the goals we pursued have been achieved and our action of deploying the missiles in Cuba has been justified.

We received information from our military comrades that at a ceremonial session that was arranged by our people on November 6, the head of the intelligence administration general staff of Cuba, Pedro Luis, tried several times to raise a toast "to Fidel and Stalin" at his table.

We have raised a toast to Fidel ourselves. We have raised a toast to Fidel ourselves here, but we condemned Stalin. We are offended that Pedro Luis, a person who enjoys great trust, a person who works in the intelligence service, catches our enemies, would extol that which we have condemned, especially at this moment of tensions between the countries of socialism and the countries of imperialism. This is to some extent a violation of the relationship of trust between the Soviet Union and Cuba. It was very unpleasant for us to read this report, and it was unpleasant for our people in Cuba to hear it. (This information should be carefully checked. You should talk to the comrades who were present; you should talk to comrades Gribkov and Pavlov.)

We wanted to say everything to you candidly. These are not the last difficulties that we will experience. We should be able to assess the situation today patiently and skillfully, and to look toward tomorrow, toward the future—and this future is good. We will have to live through this crisis. This will not be the final crisis because the imperialist camp will not leave us alone and will create crises in other places. Therefore, we should remember one thing: if we really share the same positions, the Marxist-Leninist positions, then we should look for joint decisions and undertake coordinating steps that correspond to the interests of the socialist camp, the interests of peace and socialism.

Our efforts are following this course. Cuba today finds itself in the epicenter of the struggle for these ideals. Therefore, we are doing everything in order to secure a posi-

tion such that Cuba would be following the path chosen by its people—it would be developing on a socialist basis.

Regarding the inspections: We agree that unilateral inspections are unacceptable for any country, including Cuba. But U Thant's proposal about "the UN presence" is beneficial for Cuba. In general, this is beneficial for any small country because in this case the United Nations—the world organization—to some extent becomes a guarantor against an invasion of the country that is threatened by invasion. Of course, this must be implemented on an equal basis so that UN observers would be [stationed] in Cuba, in some region of the United States and also in other countries of the Caribbean. Then sovereignty, equality, equal conditions, and equal guaranties will be ensured. If the imperialists announce that Cuba is planning an attack and therefore they want to have observers there, then in its turn Cuba, if someone is planning an attack against it, can demand that observers be sent and observer posts be established in those countries from which such aggression is possible.

We believe this approach to be correct. As early as 1955 and then in 1958, we ourselves introduced proposals at the disarmament negotiations, which presupposed establishing observer posts at airports, at railway hubs, on highways, and in large ports on a mutual basis. Those proposals remain in force today. Their purpose is to avert the danger of some aggressive country preparing a sudden attack, concentrating forces, and carrying out an invasion of the other country.

Apparently, even if we eliminate the crisis we are currently living through—and we think that we will eliminate it on the basis of a mutual agreement—this question will take on an importance beyond Cuba (but Cuba could start the process). This system then could be expanded to Europe and Asia, which would serve the cause of guaranteeing the security of all countries of the world and most of all of the two camps—of the countries of the socialist camp and the countries of the imperialist camp that have joined NATO's military bloc.

We believe that this is reasonable. Therefore now we need to enter diplomatic negotiations, which have already started. In order to create a basis for that, our country has to fulfill its obligations so that the other country can fulfill its obligation. The US president accepted this in principle in his letter. (But you should not cite this last confidential letter in your conversation with the Cubans.)

In our letter to Comrade Fidel Castro, we have already given an explanation [in response] to his statement that we allegedly have not consulted with him. We have no other alternatives except to repeat what we have already said: We believe that there was consultation when we received a telegram from Havana, which said that an attack on Cuba was

almost inevitable, and that the alternative to this was to preempt and to deliver a nuclear strike.

We understood that you wanted us to undertake measures that would preempt the enemy, and preclude the possibility of an air strike or an invasion of Cuba. You believed that this could have been achieved by our delivering a nuclear strike on the United States. According to your information about the timing of attacks on Cuba, we did not have time for formal consultations, which we wanted to conduct before doing what we did.

Therefore, we hope that you will understand that we acted in the interests of Cuba, in the interests of the Soviet people, and in the interest of the people of the entire world. And in our opinion, we achieved those ends.

When you are prepared, choose a moment for conversation. As you can see from Kennedy's confidential letter, we need to give him an answer. We have been delaying this answer for some time, and we would like to receive your opinion, which would be passed to us after having already incorporated the reaction of our friends. Then we would be able to give Kennedy an answer that we would not have to change later—an answer that would ideally express a coordinated position and would satisfy ours and Cuba's mutual interests.

We know that a hard task has befallen you. But we decided, and the military for their part quite firmly said, that in the interests of normalizing the situation the Il-28s should be removed from Cuba in order not to make the Il-28 into some kind of fetish—either the Il-28s or nothing. This would be foolish because this is not the kind of weapon for which it would be worth breaking off negotiations and thus jeopardizing all the achievements we have reached in our correspondence with the president. We should not provide an opportunity for the aggressive forces to undermine what was already achieved and place the responsibility for the breakup on us. This would be unforgivable from our side; it would show a lack of understanding of simple things.

From the materials we have obtained (and we sent these to you), you can see that among the responsible leading circles of the United States they allegedly allow for the possibility that in order not to create a crisis out of the dispute over the Il-28s, the Americans could even agree to leave the planes there; however, we must give assurances that their numbers will not increase in the future.

This, of course, would be the best option for us. But it would not be completely correct to start from this assumption in elaborating our steps. Therefore, we should exhibit caution. We are using this, but only in the course of bargaining. If we can get this bargain, then of course we would not refuse it, but we have to determine our ultimate decision, and our ultimate decision is the agreement to withdraw the Il-28s,

which will not affect the defensive measures that have been taken in Cuba. On the contrary, the moral strengthening of our position in the negotiations is worth the withdrawal of these airplanes since then the United States will be faced with the necessity of affirming, even more firmly before the entire world, the obligation undertaken in the president's letter, and to register it at the United Nations. This act warrants the withdrawal, the removal of the Il-28s from Cuba.

N. Khrushchev

[Source: From the personal archive of Dr. Sergo A. Mikoyan, donated to the National Security Archive. Translation by Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive.]



Document No. 2:

Record of Conversation between Mikoyan and Fidel Castro, Havana, 13 November 1962

November 13, 1962

The conversation took place at A. I. Mikoyan's residence. After exchanging greetings, Mikoyan talked about his visit to the cattle farm located on Turiguano Island. He made this trip by plane on the same day, together with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and head adviser F. R. Titov.

A. I. Mikoyan: Today's trip was very interesting. We were impressed with the work carried out by the revolutionary government in developing animal husbandry. The Santa Gertrudis cattle breed can take a high place at any exhibition.

F. Castro: The revolutionary government plans to export cattle from this farm in the future.

A. I. Mikoyan: Our minister of agriculture acquired a few animals of this breed in the United States. I saw them. It is a very promising breed. Speaking about the cattle farm in Turiguano, Mikoyan expressed his admiration for the scope and quality of the construction of buildings for cattle and pigs. Judging by the scope and quality of the ongoing work, one could say that this is not a socialist, but a Communist farm, Mikoyan joked. The cattle farm in Turiguano is very large. I would say that there few farms of this scale in the world. We have similar types of farms in Uzbekistan and Siberia, but I think the farm in Turiguano far exceeds them in size.

F. Castro: Have you read the article about the arrest of an American CIA agent who was sent to Cuba?

A. I. Mikoyan: Yes. I read these materials today. Here is the true face of the "free" Western world for you. Ambassador [Aleksandr] Alekseyev told me today that some time ago there was an assassination attempt on Comrade Carlos Rafael Rodriguez.

F. Castro (jokingly): This attempt, it seems, was due to the shortage of meat in Cuba.

C. R. Rodriguez (also jokingly): At the time, he did not yet hold a post at the National Institute of Agrarian Reform.

F. Castro: Comrade Mikoyan, please, let's talk about the issue raised in yesterday's conversation.

A. I. Mikoyan agrees with Fidel Castro's suggestion.

F. Castro: We basically did not agree with the removal of strategic missiles, just as we disagree with the removal of Il-28 bombers from Cuba. These measures create a difficult situation for us. They undermine our sovereign right to determine for ourselves what type of weapons we can have, and what agreements we can make.

With respect to the missiles, we are faced with a *fait accompli*, and we will not persist with regard to Il-28 bombers. We are aware of the Soviet government's intention to withdraw the Il-28 bombers from Cuba as a basis for negotiations with the Americans. The same thing happened with the missiles—first you made a commitment, then you started to remove them. Our position is as follows: tie the removal of the naval blockage and the cessation of the violation of Cuban airspace to the withdrawal of Il-28 bombers. Without these requirements, we cannot give our consent. I believe that it is a minimal, but also our firm requirement. Otherwise, the five points put forward by the revolutionary government will become meaningless, and we consider them our guarantee. If the requirements I outlined—to lift the naval blockade and cease violating Cuba's airspace—are met, then the Il-28 bombers can be removed from Cuba.

We already spoke with Comrade Mikoyan about the need to send a letter to the acting UN Secretary General U Thant that, despite the removal of offensive weapons from Cuban territory, the Americans continue to violate our airspace.

We have taken a passive, permissive stance on violation of Cuban airspace. The Americans are insolent. They make shaving flights over Cuban territory, flying at 100 meters over our military bases and units. This is bad for the morale of our people and makes them resentful. Our position led to the point that now our enemy knows everything. The Americans' reconnaissance flights over Cuban territory led to the weakening of our country's defense.

It is difficult to explain to our people this concession to the enemy. It is difficult to explain why we let ourselves come to this state of affairs. All we need now is for American planes to land on our territory to refuel. And what are we doing? We

are enabling them. In effect, we are allowing the enemy to violate our airspace.

The Soviet Union, the socialist countries, or any other sovereign nation would not allow it. Why do we? Such enabling on our part can be interpreted as a sign of cowardice, like we forgot the principles of morality. We think that after the strategic missiles are removed from Cuba, we can no longer allow this to go on. We decided to write to the acting Secretary General U Thant that all the planes making shaving flights over Cuba will be shot down.

Now I would like to speak about the Il-28 bombers. Since they are the property of the Soviet Union, we, despite the statement I just made, will agree with the Soviet government's decision to remove them, just as we agreed with the decision to remove the missiles. This is not just my personal opinion. We discussed the issue of Il-28 bombers at the secretariat of the ORI national leadership and unanimously came to this decision.

A. I. Mikoyan: I would like to respond to this question in several parts. First, I will talk about our position on the issue of violations of Cuba's airspace. At one time, we considered it necessary not to shoot down American planes. This issue was raised some time ago by Comrade Dorticós. After a conversation with Comrade Dorticós I informed the Soviet government of the Cuban position.

The day before yesterday, during a conversation with Comrade Fidel, I told him that our government came to an agreement with your position regarding contacting U Thant and demanding an end to these brazen flights. This protest could be motivated by the fact that the Soviet Union kept its promise, but the United States does not want to keep theirs. This kind of protest against the violation of Cuban airspace would serve as a warning from the revolutionary government of Cuba. It would be a serious warning to the Americans.

F. Castro: I agree with this formulation of the issue. We understand your concerns.

A. I. Mikoyan: We had to tolerate this lawlessness only to a certain point, not more.

F. Castro: We understand Comrade Mikoyan's considerations.

A. I. Mikoyan: We believe that the withdrawal of the Il-28 bombers has to be tied to the removal of the naval blockade. It is to this end that we agreed to negotiate regarding the removal of Il-28s from Cuba. All our actions are directed toward achieving this goal—lifting the naval blockade. The CC CPSU adopted the following resolution: to agree to withdraw the Il-28 bombers from Cuba if the United States will fulfill its obligation; but if they do not remove the blockade, we leave the bombers in Cuba. You see that our position is quite clear. I do not want to come back to topics we already

discussed, but it seems useful to note that after the strategic missiles were discovered, they ceased to be a deterring force. They already served their purpose. After they were discovered, they ceased to be a deterrent.

The Il-28 bomber is an old type of aircraft with a small ceiling. They are not very important for Cuba's defense. The fact that Cuba has weapons like high-speed fighter planes, missile-carrier boats, anti-assault landing and antiaircraft means—this covers all the losses that might be caused by the removal of the Il-28 bombers from Cuba. I will report your considerations to the CC CPSU. I want to reiterate that very powerful defensive weapons remain in Cuba. We will be able to transfer it to you when the Cuban military officials become familiar with it. This military equipment is incomparably more powerful than any equipment Cuba currently has. These are the most advanced weapons Comrade Pavlov currently has. The CC CPSU's resolution is to transfer these weapons to you over the course of time. I would like to emphasize that we are taking these measures in Cuba's interest, in order to ensure that the United States does not keep the blockade. We want to provide the best conditions for the comprehensive development of Cuba. The issue was discussed in the CC CPSU, together with our military. Both perspectives I described have been carefully studied. Our comrades have decided that the only correct way is to lift the blockade and withdraw the Il-28 bombers from Cuba.

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev wrote me with instructions to tell Fidel Castro and his comrades about our position and about our guiding motives. He again noted that the Soviet Union will always support Cuba.

We admire the courage of the Cuban people and their leader Fidel Castro and his comrades. I want to emphasize that we consider your difficulties to be our difficulties, and we regard your victory as our victory. Of course, one can criticize the government of imperialist countries and condemn their policies, but this does not help if there is no practical assistance. We offer you all kinds of fraternal assistance—military, economic, and diplomatic. I would like to add that we are planning to consider the possibility of providing additional weapons to Cuba. We are a fraternal nation, and we will do everything to protect Cuba. We fully supported the five points put forward by Comrade Fidel Castro. I received a telegram from Comrade Kuznetsov, in which he writes about the steps taken by our diplomats to support the five points of Cuba's revolutionary government. We understand that there will be many difficulties in the struggle to realize these five requirements, and that we will not immediately succeed in implementing them. This struggle will take place in practical terms in our negotiations with the Americans. We believe that your UN representative should join this struggle.

Our task is to use the UN and its secretary-general, U Thant, to the fullest extent to resolve questions that are important to us.

The Americans wanted to use Cuba's economic difficulties to strangle the revolution with the bony hand of hunger. But if there is no blockade, Cuba will have an opportunity to develop its economy. Our economic aid will increase, and Cuba will win.

F. Castro: I have a question related to the Il-28 bombers. What are the USSR's intentions? If the Americans fail to fulfill their promises and lift the blockade, then the bombers, as you said, will remain here. What does that mean? I do not understand in what form you plan to announce the withdrawal of the Il-28 bombers.

A. I. Mikoyan: For now we are continuing to assert that the Il-28 bomber is not an offensive weapon. The Americans argue that any bomber is an offensive weapon. So far, we have not agreed to remove the Il-28s from Cuba.

If you agree to our proposal, we will state that as soon as Kennedy's promises will be fulfilled, we agree to remove the Il-28s from Cuba. Consequently, we are talking about the possibility to start negotiations. I want to stress that we will not remove the Il-28s, the personnel and equipment until we reach an agreement with the Americans.

F. Castro: Will this position include the requirement to cease the violation of our airspace?

A. I. Mikoyan: We consider such flights to be illegal. You are planning to send your protest to the UN. It will be a serious warning to the Americans.

F. Castro: I quite agree with you, Comrade Mikoyan.

A. I. Alekseyev: The Il-28 bombers are material for negotiations, so to speak.

A. I. Mikoyan: Yes. We want to have an agreed position with you when we conduct negotiations with Americans regarding the blockade. The anti-aircraft missiles will remain here. That is a modern weapon. We will leave them in Cuba. The Americans do not dare talk about them, although they are a dangerous weapon.

A. I. Alekseyev: I read today in a review of the foreign press a report that said the MiG-21 fighter planes can be used as offensive weapons.

A. I. Mikoyan: Yes, they can be used like that.

F. Castro (jokingly): If you fly the MiG-21 one way and jump off with a parachute, then the aircraft can be used at a distance of 600 kilometers.

E. Guevara: No. It would be a distance greater than 600 kilometers.

A. I. Mikoyan: More precisely, the range of the aircraft will be 600 to 700 kilometers one way and the same on the way back. The designer of the aircraft created a wonderful

machine, which broke the record of height and speed for this class of aircraft. The record is registered by the International Aviation Federation.

F. Castro: Of course, from a military point of view, the Il-28 is not very important to us. The question of withdrawing the Il-28s can be used to make the Americans fulfill our demands.

A. I. Mikoyan: We understand the negative psychological effect of withdrawing this outdated bomber from Cuba.

F. Castro: It would be bad if this was a unilateral move. We have to demand concessions from the Americans.

A. I. Mikoyan: So we will turn the question of the withdrawal of Il-28s from Cuba into a subject of diplomatic negotiations, we will win the support of the UN and neutral countries.

C. R. Rodriguez: And if the Americans will not remove the blockade and the Il-28s will remain here, what should we do in such a case?

A. I. Mikoyan: I already said that we cannot send warships to escort commercial ships in the Caribbean. Considering the correlation of forces in the Caribbean, the Americans could continue the blockade. We want to deprive them of the excuse they want to use. In this case, we can work through the UN. After all, this is not an issue worth starting a nuclear war.

If Cuba was located geographically closer to the Soviet Union, the issue would be resolved without difficulty. Cuba's geographical location is very disadvantageous for us. Is it worth firing nuclear missiles? That would not help to resolve the current crisis. It would be better to take this step, without decreasing Cuba's defense capabilities, to remove the Il-28 bombers in order to guarantee nonaggression. The guarantee will be valid—this is the general consensus—for a certain length of time. Two tendencies are clearly emerging in the United States. Kennedy is under harsh criticism. Militant circles are trying to use the fact that the Il-28 bombers are still in Cuba to delay and prolong the blockade.

Kennedy would like to strangle Cuba by the blockade. He needs to save his prestige, too. Kennedy is not any more positive toward Cuba than any other American reactionaries. But, he is smarter, he understands that he should not undermine the prestige of the United States by a military attack on Cuba. He thinks that the blockade can undermine your system, cause economic hardship and the fall of the revolutionary government. Kennedy hopes that the entire burden of economic aid will fall on the Soviet Union, and that the Soviet Union could not bear the economic difficulties associated with the need to help Cuba. He believes that Fidel Castro's government will not be able to cope with the situation, and the people of Cuba will overthrow the government. In other

words, his whole calculation rests on the idea that Cuba will collapse economically.

Kennedy's plan is better than the plan put forward by the US military, because it is unrealistic. Cuba has great potential for the development of its economy. Our assistance will enable the growth of Cuba's economy, culture, and science. As a result, Cuba will become a model for Latin America; it will be a center of attraction for the people of Latin America.

If the blockade continues, the Cuban people's standard of living will fall, and difficulties will increase.

We have to secure the removal of the blockade and guarantees that the United States and other countries will not attack Cuba. These guarantees have to be reflected in UN documents. It is unlikely that this will be done in the form of a protocol, but it is still necessary to achieve UN control in the Caribbean.

Comrade Kuznetsov has been insisting on this plan at the UN. This plan is good because it does not allow for the possibility of a surprise attack on Cuba.

Americans cling to the OAS [Organization of American States], trying to extend the activities of this organization to Cuba. They are opposed to the UN addressing issues of the threat of sudden attack.

However, if U Thant's proposal on control is accepted, then the UN will act in the Caribbean and the OAS will be on the sidelines. Of course, the Americans will oppose the adoption of this and other proposals. But we have to fight for the five points put forward by Comrade Fidel, as well as for all our requirements.

F. Castro: Perhaps my colleagues have more questions?

E. Guevara: I do not have a question. I would just like to comment on the issue at hand. We must pray to God that the Americans do not find out about our conversation. The Americans are tying the withdrawal of Il-28s to the inspections, referring to the letter from Comrade Khrushchev. From a diplomatic point of view, they can find fault with the fact that in Comrade Khrushchev's letter he mentions both the removal of offensive weapons and inspections on the ground. If the Americans know that the blockade will not lead to nuclear war, they will keep the blockade.

A. I. Mikoyan: I think they will not attack, but they very much want to maintain the blockade. Formally, they can say that there was no onsite inspection. However, the Americans themselves retreated on the question of inspections of strategic missiles. We believe that since they confirmed the removal of these missiles through aerial photography, it will suffice. Demands for onsite inspections are just nitpicking. If the Americans wanted to complicate the issue, they would say that they have no information as to whether or not the missiles were removed.

We agreed only on visual surveillance of the removal. It was used when strategic missiles were removed from Cuba. There was also visual surveillance from ships at close distances. Although there was one attempt to go aboard one of the Soviet ships with weapons, but Soviet sailors thwarted the attempt and did not allow the controllers aboard the ship. They also put up a protest regarding this attempt to breach the agreement. After all, we agreed only to allow controlling ships to come within a small distance. Therefore, when the captain of the control ship tried to get on board our ship, he was not allowed. It should be noted that for the entire time of the blockade, controllers did not go on board of Soviet ships, they feared conflict.

I emphasize once again that different forces are at play in the United States. Kennedy does not want conflict. The American press is shouting that there is no certainty as to whether all missiles were removed or a part of them was hidden. It is important that we reached an agreement on control precisely in this form. Kuznetsov was asked about the whereabouts of the warheads intended for the missiles that were removed. He replied that warheads cannot function without missiles. Even with ground inspections, it is practically impossible to find the warheads. With the withdrawal of the Il-28s from Cuba we want to alleviate the conditions of the struggle. Of course, there is no guarantee that the Americans will accept all our demands, but we will fight hard to achieve our goals.

F. Castro: All right. We agree with this.

Ambassador A. I. Alekseyev was present at the conversation, which lasted an hour and a half.

Recorded by V. Tikhmenev.

Verified: [signature]

[Source: From the personal archive of Dr. Sergo A. Mikoyan, donated to the National Security Archive. Translation by Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive.]



Document No. 4:

Record of Conversation between Mikoyan and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Havana, 16 November 1962

16 November 1962

Ernesto "Che" Guevara received A. I. Mikoyan and his colleagues—deputy chairman of the State Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers for Foreign Economic Relations,

Comrade A. I. Alikhanov; the head of the group of chief advisers-organizers of production in Cuba, Comrade F. E. Titov; and the adviser on economic affairs to the embassy, Comrade N. V. Goldin—in his office at the Ministry of Industry.

After exchanging greetings, A. I. Mikoyan suggested to E. Guevara that Comrade Alikhanov would give a progress report on the Soviet Union's obligations for building industrial facilities in Cuba.

A. I. Alikhanov reported the following.

During the time we spent in Cuba, Soviet experts and heads of Cuban organizations have reviewed the state of affairs in the implementation of the Soviet-Cuban agreement on economic and technical cooperation, and we visited a number of construction sites and projects.

Construction has begun on a number of facilities provided by our agreements, including industrial objects. In May of this year, only one project was being built—a file-making plant; but today a whole range of projects is under construction, including two large power plants: one in Mariel, with a capacity of 200,000 kilowatts; and the second in Renta, with a capacity of 100,000 kilowatts; as well as a mechanical plant in Santa Clara. Work has started (though still in its initial stages) on the reconstruction of a steel works plant. Construction is also under way for training centers to prepare skilled industrial workers.

Construction of the file-making plant is nearing completion. All equipment for this plant has been delivered from the Soviet Union and installation is almost complete. The plant is scheduled to start manufacturing goods this December, that is, a year ahead of schedule.

Construction of the mechanical plant is proceeding well. The Cuban workers are promising to complete construction of the building in December. A part of the equipment has already been delivered from the USSR, and considering that construction of this plant is proceeding ahead of schedule, we will try to take action so the majority of the essential equipment will be shipped in the first half of 1963.

Then Comrade Alikhanov spoke about the construction of other facilities. He informed Comrade Guevara that the main lift crane equipment for the construction of the power plant in Mariel will be shipped in December of this year, and equipment for the power plant in Renta will be shipped in the first quarter of 1963. He also said that due to the difficulties of shipping a 50-ton crane for the installation of engineering structures, the Cuban side promised to find a crane for this purpose in Cuba.

Comrade Alikhanov said that all matters relating to the construction of industrial facilities were reviewed with the deputy minister of industry comrades Borrega, Trueba, and Solodriguez [sic], as well as with the minister of public works, Comrade Cienfuegos, and his deputies.

In connection with the request made by Comrade Borrega on behalf of Comrade Guevara regarding the delivery of finished steel structures for the reconstruction of a steel works plant and the construction of power plants, Comrade Alikhanov suggested that it would be inexpedient to change the course we agreed upon earlier, when it was decided that steel structures would be manufactured in Cuba from metal imported from the Soviet Union. Comrade Alikhanov also said that changing the previously established procedure for manufacturing steel structures will delay their production, and that a part of the metal has already been shipped from factories in the Soviet Union.

As for the possibility of manufacturing critical and nonstandard equipment in the USSR, Comrade Alikhanov said that we will review this question further when we return to Moscow.

Comrade Guevara agreed.

It was reported to Comrade Guevara that Soviet organizations will satisfy his request for the extension of Soviet adviser Comrade Fedorov's stay in Cuba, and on sending an expert metallurgist to work on the reconstruction of the steel works plants.

It was reported that the Soviet government approved a request from the Cuban side regarding the question of the Soviet Union providing technical assistance in the organization of production of spare parts in Cuba. For this purpose, 140 specialists will be assigned to Cuba, including 30 this year. In the first quarter of 1963, the necessary equipment for creating four laboratories (welding, metallographic, chemical, and controlling and measuring instruments) will be delivered.

E. Guevara: I would like to ask a question regarding the construction of a refinery plant. Cuban specialists recently received the Soviet project for it. When they looked it over, they saw that the cost of the work outlined in the project is approximately twice as much as the construction costs of similar North American plants that are located in Cuba. The specialists are well aware of the costs of building North American plants, since they participated in the construction and continue to work in these plants. Also, I know that American monopolies tend to inflate the cost of construction in underdeveloped countries, because it helps them to take out large profits in the metropolis. Therefore, the actual difference may be even greater.

A. I. Mikoyan: Right now, it is difficult to answer this question. We do not have the necessary data, but we will look into this and let you know the answer.

N. V. Goldin: The specialists who worked on this project will arrive here in a few days. They will look into this matter together with the Cuban side.

A. I. Mikoyan: I would like to tell you, Comrade Guevara that our design engineers often overstate the cost of the proj-

ects, and we have to be in an uncompromising struggle with them. Sometimes, we manage to reduce the initial cost by as much as 20 to 30 percent. For example, the project of the largest oil refinery in Belarus comes to mind. After a thorough review and amendment we were able to reduce construction costs by 30 percent.

Overstating the cost usually happens because a lot of support structures are included into the project, and these support structures are not always necessary. The design engineers usually place various buildings at a great distance from each other, citing fire concerns. This, in turn, lengthens the communication lines, thereby increasing their cost. When I was in Mexico, I noticed that the various service buildings of the oil companies were arranged very compactly. And rightly so, because it reduces the construction costs. And if there is a fire, it seems to me that the enterprise will burn either way (*general laughter*).

In addition, design engineers sometimes make mistakes in counting the cost of equipment, especially if it is a new model.

Different kinds of mistakes can happen, too. I remember a case with an oil refinery that we were planning to build in Ethiopia. This refinery was designed to power half a million tons of oil. When the project was finished and the Ethiopians looked it over, they said that they did not like it because it cost more than similar North American projects. We studied the situation and found out that the cost of the project included expenses for construction of a power plant that was supposed to supply electricity for the plant and for a large city, as well as expenses to build a water purification plant, which was also designed to meet the utility needs of the city, and in addition there were expenditures for construction of port facilities for receiving oil. We only had to deduct these expenses from the cost of the project and everything fell into place. The cost of our project no longer exceeded Western models. As you can see, our engineers are far from commerce, and made plant construction cost calculations based on our internal regulations. That's why I say that we need to look into the matter. I will give an order to organize a special expertise on this project in Moscow. In connection with this, I would ask you to give us precise data on the construction costs of North American plants, to facilitate the work of our experts. If our design engineers really made a mistake, we will correct them. Such a study would be useful to the Soviet Union as well. If our plants are more expensive to make, we will have to catch up. Therefore, your criticism will be beneficial to us.

E. Guevara: But I didn't criticize anybody. (Everybody laughs.) I only made a preliminary comment on the project.

A. I. Mikoyan: We do not need to be afraid of criticism. Criticism and self-criticism are at the heart of our devel-

opment. I ask you to give information about the North American plants to our comrades.

E. Guevara: Yes, I will give instructions to prepare the data.

N. V. Goldin hands A. I. Mikoyan a brief reference on the planned oil refinery.

After studying the reference note, A. I. Mikoyan says, addressing E. Guevara: As far as can be seen from these data on the composition of the future refinery, there is ample evidence that the construction costs should be reduced instead of being inflated. I see that the new plant is tied to an existing plant and therefore they will have a number of shared services. This should lower the cost of construction. However, despite this, we should examine this question. Comrade Goldin will help in this matter. He is a big specialist, he built the steel plant in Bhilai.

E. Guevara: Yes, I know about it.

A. I. Mikoyan: You should put him to work more (*Everybody laughs*) He built a plant there for 1 million tons of steel. It is a large plant. And now it is already working at full capacity. The British and the West Germans also built a factory each in India. But they are still working only at two-thirds of their capacity. As for the oil refinery plant, I think there is some kind of misunderstanding here. In India we are building an oil refinery, also for 2 million tons of oil. The question of excessive costs did not arise there. Apparently for the Indian project the world market prices were taken into account, I do not know why the problem of cost came up in the Cuban project.

E. Guevara: I noticed that there are some paradoxes in the prices of Soviet industrial equipment. Some equipment is sold far below world prices, other equipment is sold at world prices, and yet other is considerably above world prices.

A. I. Mikoyan: That is not entirely correct. We usually sell our industrial equipment at world market prices, or rather, slightly below. Inside the country the price of industrial machinery and equipment differ significantly from international prices. For example, we make a profit on the production of trucks and tractors, but we produce passenger cars at a loss. When we sell products abroad we set prices in line with world prices. For this purpose, we study reference manuals, magazines, newsletters, and so on. If we cannot find price data on certain equipment in reference materials, we give instructions to one of our trade representatives to contact the Western enterprise in question, which manufactures analogous products, and, acting as a potential buyer, to inquire about the prices for this product.

It is true that pricing industrial equipment is a complicated matter. It is not like wheat or some other agricultural commodity, the prices for which are readily available every day. Different companies producing analogous equipment do not

copy each other exactly. Furthermore, it has been established as a general rule that equipment produced in West Germany is cheaper than equipment produced in North America. British equipment is more expensive than West German, but cheaper than American. The Japanese often sell their equipment even cheaper than West Germans. So the pricing of equipment sold abroad is a complicated matter.

Further, A. I. Mikoyan directed E. Guevara's attention to an issue that in his opinion is very important for Cuba. He was talking about setting up production of spare parts for industrial equipment. A. I. Mikoyan said that Soviet specialists working in Cuba told him that Cubans allocated large production facilities for organization of enterprises that will produce spare parts for Soviet vehicles. This factory will be created on the base of the former Amber Motors. Soviet specialists believe that it would be possible to set up production of spare parts for American cars at these production facilities as well. This is of paramount importance if we consider that there are 300,000 North American cars that are already well worn. Soviet specialists proposed to invite an additional number of engineers from the Soviet Union, so they could study the relevant parts and make working drawings of them, because there are no such drawings available in Cuba. However, I think that this is not the best option. It could be arranged much faster if you send the parts to the Soviet Union and the working drawings were made there. We have hundreds of design engineering bureaus which could quickly do this work. Sending the specialists to Cuba could take a long time.

E. Guevara agrees.

A. I. Mikoyan: I wanted to bring to your attention another very important question, Comrade Guevara. The uninterrupted supply of Soviet goods to Cuba's industries in the course of the next year depends on the resolution of this issue. Our Ministry of Foreign Trade received an order for supply of goods in the nomenclature. However, it does not have the specifications that are necessary to place the orders in our factories. This matter has taken a very long time. If we do not receive the specification in the near future, the uninterrupted continuity of our shipments will be compromised starting next year. I took an extreme measure and instructed Minister Patolichev to place orders from Cuba whenever possible without specifications. However, he told me that it is impossible with regard to machinery, equipment, ferrous metals and certain other goods. So I ask you to take the necessary steps to ensure that the required specifications are transferred to our Minister of Foreign Trade.

E. Guevara: The following happened with regard to the specifications. When I was in Moscow and spoke with Comrade Khrushchev, we discussed issues of foreign trade. We have developed a trade deficit in your favor in the amount

of 190 million pesos. We agreed that this matter would be resolved later. Therefore, we did not want to produce orders for next year before we addressed the issue of balancing our trade relations. And then the events happened, of which we are aware, and made us neglect this issue completely.

A. I. Mikoyan: It is wrong to wait for a settlement of the deficit and not prepare trade for the coming year.

E. Guevara: But how can it be otherwise? On what basis can we do trade, if we owe you.

A. I. Mikoyan: On the basis of trust. We are friendly countries. Moreover, I am informing you that our government has decided to register Cuba's foreign trade debt as a trade credit. I have not told this to your leadership yet. I am telling you this now.

E. Guevara: You are talking about our debt for this year?

A. I. Mikoyan: Yes, for this year. And besides, did anyone tell you that we cannot do the same thing next year? I cannot give a specific number, but we can agree on a trade credit for next year, as well.

E. Guevara offers the present company to smoke. All except Comrade Titov refuse on the grounds that they are nonsmokers. E. Guevara lights a cigar.

A. I. Mikoyan: Smoking is a bad habit. Our scientists estimated that out of six people who died of cancer, five smoked. In our CC CPSU Presidium, for example, almost nobody smokes. Only Comrade Brezhnev smokes sometimes, but even that is more for amusement than real smoking. I have a pretty big family, around twenty people. And none of us are smokers. Four of my sons were in the army, where the conditions are very predisposed to smoking—there is even a free issue of tobacco for each soldier—and still they did not acquire this habit. I smoked at one point. But then doctors told me I could not. I started developing tuberculosis on the tops of my lungs, and I quit smoking.

E. Guevara: I also have tuberculosis, but I smoke. Neomycin works for me.

A. I. Mikoyan: Tuberculosis is a terrible disease. We have a goal in our country to eliminate tuberculosis completely. We developed a special program to combat this disease. In particular, we have now established a worldwide network of boarding schools for children, working on a system reminiscent of your system *becados*. The network will continue to grow. We decided to put all children sick with tuberculosis into these boarding schools, taking them out of the family. Tuberculosis can be cured within a year, using new methods of treatment. Thereby, we will completely eliminate this disease among young people. We will also increasingly rely on sanatoriums for the treatment of adult patients.

E. Guevara: Tuberculosis is a terrible disaster in Cuba. It is perhaps the most widespread disease here, especially in

rural areas. It seems to be due to the hard work and constant malnutrition. It is a terrible plague that we inherited from capitalism. In Cuba, TB causes more deaths than cancer. And if in the Soviet Union five out of six people who died smoked, in Cuba every five out of six people smoke.

A. I. Mikoyan: How is your tobacco production?

E. Guevara: With tobacco things are good. Natural conditions in Cuba are extremely favorable for the production of tobacco. We have some difficulty selling it abroad. The United States used to buy a lot of it. The capitalist bosses are used to Havana cigars, and right now they have to do without them.

A. I. Mikoyan: You know, when I was in New York en route to Cuba, I was talking with Adlai Stevenson. He complained to me that he misses Cuban cigars. I gave him some friendly advice to normalize trade relations with Cuba and thus solve the problem. (*Everybody laughs*)

E. Guevara: Recently, the use of tobacco within our country has increased.

A. I. Mikoyan: Do you have large trade surpluses of tobacco?

E. Guevara: I do not remember the exact number.

A. I. Mikoyan: At what price do you sell tobacco?

E. Guevara: We produce different varieties of tobacco. There is tobacco that costs 500 pesos per ton, and there is tobacco that costs 12,000 pesos per ton.

A. I. Mikoyan: In principle, we could buy tobacco from you. But we need cheap tobacco. We produce enough expensive grades of tobacco ourselves. Our domestic production is around 80,000 to 90,000 tons per year. Sometimes it goes up to 110,000 tons. Our domestic consumption of tobacco is about 180,000 to 190,000 tons. We make up the deficit by buying abroad. But, I repeat, we are buying cheaper grades. For a while, China supplied us with large quantities of tobacco. But in recent years, because of falling production, China has refused to supply us with tobacco. Bulgaria is our regular supplier of tobacco; we buy 30,000 to 40,000 tons. We buy tobacco from Greece and Turkey out of political considerations, but not in large quantities. This year Bulgaria had a bad harvest of tobacco, and it supplied us with only 20,000 tons. So we could buy your tobacco. And in general, we could always buy the tobacco that you do not sell to other countries, provided that it is cheap-grade tobacco. We could conclude a long-term agreement on this, securing a certain share of Cuban tobacco in our purchases of tobacco abroad.

E. Guevara: Could you buy black tobacco from us?

A. I. Mikoyan: I think so. We process a large number of tobacco products and, blended with other varieties of tobacco, we might be able to use the black tobacco. I think we should instruct our trade associations to discuss this issue.

E. Guevara agrees and makes a note in his notebook. The present company is served Daiquiris. Guevara explains that this is a Cuban drink made of rum and finely crushed ice.

A. I. Mikoyan praises the drink and says that it is very tasty. He notes that a Daiquiri is much nicer than pure rum, and it is weaker, so it is less dangerous in terms of intoxication.

E. Guevara jokingly explains that the strength of the drink depends on who prepares it (*Everybody laughs*).

A. I. Mikoyan: In our country, we pursue a policy of limiting the consumption of hard liquor and we are developing the production of wines and beers. The fight against alcoholism is very important, especially among the youth. We have data that half of the crimes are committed in a state of intoxication. Based on this fact alone, it is worth fighting drunkenness.

E. Guevara: The opposite is the case in Cuba; recently, the tendency has been to increase the consumption of alcoholic beverages. This year, for example, beer production will only be 60 percent of last year's production, while production of liquor grew to 110 percent.

A. I. Mikoyan: You have good beer. When we recently visited the Isle of Turiguano, we were treated to Cuban beer, which I really liked. At the time, I joked that by the quality of the beer you can tell that Minister Guevara has been doing a good job. (*Everybody laughs*) Why is your production of beer dropping?

E. Guevara: Our breweries are suffering from a lack of raw materials. We import hops and malt. We buy the hops from the Czechs, but they have a limited amount to sell us. The same can be said about malt.

A. I. Mikoyan: I will check back home in the Soviet Union to see there is something we can do to help you in this regard. Why don't you organize production of raw materials on site? You should try to master the cultivation of hops in Cuba and buy barley abroad and make malt out of it on site. This is much cheaper. It is not difficult to set up this production, it can be arranged in a matter of six months. If necessary, we can send you our specialists and equipment. The Czechs can probably do the same. Then you will have no shortage of raw materials, and you will be able to further develop the brewing industry. Beer brings a good income to the state. Considering that your country has too much money in circulation, increasing beer consumption would play a positive role.

And while you are building a factory for the production of malt, we could negotiate the purchase of barley from us and its treatment, either in the Soviet Union or in Czechoslovakia, if the Soviet Union does not have the capacity. You will buy our barley, and we will follow your instructions to send it to Czechoslovakia for processing and further transportation to Cuba. This work in two directions will help you to quickly increase production and meet demand.

E. Guevara made a note in his notebook and said that this option should be looked into.

E. Guevara: In particular, my ministry has a farm. We conduct various experiments on this land. We should try to plant hops there. I will also give an assignment to study the possibility of building our own malt production plant. The present company is invited to proceed to the convention hall of the ministry, where dinner is served.

While the rest of the company moved away, A. I. Mikoyan told E. Guevara that on the occasion of the forty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution, the CPSU received a congratulatory letter from the leadership of the American Communist Party.

A. I. Mikoyan: This letter is of some interest. In particular, it notes that the events in Cuba greatly influenced the mood of the American working class. The awakened the working class, forced it to think about political issues. In recent years, there has been an influx of workers into the Communist Party. This is a welcome phenomenon. In this letter, the American Communist Party is critical of the fact that it did not use the Cuban events to the fullest extent possible in its work. It notes that the party should have been more vigorous in defending the Cuban people. It seems to me that this letter is of some interest to the Cuban leadership. I received this letter because as a member of the Presidium of our Central Committee, I am informed about all our important matters, for which a variety of materials are directed to me here from Moscow. We are not talking about the fact that the Americans asked us to send you the contents of this letter. I think that the Cuban leadership will be interested to know its contents, to have a better understand of the situation in the US working class. It is impossible to fight against US imperialism without knowing the sentiments of the American working class.

E. Guevara agrees.

Everyone walks over to the dinner table. Guevara introduces Mikoyan to Guevara's deputies—Orlando Borrego, Juan Castineras, Tirso Saenz, Gomez Trueba, Mario Sorriola, and Santiago Riera—who join them for dinner.

During the dinner conversation, the question was raised about the difficulties of socialist construction. A. I. Mikoyan said that Cuba could build socialism with far fewer sacrifices than did the Soviet Union.

A. I. Mikoyan: We really had it very tough. We were alone. Out of the forty-five years, we spent fifteen with food rationing, when even supplying the population with bread was a difficult task. We had food rationing cards during the Civil War, during the collectivization of agriculture, and during the last war, all the way up to 1947. During the war, we had bread rationing of 300 grams to 1 kilogram of bread per day per person. Workers employed in particularly heavy industries received the highest rations. Meat and butter were given out in very small quantities.

In the last years of the war, we introduced a system of so-called commercial shops, where people could buy food at higher prices but without the rationing cards. At the time, we ended up with two price systems. Goods could be obtained through rationing cards at the low prewar prices, while prices in the commercial stores were three to four times higher. In 1947, the rationing cards were canceled. We also reinstated uniform prices for goods. These prices were higher than before the war but below commercial prices. The increase in prices served to absorb the excess money collected in the population during the war years. The money reform had the same goal, when we exchanged money at the rate of 1 new ruble for 10 old ones. Note that we exchanged cash up to 3,000 rubles, and money in bank savings up to 10,000 rubles. This reform was welcomed by the majority of the population, although, of course, a small portion of the people who had accumulated large sums was displeased. This reform improved the monetary circulation in the country.

The situation is completely different in Cuba, Mikoyan continued. If our task was to provide the population with bread, then in Cuba, it is to provide the population with meat, fats, etc.

E. Guevara: If we talk about the plight of the masses as a factor that causes revolutionary upheavals, then of all the countries in Latin America, Cuba was the least suitable country for a socialist revolution. The standard of living in Cuba was is one of the highest in Latin America.

A. I. Mikoyan: Russia was also an exception. If you follow dogmatic Marxism, the most suitable country for a socialist revolution was and is the United States, since the socialization of production there is the highest among all the capitalist countries.

Russia during the Revolution was one of the most backward countries in Europe, with strong vestiges of feudalism. And then a socialist Revolution happened in this country. It was our luck that the Russian bourgeoisie was weak and had a dumb political line. It was unable to solve a single problem of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

The working class is an advanced class, but it should not be idealized. It lends itself to bourgeois influences. If the Russian bourgeoisie had abolished the Tsarist government and conducted at least some land reform, like the one the Americans did in Japan, and to some extent solved other problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the socialist Bolshevik Revolution in Russia would have been delayed for many years. Therein lies the greatness of Lenin—he was able to understand the complex situation of the time and advanced the slogans that brought the vast majority of the population to the side of the Communists. This slogan—“Peace, Bread, and Land”—is essentially bourgeois. Peace is for all people. Land is for the peasants, that is, the majority of the population. And only bread is for the working class. Through this

slogan, the Bolshevik Party was able to win over the masses. It is not a paradox that at one point there were people who said they were for the Bolsheviks but against communism.

The Cuban Revolution also took place “against the rules.” The study of this revolution is of great theoretical interest. To properly understand the issues of the socialist Revolution in Cuba would be to make a major contribution to the development of Marxism-Leninism.

The great significance of the Cuban Revolution is that it is the first socialist revolution in the Americas. If Cuba was somewhere in the region located close to the Soviet Union, it would not have such significance, and it would not attract so much attention. The Cuban Revolution lit the torch of socialist transformation in America. It is difficult to say when and which Latin American countries will follow.

E. Guevara: It seems that the further development of the revolutions in Latin America must follow the line of simultaneous explosions in all countries. Only this way can they succeed.

A. I. Mikoyan: This is incorrect. The countries of Latin America have their own national characteristics, which cannot be ignored. Because of these features, the revolution cannot occur simultaneously in all countries. These revolutions can happen shortly one after another, but an overall explosion is unlikely.

E. Guevara: Unless there is a simultaneous explosion, the revolutions in individual countries will be suppressed by the reactionary forces in alliance with imperialism. This is confirmed, in particular, by the events in Venezuela and several other countries.

A. I. Mikoyan: This is possible, but not inevitable. If the revolution takes place quickly and the rebels manage to seize power throughout the country before the intervention begins, they can survive. But if this is not achieved, and the country has two governments, the imperialists will have a “legitimate” excuse to provide armed support to the government the rebels are trying to overthrow. Otherwise, it is difficult to organize intervention, because even imperialists are not always able to flout law and public opinion, especially now that there are powerful forces in the socialist camp, standing guard over the revolutionary movement.

As for Venezuela, I do not have enough information, but it seems to me that the recent attempt at insurrection was unsuccessful due to the fact that the rebels did not have a connection with the people. It was something like the battleship *Potemkin* during the 1905 Revolution, when the rebellious sailors were isolated from the people and defeated.

E. Guevara: We told out Venezuelan comrades that they were using the wrong tactics. They entered into an agreement with the army. They sent their people into the army. There was an uprising. As often happens in Latin American history, the army rebelled and the army surrendered. As the result, the

Venezuelan comrades lost their people, who were either killed in open battle, or captured.

A. I. Mikoyan: The battleship *Potemkin* was a good lesson to our revolutionaries. The uprising in Puerto Cabello can have the same significance for Venezuela. The uprising must be supported by the masses. Individual acts, like the recent sabotage of American oil fields, are not very useful. They do not cause serious damage to American imperialism as such. They hurt a particular company, and even that damage is relative. The company will rebuild the damaged installations and will continue to exploit people.

E. Guevara: Indeed, the company can rebuild the installation, but these installations can be blown up again. If this happens repeatedly, the imperialists will see the advanced firing line and they will lose any desire to invest their capital in that place.

A. I. Mikoyan: Speaking specifically about this case does not really prove the point. In recent years, there has been a tendency in the world not to import refined petroleum. Now it is more profitable to import crude oil and to develop the petrochemical industry around refining it. That is why American companies can let go of their oil refineries in Venezuela. This will only help them to exploit the Venezuelan people even more.

As for the theory of a simultaneous explosion, I would like to say that during the first years after the October Revolution, we were also waiting for socialist revolutions in other countries. Many people thought that if such revolutions do not take place, we would not make it. And in fact a socialist revolution broke out in Hungary and Bavaria. However, these revolutions were soon crushed by the reactionary forces. Some time passed, and we saw that the time for revolutionary crises in capitalist countries had passed, and then we made an important decision and announced that capitalism had entered a period of partial stabilization, and we need to build socialism on our own.

With this, the conversation ended and the Cuban comrades present at the dinner warmly said goodbye to A. I. Mikoyan and his accompanying colleagues.

Recorded by O. Darusenkov.

18 o'clock: In the embassy building, A. I. Mikoyan received the former president of Guatemala, Jacobo Árbenz, and the Guatemalan Labor Party Central Committee member, José Manuel Forntuny, at their request.

[Source: Personal archive of Sergo Mikoyan, donated to the National Security Archive. Translation by Anna Melyakova for the National Security Archive.]

Czechoslovakia-Cuba Relations and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1959-1962:

Evidence from the Prague Archives

Ed. note: Of all the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact allies in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia appears to have forged the fastest and closest political, economic, and military relationship with Fidel Castro's revolutionary leadership after it seized power in Havana at the beginning of 1959. (In fact, Russian documents have disclosed, Castro's guerrilla army first sought to purchase arms from Czechoslovakia—in apparently its first such foray beyond the Iron Curtain—as early as December 1958, on the eve of its final victory over the Batista dictatorship; the Kremlin approved the limited transaction, conducted through a Costa Rican firm.¹) With some in Havana considering relations with Prague an “ice-breaker” for further ties to the communist camp (Soviet-Cuban diplomatic relations were not restored until 1960²), Czechoslovak and Cuban leaders frequently exchanged visits and openly signed agreements to increase trade, cultural, scientific, educational exchanges, and the like—and secretly negotiated extensive arms transfers of Soviet-bloc arms to the rulers in Havana as they sought to defeat an ongoing challenge from anti-Castro Cuban insurgents (both on the island and in exile) and the looming threat of assault from Washington as US-Cuban relations rapidly deteriorated.

The collection of translated Czechoslovak documents presented here document this emerging relationship from 1959 to 1962 (at least from Prague's perspective and through the lens of Czech documents—unfortunately, Cuban archives containing records of foreign diplomatic and inter-party contacts remain closed, preventing a better understanding of Havana's side of the story).⁴ They are divided into two sections.

The first section presents evidence on the early development of Czechoslovak-Cuban relations from 1959 to 1961, which includes the somewhat sensitive issue of Prague's attempting to grasp the relationship and balance of power within Havana's rulers between Fidel Castro's “July 26th” movement and the traditional, pro-Moscow communist party, the People's Socialist Party (PSP). The reports here include contacts of the ruling Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) leadership with both camps, including such figures as Raul Castro and Che Guevara, both of whom visited Czechoslovakia during this period, and, significantly, extensive information on the Prague government's decision, in late September 1959, to approve sending what was euphemistically described as “special technical supplies” or “special technology” (i.e., weapons, specifically 50,000 submachine guns and ammunition) to Havana, using a neutral Swiss firm as a cut-out to conceal the transaction, especially from American eyes.⁵ The Czechoslovak willingness to covertly aid Cuba militarily,

at Havana's behest, paralleled a comparable deal contemplated by Poland at the same time—and both required a green-light from Moscow, which Nikita Khrushchev—briefly in the capital in between visits to the United States and China at the end of September—secretly gave, overruling Kremlin associates who considered tying the Soviet Union to revolutionary Cuba a hopeless cause since it was so firmly within the US sphere of influence. According to Fursenko and Naftali, who first revealed the episode (without the piquant details provided by the Czech documentation here), the step was a significant indication of the Soviet leader's emotional commitment to the new regime on the distant island, foreshadowing more fateful actions in the years to come. “If one were to choose the point at which the United States and the Soviet Union started inclining toward their first direct military clash, it was this day in late September 1959,” they wrote. “By approving the weapons sale”—Fursenko and Naftali were referring to the Polish sale, but Khrushchev apparently also approved the simultaneous Czech deal—“Khrushchev signaled to the top levels of the Soviet government that he would take risks to pursue Soviet aims in Latin America.”⁶

Notably, the Czech documents reveal, in July 1959 the Cubans had told a visiting Czech trade delegation in Cuba that Fidel Castro desired to obtain arms from Czechoslovakia, but “that given the current tense situation the purchase of these goods could only be made by way of a third country, otherwise direct supplies from Czechoslovakia could be politically manipulated by the United States, as in the case of Guatemala.” To mask the sale's actual partners, the documents show, the sale was to be made via a complicated conduit involving neutral Switzerland using financing from the charity C.A.R.E. Evidently, the Cubans succeeded in organizing such arrangements under the noses of Americans and of the Central Intelligence Agency in particular. In a late November 1959 conversation with the British ambassador in Washington, CIA director Allen W. Dulles explained the US objections to a proposed UK sale of planes to Cuba because he wanted the Cuban government to turn behind the Iron Curtain for arms, just like Arbenz had done in Guatemala, for this would help mobilize anti-Castro Cubans in exile for a covert operation to unseat the leadership in Havana. Evidently, Dulles didn't know that the Cubans had already done so, and effectively hidden the transaction for precisely the reason that he wished to coerce and expose such an act.⁷

As the Czech documents detail, this military tie intensified in 1960 with expanded requests from the PSP head, Blas Roca, and a visit to Czechoslovakia by Cuba's defense minister, Raúl

Castro, whom Prague had learned was more ideologically attuned to communism than his brother, together with Antonio Nunez Jimenez, the powerful figure in charge of Cuba's agricultural reform agency (INRA). Besides further Havana's prospects for buying Soviet-bloc arms, the documents show, the Cuban visitors used visits to Prague to widen and intensify their contacts with diplomats from other communist countries, ranging from the People's Republic of China and the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam to assorted Warsaw Pact nations who had not yet normalized relations and established embassies in Cuba. As mutual visits took place at an accelerating tempo, Prague and Havana exchanged embassies in the summer of 1960 and, within a year, they also inaugurated an airline connection via Czechoslovak state airlines (CSA), directly linking the island to the Soviet bloc by commercial aviation.

By the end of 1960 and spring of 1961, the documents show, top level Cuban requests—including from Fidel Castro and President Osvaldo Dorticos through Prague's embassy in Havana—sought an even broader military relationship to complement weapons and equipment being obtained from the Soviet Union, and one that only intensified after the Bay of Pigs.⁸ Though not formally acknowledged, this link was an open secret in Havana: "Although Czechoslovak sources never officially admitted military aid to Cuba," an outside analysis noted in June 1961, "it is no secret that a large number of Czechoslovak military advisors are present in Cuba and that Cuban air force pilots are receiving training in Czechoslovakia."⁹

By mid-1961, an analysis of Czech-Cuban relations over the past year concluded that Prague's "intensive activities" on the island had been "evident" since the summer of 1960 but "particularly vigorous" since the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion. Czechoslovakia, it noted, seemed to have been selected by Moscow as its "spearhead" in relations not only with Cuba but with much of the developing, or third, world.¹⁰

The second section of translated documents date from the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 as well as from the mostly secret Soviet-Cuban crisis in November, when Fidel Castro and many other Cubans were incensed at Nikita Khrushchev's decision to withdraw nuclear missiles, taken under the duress of US pressure and without consulting or even alerting Havana in advance (and, to add further insult, agreeing to UN inspection of the missiles' dismantling and removal on Cuban territory—an idea Castro resolutely rejected); and Khrushchev sent his closest associate, Anastas Mikoyan, who had helped broker the opening of ties between Moscow and Havana in February 1960, to mollify his disgruntled Cuban comrades.¹¹ When the crisis erupted in the fall of 1962, the close Cuban-Czechoslovak relationship established in the preceding years still persisted; a November 1962 comparative estimate of links to Cuba among Warsaw Pact countries judged that Czechoslovakia had "the lion's share" of

East/Central Europe trade with and various forms of assistance (including military) to Cuba, roughly twice as large the next highest (Poland and Bulgaria were more or less tied for second).¹² During the crisis Prague's ambassador in Havana, Vladimír Pavliček, enjoyed access to such senior figures as Foreign Minister Raúl Roa and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, the old PSP stalwart whom Castro had named to run INRA, and who had become a member of the inner leadership circle, who candidly vented negative feelings toward Khrushchev's decisions to the Czech envoy despite the latter's inevitable loyalty towards Moscow,¹³ The following summer, a Czechoslovak official in Prague insisted to a fraternal (Hungarian) diplomat that Czech-Cuban relations Cuba "did not change during the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban Missile] Crisis and the time following it, even amidst the biggest hardships...."¹⁴ Pavliček also, of course, kept in close contact with his Soviet colleague in Havana, Ambassador Aleksandr Alekseyev, from whom he gleaned bits of information about the lengthy negotiations between Mikoyan and the Cubans—and his Czechoslovak diplomatic colleague in Washington reported on his meeting (along with other Soviet-bloc envoys) with Mikoyan when the Soviet passed through town, meeting with JFK, at the end of November on his way back from Cuba to Moscow.¹⁵ More broadly, the dozens of ciphered cables from Pavliček (who also circulated with non-communist diplomats and did not shy away from reporting attitudes critical of the Soviet Union) printed here from late October-late November 1962 offer numerous fresh glimpses of attitudes, reactions, gossip, and events behind the "Sugarcane Curtain" that were difficult to discern or obtain from Washington. While Pavliček lacked the insider information on Soviet-Cuban exchanges available to Alekseyev, his reports—usefully compared with the now-available contemporaneous reports from the Polish and Hungarian embassies in Havana¹⁶—valuably add the record of inter-communist communications, perceptions, and even emotions during those turbulent, momentous days in the Cuban capital. Supplementing these materials from the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry files, also printed are translations of a number of party records, including reports during the crisis to CPCz General Secretary (and Czechoslovak President) Antonín Novotný; information on PSP leader Blas Roca's conversations in Prague in early November; and, most importantly for students of the Soviet side of the crisis, the record of Novotný's 30 October 1962 conversation with Khrushchev in Moscow (see following section).¹⁷



Most of the Czechoslovak documents printed here were gathered by Oldřich Tůma for the National Security Archive in preparation for the 2002 conference in Havana to mark the 40th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and translated by Linda Mastalir; only a few (e.g., the excerpt from the 30 October

1962 Novotný-Khrushchev conversation) were circulated at the time, and none of these have previously been printed. They were supplemented by documents gathered by James Hershberg during a 2009 visit to the Czech National Archives in Prague, and translated for this issue of the CWIHP Bulletin by Adolf Kotlík.—J.H.



DOCUMENTS ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA-CUBA RELATIONS, 1959-1961

Resolution of the 42nd Meeting of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Politburo, Regarding Talks with Representatives of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba, 24 March 1959

It is necessary to return these materials to the Technical Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia within one month at the latest.

Enclosure I

Resolution

Of the 42nd meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 24.3.1959.

Point: News about an interview with a representative from the People's Socialist Party of Cuba (Comrade J. Hendrych)

Passed resolution:

On the basis of news about the meeting with a representative of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba the following points are approved:

1. The sending of a trade mission to Cuba with the goal of preparing the road to normalizing diplomatic ties,
2. To express agreement for eventual negotiations about supplying arms should the Czechoslovak delegation be asked,
3. To provide the requested aid with regards to technical equipment for the People's Socialist Party of Cuba's printing house.

To be carried out by: Comrade J. Hendrych

Comrade V. David³

Comrade F. Krajčír⁴

Enclosure III

Memorandum

On talks with Comrade Severo Aguirre, member of the Politburo, Central Committee of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba.

Comrade Aguirre provided information about the situation in Cuba and the work of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba.

He stated that the partisan movement in Cuba, which began as an isolated action of armed petty bourgeois democrats, gradually changed into a mass movement of armed workers and peasants who form 90% of the revolutionary army. Considerable credit for this development goes to the communist party, which has for many years led the masses of landless people and petty farmers to fight for land reform: the rebel mutineers' leader, Fidel Castro, started to look for support amongst the masses of peasants after the tactic of isolated terrorist acts against the Batista dictatorship failed, and the masses of peasants supported Castro when he adopted the communist slogan of democratic land reform.

In 1958 the Central Committee of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba sent a member of the Politburo, Comrade [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez, to the headquarters of the rebel movement. The Party gave its support to the rebel movement and gained high positions within the organization. A series of significant command posts were held and are held by communists. Fidel Castro, who at the beginning of 1957 still yielded to anticommunist attitudes on the assumption that communists intend the "misuse" him for their own goals, gradually shed his anticommunist prejudices. American imperialism itself had much to do with his positive political development, since on the one hand it flirted with Castro's movement and pretended to sympathize with it, and on the other hand embraced the fascist dictator Batista with all-round military aid.

According to the Cuban comrades, Castro is sensitive to the requests of the masses. In the past the communists criticized Castro often—even publicly—for his incorrect approach that testified to the petty bourgeois mentality of the uprising's leaders. For example, in the spring of last year an appeal for a revolt was made to the soldiers in Batista's army—together with a warning that in the event instructions would not be followed, the leaders of the uprising would be shot. As a result, the honorable members of the ruling army and fascist criminals were brought together for a time.

Fidel Castro belongs to the leftist group the "July 26th of July Movement," to which his younger, though politically more mature brother Raul also belongs (the present leader of the armed forces). In government, Fidel Castro has surrounded himself with honorable, uncorrupted politicians who are partly fearful of the increasing pressure of American

imperialism. The Popular Socialist Party of Cuba is pushing for cooperation not only with the leftist elements in the “July 26th Movement,” but also with its center. In the realm of politics the widest democratic front is working to neutralize the rightist elements in the “July 26th Movement.”

The party enjoyed considerable success during the reorganization of workers’ divisions, though it must overcome sabotage from the rightist wing of the “July 26th Movement,” which is opposed to the consistent democratization of the divisions and does not want to cooperate with the communists. In the countryside, communists are working in 300 local peasant unions. The party supports shared land reform that was begun on the liberated partisan territory and gives landless peasants (so-called *precaristas*) and petty farmers free land up to an area of 26 hectares, and the option of leasing land up to 39 hectares at a low rate.

The Popular Socialist Party of Cuba is requesting a change in the institutional law on land reform, which currently requires payment for land in advance, and in cash. In the next stage of the struggle for land reform the Party will request the confiscation of property belonging to landowners. American firms, which own 66% of the agricultural land, fall into this category. Thus, the fight for land reform is related to the fight against imperialism. At the head of the revolutionary government, Fidel Castro took the first step in nationalizing American companies by installing a state control commission into the staff of the American firm [International] Tel. & Tel. [ITT] Comp., which maintains disproportionately high telephone rates for its customers.

The bourgeois democratic revolution in Cuba was, and remains, largely led by the anti-imperialist petty bourgeois and the national middle-bourgeois. However, the tone is currently not set by the representatives of democratic opposition in the government, but rather by the petty bourgeois leaders of the revolutionary army (Fidel and Raul Castro, E. Guevara), who rely on the people’s army. Communists have a high level of influence in this army, and they sympathize with these men [Castro, etc.]. The Cuban revolution included a combination of the people’s partisan struggle and the actions of the working class in the cities, who came to support the people’s armed uprising. The actions of the working class (which were above all actively organized by communists) frustrated the intentions of the USA to replace the inevitable fall of Batista’s government with a new puppet.

During the course of the progressive bourgeois democratic revolution, the state bourgeois apparatus was largely broken-up: the army has only an insignificant number of the lower-ranking officers from the former ruling army (those who could prove that they did not participate in military actions against the people). The police forces were replaced

and the so-called “bureau for the subjugation of communism” was closed down. Those political parties that compromised themselves by participating in the election farce of November 1958 were dissolved. People were replaced in the departments of justice and the municipal boards, including the mayors. Members of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba were actively involved in all these revolutionary actions. Though the Cuban bourgeois democratic revolution did not begin under the leadership of the proletariat, the proletariat’s example did influence and continues to influence its course with progressive slogans and tactics. The communists continue to develop increasingly better conditions for fulfilling the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution. Counter-revolutionary forces are currently disorganized and limited to individual groups of reactionary bourgeois that are isolated from the masses. They are gradually reorganizing themselves, especially with the support of the reactionary press. This process will reinitiate individual counter-revolutionary fronts of the bourgeois, though according to the opinions of the Cuban comrades, this will still take some time. Therefore, American imperialism cannot openly take up supporting the counterrevolutionaries who pretend to agree with the revolution and propagate the slogan: “for the revolution, but away with the communists.” This situation is allowing for the renewal of the Popular Socialist Party, which had over 10,000 members at the end of December. Since then, the number of members has apparently increased considerably. The Party publishes a daily, *Hoy (Today)*; a weekly bulletin for its functionaries, *Carta Semanal (Weekly Letter)*; and it is preparing to once again publish the theoretical magazine *Fundamentalos (The Basics)*. The Party’s propaganda has two important tasks: firstly, to explain to the masses that they must become the main force which will determine further development in Cuba, and secondly, to paralyze the anti-communist propaganda spread widely by the bourgeois press, which abuses “freedom for all.”

Comrade Aguirre emphasized the fact that the revolutionary commanders, including Fidel Castro, are counting on the fact that after a time, should its planned economic boycott of Cuba prove futile, the USA will proceed to provoke an armed struggle. In this case the exceptional assistance of socialist countries acquires meaning. Of these, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has in Cuba particularly favorable conditions to provide aid. Diplomatic ties between the two countries were not interrupted (as they were with the USSR), but they were settled practically as a consequence of the fact that the Czechoslovak charge d’affaires was recalled before February 1948 for economic reasons. Trade with Cuban companies continued even during Batista’s dictatorship.



These concrete questions were raised during the discussion:

1. The sending of a Czechoslovak trade mission to Cuba. It would have a semi-official character and arrive without any publicity. The mission would discuss the possibility of expanding Czechoslovak trade with Cuba, and would emphasize the wish to grant the Cuban government economic aid on the basis of a mutual agreement. The Cuban comrades pledge that for such a trade mission, equipped with full powers and politically well-prepared, they will arrange meetings with the major representatives of the Cuban government, including Fidel Castro.

This is a suitable moment for such a step. According to Comrade Aguirre, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic can figure as “an ice-breaker of the socialist camp” in the Caribbean region. In relation to this he said that for example, the Chinese People’s Republic could purchase Cuban sugar through the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (thus far it is purchased through England). In the near future the Cuban comrades will determine which of the Castro government’s diplomatic representatives would be best suited to carry out an authorized probe. On the 11th of this month, Comrade Aguirre discussed with Comrade Hloch at the Ministry of International Trade some detailed questions related to the eventual sending of an unofficial Czechoslovak trade mission to Cuba.

2. With regards to the Cuban comrades’ request dating to the end of 1958 (the supply of arms to the insurgent army), Comrade Aguirre emphasized that the situation changed with the quick overthrow of the Batista dictatorship. However, in the event that the Cuban government should request the sale of military technology, it would be correct for the Czechoslovak side to oblige. According to the Cuban comrades, such an act would have a very positive psychological effect not only on the masses, but also on the leadership of the “July 26th Movement,” for which it was always difficult to secure arms.
3. Furthermore, Comrade Aguirre requested technical aid (type-setting machines) for the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba’s new printing press. He said that the Popular Socialist Party will receive assistance from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the East German Socialist Party, which will donate a rotary press. From our side it would be possible to provide five well-kept line presses that have been utilized until now.



In advance, Comrade Hendrych voiced his agreement with the suggestions and requests of Comrade Aguirre, adding that he will inform the Party’s leadership.

10.3.1959

[Source: Central State Archive, Prague, Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, fund 02-2, Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 1958-1962, volume 235 and 314, point 14, page 9. Translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlík.]



Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) Politburo Resolution (with enclosures) on Arms Transfers to Cuba, September 1959

Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

Strictly confidential!

3552/14

Point: Special technical supplies to Cuba

A Swiss firm is interested in purchasing special technology in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic for the Cuban armed forces. The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was informed in advance. On the basis of its resolution of 8 September 1959, a proposal for signing an authorized contract is being put forward. The matter was discussed with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and National Defense.

Enclosure I

Proposed resolution

Enclosure III

Report

Presented by: Comrade F. Krajčír

25 September 1959

Number of pages: 8

It is necessary to return these materials to the Technical Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia within one month at the latest.

Comrade Hamouz⁵: there is no capacity for repairing submachine guns.

Question of manufacturing munitions

Comrade Jankovcová, Comrade Krajčír together with Comrade David are to verify in the resolution that the arms are really meant for the Cuban government.

Enclosure I

Resolution

Of the 69th meeting of the Politburo, Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 29.IX.59

Point: Special technical supplies to Cuba
(Comrade F. Krajčír)

Resolution:

The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

- I. takes note of the introduced report
- II. approves of:

1. Realizing the supply of specialized technology, or sending Czechoslovak samples to the Cuban government via a suitable intermediary on the basis of a license or another official document from a neutral country. This in the event that the Cuban government does not recognize the possibility of discussing these questions with the Czechoslovak government directly, *and that before the realization of these prospective supplies, Comrade Krajčír would present the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia with an authorized proposal.*⁶

2. The supply of 50,000 9mm guns of the Czechoslovak type 23/25, and the requested amount of corresponding munitions to the Cuban armed forces by way of the Swiss firm Philipp Friedlander as an intermediary.

3. Signing a contract with the Swiss firm P. Friedlander for the supply of the above noted 9mm guns and cartridges, on the basis of a Swiss re-export license and on the condition that the goods be picked up at the Czechoslovak border, with payment in cash in a foreign currency, so long as the company in question proves that the goods are designated for the Cuban armed forces.

III. The following are charged with:

1. Comrade Krajčír together with Comrade David are to ensure that before the contract is signed it is proven that the arms are designated for the Cuban government, and a prospective inquiry with the

authorized Cuban state organs is not out of the question.

2. In 1959 and 1960, [Czechoslovak Minister of National Defense] Comrade B. Lomský, together with Comrade F. Krajčír, are to free from the army's supplies, for the purpose stated in point II/2, a total of 50,000 9mm guns, type 23/25, and 80 million 9mm cartridges, all in a manner that would allow at least 15,000 pieces to be shipped at the beginning of December 1959.

To be undertaken by: Comrade F. Krajčír

Comrade B. Lomský

Comrade V. David⁷

Those to be notified: [Chairman of the State Planning Committee] Comrade O. Šimůnek

[Czechoslovak Minister of Finance] Comrade J. Ďuriš

Comrade J. Hendrych

IV. Conclusion

With regards to the above, we recommend approving, after deliberations, this addition resolved in point III:

“Comrade F. Krajčír, together with Comrade David, is charged with ensuring that before the contract is signed it is credibly verified that the arms are designated for the Cuban government, and a prospective inquiry of the relevant Cuban state organs is not out of the question.”

Furthermore, we recommend adding a sentence with the following wording to Point II/1:

“...and that, before the realization of these prospective supplies, the minister of foreign trade would always present the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia with a relevant proposal.”

Prague, 28 September 1959 Department Head:

Signature unreadable

Enclosure III

Report for the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia regarding the discussion on supplies of specialized technology from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the Cuban armed forces.

At the beginning of September of this year, the Swiss citizen Willy Strub visited the Ministry of International Trade's main Technical Department.⁸ He produced a document with the credentials of Mr. Philipp Friedlander who is authorized by the Swiss to deal in arms and war supplies (license #1876 Eidg. Militardep.). The purpose of his trip was to discuss

the possibility of supplying 50,000 pieces of 9mm guns and ammunition (5-10,000 pieces per gun) to the Cuban armed forces.

The Cuban locals have been interested in special technology from Czechoslovakia since the end of 1958. At the end of December last year, on behalf of a purely Costa Rican firm, the Czechoslovak national in charge of trade and assigned to Mexico passed on a request for military technology to aid Fidel Castro's units. Back then, the possibility of supplying trophies or older Czechoslovak arms was discussed with the Soviets. On 7 January of this year, the Soviet State Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs voiced a positive stance towards Czechoslovakia's intention to aid the liberation struggle in Cuba. In connection, the Politburo of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in its resolution of 20 January 1959 (point 15) gave the minister of international trade the task of realizing the aforementioned supplies after a preliminary consultation with Soviet representatives, should the new Cuban government request them.

While discussing the news of the interview with the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba's representative, the 42nd meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia also concerned itself with the question of supplying special technical aid to Cuba. The relevant resolution of 24 March 1959 (point 7) stipulated that a trade mission will be sent to Cuba, which amongst other things should inform the Cubans of our agreement with the eventual discussions concerning the supply of arms.

On the basis of this, in July of this year the head of the Czechoslovak trade mission, Comrade Maruška, held talks with the director of the National Institute for Land Reform, Captain Jimenez. In the closing discussions the above named Cuban functionary affirmed interest in arms from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. At the same time he voiced the opinion of the head of the government, Dr. Fidel Castro, that given the current tense situation the purchase of these goods could only be made by way of a third country, otherwise direct supplies from Czechoslovakia could be politically manipulated by the United States, as in the case of Guatemala.

Therefore, the Ministry of International Trade assumes that, taking into consideration the current viewpoint of the Cuban representatives, it would be useful to take advantage of suitable intermediaries, and possibly realize special technical supplies of Czechoslovak types to Cuba. This would be done on the basis of a license or another official document from one of the neutral states (Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Finland).

The recent visit of Mr. W. Strub to Prague seems to be in line with the stated conception of the Cuban locals, who apparently found it suitable to locate an intermediary in neu-

tral Switzerland. Willy Strub said that the transaction would be made on the basis of a proper Swiss re-export license, and in several shipments. Mr. Friedlander would personally come to Czechoslovakia to sign the authorized contract, and this on the condition that the price include transport to the Czechoslovak border, as well as transport to a loading dock (which should be in Rostock, East Germany), and that the shipment overseas would be arranged by the buyer. Payment would be made in Swiss Francs on an irreversible line of credit that Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft, Zurich, would open at the Czechoslovak State Bank in Prague. Mr. Strub also said that the purchase would be financed by the American religious organization CARE, which is apparently as a part of its charity work a major buyer of Cuban sugar, and apparently has an interest in our particular shipment. CARE's Vice-President, Benjamin Winkler, is in Havana at this time and awaiting news from Mr. Friedlander. Thus far, the Ministry of International Trade knows nothing about the goals and intentions of the CARE organization.

The Swiss representative discussed other issues not dependent upon the supply of 9mm guns, which he asked be quickly sent to Cuba either through the aforementioned Benjamin Winkler, or directly to the leader of the Cuban armed forces, Raul Castro. However, employees of the Ministry of International Trade (acting as employees of Omnipol) slowed discussions due to doubts about the suitability of sending the requested samples from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic directly to Cuba, so Mr. Strub agreed to take them himself and arrange in Switzerland their quick shipment to the interested parties. Having informed the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia beforehand, and with a resolution passed on 8 September 1959 (point 28) agreeing with this plan, the goods were handed over on 10 September of this year.

The called-for 50,000 guns would be covered by the main technical division of the Ministry of International Trade from its military supplies, allowing them to release 20,000 pieces this year, and the remaining 30,000 in 1960. As far as cartridges are concerned, the Ministry of National Defense is putting only 80 million pieces up for disposal, and of this about 1/4th this year and the rest next year. The requested number of cartridges (250-500 million pieces) is disproportionately high when compared with the number of requested guns. However, if the customer were to really order an amount exceeding the number of supplies freed by the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of International Trade would try to import the goods from either Poland or Bulgaria, and possibly, together with the Ministry of General Engineering they would try to find a means for the manufacture of these goods in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

The total cost value of the noted supplies amounts to about 32 million Kčs, of which the 50,000 9mm guns of Czechoslovak type 23/25 equal about 14 million Kčs, and the 80 million cartridges about 18 million Kčs. Considering the fact that arms of the 2nd category are involved—that is, used arms—it would be necessary to undertake an inspection of these guns. The Ministries of International Trade, National Defense and General Engineering are discussing this inspection in an effort to realize the first shipment in the greatest possible sum by the beginning of December at the latest, so that the wishes of the customer are adhered to. In addition, from our economic perspective, should the relevant payment in international currency add to the fulfillment of tasks planned for the year 1959, this would be welcomed.

Next week the Minister of International Trade will inform a representative from the Soviet State Committee of Ministers for International Trade of the discussions with the Swiss intermediary, and of the planned route for supplying the Cuban armed forces with the above noted guns and ammunition from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

The realization of this transaction would have a series of advantages. Above all, it would be the first supply of specialized technology for use in the support of an anti-imperialist movement in the Central American region (not considering the supplies sent to Guatemala), and at the same time Czechoslovakia would not carry the risk of the naval transport. Furthermore, it would be a useful way to utilize guns already put out of commission, and the Ministry of National Defense would gradually release a total of 160,000 pieces for export by the year 1964. At the same time, old ammunition manufactured in the years 1946-1951 would be sold.

The question of supplying the Cuban armed forces with specialized technology by way of an intermediary was first discussed with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and National Defense. Neither have objections to this export of goods. Therefore, the Ministry of International Trade recommends that the Politburo of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia pass the proposed resolution.

[Source: Central State Archive, Prague, Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, fund 02-2, Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 1958-1962, Vol. 259 and 343, point 29, page 19. Obtained and translated for the National Security Archive.]



Report of the Czechoslovak Politburo Regarding Military Assistance to the Cuban Government, 16 May 1960, and CPCz Politburo Resolution, 17 May 1960

POLITBURO OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF
THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!

5155/14

Point: Supplies of special material to the Cuban revolutionary government.

Enclosure I

Proposed resolution

Enclosure III

Report

PLEASE RETURN IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
DISCUSSIONS!

Presented by: Comrade F. Krajčír

16 May 1960

Number of pages: 15

It is necessary to return these materials to the Technical
Division of the Central Committee of the Communist Party
of Czechoslovakia within one month at the latest.

Enclosure II

Report

On supplying special materials from Czechoslovakia to Cuba.

During his visit to Czechoslovakia in April 1960, Comrade Blas Roca, the General Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba, requested the supply of needed equipment and military technology to the Cuban revolutionary government. At the end of April this request was extended to include further technical goods, and presented in Prague by a representative of the Cuban government, Captain Pina. In addition to the supply of special technology, Czechoslovakia was asked to provide technical assistance during the training and preparation of cadres from the Cuban armed forces. The Czechoslovak side promised full support and gave its assurance that it will try to meet the stated requests.

The possibility of supplying Cuba with special technology as well as providing technical assistance was consulted with the Soviet Union a number of times, the most recent being in March 1960. The Soviet government adopted a positive viewpoint on the matter of supplying specialized technology, and with the purpose of agreeing upon a joint course of action sent to Prague in April and May 1960 General

Sidorovich, who discussed these matters with the general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the president of the Republic Comrade A. Novotný, and the deputy chairman of the government and chairman of the State Planning Commission, Comrade O. Šimůnk.

On 11-14 May 1960, closing discussions were held in Prague between the Soviet delegation led by Comrade General Sidorovich, and the Czechoslovak side which was led by the director of the main Technical Department of the Ministry of International Trade, Comrade František Mareš.⁹ The consequences of the policy to supply specialized technology and offer technical assistance to the Cuban revolutionary government were discussed at these meetings:

1. The extent of the supplies:

The supplies of specialized technology from Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union cover practically all of the Cuban side's requests.

However, due to a shortage of the requested types, it will not be possible to supply Cuba with the following: 13 airplanes (model Avia-14), 24 rocket-launchers (model RM-130), and 4 radio satellites with a range of 250 Km. In part, it will be possible to satisfy a request for the supply of 7.62mm bullets for fully automatic gun type 52, and light machine-gun type 52.9mm cartridges for guns type 23/25, and airplanes L-60 in a joint version. The total of unfulfilled Cuban requests numbers about 150 million Kčs.

Of the entire value of requests presented by the Cuban side that reach about 1.016 million Kčs, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union can together supply special technology with a value of about 866 million Kčs, and materials of a civilian character valued at 40 million Kčs (costs at regular rates on other capitalist markets) according to CIF values. Of this, the Czechoslovak share of special technical supplies will number 569 million Kčs (or 66%) and 7.9 million Kčs (or 20% in civilian technology), whereas the Soviet share will reach 297 million Kčs (or 34%) in specialized technology, and 32.4 million Kčs (or 80%) in civilian materials.

According to the agreement with the Soviet representatives, Czechoslovakia will get one-third of the CIF price for the specialized technology from Cuba, so about 190 million Kčs, and from the Soviet Union 15% of the transport costs, so about 77 million Kčs. Thus against the calculated cost of the specialized technology at 569 million Kčs under the conditions of CIF, the Cubans will in total give the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic about 267 million Kčs, or about 47% of the regular rates of specialized technology. At the same time, Czechoslovakia will save on the naval transportation costs,

which the Soviets will provide free of charge at about 35 million Kčs.

When compared with the regular rates in capitalist markets the final settlement does present a difference of about 267 million Kčs, yet this is not comparable because it concerns technology which is not usable in Czechoslovakia, and at the same time unsellable in other capitalist markets. All of the specialized technology being considered for export to Cuba comes from a surplus of supplies at the Ministry of National Defense.

The question of the required amount of ammunition will apparently be one of the basic questions dealt with in the negotiations with the Cuban side. It is not possible to fully cover the Cuban side's requests for 7.62mm and 9mm ammunition from the ministry's supplies, and the remainder would have to be manufactured. If the Cuban needs are to be covered with at least 10 caliber shots for fully automatic guns, light machine-guns and guns, it would be necessary to manufacture another 116 million 7.62mm cartridges, and 150 million 9mm cartridges in Czechoslovakia. The costs of producing ammunition in this amount would be about 130 million Kčs at going rates. In contrast, the Czechoslovak side would get a total of 47 million Kčs in reimbursement from Cuba and the Soviet Union, though the export value of this ammunition would be 100 million Kčs according to CIF export rates. This means that the manufacture of such an amount of ammunition would be particularly unbeneficial for Czechoslovakia since it would mean a loss of 53 million Kčs in the export cost, not to mention that foreign currency expenses would not be covered in the settlement. Therefore, during negotiations the Czechoslovak side is thinking to alert the Cuban side to the fact that it will not be possible to secure ammunition supplies in a larger quantity than is proposed, and to make them aware of the need to construct a munitions works quickly—something the main Technical Department at the Ministry of International Trade is currently discussing. At the same time the Czechoslovak side will warn the Cuban representatives of the serious problems that would result from storing such a large quantity of ammunition. In the event that the Czechoslovak side should fail to convince the Cuban side of the advantageous proposed solution, it would then be necessary to solve the problem of manufacturing the higher number of ammunition, and therefore also how to decrease the losses that the manufacture of ammunition would bring for Czechoslovakia.

A reoccurring problem, though not as economically burdensome, is the supply of telephone switchboards TU-30 (10 pieces) and TU-20 (200 pieces), which are not possible to get from the Ministry of National Defense's supplies at the current time, and which it would also be necessary to manufacture.

During the negotiations it will also be necessary to alert the Cuban side to the fact that the majority of the special technical supplies are of a second category, which either means that they were in storage or are used. For this reason it was decided upon with the Soviet representatives that materials of the second category will be sold at 10% less than those of the first category.

The possibility of also supplying spare parts in a 3-year joint venture along with most of the technical supplies is also being considered. Such a supply of spare parts could in a rough outline satisfy the Cuban side's requests until 1962 or 1963. The question of spare parts for the years 1962-1963 remains unsolved, during which time it will be necessary to acquire spare parts to secure medium and general repairs. Considering the fact that the specialized technical supplies have not been manufactured in either Czechoslovakia nor the Soviet Union for several years now, it would only be possible to partly satisfy the Cuban requests for spare parts after this time if they would be available in storage at the Ministry of National Defense. It is not possible to consider the manufacture of spare parts after 1962 and 1963 for the simple reason that in most cases the required tools and materials are no longer available in the factories. It will be necessary to warn the Cuban side of this problem, adding that the Czechoslovak side will be able to judge the possibility of supplying spare parts on a case by case basis, and that the Cuban side will apparently be forced to acquire spare parts for repairs from a part of the supplied special technology.

Closely tied to the question of spare parts is also the problem of undertaking repairs of the military technology supplied to Cuba. Czechoslovakia will offer to supply mobile repair shops to secure normal repairs. However, it will not be possible to arrange for medium and general repairs in permanent repair shops in Cuba considering the fact that neither the Czechoslovak side nor the Soviet side will be capable of securing the needed machines for such a factory. As an alternative in some cases, it would be possible to consider medium and general repairs on the supplied special technology in Czechoslovak repair factories, and this based on the assumption that the required spare parts will be available.

Considering the unique situation in Cuba, and at the request of the Soviet side, the first shipment of specialized materials will be sent prior to signing the contract between Czechoslovakia and Cuba. This shipment, valued at about 50 million Kčs CIF, will include 10,000 Czechoslovak 9mm guns, 500 light and 250 heavy machine guns, 100,000 hand grenades and 40 million cartridges. As part of arranging this shipment it is first necessary to send Czechoslovak specialists to Cuba to have them check upon the storage spaces, as well as secure the preservation and storage of the materials. At the

same time they would offer a basic lesson on how to use the materials. For the time being the Czechoslovak side would cover the expenses of sending these specialists to Cuba, and once the contract is signed these expenses would be charged within the framework of providing technical assistance.

2. Principles on which to close the agreement

On the basis of an agreement between representatives of the communist parties of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Soviet Union the supply of specialized materials to Cuba will be realized for only one-third of their CIF price. One-third of the entire value, thus 288 million Kčs would be paid in the years 1960-1969 in ten equal annual installments. According to the agreement made with the representatives from the Soviet Union, the Czechoslovak delegation will press for these payments to be made in a foreign currency, which would yield 28.8 million Kčs annually, and of those 19 million Kčs would go to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and 9.8 million Kčs to the Soviet Union. In the event that the Cuban side would refuse to pay in foreign currency it was agreed upon that a combination of payments can be accepted, such as: payment in a foreign currency and in goods, including payment in the form of Cuban goods only. Regarding materials of a civilian character, the Czechoslovak delegation will push for a maximum 5-year credit at the full value of goods supplied, which would make the Czechoslovak share of payments about 1.3 million Kčs. The Czechoslovak delegation will request the same method of payment as with the special materials.

As far as the guarantee on the extended credit, a bank guarantee will be requested from the National Bank of Cuba. The credit will be granted at 2% annual interest.

If it were necessary to accept payment in the form of Cuban goods, the Czechoslovak delegation will insist that maximum advantages be provided during the purchase of Cuban goods, and that a suitable assortment of Cuban goods be presented.

In relation to supplies of specialized materials Cuba will be given technical aid, both in the form of training specialists in Czechoslovakia, and in sending Czechoslovak specialists to Cuba. The Czechoslovak delegation will also press for the maximum technical assistance to be provided in Czechoslovakia, and only the essential bit in Cuba.

The Czechoslovak delegation should be authorized to provide a maximum 8-year credit for implementing the technical assistance in Czechoslovakia. A cash settlement will be requested for providing technical assistance in Cuba.

When realizing the supplies the Czechoslovak side must also arrange for the necessary technical documentation, and it will press the Cuban side to accept these in English because in Czechoslovakia there is no opportunity to arrange for a

translation into Spanish. The Cuban side would arrange for the translation from English to Spanish on its own.

On the basis of the agreement between representatives of the communist parties of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Czechoslovak delegation also discussed with the Soviet delegation the question of the Soviet Union assisting Czechoslovakia in realizing the supply of special materials to Cuba.

There will be an authorized agreement negotiated with the Soviet government, in which the responsibilities of the Soviet Union to Czechoslovakia will be anchored—Czechoslovakia being the carrier of all ties with the government of the Cuban republic, under conditions that will be negotiated between the Czechoslovak and Cuban delegations.

In relation to providing technical assistance to Cuba, the Soviet side will also secure technical assistance to Czechoslovakia both by sending Soviet specialists to Cuba through Czechoslovak channels, and by sending Soviet specialists to Czechoslovakia and granting material assistance. The question of material aid has not yet been fully agreed upon, for the Soviet representatives are of the opinion that the special materials which Czechoslovakia does not have on hand for training be bought in the Soviet Union, while the Czechoslovak delegation is of the opinion that the Soviet side should lend these materials. The Soviet delegation also agreed that if Czechoslovakia would provide technical aid under conditions of credit, it would adjust the payment conditions of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic for these same services. To this end, both sides will still discuss the details of technical assistance to be given by the Soviet Union.

The Czechoslovak side will secure the technical documentation that must be sent to Cuba with the special materials, and do the same for the Soviet materials. The Soviet delegation reasoned its position by saying that it does not have the opportunity to secure a translation of this documentation into the English language. At the same time it emphasized that with the supply of special materials to Egypt and Indonesia the same practice was utilized, with the Czechoslovak organizations being given the required documentation in Russian, and with the Soviet Union passing on only additions and changes to the documentation. The Soviet side binds itself to paying Czechoslovakia all the expenses related to the translation and preparation of the documentation for the Cuban side. As has already been proven in earlier operations, securing this request presents a difficult and laborious task. It means that all the documentation available in Czechoslovakia and related to the Soviet materials has to be looked over, corrections must be made according to the changes that have occurred, additions must be made, all of these changes must be

translated into English and the documentation re-written in English. The extent of this material is about 1,000 books and brochures (300,000 pages). It will be necessary to secure the required number of translators and clerks to fulfill this task.

In relation to arranging the transport of goods, the question of insurance was discussed and in an effort to keep the individual shipments and routes secret, the Soviet side will not insure the goods against war risks. The consequence is that the Czechoslovak delegation must ensure that in the event the materials would be damaged during the transport to a larger extent than is covered under regular insurance, the Cuban side will still be obliged to fulfill its responsibilities, even without receiving the materials.

During the discussions with the Soviet delegation an agreement was also attained stipulating that, should the Cuban side fail to fulfill its payment obligations to Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union will reimburse Czechoslovakia another 15%, so that reimbursements from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would total 30%, and this from the value of supplies delivered to the Czechoslovak border for export. This reimbursement would be paid through existing Czechoslovak-Soviet accounts.

The Czechoslovak and Soviet sides reached an agreement in that as part of its share, the Soviet side will carry all risks ensuing from the possible failure of the Cuban side to fulfill payments.

Considering that practically all of the supplied materials are of a second category, the Czechoslovak delegation will refuse any requests to provide a guarantee on the supplied goods.

During the discussions the Soviet side stated refusal with having a representative of the Soviet side join the Czechoslovak delegation for negotiations in Cuba and did not recommend the Czechoslovak delegation to come into contact with representatives of the USSR in Cuba. The Soviet delegation also refused to have the needed Czechoslovak specialists be transported to Cuba with the first Soviet shipment of special materials. Thus there is a question of how to best undertake the transport of the rather numerous Czechoslovak delegation. For to secure the storage, transfer and conservation of the first shipment it will be necessary to have about 12 Czechoslovak military experts in Cuba beforehand, who together with the members of the delegation will comprise a group of 25 people. It is probable that such a number will draw the attention of the public. Therefore, it will be necessary to weigh the question of transportation so that the shipments are conducted on a smaller scale and by way of various routes, or consider realizing the shipment with Czechoslovak airplanes of the Ilyuhin I1-18.

As for the actual negotiations, the delegation will be led by F. Krajčír and his alternate who also has signing authority, Comrade Mareš, the Director of the Ministry of International Trade's Technical Department.

5515/60 Strictly confidential!

RESOLUTION

99th meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 17 May 1960

Re. Point 28: Supplies of special materials to the Cuban revolutionary government (Comrade F. Krajčír)

Resolved:

The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

I. Takes note of the presented report.

II. Agrees

1. With the government of the Czechoslovak Republic being the negotiating party during the discussions about supplying specialized as well as some civilian materials to the Cuban revolutionary government, including these supplies from the USSR;

2. That due to the unique situation of Cuba, the first shipment of specialized technology should proceed without a contract with the Cuban side;

3. With the granting of an 8-year line of credit at 2% interest for the training of Cuban specialists in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The maximum amount would be 50 million Kčs, to be paid between 1960 and 1967, and as with the realization of technical assistance and training in Cuba, payment in goods is to be accepted only in the most critical of circumstances;

4. With the signing of these successive documents between the government of the Czechoslovak republic and the revolutionary government of Cuba:

a) Agreement on the delivery of specialized materials with a total value of about 886 million Kčs at CIF rates, including the USSR's share (USSR 297 million Kčs, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic 569 million Kčs). The Cuban revolutionary government will pay one-third of the CIF price, or about 288 million Kčs, so that two-

thirds of the price of materials will come in the form of a gift to the government of the Cuban republic.

This payment equaling one-third of the actual price will be made in foreign currency, or in Cuban goods, and in ten equal annual payments starting in 1960, possibly in 1961, with a 2% interest rate.

Included in the agreement will also be some materials of a civilian character originating from Czechoslovakia and with a value of about 7.9 million Kčs, and from the Soviet Union with a value of 32.4 million Kčs.

b) A protocol on granting technical assistance during the training of Cuban military experts in courses organized in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic or in Cuba;

c) An agreement on supplies of equipment for the manufacture of 7.62mm fully automatic guns, model 52, and 9mm guns model 23/25, as well as the relevant ammunition. In addition, this includes the granting of licensed documentation, technical aid connected with building the factory, and a 5-year line of credit at 2% annual interest to be paid between 1961-1965, and to a maximum of 20 million Kčs;

5. With the granting of a loan to a maximum of 30 million Kčs for the supply of civilian planes and sporting weapons of Czechoslovak origin. This would be paid in five instalments during the years 1961-1965, at a 2% interest rate; the same conditions apply to shipments of some Soviet materials of a civilian character;

6. With the establishment of an appointed expert official for technical matters as part of the economic section of the Czechoslovak embassy in Cuba;

7. With raising the positions of employees from the Ministry of International Trade's main Technical Department, and on the suggestion of Comrade F. Krajčír, authorizing Comrade O. Šimůnek with carrying out the relevant measures.

III. Responsibilities of:

1. Comrade F. Krajčír

a) In the name of the Czechoslovak government, to finalize an agreement with the government of the USSR on the shipment of specialized materials with a total value of about 297 million Kčs from the USSR to Cuba, and

this under the same conditions on which an agreement between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba will be based, provided that:

Through the established Czechoslovak-Soviet accounts, the government of the USSR will provide a reimbursement of 35% of the value of Czechoslovak materials shipped to Cuba, at intervals that will match those of payments agreed upon in the contract between the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba,

In the event that the Cuban government does not fulfill its responsibilities, the government of the USSR will, within the framework of the established Czechoslovak-Soviet accounts, reimburse the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic another 15% of the remaining value of Czechoslovak materials.

b) In discussions with the USSR, have them agree that the Soviet Union will transport the specialized materials originating in Czechoslovakia from the Czechoslovak border to the Cuban port at its own expense.

2. Comrade B. Lomský

a) To satisfy the Ministry of International Trade's requests regarding the first shipment so that this shipment is at the station Čierná n/T. at the latest by 21 May 1960.

b) To secure the shipment of specialized materials for Cuba according to the contracts signed by the governments of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba.

c) To secure, according to the requests of the Minister of International Trade, technical assistance both in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and in Cuba.

3. Comrade J. Ďuriš

a) To undertake, together with Comrade F. Krajčír and Comrade O. Šimůnek the necessary confirmations, should any arise from this resolution.

4. Comrade K. Poláček

a) To secure, according to the requests of the Minister of International Trade, supplies of equipment to be invested into the construction of a weapons and ammunitions

factory in Cuba, according to the agreement between the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba.

IV. The governmental delegation will be composed of: Head of the delegation, Comrade F. Krajčír, Minister of International Trade.

Alternate boss with signing authority on the relevant agreements is Comrade F. Mareš, Director of the main Technical Department, Ministry of International Trade.

Members of the delegation:

Comrade J. Knytl, employee of the Technical Department, Ministry of International Trade.

Comrade K. Černý, employee of the Technical Department, Ministry of International Trade.

Comrade A. Novotný, employee of the Technical Department, Ministry of International Trade.

Comrade Colonel Srovnal V., employee of the Ministry of National Defense.

V. Comrade F. Krajčír and Comrade F. Mareš are empowered with signing the documents presented in points II and III of this resolution, and with adding to the agreement with Comrade B. Lomský and Comrade K. Poláček by assigning other experts to the negotiations in Cuba.

To be undertaken by:

Comrade F. Krajčír

Comrade B. Lomský

Comrade J. Ďuriš

[Minister of General Engineering] Comrade K. Poláček

Those to be notified: [Premier] Comrade V. Široký

Comrade O. Šimůnek

Comrade L. Jankovcová

Comrade V. David



Documents Regarding Cuban Defense Minister Raúl Castro's Visit to Czechoslovakia, June-July 1960

07/09/60

First Secretary of the CPCZ Central Committee

Comrade Antonin Novotny

Prague

I was accompanying the Cuban delegation led by Defense Minister Raul Castro. The delegation visited the CF Polepy and wine cellars in Zernoseky, in the Litomerice district. In the CF Polepy as well as in wine cellars, minister of defense Raul Castro spoke out strongly against imperialism, especially against the American one. On the other hand, he kept emphasizing the crucial role of the Soviet Union and socialist countries and their aid to colonial and semi-colonial nations in their struggle for independence and freedom. He stated that if the American imperialists attack Cuba, Cubans would fight to the last man.

The whole delegation was in a good mood when we were returning from Litomerice. I was in a car with Raul Castro and Luis Martino. During the ride, we exchanged opinions on some international and party issues. Raul Castro and Luis Martino were saying that Chinese Communist Party and China in general, who supposedly understood the importance of struggle for freedom in Latin American countries, was doing a lot of work there. It also followed from the conversation that both of them lean towards the Chinese opinions on international issues. Regarding that they said they made their own assessment of J.V. Stalin's work because he was a great fighter against imperialism. I told them that the CPSU, cde. Khrushchev or our party never said that imperialism would be any different than before, or that it was not necessary to fight against it. I emphasized that we fully support the position of the CPSU and the Moscow Declaration.

They were also saying that neither the USSR nor the CSR know the situation in Cuba well and that we do not understand the importance of the Cuban revolution. They said we could do a lot more work in Cuba than the People's Republic of China. I told them that the first secretary of the CP CC cde. Novotny stressed when receiving Jimenez (as cde. Krajcir said) that aid to Cuba had to be provided as the first priority, which shows that the CC of our party knows their situation and fully understands it. They rebutted: When Raul Castro arrived in the CSR, some American agencies wrote that he was removed from the function of the defense minister and that Fidel Castro took over that function. Officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs allegedly asked them whether it was true, which means they rather believed American propaganda than them [Cubans].

As for the USSR, Luis Martino said he talked with Soviet comrades ([he] didn't say which ones) who did not talk about the importance of the revolution and about the measures taken by the revolutionary government; namely they were

asking whether Raul and Fidel were of working-class origin, which supposedly means they probably didn't trust them. At that, Luis Martino emphasized it was not right because Marx and Lenin were not of the working-class origin either and yet they were Marxists.

They also said that Fidel Castro makes many mistakes, personal as well as political (he would for instance lose his temper and strongly stand up against small and middle bourgeoisie, which the Popular Party CC does not hold as correct), and Castro is always criticized for these shortcomings. They further said they were both members of the Party, that Martino has been a member for 23 years, that they did not agree with the opinions of Polish communists after the XX Congress, and that they hold our communist party in high esteem.

Dear Comrade Secretary, I considered it necessary to inform about these opinions before you receive the Cuban delegation.

With comrade's greeting,

Sejna Jan



**Material for the Reception of Raul Castro,
the Cuban Minister of the Revolutionary
Armed Forces, July 1960**

in Brozik salon on the 1st floor on 13 July 1960 at 10:00 am.

C o n f i d e n t i a l !

Printed in: 3 copies

Copy No.: 1

File No. 027. 317/60-6/

Brief information about the current stay of Raúl Castro in the
CSSR [Czechoslovak Socialist Republic].

In early morning hours on 27 June, a fourteen member Cuban delegation, headed by Minister of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces Raul Castro, arrived on a special plane. Raul Castro came to the CSSR on an invitation

from [Czechoslovak Foreign] Minister [Václav] David at the occasion of the II. National Spartakiade.

At the time of Castro's delegation's arrival, the Cuban economic mission headed by Antonio Nunez Jimenez, director of the National Institute for Land Reform in Cuba, was already on a visit in the CSSR as guests of Minister [of Foreign Trade Frantisek] Krajcir. The program of the Castro's delegation in the first few days was thus identical in some points with that of the Jimenez mission.

On 27th June, the delegations of the both Cuban representatives were accepted by the Minister of International Affairs c. David. In the course of a friendly and open conversation, minister David especially emphasized the international impact of the Cuban revolution and added that it is undoubtedly an attractive example for other Latin American countries. During the conversation, the Cuban representatives compared the revolutionary movement in Cuba with the coup in Guatemala in 1954 and pointed out the mistakes that the Cuban revolution avoided, unlike the movement in Guatemala. Then both Cuban representatives in unison highly praised the aid to Cuba from the socialist camp, and said that the CSSR was one of the top countries in this respect.

After the conversation, cde. David invited R. Castro and N. Jimenez for a dinner, which he arranged in their honor. A friendly and sincere atmosphere from the previous conversation continued at the dinner. R. Castro and his entourage spent the rest of 27th June sightseeing Prague.

On 28th June, Raul Castro visited Orlik to see the dam. During the tour of the dam, an improvised meeting took place of R. Castro with deputy ministers of defense of the PRC and the DPRK, which turned into a very friendly and cordial conversation among the three representatives. (The Cz. News filmed the whole meeting, and Raul Castro asked for 1 copy.) Two more meetings of Raul Castro and the Chinese and Korean deputies of national defense took place in the following days. It happened on 1 July at a small dinner, which Castro set up in his villa for the both mentioned Chinese and Korean representatives. Another meeting was on 3 July in the residence of the Korean titulary, and soon after that also in the residence of the PRC titulary in Prague. In all these meetings, the common platform of anti-imperialist fight of the Cuban, Korean and Chinese people was especially emphasized, and the need to mutually share and use the experience from this fight was signified. At this occasion, first the deputy Defense Minister of the PRC invited R. Castro for an official visit of the PRC, then his Korean colleague did the same and officially invited Castro to the DPRK. Raul Castro thanked [them] for both invitations and apologized that he would not be able to use these invitations at this time; however, he promised to

use these invitations during his next trip to Asia or at some other convenient opportunity. During R. Castro's visit at the residence of the Korean titulary, the talk was specifically about the possibility to open diplomatic contacts between the DPRK and Cuba. Castro then invited the Korean youth delegation to attend the congress of Latin American youth, which was to open in Havana on 27 July. When the Chinese titulary accepted R. Castro at his residence shortly after, he stressed that the Cuban revolution was fully supported by all Chinese people. In conclusion of the conversation, Raul Castro said that the visit of his delegation in Czechoslovakia was very fruitful because it showed where the Cuban people have real friends.

On 30 June, National Defense Minister cde. Lomsky accepted R. Castro. They then talked about the issue of the origin and development of the guerilla movement in Cuba, strategy and tactics of guerilla warfare, as well as the current condition of the Cuban revolutionary army. The issue of establishing a regular army in Cuba was also discussed in greater detail. This conversation was very friendly, just as the preceding meetings.

On 30 June in the afternoon, R. Castro and his entourage visited Lidice where he laid a wreath at the memorial to the victims martyred by fascism. From 1 to 3 July, the Cuban delegation was watching the Spartakiade (where R. Castro was the most impressed by the army routine), visiting a collective farm (CF) (CF Polepy and Zernoseky in North Bohemia region), and meeting with already mentioned Korean and Chinese representatives in Prague.

From 4 to 6 July, R. Castro went for a three-day trip to Karlovy Vary [Carlsbad], Mariánské Lázně and Plzeň. Besides touring factories and various facilities in these cities, R. Castro watched a full-day military program in the Karlovy Vary [military] area (this was already the second demonstration of military training shown to a Cuban delegation; the first one took place on 29 July in Caslav).

Since many titularies from embassies of friendly countries in Prague were interested in a meeting with defense minister R. Castro, visits of these diplomatic representatives are currently taking place in the residence of the Cuban delegation. On 7 July, R. Castro accepted in his villa the Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian titulary suggested to R. Castro a visit to the PRB, which Castro at that time declined with regard to the current situation in Cuba and his prolonged absence from the country. On the other hand, Castro allowed for a possibility to open diplomatic ties between Bulgaria and Cuba.

Shortly after that, R. Castro accepted the Ambassador of the GDR. This meeting proceeded in friendly manner as well, and the importance of the visit of the Cuban economic

mission, led by A.N. Jimenez, in the GDR was stressed.

On 7 July, R. Castro was also accepted by minister of international trade cde. Krajcir who later arranged for him a courtesy dinner.

On Friday 8 July, R. Castro accepted the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Prague. R. Castro showed genuine interest in past battles of the Vietnamese Liberation Army, namely in the fortress Diem-bien-fu [Dien Bien Phu]. They also discussed the possibility of opening mutual diplomatic ties in the near future.

Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 of July were resting days for the Cuban delegation. On Saturday afternoon, the whole delegation saw a performance of Laterna Magica and then in the evening, it split into several groups to spend the Saturday evening and Sunday.

The visit of the Cuban delegation headed by Raul Castro is unfolding positively. Thanks to cordial and open conduct of R. Castro and his entourage, as well as to an openly friendly attitude, which Castro shows towards the CSR, the Cuban delegation is welcomed everywhere with heartfelt sympathy and uncommon interest. The Cuban delegation is expected to stay in the CSR till 22 July when Raul Castro with his entourage is to fly to the UAR [Egypt] for celebration of the [fourth] anniversary of nationalization of the Suez Canal.



With file No. 01783/60

Attachment No. 1

Brief characteristics of Raul Castro

Raul Castro was born on 13 June 1931. He is the brother of the Prime Minister Fidel Castro and one of the most outstanding Cuban revolutionaries. He joined the Fidel Castro's movement in 1953 when on 26 July, they led opposition groups into an attack against the Moncada barracks and the administrative building of the Batista organization in Santiago de Cuba. This historic date gave name to the whole revolutionary movement in Cuba. Then Raul Castro was arrested and imprisoned until 1955 when he was released in a general amnesty. Afterwards he lived briefly in exile in the USA and Mexico.

In 1956, he returned with an expedition of his brother Fidel to Cuba where they started to organize intensively a guerilla war in the Sierra Maestra [mountains] against the Batista dictatorship. Raul Castro was active as a guerilla and an underground operator under the code name Deborah.

After toppling the Batista regime on 1 January 1959, he entered the capital Havana victoriously alongside Fidel Castro.

Ever since the revolutionary government seized power, he has held many top functions. He became minister of national defense on 16 February 1959, and when this bureau was closed, he was appointed the minister of Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces.

Raul Castro has strong influence with his brother who respects him very much. He has a gentle demeanor and likes to act directly, without any formalities. The word is that Raul Castro and his wife Vilma Espin are members of the Popular Socialist Party [PSP] of Cuba. He has very friendly attitude towards the CSR, which he visited for the first time in 1953 with a delegation of Cuban youth.



With file No. 01783/60

Attachment No. 2

The list of members of the Cuban delegation

- 1) Raul Castro Ruz, minister of Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, the head of the delegation
- 2) Efigenio Almejeivas Delgado – a police chief
- 3) Guillermo Garcia I
- 4) Ramiro Valdez Menendez
- 5) Belarmino Castilla Mas
- 6) Felix Lugones Ramirez
- 7) Felipe Guerra Matos
- 8) Diocles Torralba
- 9) Melquiades Ramos
- 10) Marcellino Sanchez Diaz
- 11) Juan Bautista Perez
- 12) Manolo Fernandez
- 13) Luis Mas Martin – personal secretary of Raul Castro
- 14) Mariano E. Seijo Torres

Note:

On orders from Raul Castro, a four-member group from the delegation in the CSR left for Cuba on 6 July. There were these delegation members: Felix Lugones Ramirez, Marcellino Sanchez Diaz, Juan Bautista Perez, and Mariano E. Seijo Torres.

Another four-member group is to depart for the USSR shortly. These are: Efigenio Almejeivas Delgado, Guillermo Garcia I, Belarmino Castilla Mas, and Diocles Torralba. This group is to return to the CSR on 20 July and rejoin the delegation, which is to visit the UAR [Egypt].

[Source: National Archives, Prague, Czech Republic. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlík.]

Report by Czechoslovak Embassy, Havana, on July 1960 Visit of Czechoslovak Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Jiri Hajek to Havana, 4 August 1960

On 4 July, the state deputy, accompanied by the ambassador, visited Foreign Minister Raul Roa, with whom he engaged in lengthy exchanges of opinions on the current situation in Cuba, the next approaches of the revolutionary government, its current position among Latin American countries, and certain international questions.

Around noon, the state deputy, accompanied by the ambassador, paid a courtesy visit to the President of the Republic, Dr. O. Dorticos, with whom he had become acquainted in Argentina.

In the evening, Dr. Roa organized a dinner in honor of the state deputy, which was attended by all prominent officials of the Cuban foreign ministry, the designated Cuban ambassador to Prague, and employees at the Czechoslovak embassy. Later that night, the state deputy and the ambassador visited the chairman of the National Bank, Dr. [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara, with whom they held very lengthy and interesting political conversations on the present international standing of Cuba, possible ways to thwart United States aggression, and the support Cuba looks forward to receiving from other Latin American countries. It is interesting that, at this time, Guevara was convinced of planned American aggression. It is worth mentioning that this conversation was one of the best political conversations during the state deputy's visit to Havana.

Ambassador Pavlíček

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague, Czech Republic, Politické zprávy (Political reports), Havana 1960. Translated by Francis Raska.]



Documents Regarding Impending Visit to Czechoslovakia of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, president of the Cuban National Bank, October 1960

The National Planning Committee 6333

File No. 007 396/60

Attachment III

Report

About talks with the Cuban government representative Mr. Ernesto Guevara

I.

The president of Cuban National Bank Ernesto Che Guevara, who is actually one of the most influential personalities in the Cuban economy, is expected to visit the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic on 23rd October 1960. He is de facto in the function of a Deputy Chairman of the Cuban government, and as for importance, he ranks the third after Fidel Castro. He is originally an Argentinean; he acquired Cuban citizenship only recently.

He actively fought against the Peron dictatorship in Argentina, then alongside [Jacobo] Arbenz in Guatemala, and since 1955, together with Fidel Castro against the Batista dictatorship. In 1956, he was among the 82 of Castro's comrades who in the beginning of December landed in Cuba and out of whom only 12 were left by the end of 1956. He grew to be the most capable commander of the revolutionary army, and successfully led one of the key strikes against the Batista army.

We can assume that during his stay in the CSSR, he will namely want to discuss construction of a car factory in Cuba, granting of further credit of about \$50 million, and maybe, the question of possible cooperation within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance [COMECON].

He is scheduled to leave the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic for Moscow, supposedly to negotiate another credit earmarked for construction of a metallurgical factory with capacity of about 1.2 million tons, expanding the capacity of a steel mill from 130 thousand tons to 200 thousand tons, construction of an oil refinery, and for geological exploration. Mr. Guevara supposedly wants to negotiate in the USSR possible participation in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance to some extent.

We expect to discuss with c. Guevara the following:

- Agreement on rules of economic cooperation;
- Import of non-ferrous metals from Cuba, if possible long term;
- Sending a short-term expertise of the National Planning Commission on control and planning of the Cuban

- national economy;
- Sending experts requested by Cuba and accepting Cuban experts in Czechoslovakia;
 - Some issues arising from current exchange of goods.

II.

Proposal of our position on issues that need to be discussed with c. Guevara

1. Further development of economic cooperation between the Republic of Cuba and the CSSR

The Cuban government is going to start planned control of the Cuban economy.

Since Cuba currently lacks necessary know-how, experts and experience, a Cuban governmental economic mission, led by the Director of the National Institute for Land Reform A.N. Jimenez, visited the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in June of 1960 and consulted with the National Planning Commission's Chairman cde. Simunek and his first deputy Pucek on the issues of planned development and control of economy, and showed a genuine interest in Czechoslovak know-how, experience and experts.

At the end of discussions, Mr. Jimenez presented the Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Planning Commission cde. Simunek with a proposal, approved by some members of the government (including Fidel Castro), on economic cooperation in international trade based on specialization of production resources (translation is in Attachment No. 1).

The National Planning Commission recommends to grant the Cuban request and to accept the Cuban proposition of economic cooperation and to modify it according to the attached text of the Czechoslovak counter proposal of a framework agreement between the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Cuba on principles of economic cooperation (Attachment No. 2) in order to clarify and align it in terms of the Czechoslovak economic possibilities and create a framework for gradual closing of concrete agreements.

Since this involves a politically important matter, it is recommended that the Politburo of the CPCZ CC approve the material before our position is conveyed to Mr. Guevara. If it is approved, it is recommended to propose to Mr. Guevara that the agreement be signed on behalf of both governments either in Havana or Prague. A meeting could follow of repre-

sentatives of the planning authorities in Havana or Prague in order to work out details of the signed agreement.

2. Sending experts from the National Planning Commission to Cuba in order to provide expertise in planning and control of the economy

At the conclusion of discussions in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Mr. Jimenez sent a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Planning Commission cde. Simunek on behalf of the Cuban revolutionary government, in which letter he asks for sending an expert of the National Planning Commission to Cuba where he could get familiar, with the help of Cuban experts from the Central Planning Council, with the issues of the Cuban national economy, and could prepare outline recommendations for development of specific sectors of the economy (translation of the letter is in Attachment No. 3), on the basis of which the Cuban government could subsequently ask for complex expertise. He also asked cde. Krajcir in writing for sending a trade expert (Ministry of International Trade is getting ready to send him).

The National Planning Commission thinks it is right to grant the request of the Cuban side, and confirmed in writing its approval of sending an experienced expert. It is recommended to promise Mr. Guevara that an expert would be sent in shortest possible time. The Commission also thinks it would be constructive to recommend to Mr. Guevara that a 5 or 6 member group of experts from the National Planning Commission should be sent, which would consist of: 1 leader, 1 specialist for production issues, 1 for agriculture, 1 for issues of financial planning, 1 for international trade, and 1 translator, all at the expense of the Czechoslovak side; during 4-6 weeks, the group would get a better understanding of the main problems of Cuban economy, which are crucial for further development of economic cooperation between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba. The date of their departure would be agreed upon later.

It is recommended to inform Mr. Guevara about work assignment of the group as follows:

- To prepare expertise of management and planning in a similar manner as the Soviet expert group did for us in 1951 recommendation of economic planning and how to deal with the most pressing issues of managing the key sectors of the national economy;
- To review possibilities of further development of mutual economic ties (i.e. beyond the closed agreement), namely a rapid increase of mutual shipments of goods

according to the needs of both countries, in order to expedite import and distribution of those Cuban products that were traditionally made for the USA and other capitalist countries, which is especially urgent now when the USA is strongly restricting trade with Cuba;

- c. Also to study, which measures the Cuban side should take in order to secure long-term needs of both countries;
- d. The results of the expert group's activities should be recommendations on organization of planning for Cuban economic authorities, and on the main problems of long and short term cooperation.

3. Possible import of non-ferrous ore from Cuba and cooperation in this sector

Based on consultations with experts from the Ministry of Metallurgy and Ore Mining who returned from Cuba at the end of September, there are several problems with ore mining and metal production whose solution by joint efforts would be beneficial to both sides. These are questions regarding exchange of goods, which can be resolved in short time, and questions of a long-term nature, which will require scientific and economic cooperation.

The core problems gravitate towards production of nickel. There are 2 plants in Cuba, the capacity of which allows for production of 50 thousand tons of nickel. The Cuban government nationalized one of them Moa with capacity of 25 thousand tons of nickel contained in the feedstock, before all aggregates could be made fully operational and before production problems could be resolved. The plant, built to the highest technical level and for new technologies, was soon afterwards shut down. That idled approximately 3 – 4 thousand people. Restarting the production will be a very complicated matter because Cubans in the plant are only in positions of middle technical level and know only basic technological parameters of production, and they do not possess documentation, which Americans removed or destroyed. Problems stemming from a unique technology and very complicated equipment are exacerbated by the fact that only part of the plant is located in Cuba, which does mining, ore preparation and production of feedstock - nickel and cobalt sulfides - while the other part of the plant, which makes final product from the feedstock, has been built in the USA. There is no documentation available for the second part of the plant either.

Given this situation, we cannot expect, even with the help of socialist camp countries, namely the USSR, that Cuba would be able to produce nickel in a closed cycle with the

use of the technology introduced by Americans. However, we can assume that by collecting knowledge of and information about the first part of the process located in Cuba, and by trial runs of the technological guidelines, conditions could be created relatively soon for production support of this first part of the plant, which would be producing nickel and cobalt sulfides. Even though the socialist camp countries do not have the technology yet for processing this feedstock, the Soviet Union could possibly process these sulfides in some of its plants by adding them to their production process, until the second part is built. It will be possible, though, to determine to what extent the sulfides can be added to production process only when the necessary experiments are done. Even for this partial solution, i.e. start-up of the Cuban part of the plant, an important prerequisite would be securing shipments of sulfur for the necessary production of sulfuric acid, which would be available from the plant Moa in capacity of 1,300 tons a day. Americans were shipping sulfur for this production in a molten state directly from the mainland.

Besides that, a technology is being developed in the CSSR for separating nickel from cobalt, which is different than that introduced by Americans. We hope that within 3 months from obtaining a required sample from Cuba, the feasibility of our method could be assessed for use with Cuban nickel and cobalt sulfides. This technology is much simpler and requires less investment than the one used in the second part of the plant located in the USA. It will be necessary to consult with the USSR on the many questions associated with production restart in Moa and how best to help Cuba.

Obviously, even if all goes well, resumption of nickel production will take a long time. Importing ore from fully equipped quarries whose capacity is estimated from 1.5 to 2 million tons of ore a year, could partially help Cuba in this situation. Composition of this ore is similar to that of the ore from the People's Republic of Albania, the difference being that the Cuban ore contains 1.3 to 1.4 % nickel compared to 1 % for the Albanian ore. By importing between 100 to 200 thousand tons a year of this ore with higher nickel content, it would be possible to increase nickel production in the Sereď plant [Slovakia] during the third 5-year plan (desirable), and to build up reserves for the considered increase of the plant's capacity. Also the GDR [German Democratic Republic; East Germany] could import about twice the amount of ore, which would lengthen the production expectancy of a newly built nickel plant, and it would substantially increase their nickel production (ore in the GDR contains only about 0.7 % nickel).

The second nickel producing plant is Nicaro with capacity about 25 thousand tons. It uses a technology that Czechoslovak metallurgists know fairly well. It is basically

the same technology as used in the Sered plant. The Nicaro plant is still in the hands of a capitalist company with predominantly American capital, which closed it in the first days of October 1960 under the pretense that they have to pay Cuba high taxes. Cuban militia secured the plant. Shutting down production in this plant is undoubtedly to be a repressive measure from the USA because the Cuban government declared it would nationalize the plant at a convenient time. As for securing production of this plant after nationalization, the situation here is much better than in the case of the Moa plant. With short interruptions, Nicaro is producing since 1943 and it has a well-trained workforce knowledgeable about the production technology, as well as many middle management Cuban cadres. The CSSR could also contribute to ensuring proper operation of the plant by sending a group of up to 10 technologists and shop managers who are working with a large semi-production installation for nickel production in Vitkovice Steelworks. The USSR could possibly provide this kind of specialists as well. We should point out, however, that due to the change in ownership relationship of this plant, securing the delivery of about 7 thousand tons of ammonia a year is required, as well as a large quantity of coke for production of producer gas. Deliveries of these materials, and many other questions will have to be discussed namely with the USSR and some other socialist camp countries.

Cuba was getting certain part of the Nicaro production in the form of sinter containing about 91% of nickel. The use of such material in the Czechoslovak economy has considerable potential. Following the nationalization of Nicaro, it may be possible to secure considerable part of nickel deliveries for the Czechoslovak economy in the form of sinter.

Now let's move on to other possibilities of cooperation in utilization of Cuban natural resources.

By rough calculations of finishing capabilities, our experts estimated that Cuba is currently producing over 30,000 tons of rich copper concentrates containing about 10,000 tons of copper. There are other possibilities of increasing the resources of copper. The mined ore contains 2 to 7% copper. The concentrates were exported to the USA; the export was halted after the nationalization. Cuba is interested in building a plant for production of black copper, which would be exported. Building such a plant with capacity of 15 or even more thousand tons can be considered useful and advantageous for Cuba. Investment costs when using modern technology would be low, especially if it is not considered useful to simultaneously build a plant for production of sulfuric acid. Participation of the CSSR in such a construction could secure delivery of several thousand tons of copper. Until the plant is built, we should look for delivery and processing of copper concentrates partially domestically and (depending on

the quantity obtained) in cooperation with other countries of the socialist camp.

Cuba also has considerable reserves of good quality manganese ores. As mined, they contain 37% of manganese and after processing from 48 to 49% of Mn. Currently, about 10 thousand tons of these processed ores is warehoused. Considering the difficult situation in supplying the Czechoslovak metallurgy with rich manganese ores, it makes sense to look into possibilities of importing Cuban ores and into conditions, under which this could be secured.

Similar possibilities exist in chromium ores that, true, contain only 33% of chromium (III) oxide but they have suitable composition as for other components. Since it is difficult to obtain these ores from countries of the socialist camp, we should explore the possibilities of importing Cuban chromium ores.

Significant aid to Cuba would be making order in their geological survey, mine organization, and keeping good documentation in the mines. The current situation is rather dismal. Many nationalized plants work with a minimum of confirmed reserves, exploration is not organized into projects, there is practically no mining/geological and survey documentation, etc. Aid could be organized by sending a group of geologists, mining engineers and surveyors who would at the plants ensure smooth operation and also help with training the Cuban cadres. The USSR is planning similar aid.

The issues in ore mining and metallurgy can be summarized for negotiations with Mr. Guevara as follows:

Nickel

1. The Moa plant – to reach an agreement with the USSR about close cooperation and aid in bringing the Cuban plant to production, and about the most efficient approach to utilization and processing of nickel and cobalt sulfides.
2. The Nicaro plant – to consult with the USSR on the question of Czechoslovak specialists helping to ensure an uninterrupted production of the plant, preparing the necessary documentation for securing delivery of spare parts, and also the question of Czechoslovak participation in supporting the plant's production with materials and auxiliary materials [sic] (ammonia and so forth).
3. Import of ferro-nickel ores
 - a. Show interest in import of these ores up to at least 100 thousand tons a year for ensuring further growth of nickel production during the third 5-year plan;
 - b. In connection with the results of the upcoming negotiations with the APR about an increase

in shipments of ferro-nickel ores, to explore possibilities of supporting an increase in capacity of the nickel plant in Sered by long-term shipments of ores from Cuba.

4. Import of nickel sinter
Secure within trade relations shipments of nickel sinter up to the maximum the Czechoslovak economy can utilise.

Copper concentrates

1. Explore possibilities of processing the copper concentrate in the CSSR and in friendly countries.
2. Explore possibilities of Czechoslovak participation in construction of a plant for production of black copper in Cuba.

Manganese ore

Verify suitability and scope of possible import of this ore to the CSSR this year and in the future.

Chromium ore

Explore usability and suitability of imports of chromium ores for the Czechoslovak economy.

4. Exchange of goods between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Republic of Cuba

Trade between Cuba and Czechoslovakia has been characterized by heavy Cs. trade surplus in recent years. The value of Czechoslovak export, almost exclusively consumer goods, was between 16 and 19 million CZK from 1954 to 1958. There was practically no import to the CSSR except for packaged tobacco worth small amounts of money. This situation resulted in a protest from the Cuban side and therefore, the Czechoslovak side started to buy sugar for re-export from 1955 to 1956. Exchange of goods was temporarily suspended due to introduction of licensing proceedings.

By negotiating long-term trade, payment, and credit agreements, and a protocol on scientific and technological cooperation, conditions were created for exchange of goods on a substantially larger scale, and for the necessary changes in the structure of Czechoslovak export. The pertinent agreements were signed in June of this year, and mutual trade is [scheduled to be?] increasing strongly in the coming months (Appendix No. 4).

Several Czechoslovak trade and technological missions visited Cuba, namely a special mission of the foreign trade enterprise Technoexport, and the already mentioned technological mission of the foreign trade enterprise Motokov. Negotiations of Motokov representatives resulted in closing contracts for 14 small engineering units (for instance production of locks, bolts, refrigerators, small gasoline motors, etc.) in total value about 35 million CZK; most of the shipments will be made in 1961. Negotiation of other representatives of Czechoslovak foreign trade enterprises resulted in unification of **especially** contracts for engineering goods. Engineering enterprises of international trade placed orders for 1960 worth more than 24 million CZK in foreign prices by 1st October 1960, which is 244% of the original export plan for shipments of engineering goods. Non-engineering enterprises of international trade show slower increase of orders for 1960; their worth is 34.5 million CZK by 1st October 1960, which is 153 % of the plan. Since we can expect a continued flow of orders and a higher rate of their completion till the end of the year, we can count on total export worth more than 40 million CZK, which exceeds the plan almost up to 200%.

Beside trips of representatives of Czechoslovak foreign trade to Cuba, some leading Cuban trade officials visited the CSSR. The objective of the mission of A.N. Jimenez, Director of INRA (National Institute of Agrarian Reform), was to clarify and expedite shipments of some small engineering units, and to negotiate crucial measures in the area of economic cooperation. Mr. Maldonado, representative of the Bank of International Trade, which so far is the only authority of the foreign trade monopoly, visited the CSSR in August and presented the Czechoslovak side with a list of goods that Cuba wants to import from countries of the socialist camp in greater quantities in case of economic boycott of Cuba by the USA. The Cuban side was to specify quantities and values in this list in September. Based on this list, Czechoslovak foreign trade enterprises prepared preliminary reports of delivery possibilities; since the Cuban lists have not been amended and specified, these reports along with some offers from foreign trade enterprises were sent to the Czechoslovak Trade Department to be available to the Cuban side. Recently, the Cuban side presented the Czechoslovak Trade Mission a list of about 2,500 items of goods with requested quantities of import. The Czechoslovak delivery capabilities will be promptly reviewed and coordinated with other socialist camp countries, to which a similar list was also given.

Czechoslovak imports are hampered by considerable difficulties. True, the Cuban side presented an informative summary of their export capabilities but it became apparent that the current status of production and organization of Cuban exports is making purchases difficult. For instance, a

trial shipment of iron ore did not happen because the ore was not available for shipment despite our ships being sent to a Cuban port twice upon Cuban invitation; promised shipment of copper concentrates did not materialize either for similar reasons. Only smaller shipments of sugar, hides, coffee and coco were carried out, and negotiations are pending namely about shipments of iron, manganese and chromium ores and concentrates of nickel and copper; possibilities of importing silk cord, sisal, etc. are being reviewed.

The current status of mutual exchange of goods indicates that in the near future (2 – 3 years), trade balance will show a considerable surplus on the Czechoslovak side. This surplus is estimated about 20 million CZK for 1960, and 30–40 million CZK for the next year. For increase in imports from Cuba, it will be necessary to develop those Cuban production sectors that can create for the Cz. side interesting import opportunities; this applies namely to ore mining and to some kinds of agricultural production, for instance corn, palm core, and coco. Czechoslovak experts can help in this area. Importing sugar either for domestic consumption or for direct or indirect re-exports can also facilitate decreasing the trade surplus or for direct or indirect re-exports, the pertinent negotiations have been initiated.

When talking with Mr. Guevara, it would be good to convey to him the Cz. opinion on the development of mutual goods exchange and to point out especially the necessity of increased Cuban export to the CSSR, which would substantially contribute to further growth of exchange of goods.

Development and status of goods exchange between the USSR and the Republic of Cuba indicates that in the near future, Soviet import capabilities will surpass the export capabilities. A clause was incorporated into the Soviet-Cuban and Czechoslovak-Cuban trade agreements, which allow transfer of assets to third country accounts, provided all parties agree. The Soviet side has requested a preliminary information about a possibility of exporting some Cz. machinery in exchange for other goods, namely consumer goods, on the account of the Soviet-Cuban trade agreement.

We will propose in our discussion with the Soviet side to solve the problem of increased

Soviet purchases in Cuba by transferring the Cs. surplus balance of about 20 million CZK from 1960, and 30–40 million CZK for 1961. Transfer of the Soviet side's surplus remainders in interesting clearing accounts will be requested.

In connection with issues of barter and economic cooperation with the Republic of Cuba, correctness of the current system of territorial division of the foreign trade plan will be assessed. It may be useful to remove these countries from the capitalist sphere and to create in the foreign trade plan a sphere of countries with whom the CSSR and other socialist

countries would develop and coordinate economic cooperation and technological aid.

III.

Proposition of our position on issues Mr. Guevara wants to talk about based on preliminary information

1. Credit request for construction of an automobile plant in Cuba

Cuban representatives, headed by Mr. Guevara, discussed with the Czechoslovak delegation, headed by the General Director of Motokov cde. Kohout, granting credit and technological aid for construction of an automobile plant in Cuba. According to Cuban officials, it would be a plant with capacity of 15 thousand passenger cars, 5 thousand trucks, 3 thousand tractors, motorcycles, diesel motors, etc. Cuba already talked with representatives of Renault about building this plant, as well as granting credit. Having compared the proposal of Cz. experts with that of Renault representatives, Chairman of the Cuban government Fidel Castro informed the Cz. delegation that he preferred the Cz. proposal. He especially appreciated the social aspect of the Cz. proposal (an apprentice center, and so forth). According to projections of the Cuban government, the plant should be built from 1961 until 1965. Cz. experts prepared a preliminary proposal of construction stages; assembly would be organized in the first stage, for which halls were built in Cuba, and gradually other production lines would be built (foundry, motor shop, cog-wheel and mechanical parts production facility, and so forth). The total investment amount is estimated as about \$70 million. Considering that the Cuban side hasn't practically tapped into the provided credit of \$20 million, Cuban representatives would request additional credit of \$50 million. Mr. Guevara will probably talk about this question during his visit.

The Cuban side expects from construction of this plant and other small shops:

- a) A partial solution to the unemployment problem (unemployment is currently estimated as 500–600 thousand people);
- b) The automobile industry is considered in Latin-American countries as one of the important signs of industrialization;
- c) The Cuban government wants to utilize the halls that Americans built.

The following position is proposed on any request of credit for the Cuban Republic for construction of the above-mentioned

plant:

a) Point out to Mr. Guevara that the projected low batch manufacturing implies low efficiency and consequently, high capital costs;

b) Recommend first organizing assembly from Czechoslovak parts. Their export can be facilitated with funds of the Ministry of Foreign Trade who expects decrease of exports of completed cars, and sees export of parts and their assembly at the destination place as means towards fulfilling the 5-year plan;

c) Recommend to Mr. Guevara that until 1965, Cuba concentrate especially on building facilities for production of tractors, trucks and other products, while construction of facilities for production of passenger cars could be organized after 1965. This approach would lower investment costs for building the intended plant from \$70 million to \$40 million for the time period until 1965. In such a case, credit of \$20 million would be required in addition to the \$20 million already granted. The additional credit could be created, as a preliminary thought, by transferring about \$10 million from credit reserves for less developed capitalist countries, and \$10 million from reserves for socialist countries. We can assume that this solution will be acceptable to Mr. Guevara because he himself does not support building the automobile industry in the foreseeable future, and prefers production of tractors and trucks. Granting larger credit is not feasible due to limitations of funding reserved for the 5-year plan. It would not be possible to cover larger credit both regarding credit reserves expressed in value, and regarding machinery and equipment required for such a credit;

d) As for assembly of passenger cars in Cuba from Cs. parts until their production is introduced, it will require negligible construction (estimated less than \$1 million), which could be drawn from the already provided credit. We suggest emphasizing to Mr. Guevara that payments for the shipped assembly parts have to be made within the normal trade agreement, and that Czechoslovakia is interested mainly in shipments of non-ferrous metallurgy products.

2. Exchange of opinions about participation of the Cuban Republic in the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance

According to the preliminary and unverified information, Mr. Guevara is going to talk in Moscow about Cuba joining the CMEA. Regarding this, Fidel Castro supposedly said that Cuba did not intend to develop complex heavy industry and would rather rely on heavy industry in socialist countries,

especially in the member countries of the CMEA. It is, therefore, safe to assume that during his visit in Czechoslovakia, Mr. Guevara will discuss this issue with our representatives. According to preliminary information from the CSSR envoy to Moscow cde. Dvorak and from cde. Balaban, deputy of the CSSR representative, there is no official knowledge about this issue from the USSR. Therefore, if Mr. Guevara talks about this issue, we recommend to take this position:

a) Discussion about this question is only informative; a decision can be made only after consultations with all member countries of the CMEA;

b) Inform Mr. Guevara about the conditions for membership in the CMEA, which are based on an accepted Statute of the CMEA. Emphasize that based on this accepted Statute of the CMEA, only European countries may become members of the Council, and that other countries can participate in the work of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance on selected issues.

c) Inform Mr. Guevara about the main objectives of the CMEA, namely coordination of plans for the next 20 years.

d) Delegate to cde. Balaban monitoring of this issue in the USSR and passing on immediately any information he obtains.

3. Providing technological aid to the Cuban republic

On 10 June 1960, the Minister of Foreign Trade signed in Havana a "Protocol on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Republic of Cuba." Based on this framework document, the FTE Polytechna sent in September 1960 its representatives to discuss concrete forms and general conditions of technological cooperation with the Cuban Republic. An agreement "General Conditions for Realization of Scientific and Technological Cooperation" was signed in Havana between the FTE Polytechna and two leading Cuban institutions:

a) National Institute for Agrarian Reform (Instituto Nacional de la Reforma Agraria), and

b) Central Planning Council (Junta Central de Planificacion).

At the same time, fundamental questions were discussed in the presence of our experts in Havana about our technological aid to Cuba with regard to differences in the Cuban economy compared to most of other less developed countries. The most pressing issues of technological aid in these three areas are:

- Providing leading experts in the main areas of industry and agriculture who could solve the organizational questions, organize the administration, and solve the problems of short-term production planning and its development, and the investments problems;
- Sending our production technicians to key enterprises and plants, sometimes only to one enterprise of a given [industry] branch, which has the best potential to become a showcase production facility where Cuban specialists could be trained, in order for these enterprises to start or increase production and to increase productivity.
- Organizing a system of training Cuban specialists either in Cuba in the existing or newly built vocational schools, or by sending Cuban apprentices and students for practical study to the CSSR.

Considering the political-economical situation in the Republic of Cuba, all these measures will have to be taken very quickly because primarily the economic situation in Cuba could become critical in a very short time.

Our delegation negotiated with the central authorities and also with individual production plants direct technological aid to the Republic of Cuba, and together, requests of the Cuban side were specified as for sending 64 Cz. experts [to Cuba] and sending 20 Cuban apprentices for practical study to the CSSR. The FTE Polytechna sorted out these requests for Cz. experts and passed them on to pertinent ministries and central authorities of the CSSR for expedient realization of the part regarding sending Cz. experts to Cuba, and sending Cuban apprentices to the CSSR.

At the same time, a group of 18 Soviet experts was staying in Cuba for several months and prepared reports about the current status of the Cuban economy and about the possibilities of its further development, especially in the following sectors:

- Mines and mining industry, metallurgy, geological and ore exploration, liquid fuels, energy and planning.
Based on these reports and consultations with the Soviet experts, Cuban authorities prepared a list of about 170 experts whom the Chairman Fidel Castro requested, in a personal letter to the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers cde. **Khrushchev, to be sent to Cuba.**

It followed from the talks of our delegation with Mr. Guevara, as well as with Soviet technological aid representatives, and with the Trade Councilor in Havana, that the USSR, in cooperation with other countries of the socialist camp, would provide the above-mentioned 170 experts.

Also, Mr. Guevara, who is the highest instance for economic issues in Cuba, directly asked that sending these experts be coordinated between the USSR and the other countries of the socialist camp.

On their own initiative, representatives of the FTE Polytechna have initiated talks with the pertinent USSR authorities for the purpose of joint coordination of scientific and technological aid to the Republic of Cuba. Since some requests for Cz. experts in some sectors are overlapping with the requests made by the Cuban side to the USSR (in the count of 170 experts), cooperation with the Soviet SCFER has been partially agreed upon. First steps in this direction were also taken with representatives of the GDR and the PRP in Prague.

Based on the above-mentioned facts, we recommend drawing the following conclusions about providing scientific-technological aid to the Republic of Cuba:

- a) Tell Mr. Guevara that the request of the Cuban side for sending experts from the CSSR will be fulfilled without delay;
- b) Tell Mr. Guevara that we consider, in agreement with the Cuban requests, providing aid in the following areas as the most important and urgent:
 - Planning and management of the Cuban national economy,
 - Organization of the foreign trade monopoly,
 - Restarting ore mining and metallurgical production,
 - Providing a financial and banking consultant for the Cuban National Bank;
- c) Convey to Mr. Guevara that we agree to accept Cuban experts in the CSSR immediately, as per request of the Cuban side.

IV.

Other findings and ideas

After consultations with the experts from the Ministry of Metallurgy and Ore Mining who personally visited ore mines and plants processing namely nickel and copper ore, we came to a conclusion that when assessing Cuban requests for an agreement on economic cooperation in exchange of goods and sending experts, we should consider that:

1. The Cuban government and its economic officials still

lack experience in actual management of the economy as a whole and of individual sectors, and thus are not always able to objectively assess their capabilities and to formulate their requests accordingly;

2. The Cuban economy is furnished exclusively with American machinery and equipment. In the short term, shortages of auxiliary and spare parts, and aggregates should be expected, which could paralyze the whole industry to a great extent;
3. Considering this, we would recommend to Mr. Guevara to prepare a short-term (for instance 3-year) plan of reconstruction and development of the national economy as a basis for the economic policy of the Cuban government, and to offer help of Czechoslovak experts with preparation of the above-mentioned plan.

V.

We recommend that cde. Krajcir conduct the talks with Mr. Guevara, with the 1st Deputy of the Chairman of the State Planning Commission cde. Vlana participating.

We further recommend that Mr. Guevara be accepted by the President of the Republic and the 1st Secretary of the CPCZ CC cde. Novotny, by the Prime Minister cde. Siroky, with participation of c. Simunek, Krajcir and Vlana, and by c. Simunek with participation of c. Krajcir, Vlana, Smok, and c. Duris.

In agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we recommend to award Mr. Guevara the Order of White Lion of the first degree in recognition of his efforts in developing contacts between Cuba and the CSSR.

[Source: Central State Archives, Prague, Czech Republic. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.]

Report to Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee (CPCz CC) on Consideration of Cuban Arms Requests, c. early 1961

Report for the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party concerning the Interest of the Cuban Revolutionary Government in being supplied additional special Technology.

At the end of last year, the leading Cuban representatives, President [Osvaldo] Dorticos and Prime Minister Fidel Castro, expressed on various occasions their interest in being

supplied with additional special technology and investment mechanisms, including appropriate technical assistance.

In a meeting on 16 December 1960 with the Czechoslovak Ambassador in Havana and in a letter dated 17 December 1960, President Dorticos asked the First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the President of the Republic, Comrade A. Novotný, for assistance with the construction of anti-aircraft defenses for the country against expected hostile air strikes.

The Cuban Revolutionary Government intends to counter this threat by developing a radiolocation network and by organizing anti-aircraft defenses. To this end, it plans to use anti-aircraft weapons supplied by Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. It wishes to purchase 5-6 fighter planes equipped with radiolocation mechanisms. At the same time, the Government expects Czechoslovakia to provide technical assistance and send a small group of specialists in order to organize anti-aircraft defenses and train 4-5 pilots to fly the supplied planes. During the process of supplying the special technology, it will also be necessary to train Cuban specialists to maintain and repair the supplied planes. Until the trainees return from Czechoslovakia, maintenance and repairs would be the responsibility of Czechoslovak specialists. Furthermore, it will be necessary to train Cuban specialists to use the radiolocation equipment.

On the same occasion, the Prime Minister requested that radio stations be supplied in order to ensure the command effectiveness of the armed forces (the army and militia) as well as other radio stations to secure communication between provincial commanders. Among his other requests, it is necessary to mention the previous request to be supplied with 50 million 7.92 millimeter bullets and 400,000 magazines for 52čs automatic rifles.

The commander of the Revolutionary Army's tactical forces, Commandante Guillermo Garcia, communicated a wish through the prime minister for the supply of two mobile artillery batteries for divisions and machine equipment for the development of a permanent army repair facility for artillery materials.

The main technical officials at the Ministry of Foreign Trade discussed supply possibilities with the Defense Ministry and the Machine Ministry. From the discussions, it became clear that the Czechoslovak side is able to supply the mobile artillery batteries for divisions from Defense Ministry stockpiles, the magazines for automatic rifles (100,000 in 1961 and 300,000 in 1962) and two million 7.92 millimeter bullets from Defense Ministry stockpiles. The issue of equipment for the army repair facility is in the process of being clarified.

In recognition of the fact that the urgent Cuban demands have not been fully satisfied, supply possibilities

have been explored in the Soviet Union and the Bulgarian People's Republic.

On 30 December 1960, the Deputy Prime Minister, Comrade O. Šimůnek, informed the Soviet ambassador in Prague, Comrade Zimyanin, via a memorandum of President Dorticos' request and requested that the Soviet Government inform him if it could provide the requested special technology for anti-aircraft defense and for the security of the command structure of the armed forces (copy of the memorandum enclosed-Enclosure 4). A reply from Comrade Zimyanin was received by Deputy Prime Minister, Comrade O. Šimůnek on 7 March. He mentioned that the Soviet Government had decided to fulfill the request of the Government of the Cuban Republic and, in addition to anti-aircraft defense, would provide resources for coastal defense. Considering the fact that Soviet arms shipments to Cuba are no longer a secret, the Soviet Government believes that it would be useful if further supplies to Cuba take place without the participation of Czechoslovak organs. By the same token, Soviet specialists will be sent directly to Cuba.

The Soviet Ambassador further informed that the Soviet Government, in harmony with the opinions of the Czechoslovak side, believes that it would be useful if specialists from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic were sent to Cuba as soon as possible in order to assist in the organization of anti-aircraft defense for the country using the already supplied materials. As a significant portion of the resources for anti-aircraft defense have been and will be supplied by the Soviet Union, the Soviet side considers it appropriate to send its own group of specialists to Cuba who, in cooperation with the Czechoslovak specialists, would solve all problems surrounding anti-aircraft defense in Cuba.

It is clear from the above-mentioned facts that it will be possible to satisfy fully the new Cuban requests, including the sending of a small group of Czechoslovak specialists who, together with Soviet specialists, will formulate a plan for the organization of anti-aircraft defense in Cuba. The training of Cuban pilots, which will enable them to fly fighter planes as well as that of specialists for their maintenance and specialists of other supplied equipment will be provided by the Soviet Union.

[Source: Central State Archives, Prague. Obtained and translated for National Security Archive.]



Record of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) Politburo regarding Cuban Requests for Arms and Ammunition, 6 April 1961, with Attached Resolution on Same Subject, 18 April 1961

POLITBURO OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNIST PARTY

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!

7588/14

Regarding: The interest of the Cuban Revolutionary Government in being supplied with additional special technology.

Leading representatives of the Cuban Revolutionary Government have submitted via the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana new requests for supplies of special technology and investment mechanisms.

The requests have been dealt with by the State Planning Commission, the Defense Ministry, the Ministry of Industry, and the Finance Ministry.

Enclosure I

Suggested resolution

Enclosure III

Report

Enclosure IV

Memorandum for the record

Presented by: Comrade F. Krajčír

6 April 1961

Number of pages: 11

It is necessary that this material be returned within one month

to the Technical Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party

ENCLOSURE I

Resolution

143rd meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party on 18 April 1961

Regarding: The interest of the Cuban Revolutionary Government in being supplied with additional special technology (Comrade F. Krajčír)

Resolved:

The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party:

I. It takes into account the report on the interest of the Cuban Revolutionary Government in being supplied with additional special technology and investment mechanisms.

II. Agrees to the following:

- a) To supply 50 million 7.92 mm bullets to the Cuban Revolutionary Government of which 2 million will come from Defense Ministry stockpiles for one-third of their value on the basis of the reserve sum of the Czechoslovak-Cuban Agreement of 11 June 1960 on supplies of special technology reached between the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Government of the Cuban Republic and the other 48 million bullets will be re-exported from the Bulgarian People's Republic at full value. At least one-fifth, namely 5.3 million Czechoslovak crowns will be paid for in hard currency in 1961. The remaining 21.2 million Czechoslovak crowns will be paid off in five annual payments based on Czechoslovak-Cuban clearing accounts at 2% interest beginning in 1962.
- b) To supply 2 mobile artillery batteries from the stockpiles of the Ministry of Defense at one-third of their value, namely for 423,000 Czechoslovak crowns on the basis of the reserve sum of the Czechoslovak-Cuban Agreement of 11 June 1960.
- c) To supply 400,000 magazines for 7.62 mm automatic rifles vz.52čs at a value of around 10.5 million Czechoslovak crowns on a cash, hard currency basis or through Czechoslovak-Cuban clearing.
- d) The construction of a permanent army weapon repair station and with the provision of any necessary technical

assistance in order for it to be operational. The entire cost should be covered through Czechoslovak-Cuban clearing with 20 percent of the cost to be covered upon supplies of technical equipment. The rest would be covered on the basis of a 12 million crown loan, which would be repaid in five successive annual payments. The value of supplies will then exceed the initial twenty percent.

- e) To provision of technical assistance for the construction of anti-aircraft defenses in Cuba. A five member team of experts will be sent to Cuba according to those conditions set out in the agreement between the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Government of the Cuban Republic on supplies of special technology (Article 10, Section 2), which was signed on 11 June 1960 in Havana and later approved by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party on 28 June 1960.

III. Charges:

- a. Comrade F. Krajčír with the task of finalizing any additions to the agreement of 11 June 1960 or additions to established contacts concerning supplies described in Points II a to d of this resolution.
- c. Comrade B. Lomský
 1. with the task of freeing up 2 million 7.92 mm. bullets and 2 mobile artillery batteries,
 2. of preparing a group of specialists for the provision of technical assistance with the organization of anti-aircraft defenses on Cuban territory.
- d. Comrade K. Poláček with the following tasks on the basis of requests of Minister of Foreign Trade, F. Krajčír:
 1. To produce magazines for the automatic 7.92 mm. rifle model 52 Cz. by deadlines agreed upon with the Ministry of Foreign Trade.
 2. To formulate quickly along with the Ministry of Foreign Trade a final offer to build an army repair station keeping in mind Cuba's need to secure its ability to repair supplied weapons.
 3. To provide technical assistance in conjunction with the Defense Ministry technical assistance by sending Czechoslovak experts to Cuba or by training Cubans in Czechoslovak industries.
- g. Comrade J. Ďuriš with the task of providing loans in accordance with the

provisions according to Points II a and II c of this resolution.

IV. Empowers Comrade V. Široký to decide on approaches to any new issues that may develop in future negotiations with Cuban representatives so long as they shall fall outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Trade.

To be acted upon by:

Comrade F. Krajčír

Comrade B. Lomský
Comrade K. Poláček
Comrade J. Ďuriš

To the attention of:

Comrade V. Široký
Comrade O. Šimůnek
Comrade L. Jankovcová
Comrade V. David
Comrade B. Kóhler
Comrade A. Dubček
Comrade V. Koucký

**Czechoslovak Intelligence Reports
Correspondence with Czechoslovak
Embassy, Havana, Regarding Purported
Assassination Plot against Fidel Castro
and Coup Plot against Cuban Government,
April 1961**

6th Division/Petrželka Lightning-Immediately
30 April 1961

HAVANA

To my 025.113-According to an additional report from Pleskot:

Gramatges informed that the contact with the holder of the document in Cologne has taken place. The conditions surrounding the handover have not yet been agreed upon. Additional discussions should occur on 2 May. It appears as though the action against Cuba is still being prepared.

Hájek 025.114

326/111

6th Division/Petrželka/

30.4.61
Lightning-Immediately

HAVANA
Pavlíček

Gramatges informs through Pleskot:

Ricardo Toriente, who arrived in Paris from Bonn tonight, received written information from H. Felske, Essen, Huysenallee 33, offering detailed documentation on preparations for a counterrevolutionary coup against the Cuban Government and an assassination attempt against Fidel Castro. The holder of the documents allegedly worked until recently at a consulate in Havana. Involved are microfilms containing detailed information about the organizers and place of action. He requests 28 thousand German marks for the materials. In negotiations over recent days on the conditions of the handover, Felske stated that, among other things, an assassination attempt is being prepared during a big public celebration and that a large amount of explosives have been transported to Havana by individuals whose families live there. Toriente believes that a possible assassination attempt could occur during celebrations marking 1 May. His go-between held discussions in Essen on 29.4 in the evening and requested evidence that the films on offer truly contain the mentioned information. He will receive a report by ten o'clock.

Pleskot will provide another report should anything serious develop.

Hájek 025.113



Telegram from Havana SP: 580
Copy #9

Arrived: 29.4.61 18.10 Lightning, to be delivered immediately I, III

Decoded on 29.4.61 19.20

Exposed on 29.4.61 19.30

Hájek.

Send a lightning message immediately to Pleskot telling him to inform Cuban ambassador, Gramatges, of the arrival of the Bonn charges in Paris. He is carrying an important report, which Gramatges should immediately hand over to Pleskot. Arrange the immediate sending of the report. Allegedly involved is a big sabotage on 1 May based on information provided by Fernandel.

Pavlíček 179

II. CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS, 1962

Report to Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) General Secretary Antonin Novotný on European Military Situation, n. d. [apparently between 22 and 28 October 1962]

Report for Comrade Novotný

During the course of today no significant changes occurred on the European theater. The troops of the majority of NATO countries are on combat alert. However, no increased activity has been observed of strategic air forces or rocket units in Europe.

In the Federal Republic of Germany border zone with the CSSR, increased observation of our territory continues. This is accompanied by air reconnaissance flights.

In the Cs. [Czechoslovak] People's Army and the troops of the Ministry of the Interior, the activities of commanders and political personnel are focused on securing the fulfillment of combat readiness tasks. Thorough checks of their fulfillment are being carried out. So far the results of these checks show good readiness on the part of the armed forces, and only defects of a minor extent are being found. In the 13th Tank Division severe insufficiencies in the material outfitting of soldiers were discovered; care for the soldiers had been neglected. Control organs have adopted remedial measures.

Political organs in nearly all units and sub-units agree in their reports that the current measures taken by our armed forces have led to a marked strengthening of ties between the different class years of basic-service soldiers and reservists. Comrades are helping one another to unify the level of their readiness as much as possible. For example, instructors in

the 322nd Artillery Brigade have committed to accelerate the training of 1st-year soldiers. In the 62nd Radio Company, 33 2nd-year soldiers have committed themselves to help work their 1st-year comrades into their functions. Similar cases of helpfulness and conscientious fulfillment of tasks are being reported in all the armies. The company of the Internal Guard in Strážské reports the signing of 237 individual and 21 collective commitments. There is also a high state of political morale at [MND]. Officers are working intensively on combat alert and readiness tasks.

Besides these positive expressions of understanding of the current international situation, isolated incorrect opinions and attitudes continue to exist. Appropriate attention is being paid to these issues on the part of the political organs.

On the basis of a resolution of the politburo of the CC CPCz, measures have been taken in all sectors as directed by the XI Department of the CC CPCz.

At the Central Committee of Svazarm²⁵, inspection is successfully being carried of the feasibility and readiness of plans for the transfer of the entire organization to a state of national defense readiness. Similar measures are being carried out at all regional and district committees of Svazarm. Increased watchfulness is being implemented at all Svazarm airfields, and measures are being carried out to fulfill the designated tasks. The secure storage of weapons, ammunition, and radio equipment is being reinspected to prevent their misuse. The regional and district committees of Svazarm have been instructed to ask for schooling from the state organs in explaining the current situation and in training the population in II level national preparations, which are proceeding intensively at present.

At its meeting the presidium of the Svazarm Central Committee has adopted a resolution condemning the aggressive acts of the government of the USA, and supporting the resolution of the Soviet government and the position of the government of the CSSR. The resolution was published in the Svazarm magazine *Obránce vlasti*.

Likewise at the Ministry of Justice and the General Procurator's Office, the measures assigned by the politburo of the CC CPCz have been carried out. Readiness in case of extraordinary events has been verified, and telecommunications links and readiness at all equipment have been verified. It has been ordered to increase watchfulness and wakefulness at all workplaces, and move consistently and in a timely manner against those who would misuse the situation.

Staff is on duty round-the-clock in all sectors.

Signature

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ (Prague), file Antonin Novotny, Kuba, box 124. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 319 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Vladimir Pavlíček), 24 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 10.815

Arrived: 24.10.62 16:30

Processed: 24.10.62 17:30 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 24.10.62 18:00

NEWSFLASH!

According to talks with [Cuban foreign minister] Raúl Roa and [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev, it has been confirmed that [US President John F.] Kennedy has caved to the heavy pressure of the Pentagon, the CIA, and the monopolist circles and chosen the utmost dangerous route of provocations and blockades of Cuba. Within a few hours initial contacts between the USSR's ships and the American battleships should take place; according to Alekseev's information, the American battleships do not yet have instructions to stop the ships. Despite this, the Soviet friends are anticipating dangerous provocations. About eight ships are on the way. On the morning of 23.10. [October 23] two of the USSR's ships arrived without difficulty. The Cubans have cancelled all Pan-American [Airlines] flights and all domestic connections. Our ČSA [Czechoslovak Airlines] and Soviet TU [Tupolev] should depart normally. TU at night, and ČSA on the morning of 24.10 [24 October]. In the event of internal unrest, certain changes can be expected. Fidel [Castro] is satisfied with the pronouncement of the Soviet government, as well as with the situation in the country, which is calm. He will speak on the evening of 23.10 [23 October]. Battle preparedness has been strengthened in all sectors. This morning a US military plane crashed into a minefield in Guantanamo, causing a tremendous explosion and many dead. We are calming the Czechoslovak colony, instructing according to the lines of duty and the Party and taking the appropriate precautions. We will inform you further. The Vietnamese ambassador visited me: He had the same questions as Kříž [military attaché at the Czechoslovak embassy] about borrowing several pistols for the defense of the embassy. Send your views. We feel we can suitably decline since the Cubans ensure the defense of the embassy and the residence.

Pavlíček 319

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ, (Prague); File: "Antonin Novotny, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir..]



Cable no. 323 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 25 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 10896

Arrived: 25.10.62 21:20

Processed: 25.10.62 24:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 26.10.62 06:20

NEWSFLASH!

On the basis of information from the Soviet friends and our own in Washington, the Cubans have further expanded their battle preparedness and are now at maximum readiness. They evacuated some hospitals where the cases of the ill allowed, and increased security measures. They arrested a number of counterrevolutionary elements and all institutions, factories, and important objects are constantly under guard. Judging from the situation in Havana as well as in the provinces, the country is calm, although understandably nervous. People are not buying up goods, there is no panic—on the contrary, everything is working respectably and calmly. As a result of the increased danger, the industrial manufacturing sector is working better, though with understandably insufficient supplies of raw materials and in some places, insufficient numbers of workers. The labor unions, women, and youth are all helping the KRV [Cuban Revolutionary Front] very efficiently. The revolutionary unity is strong; there are no traces of sabotage or organized internal opposition that would have to be crushed. There was an even greater solidarity after Fidel [Castro]'s speech. Talks reveal a concern about whether it will be possible to secure a delivery of fuel and food supplies, both of which are in weak supply, in some places only enough to last 3-to-5 weeks. There are concerns about a possible invasion of mercenaries, concealed and supported by the blockade, and an attack on Guantanamo. The one-sided support of Latin American countries for [US President John] Kennedy supports these concerns. On the other hand, determination prevails, as does the need to oppose the USA or the mercenaries. The first Soviet ship has just arrived,

allowed through based on the response that it is not carrying any military materials.

Pavlíček 323

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Report on "Extraordinary Measures" Regarding Czechoslovak Organizations, 26 October 1962

Report on implementation of extraordinary measures in the ROH [Revolutionary Trade Union Movement], ČSM [Czechoslovak Union of Youth], and National Front

Central Council of Labor Unions [ÚRO -]

The Secretariat of the ÚRO discussed the ÚRO statement on the Cuban question and measures to implement extraordinary measures.

The statement of the ÚRO was submitted to the Czech Press Office, but was published only in the daily *Práce*.

A round-the-clock duty service of three comrades was established, consisting of the heads of department of the ÚRO and their representatives, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Central Committees of the labor unions. Similar measures were enacted in the labor union building on Gorký Square. A list has been made of personnel and their methods of instruction. The readiness of the vehicle park has also been secured. The ÚRO will always be notified of the absence of leading functionaries of the ÚRO, labor unions, and the [KOR].

Duty hours of the leading functionaries of the ÚRO are from 18:00 to 06:00 in the morning. From 06:00 to 08:00 comrades from the defense staff. Precise orders have been drawn up for duty service.

Measures for archive materials

The Central Archive has already been deposited at a specified place outside the ÚRO building. An emergency materials plan was put into effect in accordance with orders from the CC CPCz. Com Kozelka informed the heads of department

of the ÚRO and the Chairmen and the Vice-Chairmen of the labor unions' Central Committees of the necessary measures.

Plan E

The World Federation of Labor Unions was not included in this plan. Yesterday morning (25.10.) Cde. Kozelka discussed these matters with Cde. Chleboun and Cde. Mevald, who drew up a list of comrades into two ranks, which is being speedily verified.

The defense headquarters of the ÚRO was joined by comrades from the World Federation of Labor Unions.

Unresolved issues

The limit for the relief of ROH [Revolutionary Trade Union Movement] functionaries was assembled without the district labor councils, and without the World Federation of Labor Unions.

Now a request has been submitted to main headquarters, but a decision has not yet been made.

Czechoslovak Union of Youth [ČSM]

A proclamation by the Central Committee of the ČSM was discussed and approved, and was published today in *Mladá fronta* only. The statement was submitted to the ČTK by the CC ČSM.

The statement of the University Council of the CC ČSM was also announced in the press.

An alert was declared for all political personnel of the CC ČSM, who were informed of the most important tasks.

The CC ČSM cancelled a number of planned meetings, so that functionaries of the ČSM can be utilized for active work among youth.

It also came to agreement with the municipal council of the ČSM on launching a campaign in the schools (meetings, assemblies) and the inclusion of foreign students.

In Prague and Bratislava foreign students, especially from Cuba, exhibited a tendency to go into the streets, and some voices advocated attacking the American embassy. The organs of the ČSM agreed with the foreign students that they will take part in joint gatherings with the ČSM in the schools.

Orders were prepared for duty service and methods of possible mobilization of CC ČSM personnel. Vehicles and drivers have been placed on alert.

M measures

Adjustments and additions were carried out for the occupation of sectors from the standpoint of the present cadre profile of the CC ČSM.

Orders were prepared for evacuation, and measures taken for archival material according to orders from the CC ČSM.

Some problems:

1. So far means of possible evacuation have not been set. From the Ministry of Transportation they have the order to go by train.

2. The question of archive materials from the CC ČSM, the International Students' Union, *Mladá fronta*, and the ČSM Central School has thus far not been resolved.

The archives of the CC ČSM are supposed to be deposited in the state archives, which have rejected them however, saying that the Institute for the History of the CPCz is responsible for this task. Here they refuse also, saying that it has not been approved by the Secretariat or the leading comrades of the CC CPCz.

The economic archive has also not been dealt with, because the CC ČSM has no place to put it, and no means. The same for the archive of the ČSM Central School.

Also unresolved is the question of relocating the archive to a selected place in Slovakia. No site or money has been approved with which the archive could be relocated.

3. The biggest problems are with the International Students' Union, which has not been considered up until now. So far there is no site or means to relocate the personnel of this organization. There is the possibility of relocating them if needed to the recreation facility in Pec, but there are no means of getting them there. The archive of that organization and what to do with it is an unresolved question.

4. There are also problems with *Mladá fronta*. They don't know what to do with the archive. It is an open question what to do in the event of extraordinary measures with the publishing house, and especially with the daily newspaper *Mladá fronta*.

5. In case of need the municipal CD command center will request in case of need from the CC ČSM buses and delivery trucks with civilian and girl drivers. The CC ČSM does not have civilian and women drivers, and all the Svazarm courses are full. This task has not been fulfilled.

National Front

The Czechoslovak Socialist Party and the People's Party have adopted a statement, which has been published in today's daily papers.

[Signature]

[illegible handwritten comments]

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ (Prague), file Antonin Novotny, Kuba, box 124. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Report to CPCz General Secretary Antonin Novotný, 27 October 1962

Top Secret

Report for Comrade Novotný

During the night there was no significant change in the military-political situation.

According to information from the Ministry of the Interior, [US President John F.] Kennedy offered [British Prime Minister Harold] Macmillan to arrange for mutual telephone contact for the purpose of exchanging opinions during the course of the next few days. The position of Macmillan on this proposal is not known.

In military circles in Great Britain indignation is being expressed that the government of the USA did not discuss its actions in the Caribbean area with its allies in NATO, namely with Great Britain. It has been confirmed that the armed forces of Great Britain are not participating through any measures in the current military-political situation.

The government of the USA is interested in not raising the slightest doubt about its determination to attain its goal. In the [UN] Security Council it presented the aerial photos of 4 missile bases and one airfield for jet airplanes in Cuba. In commenting on the submitted photos, an American army colonel had to admit that so far no atomic weapons had been found. Stevenson expressed the idea that he would go with a Cuban representative to Cuba to carry out an inspection of the bases.

President Kennedy has supposedly decided to call a special session of Congress to discuss the situation in Cuba in regard to alleged continued construction of missile bases.

On the evening of 26.10 [26 October] an official statement was released in which it comes to light that the USA is assuming the right to take further steps if construction continues on guided missile bases, which are being labeled as the main cause of the current crisis. Military circles continue to be fed reports of a possible invasion, preparations for which are linked to the continuing concentration of forces in the Caribbean area.

With the feeling that so far no positive result has been obtained in arranging talks between representatives of the USSR, USA, and Cuba, and the official statement of the USA, the situation among diplomatic circles in the UN on the evening of 26.10 [26 October] was described as deteriorating.

The American ambassador in Vienna has assured the Austrian government that there is no immediate danger of war. He advised the Austrian government to avoid statements that might endanger their neutrality.

The Presidium of the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) discussed the issue of Berlin at their meeting of yesterday, and expressed the opinion that at the beginning of November a restoking of the Berlin crisis can be expected.

The situation in the Cs. [Czechoslovak] armed forces is unchanged. Troops are undergoing intensive training according to adjusted plans. Staffs are verifying the accomplishment of assigned measures, and are implementing steps to increase coordination.

Evidence has been discovered of a deliberate impairment of the combat readiness of a MIG-15 plane that members of the headquarters of the 7th Army use for training. A scrap of paper had been inserted into the gun sight, preventing effective fire from the on-board weapons. The perpetrator has so far not been identified.

The state of political morale in the armed forces of the CSSR is still good. The current situation is spurring the majority of members of the army and Interior Ministry troops to more active and responsible activity in the accomplishment of duties. Commitments to more rapid training of recruits and reservists are being adopted. Cases are spreading of non-party army members requesting acceptance as candidate members of the CPCz. Inquiries on the possibilities of recruiting volunteers to go to Cuba are increasing.

Measures for supply of the population are being positively received, and it is reported that the wave of panic buying in stores has subsided in most instances.

Isolated cases of indiscipline are also being reported, such as absence without leave, and failure to report for duty. During the course of yesterday there occurred a desertion of two privates on basic service from military troop 8008 Plzeň. The motive for desertion was probably one of the soldiers'

having been referred to the military prosecutor for failure to obey orders. The search for both of these deserters is being carried out by Public Security.

On 26.10.1962 [26 October 1962], 15 soldiers at a technical vocational school (where the officer corps is trained to serve anti-aircraft rockets) were found listening to a broadcast of Radio Free Europe in the Hungarian language, which was translated by one of the listeners. The report spoke of the border conflict between India and China.

Similarly, in the 2nd company of the Cheb brigade of the Border Guards, several members listened to West Berlin station Rias on a transistor receiver.

A private of the 151st engineer regiment was found taking 200 grenades off base. The case is being investigated.

In the area of Hradiště exercise range yesterday afternoon, a foreigner on a visa, Arthur Roger Henrichs, who is an American citizen, was apprehended while photographing the area. He was identified, and his photo apparatus was confiscated.

Among the citizens, increased interest is being shown in training in national preparation for Civil Defense II level. For example in the Přerov district, participation in training has risen from 40% to 90%.

A number of cases have occurred of reserve soldiers and officers requesting recall to active duty. Military district officials report increased registration discipline.

The political authorities of the 2nd army district warn that in the areas of Bruntál, Šumperk, Hlučina, and Odry, members of the German ethnicity are becoming active.

[Signature]

[Source: central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ (Prague), file Antonin Novotny, Kuba, box 124. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 326 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 27 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11043

Arrived: 27.10.62 15:30

Processed: 27.10.62 16:30 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 27.10.62 17:00

NEWSFLASH!

[Deputy Foreign Minister Antonin] Gregor.

That sent by you via Washington, and a discussion between Vrána and Pinner 26.10. [26 October] passed on this conviction of Fidel [Castro]'s about the danger of an invasion by the USA and mercenaries 27.10 [27 October]. If [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alexejev [Aleksseev] confirms this information during the night hours, we will give the order to burn all classified materials except for the enciphered data, which we will destroy last. At the same time I will order the emergency measures for informing and organizing our citizens, as per the emergency plan.

Pavlíček 326

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Report to CPCz General Secretary Antonin Novotný, 28 October 1962

Information for Comrade Novotný

During 28 October no significant changes occurred in the military-political situation.

In spite of the White House statement in which there are indications of willingness on the part of the USA to negotiate a resolution to the current crisis, aggressive preparations against Cuba continued overnight. Especially ongoing were the reinforcement and concentration of American ground and air forces in Florida and on the base in Key West, where Hawk anti-aircraft missile batteries are also deployed. The American government has officially proclaimed that the intensity of air force reconnaissance over Cuba will be increased, while American planes will destroy anti-aircraft facilities that attempt to defend Cuban airspace.

It has been learned that a light armored regiment from the strategic corps at Fort Meade, Maryland is at combat readiness and is prepared to move from the base. The American Defense Ministry has called 24 transport planes of the Air National Guard to active duty.

According to information from General Headquarters of the Ministry of National Defense, on 27.10.1962 [27 October 1962] at 16:00 h our time a Cuban anti-aircraft battery shot down an American U-2 reconnaissance plane about

20 km from Guantanamo. At 16:17 h a group of American planes penetrated to above Pinar del Rio province, and were repelled by anti-aircraft artillery.

In Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala, and other countries, exile intervention units are at the ready. Increased readiness has been observed at the Canadian Defense Ministry, where 50% of officers were at their stations during the night. Preparations for other measures toward heightened combat readiness has been observed in Italy. On 27.10. [27 October] police were put on alert in Rome, and instructed that possible internal unrest should be expected, especially in the event of mobilization. The mood among the ranks of the Italian police and army is strongly anti-American.

Among troops deployed on the Central European theater, no further extraordinary measures have been observed. Stand-by patrols by American strategic B-52 airplanes continue in the Mediterranean area at the rate of 48 flights per day.

During the night continuing preparations were discovered to destroy routes of communications in the area of Ludwigsthal. Civil defense exercises were held in the area of the eastern Schönsee at 22.30 h.

The situation in the Cs. [Czechoslovak] armed forces is unchanged.

Troops continue to train for increased combat readiness. Repairs to equipment are being rapidly completed.

The commander of the 4th Army has relieved the commander of the 4th Antiaircraft Detachment, Lt. Colonel Havidler, for irresponsible attitude and failure to fulfill combat readiness tasks. In the same army, during a relocation of the 9th Mechanized Infantry regiment, there were motor breakdowns of some automobiles – the fault of recruit drivers.

The state of political morale in the armed forces continues to be good. The message from Cde. [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev to President Kennedy has become the focus of attention. In the Cz. [Czechoslovak] People's Army and the troops of the Interior Ministry, mass radio listening has been arranged for, and reports and meetings have been held. The response of all members has been very positive. During these political events interest was shown on other questions; especially anticipated is what position will be adopted on the Soviet position by Turkey and the USA.

Political activity continues to be pursued among the units, exhibiting results in the exemplary fulfillment of tasks and the adoption of commitments. Combat readiness is maintained at a high level. Preparations for the swearing-in ceremony of 1st year recruits were taken advantage of to explain the current international situation and the necessity for high combat readiness. In several units the ceremony has already taken place; in others it will take place today. The clarification of the meaning and sense of the oath has a very positive effect on the

soldiers at this time. An equally positive impact is had by the speeches of representatives of local government organs, sponsor factories, and the participation of parents. Commitments to quality and timely fulfillment of tasks are adopted then and there at the assembly under the impression created by the oath-taking. From the ceremonial assemblies and meetings, greetings are sent to the district conferences of the CPCz in which soldiers assure the delegates that they will fulfill their assigned tasks.

Among the troops of the Interior Ministry – in the Internal Guard since the last report, 30 new collective and 333 individual commitments have been adopted relating to guard duty, heightening of combat readiness, attainment of the “Model Collective” award, fuel conservation, etc.

In regard to the statement by Cde. Khrushchev, some members have expressed the opinion that tensions have been further decreasing, and that it will no longer be necessary to observe all measures for maintaining combat readiness.

In the Blansko RMZ [Regional Military Zone] there was a gross breach of discipline by two officers, Major Koš, a former member of the government troops, and 1st Lieutenant Kriš, who had been released to the reserves in 1950 and reactivated. The above-named expressed unwillingness to obey an order of the chief of the RMZ. The case is being investigated by the head of the Regional Military Authority and the RMA Political Department.

In the 4th Tank Division, listening to Radio Free Europe was discovered in the political education office. The commander of the army and the chief of political administration have taken the appropriate measures.

A drop has occurred in the increased buying within the territory of Prague. Buying continues near bus and train stations, where citizens from the country do their shopping.

Much buying has been observed on the *Malá Strana* as well, and diplomatic personnel are especially involved in this. Also the *Dům potravin* [Food Store] delivery service has recorded increased purchases by the embassies of foreign states. The increased purchasing tendencies continue within the Prague 5 district as well.

In the West Bohemia region there is constant demand for sugar, salt, butter, and flour. Cases have been discovered where citizens that have a vehicle are traveling to shop in neighboring regions. In Plzeň itself there is a great demand for salt. It is being said there that salt is a good protection against exposure to radiation.

Despite a certain drop, increased purchasing is being reported in other regions of the republic as well.

[Signature]

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ (Prague), file Antonín Novotný, Kuba, box 124. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 328 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavliček), 28 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11091

Arrived: 28.10.62 15:00

Processed: 28.10.62 16:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 28.10.62 16:30

NEWSFLASH!

The night of 26.10 to 27.10 [26 October to 27 October] passed by in relative calm, although in absolute readiness and understandable nervousness. Materials were not destroyed as the alarming news of the Cubans was not definitely confirmed by [Soviet Ambassador] Alekseev and we decided to wait. In the morning hours of 27.10. [27 October], a U-2 rocket in Oriente [Province] along with gunfire shot down and fended off an attack by a group of US jet bombers, likely on a mission to examine the missile bases in Pinar del Rio. Caught a Pentagon announcement that if the Cubans do not leave a free zone for US flight inspections of Cuba and if an immediate dismantling of missile bases does not begin, there will be further action, including armed forces. Apart from that announced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that [US President John F.] Kennedy refused [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev's offer to negotiate, the bases will not be dismantled. With this comes the climax of the third, this time very dangerous, crisis where the Cubans anticipate a direct attack by the USA. Therefore we are undertaking the same security measures on 27.10 and during the night of 28.10.

Pavliček 328

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ, (Prague); File: “Antonín Novotný, Kuba,” Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 330 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 28 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11096

Arrived: 28.10.62 19:00

Processed: 28.10.62 20:30 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, TO

Dispatched: 28.10.62 22:00

ČTK [Czechoslovak Press Agency]

Amongst the lower staff of the ORI [Integrated Revolutionary Organizations], the reaction to [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev is understood correctly and with trust. Amongst the intelligentsia there is concern that a portion of the population will be fooled by the offer, that Cuba's defenses will be weakened as a result and inspections allowed, despite Fidel [Castro]'s claim that inspections will never be permitted and that defenses will continue to be erected. Therefore the news has not been published as of Saturday noon, although known since Friday. It will be explained as a peaceful measure by the Soviet Union with the goal of forcing the USA to negotiate, and at the same time unmasking them because [US President John F.] Kennedy will not allow the Turkish bases to be closed.

News sent by Štrafelda and Vavruš.

Pavlíček 330

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 332 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 28 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11097

Arrived: 28.10.62 20:45

Processed: 28.10.62 22:30 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, OMO

Dispatched: 28.10.62 22:45

IMMEDIATELY!

To comrade Kurk.

The KRV [Cuban Revolutionary Front] received a message from [UN Secretary-General] U Thant in the evening hours of 26.10, to which Fidel [Castro] responded on 27.10 [27 October]. Among other things, Fidel's text says that Cuba is willing to discuss its problems with the USA in cooperation with the United Nations so that the crisis gets resolved. However, Cuba refuses to accept any sort of infringement of its sovereignty, such as a blockade or aggressive actions and demands by the USA which entail deciding what rights Cuba has, what kinds of weapons it has, which weapons are defensive, its relations with the USSR, and steps in international politics to which all nations are entitled and which compose the norms of UN standards—Cuba has a right to these so that it can ensure its security and sovereignty. The KRV is willing to accept suggestions in its effort to maintain peace, but on the assumption that during the negotiations the USA will cease the threats and aggressive actions against Cuba, especially the naval blockade. Cuba is not breaching international law—in contrast, it suffered the aggressive actions of the USA, such as the naval blockade and a series of others, by which the rights of Cuba were trampled upon. Fidel is currently expressing the wish to weigh every proposal and if he regards it as a positive step towards peace, he invites U Thant as the Secretary General of the UN to Havana for talks about the current crisis, with the goal of preventing a dangerous war. The unrestricted respect of Cuba's sovereignty is a necessary precondition for Cuba to be able to contribute to resolving the problems, together with all nations fighting for peace—the exception being that Cuba would be surrendered and asked to relinquish the rights which every sovereign state possesses. In the evening hours U Thant answered with a preliminary acceptance of the invitation to Havana; upon instructions from Fidel, [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa will immediately fly to meet the [UN] Security Council. Please pass along the briefly worded message from Fidel, as per the wishes of Minister Roa Raúl Kouro.

Pavlíček 332

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 333 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 29 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11134

Arrived: 29.10.62 17:45

Processed: 29.10.62 20:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 30.10.62 06:30

NEWSFLASH!

Other events gradually took place during 27 October which further dramatized the tense state of affairs; but on the other hand, in our view, these events clarified the position to such a degree that an invasion by the USA can scarcely be expected, and we can instead hope that the entire problem will be resolved through negotiations. Most important was [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev's message to [US President John F.] Kennedy which was replied to in a significantly different tone in the afternoon hours, as well as the exchange of messages between [UN Secretary-General] U Thant and Fidel [Castro] which promises that U Thant will travel to Havana. A binding factor can certainly be the fact that during the morning hours of 27 October the USA "tried," with embarrassing results, [to penetrate] the defenses of Cuba and thus a U-2 [reconnaissance plane] was shot down, and according to about 600 Cubans and friends, after gunfire and a quick attack, a US bomber unit from Pinar del Rio was also lost. The kind of panic these events caused can easily be imagined by the fact that the plane did not return to its base and could be regarded as lost, while [US Secretary of Defense Robert] McNamara did not admit that it had been shot down until the late hours of the night. The opinion of the Cuban people and their friends is that the current aggressive act of the USA was unleashed to unimaginable proportions of propaganda and was an act of camouflage, supported by constant threats of attack which were meant to break Cuba's defenses and probably to try to blackmail the USSR into backing down. Thus far, events have unfolded in the exact opposite manner and are only another confirmation of the failure of the Pentagon and the CIA. The internal situation has not seen any changes. The dignified, orderly, and quick mobilization, and above all the calm nature of the Cubans surprised not only all our friends, but above all the foreigners residing here. There is commentary to the effect that a similar calm, decisiveness, and courage should possess our Cuban friends in the area of working results. The results would be impressive. The entire country lives in a state of preparedness, awaiting a US attack which would for them end in catastrophe. Provocateurs appear only sporadically, their work having an immediately guaranteed effect. There is no sign of the USA's wish for an organized

internal opposition. All tasks of civil defense, medical services, and others are fulfilled in accordance with Cuban possibilities and organizational capabilities. Battle plans with the Soviet friends are being fulfilled faithfully under very unfavorable conditions--strong winds and continual heavy rains and cool weather. Khrushchev's suggestions are understood and received well, with explanations and commentaries in the press, radio, and television. Expressions of solidarity from our countries and the entire world strengthen the fighting spirit of the Cubans and solidify the unity around the KRV [Cuban Revolutionary Front]. It is a great mistake that the Cubans do not inform the embassies of the socialist camp countries about the course of events and the internal measures. We are in close touch with Cubans at the highest levels, as well as with the Soviet friends and we inform the Polish, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Romanian, and partially the [East] German and [North] Vietnamese embassies, as they requested us to do so. All others in contact with the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs work quietly in their posts; they are regularly informed of the situation by the embassy and are given directions in emergency situations. It is an unforgivable mistake to send more groups of tourists and women with children to visit our experts. Here we cannot understand that such groups are still being sent off under such dramatic circumstances; they certainly add to the embassy's problems. I ask for an energetic removal of these groups from further trips. If resorts are fulfilling the necessary quotas or rather we are dealing with paid trips without regard for a dangerous situation, this stance deserves criticism and should be stopped. Regardless, the embassy is arranging contact with all and providing information about the situation.

Pavlíček 333

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Record of the Conversation between CPCz first secretary Antonín Novotný and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, Moscow, 30 October 1962 (excerpt)

[For the Czech record of the 30 October 1962 conversation in Moscow between CPCz first secretary Antonín Novotný and Nikita Khrushchev (i.e., excerpt containing Khrushchev's comments on the missile crisis), see the section below.]



Cable no. 335 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 30 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11.184

Arrived: 30.10.62 13:00

Processed: 30.10.62 15:15 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, OMO

Dispatched: 30.10.62 15:45

IMMEDIATELY!

Kurk. From talks between [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa and [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev it became clear that Fidel [Castro] and the KRV, who are clear about [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev's orders to dismantle [the missiles], are nevertheless concerned that the general population and the army will not understand this step, and they are also concerned about the danger of the Soviet Union losing some prestige. Thus far the press and radio are commenting on the matter insufficiently and [sic] clarifying for the people all the measures and suggestions on the part of the Soviet Union. Thus, according to Alekseev, Fidel will evidently speak on television and clarify the entire situation. Furthermore, Fidel fervently tried to convince Alekseev that thus far he does not believe in any of the USA's guarantees and he is convinced of the USA's treachery in that, in the event of dismantling, they will [nevertheless] invade. According to Roa, [UN Secretary General] U Thant and his advisers will arrive in Havana on Tuesday 30 October to begin talks with Fidel and clarify the requests of the Cubans. After the negotiations end, Roa will return to the UN with U Thant. This evening a special messenger, [sent by Brazilian President João] Goulart, will arrive with a message regarding Brazil's position.

In Venezuela, there was a huge act of sabotage affecting oil equipment, which forced [President Romulo] Betancourt to mobilize and protect the equipment. Estimates say 1/6th of the equipment was ruined. The internal situation remains unchanged, as we reported last time. Calm prevails and battle alertness is heightened in connection with the constant threats of attack by the USA.

Pavlíček 335

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 336 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 30 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11213 V

Arrived: 30.10.62 21:00

Processed: 31.10.62 03:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 31.10.62 06:00

As we already indicated, the press continues to inadequately explain the situation and the importance of individual steps made by the USSR. Usually it only registers. Among the current press clippings, pay special attention to *Revolucion* from 29.10 [29 October], to the proportions and placement of the message's titles, etc., which already resulted in protests by the revolutionaries and supported an undesirable discussion. Reasons for the weak press campaign: mainly busy, an inadequate understanding of the situation by *Revolucion*; we do not discount a focus unfavorable to the USSR's prestige. I send more details by messenger. Vavruš [Czech Press Agency reporter in Havana] has an opportunity to visit with military personnel and he is consulting his steps with the embassy.

Pavlíček 336

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 337 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 30 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11208

Arrived: 30.10.62 19:50

Processed: 30.10.62 23:45 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 31.10.62 06:00

NEWSFLASH!

After [Cuban leader] Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points for guarantees were made public, the Cubans unfortunately did not at all understand the historic steps by [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev and instead believe that the USSR backed away from the USA, and that Cuban defenses have been weakened. They focused all attention on the fulfillment of Fidel's requests and think that this is decisive for the future course of events. The press, television, and radio are working very poorly and are probably wavering, including the former party supporter, [the newspaper] Hoy. In fact, in some instances it [the media] is apparently intentionally standing in contrast to the views of Khrushchev and Fidel and not clarifying the importance of the Soviet steps. According to the unconfirmed information of friends, including [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev, it seems that varying opinions were also expressed within the government. According to personal interviews with secretaries of the CTC, there is an apparent total disorder of opinions. They do not understand the situation from a world-wide perspective, only a Cuban one, and their only vision remains the fulfillment of Fidel's requests. Today's party press hardly publishes anything about the USSR, and instead speaks of the indestructible nature of Fidel-ism in a prominent editorial. Fidel will speak on Thursday, probably after his talks with [UN Secretary-General] U Thant end. During discussions with Alekseev I learned of the Soviet friends' concerns regarding the losses in the USSR's position. Questions are being raised about whether Fidel was informed of the USSR's position and the dismantling beforehand, and about the fact that an agreement was reached on supervision by the UN -- an agreement that Fidel then rejected in reaction to [US President John F.] Kennedy's speech. There are even remarks about a new Munich. Together we are very uneasy about the current state of affairs; we are trying to provide explanations but assume that only Fidel's speech on 1.11 [1 November] will bring clarity.

Pavlíček 337

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 338 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 31 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11281

Arrived: 31.10.62 19:00

Processed: 1.11.62 03:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 1.11.62 06:45

IMMEDIATELY!

The mood of the general population continues to be in a state of considerable confusion regarding the problem of dismantling. The situation is worsened by the difference of opinion among the mid-level staff, which echoes in the masses. According to the discussion with [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev, [Cuban leader] Fidel [Castro] understood the situation exactly, but he has to lead politically unstable and doubtful elements in their relationship to the Soviet Union. From this perspective, clarity is expected in his speech to be given on Thursday. It has been illustrated, and the comrades understand how hard it is, especially now with an insufficient political party that is substituted by a very important unit around Fidel and his decision-making. We get our information from conversations with friends and some higher and middle functioning staff, because those highest around Alekseev are not within reach. The President [Dorticos], Fidel, Carlos and Rodriguez are in Havana, Raúl [Castro] in the east, and [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara in Pinar. Unfortunately, neither ORI [Integrated Revolutionary Organizations] nor any of the information services are clarifying the steps being taken by the Soviet Union. Things are evaluated on the surface level, in keeping with Cuban temperaments, and there is no lack of comment about another Congo, abandonment, the defense of Cuba, etc. Quick meetings called by ORI are not very effective. The categorical focus is on the fulfillment of Fidel's 5 Points, and thus the tense waiting for the meeting with [UN Secretary General] U Thant. All the while it is clear to Fidel himself that the maximum request for the liquidation of Guantanamo is unacceptable to [US President John F.] Kennedy. The mood has had a depressing effect on the Soviet friends, and while they are convinced there will be a positive ending, they are stunned and surprised by the Cuban reaction. According to some officials it will be necessary to explain much to the Cubans. Otherwise the internal situation has not undergone a change with regard to resoluteness, preparedness, and security, apart from the above-mentioned confused discussions. The latest information indicates that

the situation is beginning to improve. On the other hand, supplies of food and fuel are decreasing and could be seriously threatened during prolonged negotiations. The total supply of vital products is estimated as being enough for only 3 weeks. Some Cuban officials expect that once the USA realizes the extent of the situation, they will prolong the negotiations in order to cause the most disruption. Security forces liquidate individual provocateurs quickly and effectively so this kind of activity is minimal throughout the country and absolutely unorganized—and thus has brought a deep sense of disappointment to the USA. If possible, we will try to learn some of the results of the talks with U Thant. The predominant opinion is that despite favorable commentaries and prospects about the negotiations, it is not possible to expect any improvement in relations between the USA and Cuba; in the event of a “guarantee,” the dangerous situation will be postponed, not resolved.

Pavlíček 338

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: “Antonín Novotný, Kuba,” Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 339 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 31 October 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11279 Kr
Arrived: 31.10.62 19:25
Processed: 31.10.62 24:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6
Dispatched: 1.11.62 06:30

NEWSFLASH!

[Deputy Foreign Minister Antonin] Gregor.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez visited me and informed me of the crushing impressions and the situation in which Fidel [Castro] and the government find themselves with regard to the Cuban people; for Fidel was not at all informed of the order to dismantle [the missile bases] nor of the UN inspection, to which he was categorically opposed. At the same time they see no guarantees that could be given to Cuba for they do not trust the USA. Therefore they are focusing their efforts on having Fidel's 5 Points fulfilled. Explanations that Cuba was not abandoned are spreading in an explosive fashion amongst

the population. Rodriguez confirmed that [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev learned of the order to dismantle from my telephone conversation, based on news from *Prensa Latina*.

A crushing mood also prevails amongst the Soviet friends. After receiving the order, the Soviet personnel absolutely did not understand and cried. Some experts and technicians refused to work further and there were many instances of drunkenness in old Havana. Rodriguez said that they are awaiting the arrival of [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan. Despite this, he said that the actions of the Soviet Union will have a catastrophic effect for the USSR's position, as well as that of the entire socialist camp and Latin America. He sees only a partial salvation of the situation in the form of perfect guarantees, in which he does not believe anyhow. The internal situation will depend much on Fidel's speech of 1 November. [UN Secretary General] U Thant's preliminary discussions are not yet known. The concrete negotiations should take place on 31 October. Brazil should send some of its suggestions, which [Brazilian President] Goulart will voice straight away. The position of our experts and technicians amongst the Cuban colleagues is difficult. They are met with a series of comments and innuendos suggesting that we all abandoned Cuba. There is also considerable disorientation among a series of our friends. When possible, I ask for your information and directions.

Pavlíček 339

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: “Antonín Novotný, Kuba,” Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 340 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 1 November 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11330 St
Arrived: 1.11.62 18:05
Processed: 1.11.62 19:15 Office of the President, G, Ku
Dispatched: 1.11.62 19:50

NEWSFLASH!

To [Czechoslovak Deputy Foreign Minister Antonin] Gregor.

As I informed earlier, confusion and disappointment are noticeably reflected in the mood of the population as a result

of the Soviet Union's actions, which were not led by anyone, not even a government official. The press, radio, and television with its explicit focus on Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points only worsened the situation. In this respect there was an exceptional cooling amongst a segment of the intelligentsia and the middle classes, while this was much less the case amongst the others. There has also been a significant rise in nationalism. Only today is the press and radio preparing the ground for Fidel's appearance tomorrow, on 1 November, from the viewpoint of resolving the situation not only from a Cuban perspective, but a world-wide one for the preservation of peace. According to our information, Fidel visited the university where he expressed the hope that the negotiations will be successful and that he believes that Cuba's security will be secured with the help of the Soviet Union and all countries of the socialist camp. Up until this point, information from [UN Secretary-General] U Thant's talks indicate that the Cubans continue to insist upon Fidel's 5 Points being fulfilled, and they are opposed to UN inspections.

Pavlíček 340

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 341 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 1 November 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11.337 St

Arrived: 1.11.62 19:35

Processed: 2.11.62 01:00 Office of the President, G, Ku

Dispatched: 2.11.62 06:45

NEWSFLASH!

[Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa informed me of the results of the talks with [UN Secretary-General] U Thant. He qualified his [i.e., Thant's] manner as proper, with considerable sympathy and understanding for Cuba. Today, on 31 October, U Thant met only with the Cubans, without translators and other members of the delegation, among whom an Indian and an Arab were not pleasant. U Thant discussed the question of the Cubans' requests with them and acknowledged their

right to submit the issues for consideration. The Cuban requests are based on discontinuing the blockade, fulfilling Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points, and not supporting an international inspection. The firmness of the Cuban government and the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people made an impression on U Thant. Apart from the negotiations he held talks with [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev, the Brazilians, and a Yugoslav. He asked Alekseev about the dismantling of the rockets and the manner in which they would be transported back to the Soviet Union. Alekseev said that he does not know anything about the bases and referred U Thant to the military experts. According to Roa, the Brazilians offered its good offices and were eager to present suggestions for the removal of Soviet bases on Cuba, but also for those of the USA in the entire Caribbean. They acknowledged Cuba's right to negotiate. In cooperation with the Brazilians, the Yugoslav also offered its good offices, wanting to gain support for the Cuban requests from Asian and African countries, especially those that signed the Belgrade Declaration. Furthermore, Roa informed us that during the night hours of 30 October he received a message from the Canadian government offering its good offices. Roa thanked the Canadian ambassador and referred to the discussions at the UN. At the end of the talks, in the name of the USA, U Thant requested information about a US airman [Major Rudolf Anderson] who was shot down 27 October in the east. The Cubans provided information about the incident and promised to agree to ship his body to the USA. On the basis of preliminary information, the UN Security Council should be called together on 7 November and Roa will attend. Since the Cubans refused to budge on the issue of an international inspection, U Thant's entire group including [Cuban UN Ambassador Carlos] Lechuga departed together. The Brazilian delegation left that same day. Roa reported that Chile, Bolivia, and Uruguay refused to submit to the USA's pressure and break relations with Cuba. Of the Latin American countries, Brazil had the most correct approach, and Mexico was highly condemned for giving in to US pressures. Roa also praised the support of Yugoslavia and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, he revealed that Fidel will likely concern himself with two problems in his speech of 1 November. The first is the Cubans' orientation and the detention of anti-Soviet groups inside the country, actions supported by the Soviet Union in friendship and gratitude for the enormous help. The second point will be news about the results of negotiations with U Thant, the requests and guarantees granted Cuba. Roa openly admitted that while the government and Fidel are absolutely clear on the fact that the actions of the Soviet Union in the interest of preserving peace and preventing a nuclear war were correct, they cannot understand and accept the manner in which they were carried out -- [i.e.,] the very harsh

political mistake, revealed also in [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev's documents, of presenting Cuba with a decision without preliminary talks or communications. They await [Soviet Deputy Premier] Mikoyan's explanations, which will clarify much. They have a real desire to quickly bring to a halt and paralyze the anti-Soviet campaign which was unleashed by counter-revolutionary elements and reactionaries, and caused much confusion. He understands the very difficult situation of Alekseev and the Soviet soldiers living in Cuba, and believes that the situation will improve after Fidel's speech, although it will be difficult to completely erase the incident from memory. Alekseev was present for the entire discussion and admitted big mistakes, expressing the hope that Mikoyan will clarify the situation. Roa said that the KRV very much welcomes Mikoyan's visit and sees it as an important political gesture given the current situation. Alekseev and Roa agreed that Guevara and Roa will be present for the arrival ceremony, without an invitation from the diplomatic office dealing with sensitive visits. Despite this, we are going to the airport with friends from countries of the socialist camp. I will send information about the course of the visit.

Pavlíček 341

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 347 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 1 November 1962 [received 2 November 1962]

Telegram from Havana File # 11339

Arrived: 2.11.62 03:35

Processed: 2.11.62 05:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 2.11.62 06:00

NEWSFLASH!

Re. your 031.583

Your request will clarify the differences of opinions in the government, as well as our uneasiness. On the basis of [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev's last letter about the dismantling [of the missiles] supervised by the UN—without

informing Fidel [Castro]—there was a harsh exchange of opinion in the government; we do not know the contents of the debate, but can for example deduce the views of the hitherto unbalanced socialist thoughts of members like [Minister of Education Armando] Hart, [economic advisor Raúl Cepero] Bonilla, [Minister of Health José Ramón] Machado, [Minister of Construction Osmani] Cienfuegos, Yadur [not further identified] and others. Also [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara, but he only learned of the dismantling in the evening hours of Sunday, was crushed and could not believe that the defensive agreement remained unfulfilled. Mory Jansov's commentary was also interesting, in line with [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa's viewpoint about which I write separately. Fidel prevented the danger of further divisions with the publication of his 5 Points and the request that unity be maintained at all costs in the government, as well as his personal explanation to the people about the USSR's actions meant to prevent a loss of prestige and block the anti-Soviet campaign. Our uneasiness then came at the stage where there were efforts to prevent disunity and divisions which would weaken the revolution and cause internal wavering. The situation on Monday and Tuesday resembled this exactly as the press, radio, and television were left to themselves, nobody directed them, causing the people to be let down; only the news that Fidel would appear and a national campaign to have Fidel's 5 Points fulfilled contributed to a sense of solidarity and unity, although with deep reflections regarding the relationship to the USSR.

Pavlíček 347

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 346 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 1 November 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11.340 St

Arrived: 2.11.62 05:05

Processed: 2.11.62 06:10 Office of the President, G, Ku, Kl, 6, TO

Dispatched: 2.11.62 06:45

The Cuban press is stressing Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points and gathering other news from API without commentaries, and only a little from TASS. Journalists are very disoriented

and embarrassed; some circles are even supporting anti-Soviet moods and anti-communism, although these tendencies are not determined. The press makes no mention of China's heightened position given its proclamation supporting the 5 Points and Cuba, nor of the Chinese-Indian conflict. We can expect the press to take some direction after Fidel's speech. Explain to ČTK [Czech News Agency] that Vavruš [a ČTK reporter] is consulting important steps with the embassy and cannot make note of certain negative realities included in our other, already sent messages. At a press conference we probed for reactions to the Czechoslovak government's gift—results are good and there were positive evaluations from our partners in East Germany (GDR), the USSR, etc. Details and analysis of individual tendencies in the press and the like will be sent by messenger. We recommend an increase of photos and materials about the situation via Prel and also the embassy.

Pavlíček 346

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 348 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 2 November 1962

Telegram from Havana

Arrived: 2.11.62 18:45

Processed: 3.11.62 01:50 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 3.11.62 06:00

Commentary related to [Cuban leader] Fidel [Castro]'s speech.

Together with our Cuban friends and our own, we think that Fidel's speech had considerable importance both domestically and abroad and shows his significant and quick political growth. His speech related the strength and unity of the Cuban revolutionary government to not allow an agreement under undignified terms, nor to allow the rights of the Cuban people to be trampled upon. As well, his evaluation of the internal situation and acknowledgement of the Cubans' fighting spirit and determination has and will have a large response internally and externally. I conclude that given the present situation where the UN is still discussing the matter and [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan has not yet arrived to clarify some open questions, he did a very good job

of evaluating and explaining the situation regarding relations with the Soviet Union, and its views. He was able to speak openly about some disagreements that will be dealt with during joint talks, and on the other hand he clearly placed above all else the help and friendship of the USSR, as well as about the anti-Soviet campaign that was unleashed by the counter-revolutionaries and which was assisted by the unsuitable writings of the local press on Sunday 28 October. However, we would have liked to have heard an emphasis on the [critical] role of the USSR in saving world peace and preventing a nuclear war, although much of this could be deduced from the speech. He will probably concern himself with the entire situation after Mikoyan's visit and the talks end. Thus far the reaction to Fidel's speech means an absolute calming of the situation and a clear orientation for the Cubans in the current situation.

Pavlíček 348

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Report on Visit to Prague by Cuban Communist Party Leader Blas Roca Calderio, 6 November 1962

Information regarding Blas Roca's stay in Prague

1. During his stay in Prague (1. – 4.11 [1-4 November]), Blas Roca met with Cuban ambassadors stationed in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and China, with whom he held talks; nothing of their content is known. While saying farewell to the Cuban ambassador in China, [Oscar] Pino [Santos], Blas Roca twice reminded him to convey his personal greetings to Mao Tse-tung [Zedong]. To comrade Petrov of the Bulgarian embassy in Prague, Roca said that of the socialist countries he likes Poland and Bulgaria the most. While he did not comment further on Poland, the comment regarding Bulgaria came in connection with the fact that he knew [Georgij] Dimitrov well and worked with him.

Blas Roca also spoke about solving the Cuban crisis with comrades Rumjancev and Sobolev of the OMS. The contents of their talks are in line with what he told us. However, with the Soviet comrades he did not speak with such sharpness and openness.

On Sunday at 10:00am, therefore 4 hours before his scheduled flight to Cuba, Roca received a phone call at the villa from Havana, telling him to attend the meeting of the Bulgarian Communist Party. According to Roca, he will attend the Congress in Hungary and if there are no extraordinary changes, he will also be at the 12th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

2. The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Paraguay, Oscar Creydt, told comrade Koernan: Via Cuba, the Paraguayan Party received a letter from the Communist Party of China in which the Chinese—on the basis of requests from the Communist Parties of Great Britain, New Zealand, Korea, and Indonesia—express the opinion that a council of representatives of communist parties should be elected for the purpose of discussing certain problems of the international communist movement. Creydt expressed the opinion that such a meeting will likely take place during the Bulgarian Congress.

[Handwritten addition]: (I think that this is a matter of the past. It will be necessary to ask comrade Creydt for precise details). [end of handwritten addition].

(Note: According to comrade Havlíček's information, a few days ago a Xinhua [Chinese state news agency] writer visited the editorial offices of the magazine *Questions of Peace and Socialism* in Prague, and asked a representative of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Gibons, what sort of response would likely be raised within the Communist Party of Great Britain if the Chinese Communist Party were to release an independent statement regarding international questions).

6.11.1962 [6 November 1962]

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 350 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 6 November 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11532 Kr

Arrived: 6.11.62 14:30

Processed: 6.11.62 17:15 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6,

OMO

Dispatched: 6.11.62 17:30

To Kurk.

The situation regarding [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan's talks with the Cubans has been complicated by the unexpected death of comrade Mrs. Mikoyan which has struck Mikoyan deeply. The first meeting did not take place until 4 November. The Cuban delegation includes Fidel [Castro], the President, Raúl Castro, Che Guevara, Carlos R. Rodriguez, and [Emilio] Aragonés. For now the Soviet side is composed of Mikoyan, [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev and the translator. The results are not yet known. [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa, to whom I passed on news from Ghana, indicated that according to [Cuban UN Ambassador Carlos] Lechuga there reigns a great deal of confusion at the UN regarding the next developments, for there is no one or coordinated set of views. Therefore [UN Secretary-General] U Thant is postponing a meeting of the Security Council. The USA has not reduced pressures and is in fact continuing to concentrate forces in Florida, strengthen Guantanamo, the flight inspections and the blockade. It is expected that a meeting of the OEA [OAS; Organization of American States] on 6 November will bring some developments, at least from the perspective of the USA. According to Polák, there is much talk about the compromise proposal to "Finlandize" Cuba, a proposal which should be presented by Brazil. This would mean Cuban neutrality and an end to the base at Guantanamo. However, in reaction to some questions regarding Brazil's position, Roa said only that the Brazilians offer good services. There was a considerable calmness inside the country after Fidel's speech. However, many Cubans still retain considerable reservations about the USSR's actions, and they await Mikoyan's clarification. Security and defensive measures remain in effect and the people are prepared for a possible breach of faith by the USA.

Pavlíček 350

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 355 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 7 November 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 11594 V

Arrived: 7.11.62 17:15

Processed: 7.11.62 19:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 7.11.62 19:30

1. Roy [Mario Garcia] Inchaustegui was harshly criticized by [Cuban leader] Fidel [Castro] for the fact that instead of discussing Cuba's right to defense at the [UN] Security Council, he discussed the question of the authenticity of documents related to the bases. Moreover, they criticized him for the low level of readiness and the government's deviation from the Party line, which according to our information concerned only Fidel's speech of 23 October. [Inchaustegui was replaced as Cuba's UN ambassador by Carlos Lechuga on 30 October 1962—ed.]

2. We are asked about the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic's stance towards Fidel's 5 points. We are replying positively, in connection with [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan's acknowledged support. Yet I am still requesting an official viewpoint.

Pavlíček 355

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 358 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 8 November 1962 (received 9 November 1962)

Telegram from Havana File # 11677 Kr

Arrived: 9.11.62 03:00

Processed: 9.11.62 10:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, Š, Kl, 6

Dispatched: 9.11.62 10:30

According to the preliminary, incomplete, and sketchy discussions with the Soviet friends and the Cubans, the talks between [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan and the Cubans are continuing in great detail and with a large dose

of patience on the part of Mikoyan. The Cubans remain adamant about refusing inspections, even on the open ocean, and they are absolutely against UN inspections. They are focused on Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points which they persistently push. [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez's speech at the ceremonial meeting marking the 45th anniversary of [the Russian Revolution of] October [1917] carried the same spirit, as he markedly underlined the 5 Points and strongly glorified 26 July. His words expressing confidence in the Soviet government's support and greetings to [Soviet Premier] N.S. Khrushchev were reacted to very coolly by some [Cuban] government officials ([President Osvaldo] Dorticos, [Minister of Construction Osmany] Cienfuegos, [Commandante Jose Ramon] Fernandez, [Emilio] Aragones), without applause. Yesterday's reception at the Soviet embassy drew huge numbers and the complete governmental delegation was marked by warm feelings and openness, but discussions still revealed the remains of doubtful tones regarding the USSR's approach. Sinhu [Xinhua—state Chinese press agency] is making a special effort to feed those feelings with his blatant nonsensical information in a bulletin that the local press willingly accepts. There was even a comment about a new Munich. Let us believe in a solution, although it is probable that some issues of prestige and self-complacency are difficult to overcome without solid political arguments. We are counting on the fact that Mikoyan will inform us of the results at the conclusion of the talks.

Pavlíček 358

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 365 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 15 November 1962 (received 16th)

Telegram from Havana File # 11.960 St

Arrived: 16.11.62 04:20

Processed: 16.11.62 05:45 Office of the President, G, Ku

Dispatched: 16.11.62 06:45

NEWSFLASH

A strictly confidential and scaled-down meeting of the leadership held in Prel on 14 November apparently gave the following instructions: Strict controls and reviews of news from the Soviet Union, and no publication in *Prensa Latina* of any news regarding peaceful coexistence nor about the solidarity of whomever with the Soviet Union, especially about the exports of arms, etc., until the situation is resolved. If possible, do not mention [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev. In the event of a critical situation, decisions will be made by Prel Carneado, an old member of the Party. Limitations placed on foreign correspondents and writers are also emphasized—they will get materials only from the director or his replacement. ADN and PAP allegedly protested. Vavruš is thus far without greater difficulties. Thus far unconfirmed information states that Pen, a former administrator and Revuelta's successor, has been sentenced to death in connection with allowing a US reconnaissance plan to unfold—a government plan to establish a section for a secret agency within the offices of *Prensa Latina*, the goals of which are not yet known. Revuelta's appeal is perhaps connected to the problems already mentioned, but he is not accused. Inspections and improvements in reporting are already underway—for example, the front page of *Pravda* let go of the question of preventing a world war, and support for Fidel Castro's 5 Points remains, with a similar statement coming from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uruguay.

We are watching and consulting the entire question with the Soviet friends and will inform further.

Pavliček 365

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 370 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavliček), 21 November 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 12.208 St

Arrived: 21.11.62 18:20

Processed: 21.11.62 20:45 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, 1, OMO

Dispatched: 22.11.62 06:35

NEWSFLASH

[Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan and [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev invited all the friendly embassy leaders, except for the Albanians. Mikoyan provided information about the talks with the Cubans, though probably in a reserved fashion given the presence of the Chinese. Thus we did not consider it appropriate to ask deeper questions. Mikoyan said that it is necessary to look towards the future optimistically, although there will still be difficulties. The actions of the Soviet Union prevented a nuclear war and saved world peace. In time, nations will remember that the USA caused the situation and presented the danger of a nuclear war. Nothing about the Cuban revolution will change, it will be stronger and more resistant. In exchange for removal of the strategic materials, including bombers, Cuba will get a guarantee of non-aggression and the blockade will end. In effect, this means the end of the Monroe Doctrine and the Rio Pact. The OAS [Organization of American States] agreements also suffered a heavy shake-up. The Soviet Union, together with Cuba, agreed to a joint measure regarding the USA, and this will be negotiated after a discussion with them and [UN Secretary-General] U Thant at the Security Council. With Cuba's agreement, the Soviet Union will within one month remove the [IL-28] bombers, under a supervision which will be decided upon at the UN. Thus, the requests of the USA will be fulfilled. The joint requests of the Soviet Union and Cuba include an end to the blockade, an end to provocative flights, and negotiations regarding Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points. The proposals of Brazil and Latin American states to create a non-nuclear zone are seen as favorable on the whole, although with some reservations which Cuba and the Soviet Union will state precisely at the UN. Where inspections are concerned, Mikoyan said that U Thant formerly had three alternatives prepared. The first was to be an inspection of Cuban territory by members of the United Nations Secretariat, the second by ambassadors of Latin American countries posted in Cuba, and then the third inspection by ambassadors of neutral countries posted in Cuba. Given the one-sided approach and unfavorable conditions for Cuba, U Thant is currently considering creating a permanent watch unit at the Security Council which would undertake similar inspections if required. The proposal has not yet been discussed with the USA. That should create the conditions for negotiating an agreement at the Security Council. Mikoyan assured us that Fidel consulted U Thant beforehand on the point where the USA is warned that each airplane in flight will be shot down. [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev approved the approach. In the end he evaluated U Thant's role solidly, saying that he proved to be very objective. Mikoyan highly praised the honesty, solid nature and determination of Fidel and the Cubans, expressing the wish that there be more of such people and countries. He

said that the Soviet Union still had inconsistent views some years after the revolution, never mind that all Cubans should not have them too and instead understand everything at once. They will understand with time. In conclusion, Alekseev told me that he will give me more information. From this I infer that Mikoyan did not go into great detail about his discussion with the Cubans in the presence of the Chinese, and that he will inform Alekseev of these details. Mikoyan's departure has not yet been fixed. I will send further information after my conversation with Alekseev.

Pavliček 370

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 384 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavliček), 24 November 1962

Telegram from Havana File # ?

Arrived: 24.11.62 17:35

Processed: 24.11.62 23:40 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, OMO

Dispatched: 26.11.62 06:40

IMMEDIATELY

At the time of this report our friend [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan is awaiting the results of meetings in New York, and preparing for a meeting of the [UN] Security Council in the event that an agreement is reached. As soon as the position of the Security Council will be negotiated he will fly to Moscow again, via New York. Meanwhile, we can still see reservations about the approach of the Soviet Union and often disappointment, as reflected in talks with and speeches of government officials, as well as in the mood of the general population. The Cubans claim that the Cuban revolution will suffer not only internally by way of Fidel [Castro]'s authority, the government's authority, and a slowing of the revolutionary process, but most especially in the Latin American countries and others fighting for national liberation and independence. At the same time they condemn as politically risky and harmful to the socialist camp the position of the People's Republic of China, and the speeches of the Albanians. They claim that in contrast to the earlier limitless

confidence in the Soviet Union, not long ago supported by [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos at the UN and by Fidel, there is a markedly noticeable decrease in the country's prestige and a loss of trust. About three views of strong doubts are taking shape which also match the observations of the Soviet friends and correspond to difficulties during their explanations. The first reality is the Cubans' opinion that the USA did not give and is not willing to give any definitive guarantees, which not only confirms the continuation of flight observations and provocations, but also gives no indication of the withdrawal of forces from Florida and in the end also of the OAS [Organization of American States]'s last maneuver of organizing actions against the subversive acts of Cuba in Latin American countries. The Cubans refuse to believe any US guarantees. The second is the categorical and unchangeable view of Cubans regarding any kind of inspections on Cuba. They say that Cuba did nothing wrong and inspections indicate a humiliation and an attempt by the USA, the aggressor, to further provoke and insult Cuba. They do not even agree with inspections on the open ocean because it is an issue between the Soviet Union and the USA. They consider even this to be humiliating. Finally, as a third point they believe that the situation was bought out at far too high a price at the expense of the Cuban revolution, and without preliminary discussions with Fidel regarding questions of inspections; to this point only the Soviet Union and Cuba have fulfilled the concessions while the USA continues its arrogant provocative actions and declarations. They fully understand the Soviet steps taken to secure peace and avert a nuclear war, though they fear for the Cuban revolution because of the absolutely insufficient guarantees. The viewpoints expressed in conversations with us and other friends are decidedly reserved and one is able to observe the mixed feelings of confusion, disappointment, and insufficient understanding, which the press, radio, and television all help to spread. We think that this is an unfortunate reflection of the situation in the government and ORI [Integrated Revolutionary Organizations]. Despite this, together with our friends in favor of honesty and diligence amongst the leaders of the revolution, we believe in a return to a better understanding, though not without a long and difficult road of explanations and discussions.

Pavliček 384

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Cable no. 388 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 28 November 1962

Telegram from Havana File # 12540 P.
Arrived: 28.11.62 19:25
Processed: 28.11.62 22:10 G, HTS
Dispatched: 29.11.62 06:00
Re. your 1448.

The partner critically needs practice ammunition. According to the announcement he has no other option but to accept a delay in the terms of delivery. Lopez [not further identified] is not willing to negotiate directly with the Bulgarian People's Republic, nor with their new representative in Havana. He does not consider this proper. He is asking us, as allies, to discuss the delivery of the remainder, and if possible already in the first quarter of the year. According to Minfar's [Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces] list the number of outstanding ammunition supplies to be delivered stand at 40 204 000, as opposed to the 37 000 000 advised. Send word on whether the difference has not already been sent off in one of the prepared transports. I ask for a return reply. Message sent by Zachař.

Pavlíček 388.

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



Czechoslovak Ambassador to the United States (Dr. Miloslav Ruzek), Report on Anastas Mikoyan's Conversations in Washington, 29 November 1962 (passed to CPCz General Secretary Novotný, 18 December 1962)

Dr M. Ruzek
TOP SECRET!

Comrade A. Novotný
(Received in duplicate)
18 December 1962

Minutes of the communications of Deputy Chairman of the Ministers of the USSR

A. I. Mikoyan at the dinner in the Soviet Embassy, 29 November 1962

Comrade Mikoyan discussed his stay in Cuba and his talks with US President J. Kennedy in Washington, on 29 November 1962, in which Ambassador Dobrynin also participated. During the conversation President Kennedy brought up the idea of a certain division of spheres, in the sense that the Western hemisphere should be considered the area of American influence and that the USSR should not interfere in the Western hemisphere. There followed a discussion on the question of supporting revolutions, where Kennedy and [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk sought to show that the USSR supported revolutions against the USA. Comrade Mikoyan refuted this view and argued, using the example of Castro, in the sense that, after all, the USA had its representation abroad in Cuba, a monopoly of its affiliations, and many possibilities to influence the situation, and none of that helped. Fidel Castro had started out as a large estate owner, but developed into a socialist, not because of the support of the USSR but because of the development of socialist relations in Cuba. At this point Kennedy and Rusk disagreed, arguing that Castro was an enemy of the USA. Mikoyan pointed out that the USA itself had made Castro into an enemy of the USA (if one can even say that). The USA should try to understand the dynamics of the Cuban revolution and live with it in peace.

Concerning the topical question of the Cuban situation Kennedy argued that the American intervention became necessary after weapons had been brought to the island, and stated that the USSR would not have been able to sleep either if the USA brought that sort of weapon to Finland. Mikoyan replied that the USA had its weapons in Turkey, which is even closer to Armenia than Finland is, and yet the Soviet political representatives sleep well because they are judicious people who know that these weapons are under American control, and that if the American top-level leadership gave the command for their use against the USSR, that would be suicidal for the USA.

Mikoyan argued that the USSR had made good on its obligations stemming from the exchange of letters between [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev and Kennedy, of 26-28 October 1962, and that it was therefore up to the USA to make good on its remaining obligations - namely, to give formal guarantees that it would not attack Cuba. Kennedy and Rusk argued that the USSR had not made good on its obligations to allow spot checks and to introduce controls against the redeployment of offensive weapons in Cuba, and

that therefore the USA could not give formal guarantees. Mikoyan argued in response that Khrushchev, when he had reached an agreement with Kennedy, could understandably commit himself only in so far as it concerned Soviet property - namely, missiles and IL-28 aircraft - and not in the matter of inspection on Cuban territory, where the Cuban government has jurisdiction and does not want to permit inspection. The USSR therefore offered inspection carried out on the open seas, without allowing inspectors on Soviet territory, that is to say, on deck, and that had been agreed to even before Mikoyan's departure for Cuba. Kennedy and Rusk, nevertheless, stuck to their position, which they further argued by saying that guarantees against the re-deployment of offensive weapons in Cuba were necessary because China, too, could send similar weapons there in two or three years.

The question of the violation of Cuban airspace by over-flights of American aircraft and the question of bases on foreign territory were also discussed. Mikoyan protested against continuing over-flights over Cuban territory by American aircraft, and stated, among other things, that these over-flights were not necessary even for technical reasons, because considering the small width of the island of Cuba, the zone containing the whole territory of Cuba could be photographed from positions above the open seas. (This was confirmed to Mikoyan by John McCloy in New York.) Kennedy and Rusk defended the necessity of over-flights with the necessity of checking the dismantling of the IL-28s, and at the same time pointed out an article in the *New York Daily Mirror*, where it said that nuclear weapons in Cuba were concealed in caves. Mikoyan brushed off this argument with a joke, saying that articles like that were intended for idiots. During the discussion on bases in foreign territory Kennedy stated that their bases in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe were becoming less important, and that they were planning to close them down.

Apart from the Cuban case, Kennedy mentioned Laos, but Mikoyan was not prepared to discuss the matter. Other international problems, for example Berlin, Germany, and the like, were not discussed.

Concerning the experiences from his stay in Cuba, Mikoyan reported that the orders from the Central Committee of the CPSU were along the lines that no pressure was to be exerted on Castro. Considering the Cubans complained that Mikoyan had not sufficiently defended their interests in New York (they believed the American press), Mikoyan made a statement to the press before leaving for Havana, in which he supported the five Cuban points. Castro appreciated that very much, especially because it was done back in the USA and not after arriving in Cuba. From the beginning Castro rejected talks with the USA and the efforts to obtain guarantees against invasion, arguing that weapons were a better

guarantee for them and that it was impossible to set great store by American guarantees. He insisted on the five-point program, and did not even want to go to welcome Mikoyan at the airport. When, however, the agencies carried the news about Mikoyan making the statement in New York before his departure, Castro decided to go to the airport after all; [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos, however, did not go, which is, anyway, within protocol, because it was unnecessary for the head of state to be at the airport. During his departure, both Castro and Dorticos were at the airport.

After the withdrawal of the missiles the Cubans are left with three kinds of MIG—namely, the MIG 17, 19, and 21—as well as defensive missiles. According to Comrade Mikoyan, the American U-2 aircraft piloted by Major [Rudolf] Anderson had been shot down by a Soviet crew. There had also been other operations against American aircraft.

The population of Cuba behaved very well, and everything was flawless in the area of military measures. Economically there are many problems, but the harvest will be better. Intensive activity had been undertaken by the Chinese; they had organized blood donations, sent resolutions, etc. This activity, however, has had no influence on the leadership of Cuba. Before his departure, Khrushchev was told by Castro that Cuba was with the USSR and would continue to be with it. In this connection Mikoyan reiterated some of the arguments that he had used in discussions with Cuban representatives, concerning the pseudo-revolutionary 'positions' of the Chinese. The Chinese are very active in the use of revolutionary clichés, but have done virtually nothing useful for Cuba. Soviet garrisons were in Cuba, and if it came to a fight, they would give their lives, and not just give blood in a clinic. Instead of attacking Macao or Hong Kong and thus complicating the relationship of the USA with her allies Portugal and Britain, the People's Republic of China had attacked India, a neutral country, and was trying to enter into friendly relations with Pakistan, a member of an aggressive pact. Even in carrying out her policies in Tibet, the People's Republic of China had made a lot of blunders, mainly in assuming that it was enough to have an agreement with the leading figures of the Lama system; ultimately the shortcomings had become evident, which the Chinese did not want to admit. Comrade Mikoyan compared the behavior of the Chinese during the Cuban crisis with the behavior of the ultra-left during the Peace of Brest-Litovsk in World War I, when Lenin had to defend a sober approach to the situation against the cliché-mongers. The USSR explained to the People's Republic of China that it would be better if India received arms from socialist countries, and it would, in fact, thus be possible to influence her in the event of international difficulties, rather than from capitalist countries. The Chinese do not want to

understand that, and it was now coming about that [former Indian Defense Minister] Krishna Menon's position has practically been wiped out, while the position of the right-wingers, such as [Indian Finance Minister] Morarji Desai, had been strengthened, and the situation of the [Communist] Party in India had been made difficult. At the same time, Mikoyan stated that the delivery of Soviet MIG21 aircraft to India, which was being written about a great deal in the press, depended on the concrete situation at the time they were to be delivered, in December 1962.

The Cubans value in particular the attitude of Brazil and of President [João] Goulart personally, who sent his own envoy to explain the position of Brazil. Mexico had been placed under pressure by the USA, and they submitted to that pressure. Another country with a positive approach to Cuba was Chile. Mikoyan further reported that the American communiqué that had been noted in the press after his conversation with Kennedy had been prepared by the USA at Mikoyan's request; he had asked Kennedy for them to prepare a communiqué in view of the fact that they were more familiar with the American press.

During the conversation Kennedy, using the same domestic-political reasons, explained his reluctance to issue a formal statement against the invasion of Cuba. In this, he reiterated his earlier statements that the USA had not intended to attack Cuba and that they had been concerned only with offensive weapons. In this sense, Mikoyan also said that Kennedy's statement at the press conference of 20 November 1962 had been discussed beforehand in correspondence between Khrushchev and Kennedy.

Mikoyan also replied to our questions on the situation in Cuba, particularly concerning the situation in industry and agriculture.

Washington, 30 November 1962

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 193. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]

Notes

1 Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"—Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), pp. 12-13.

2 "ice-breaker": Severo Aguirre, a leading figure in Cuba's People's Socialist Party (PSP), quoted in comments to a Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) official J. Hendrych in Hendrych's March 1959 memorandum on their conversation, presented here.

3 On the February 1960 visit to Cuba by senior Soviet communist figure Anastas Mikoyan, Nikita Khrushchev's closest associate on the Soviet party Presidium (Politburo), see esp. Sergio Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 2012); Sergio Mikoyan accompanied his father on this ground-breaking trip to the island, which he recounts in the book, an earlier version of which appeared in Russian.

4 For more on this story, see Hana Bortlová, *Československo a Kuba 1959-1962* (Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy v Praze, 2011); *Czechoslovakia and Cuba in the Years 1959-1962* (Praha: FF UK (ed. Scholia), 2011). ISBN: 8073083574, 978-80-7308-358-8.

5 See proposed CPCz Politburo resolution, September 1959, and associated documents, below.

6 Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 22-25 (quotation on 24).

7 See the report of a conversation with Dulles by UK ambassador Sir Harold Caccia, 24 November 1959, FO 371, The [United Kingdom] National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), Kew Gardens, England, copy available on the website of the National Security Archive (press release of 23 March 2001). A few months after this conversation, in March 1960, the Eisenhower Administration would secretly approve Operation Zapata, the plan that would a year later, after modification by the incoming Kennedy Administration, produce the fiasco at the Bay of Pigs.

8 Cuban Foreign Ministry Raúl Roa visited Prague in June 1961 and presumably discussed military aid, though the records are not reproduced here. More murky than the military relationship, the Czech documents from 1961 printed herein also point to intelligence cooperation between Prague and Havana—a couple of cryptic cables refer to assassination plotting against Fidel Castro. Of course, since the Church Committee investigation of the mid-1970s, there has been a voluminous literature concerning CIA involvement in assassination plotting against Castro during this period, but a fascinating potential avenue for future research would be to carefully comb available intelligence archives of former Warsaw Pact countries in Eastern and Central Europe—especially with KGB and Cuban intelligence archives essentially off-limits—to gain some indication of whether, and to what extent, communist secret police were able to track such conspiracies. For Cuban intelligence report on CIA-aided preparations to invade Cuba by anti-Castro Cuban exiles around the time of the Bay of Pigs, see the selection of translated Cuban reports from January-May 1961 published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

9 "Czechoslovakia In Cuba," 17 June 1961, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) Czechoslovak Unit Background Report, Open Society Archives, box 16, folder 2, report 44, on OSA website.

10 Ibid.

11 On Mikoyan's missions, see Sergio Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya, cited above.

12 "Eastern Europe's Economic Commitments In Cuba," 12 November 1962, RFE/RL Background Report, Open Society Archives, box 14, folder 1, report 237, on OSA website.

13 See, e.g., Pavlíček's cables nos. 319 (October 24), 339 (October 31), 341 (November 1), all printed herein.

14 Czechoslovak (foreign ministry?) official, Stross, quoted in report from Hungarian Embassy, Prague, on Czechoslovakia-Cuba Relations, 25 June 1963, published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

15 See the report of Miloslav Ruzek, Czechoslovak Ambassador to the United States, on the 29 November 1962 meeting with Mikoyan, printed herein.

16 See the compilations of translated Polish and Hungarian documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

17 For the report of a Czechoslovak military delegation that visited Cuba in March-April 1965, led by Defense Minister Gen. Bohumil Lemský, which met with, among others, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, see the compilation of translated Polish, Bulgarian, and Czech documents on East European-Cuban contacts in early 1965 published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

³ Václav David was the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs.

⁴ František Krajčír was the Czechoslovak Minister of International Trade.

⁵ The first page of this report consists of a page with these handwritten notes.

⁶ The section in italics is added to the proposal in pen.

⁷ In the previous resolution proposal V. David's name was included only in the "those to be notified" column.

⁸ The main Technical Department of the Ministry of International Trade is de facto Omnipol. Apart from the export of so-called "special materials" under the company Omnipol, which concerns itself with foreign trade, the employees of the Technical Department were directly responsible for acquiring goods under embargo by the West.

⁹ Director of the Technical Department, Ministry of International Trade, František Mareš became the head of Omnipol at the end of the 1950s. His arrival ended a series of scandals (the incapability of the former Director, Antonín Podzimka, conflicts with the general staff of the Ministry of National Defense, with Minister of the Interior Rudolf Barák, the leak of information regarding a contract with Egypt, and especially the detainment of the Czechoslovak vessel *Lidice* that contained arms for Algerian rebel mutineers) that had accompanied the Technical Department's work. After a certain time František Mareš was succeeded by František Langer, another long-time boss of the Technical Department.

25 [Ed.note: According to Czech scholar Oldřich Tůma, Svazarm was a frequently used abbreviated name for *Svaz pro spolupráci s armádou* [Association for cooperation with the army], an organization for pre-military training of youth, military sports, etc.]

“We Were Truly on the Verge of War”—

A Conversation with Nikita Khrushchev, 30 October 1962

Document Obtained by Oldřich Tůma

Ed. Note: In the days after agreeing to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba, Nikita Khrushchev welcomed a series of high-ranking communist visitors to Moscow for the annual commemorations of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. One such guest was the General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) and President of Czechoslovakia, Antonín Novotný, who came to the Kremlin on Tuesday, 30 October 1962, for a bilateral conversation with the Soviet leader.¹ As revealed by the detailed Czechoslovak record of their talk excerpted below, Khrushchev used exceptionally candid language to defend his handling of the superpower confrontation, what he described as “six days which shook the world.” While well aware that many fellow communists (including the Chinese and Cubans) regarded his agreement under pressure from US President John F. Kennedy to remove the missiles as a humiliating surrender to the imperialists, Khrushchev stoutly defended his action as not only a necessary measure to avoid a catastrophic nuclear war, but actually a victory, since, he claimed, the Soviet missiles had attained their objective—safeguarding the survival of the Cuban revolution. For the leader of that revolution, Fidel Castro, who had already indicated his displeasure with Moscow’s concession to the Americans, Khrushchev bluntly criticized him for failing to comprehend the true nature of war in the thermonuclear age, and being so “blinded... by revolutionary passion,” that at the height of the crisis, he had suggested in a letter to Khrushchev that the Soviets should be the first to use nuclear weapons, striking the United States should it attack Cuba, even though this would lead promptly to a global incineration.² Explaining why he had to “act quickly”—Castro and the Cubans were already grumbling about his failure to consult or even notify them prior to agreeing to Kennedy’s demands on 28 October—Khrushchev admitted feeling “completely aghast” at Castro’s approach. Nor was he impressed by Castro’s complaint that the Kennedy’s pledge not to invade Cuba was worthless because the imperialists could not be trusted; after all, he admitted frankly, the imperialists couldn’t trust them either—Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko had told JFK to his face that there were no atomic missiles in Cuba, “And he was lying. And how! And that was the right thing to do, he had orders from the party.” (The Soviet also had only scorn for the belligerent Chinese, mocking Mao Zedong’s glib dictum that imperialism was a “paper tiger” with the observation that it in fact was a tiger that was not only not paper but “can give you a nice bite in the backside.”)

In many respects, this short record is one of the sensational documents to emerge from the communist world’s archives on Cold War history since the collapse of the Soviet bloc, and then the Soviet Union, a little more than two decades ago. Almost tantamount to an “oral history interview” of Khrushchev while the crisis was still fresh (and even still in progress, to some extent), his exposition to Novotný, while obviously self-serving, foreshadows the recollections of the crisis he would dictate into a tape-recorder at his dacha after being ousted from power in 1964—and his derisive view of Castro’s willingness to provoke global thermonuclear war for the sake of revolution would be excised due to its sensitivity from the first two volumes of Khrushchev’s memoirs that were smuggled out of the USSR and published in the West—Khrushchev Remembers (1970) and Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament (1974)—and only appear nearly two decades later, in Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes (1990). Here, contemporaneously and vividly, we can hear Khrushchev’s inimitable voice, strongly asserting the rectitude of his conduct—and to a lesser comrade of a subservient satellite in no position to contradict him—and blasting, even mocking, those who disagreed with him, yet also, clearly, still shaken by how close he and Kennedy had come only days earlier to going over the brink, and plunging their nations, and the world, into the nuclear abyss, dooming millions. This document was found by Oldřich Tůma in the CPCz Central Committee records in Prague and circulated to participants at the October 2002 conference (principally organized by the National Security Archive) in Havana to mark the 40th anniversary of the missile crisis, but has never before been published.—J.H.



Minutes of Conversation between the Delegations of the CPCz and the CPSU, The Kremlin, 30 October 1962 (excerpt)

Present: CPCz: Novotný, Hendrych, Šimůnek, Dvořák
CPSU: Khrushchev, Kozlov, Brezhnev,
Kosygin, Kolesnikov, Zimyanin

[....]

Cuba

Concerning the problem of Cuba, Comrade Khrushchev said: Today it is now possible to consider the danger of armed conflict to have been averted. The Americans may have flown over Cuba, but we have shot down one U-2 aircraft with our missiles [on 27 October]. The Cubans announced that they shot down a foreign plane. The Americans said that one of their planes had probably crashed into the sea (but it crashed into Cuba, and the pilot [Maj. Rudolf Anderson] was killed). We recommended to the Americans that they should not fly over Cuba, and they stopped.

How did this situation develop? We knew that the Americans wanted to attack Cuba. As early as in his conversation with [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko [on 18 October] President Kennedy was very reserved and very aggressively inclined concerning Cuba. Both we and the Americans talked about Berlin—both sides with the same aim, namely, to draw attention away from Cuba; the Americans, in order to attack it; we, in order to make the USA uneasy and postpone attacking Cuba.

The Americans announced maneuvers at sea—20,000 Marines. The focus of the maneuvers was “conquering the Island and overthrowing the dictator” and the code word was “Ortsac,” which is Castro backwards. (That, by the way, is a game we played in school.) The maneuvers were suddenly called off, allegedly after a storm at sea, but that was followed by the president’s speech [on 22 October], hysteria was unleashed in the USA, and a blockade was announced.

We believe that shortly before the beginning of the maneuvers, their intelligence discovered that our missiles were in Cuba, and the Americans became furious. Another possibility (as we have now been told by our intelligence) is that the presence of our missiles in Cuba was discovered by West German intelligence and then communicated to the USA.³

Naturally we wanted the presence of our missiles with atomic warheads to remain secret. That is obviously impossible in Cuba. They were hardly the most powerful missiles, but the Americans calculated well when it came to their range—they could have reached Washington and New York.

We now know the subsequent course of events. We had to act very quickly. That is also why we even used radio to contact the president, because the other means might have been too slow. This time we really were on the verge of war.

We received a letter from [Fidel] Castro in which he told us that the USA would attack Cuba within twenty-four hours.⁴ That would mean nuclear war. We could not be certain that they would not do so. The presence of our missiles

provoked them too much; the Americans thus sensed the winds of war from up close. It was necessary to act quickly. That is why we issued the statement [on 28 October] that we would dismantle the missiles if the USA declared it swore not to attack Cuba. (The missiles, by the way, are of two kinds: some are placed on the ground, the others underground. The ones on the ground can be destroyed by a blast of air. We had both sorts of missile in Cuba, as well as our officers and technical staff. We were concerned about them, too.)

In a letter, Fidel Castro proposed that we ourselves should be the first to start an atomic war.⁵ Do you know what that would mean? That probably cannot even be expressed at all. We were completely aghast. Castro clearly has no idea about what thermonuclear war is. After all, if a war started, it would primarily be Cuba that would vanish from the face of the Earth. At the same time, it is clear that with a first strike one cannot today knock the opponent out of the fight. There can always be a counter-strike, which can be devastating. There are, after all, missiles in the earth, which intelligence does not know about; there are missiles on submarines, which cannot be knocked out of the fight right away, and so on. What would we gain if we ourselves started a war? After all, millions of people would die, in our country too. Can we even contemplate a thing like that? Could we allow ourselves to threaten the world of socialism which was hard won by the working class? Only a person who has no idea what nuclear war means, or who has been so blinded, for instance, like Castro, by revolutionary passion, can talk like that. We did not, of course, take up that proposal, especially because we had a chance to avert war. What the Americans feared most, by the way, was that the missiles were in the hands of the Cubans and that the Cubans would start a war. That is why in our letter to the president we stressed also that the missiles were in the hands of our officers, who would not fire before receiving orders from the Soviet government. From our intelligence reports we knew that the Americans were afraid of war. Through certain persons, who they knew were in contact with us, they made it clear they would be grateful if we helped them get out of this conflict.

We agreed to dismantle the missiles also because their presence in Cuba is essentially of little military importance to us. The missiles were meant to protect Cuba from attack; they helped us to wrench out of the imperialists the statement that they would not attack Cuba, and they thus served their main purpose. Otherwise we can hit the USA from elsewhere, and we do not need missiles in Cuba for that. On the contrary, their deployment on our territory is safer for us and our technical personnel who look after them.

Concerning Turkey, in our second letter to the president we backed down from that stipulation. We understood that

these questions are too far removed from the concrete situation in the Caribbean and Cuba, that Kennedy could not answer them because he would have also to consult with other members of NATO, and the situation was too serious for us to postpone its solution.

Conclusion:

How should one assess the result of these six days which shook the world? Who won? I am of the opinion that we won. One must start from the final aims we set ourselves. What aim did the Americans have? To attack Cuba and get rid of the Cuban Republic, to establish a reactionary regime in Cuba. Things did not work as they planned. Our main aim was to save Cuba, to save the Cuban revolution. That is why we sent missiles to Cuba. We achieved our objective – we wrenched the promise out of the Americans that they would not attack Cuba and that other countries on the American continent would also refrain from attacking Cuba. That would not have happened without our missiles in Cuba. The USA would have attacked Cuba. The proximity of our missiles made them understand, perhaps for the first time, that we have weapons that are at least as strong as theirs. Though they knew we had atomic weapons, they kept calming themselves by saying that Russia, with its missiles, is somewhere far away, whereas Cuba is right next door. But now they have felt the winds of war in their own house.

One might ask whether we made concessions. Of course we did. It was one concession for another. (Because ultimately it is no business of the United States what kind of weapons Cuba has.) But this mutual concession has brought us victory.

This clash (and we were truly on the verge of war) demonstrated that war today is not inevitably destined by fate, that it can be avoided. The Chinese claim was therefore once again refuted, as well as their assessments of the current era, the current balance of forces. Imperialism, as can be seen, is no paper tiger; it is a tiger that can give you a nice bite in the backside. That is why one has to be careful of it. At the same time, however, it is not a tiger that determines whether or not there will be war. The Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence thus gained a glorious victory and graphic confirmation. This encounter was truly a classic manifestation of peaceful coexistence, which is nothing other than continuous struggle, a sequence of conflicts, one concession after another. Only in such a struggle is it possible today to keep the peace and to win one position after another from the imperialists.

Castro now tells us that the USA cannot be trusted, that the USA can break its promise. Of course, they cannot be trusted. But we won't get anywhere with that sort of argu-

ment. Following that logic, a child in a socialist country would have to pounce on the imperialists almost as soon as it was born. Today, however, it will be harder for the imperialists to attack Cuba in front of the whole world. We cannot, after all, permit a war just because the imperialists cannot be trusted. (Comrade Gromyko, incidentally, stated that we have no atomic missiles in Cuba. And he was lying. And how! And that was the right thing to do; he had orders from the Party. So, the imperialists cannot trust us either.) One of the important consequences of the whole conflict and of our approach is the fact that the whole world now sees us as the ones who saved peace. I now appear to the world as a lamb. That is not bad either. The pacifist [Bertrand] Russell writes me thank-you letters. I, of course, have nothing in common with him, except that we both want peace.

Such, on the whole, are the results of these six tense days. (In the presence of Comrade Novotný and other members of our delegation, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU debated also the letter to Comrade Castro, in which the position of the Soviet Union in the whole conflict is explained, and the reason the USSR was unable to agree to Castro's proposal is also explained.)

[Source: *Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 193. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma. Translated by Linda Mastalir.*]

Notes

1 Among other leaders who came to Moscow at the end of October and in early November were Poland's Władysław Gomułka, East Germany's Walter Ulbricht, and, a few days later, Hungary's Janos Kadar. For Kadar's report on his talks in Moscow, given to his Hungarian comrades on 12 November 1962, see the collection of translated Hungarian documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

2 For Castro's 26 (actually 27) October 1962 letter to Khrushchev and other correspondence between them in late October 1962, see James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), pp. 474-91.

3 Ed. note: It is not clear where Khrushchev obtained this idea; no evidence has emerged to suggest that West German intelligence alerted the US government to the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba. For contacts between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) during the crisis, see the collection of translated FRG documents published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

4 Ed. note: In fact, in his letter, dated October 26 but composed during the night of October 26-27, Castro judged a US attack "almost imminent within the next 24 to 72 hours." See Fidel

Castro to Khrushchev, 26 October 1962, in James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (NY: Pantheon, 1993). p. 509-10.

5 Ed. note: In his October 26 letter, cited above, Castro advised Khrushchev that if “the imperialists invade Cuba with the goal of occupying it, the danger that the aggressive policy poses for humanity is so great that

following that event the Soviet Union must never allow the circumstances in which the imperialists could launch the first nuclear strike against itthat would be the moment to eliminate such danger forever through an act of clear legitimate defense, however harsh and terrible the solution would be, for there is no other.”

Czechoslovakia and Cuba, 1963

Introduced by James G. Hershberg

The two documents below offer communist-world insights into relations between Czechoslovakia and Cuba—and, more broadly, between the Soviet bloc and Havana—during 1963.

The first document, from the Hungarian archives, is a June 1963 report from Budapest's embassy in Prague on the state of Czechoslovak-Cuban relations, based on a conversation with a Czechoslovak foreign ministry official. It takes a basically positive view of the development of relations, reflecting increased optimism for closer Soviet-Cuban (and therefore Czechoslovak-Cuban) ties following the lengthy visit to the Soviet Union by Cuban leader Fidel Castro from 27 April to 3 June. Castro's trip included extensive meetings with Nikita Khrushchev, and was widely viewed as having overcome many of the tensions between Moscow and Havana that resulted from Khrushchev's decision at the climax of the Cuban Missile Crisis the previous October to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba, under United Nations inspection, a step taken without prior notification or consultation with the Cuban government. On returning to Havana, Castro made such positive comments regarding the Soviet Union that observers viewed Cuba as having moved closer to the Soviets and, therefore, further from Beijing in the emerging Sino-Soviet schism.¹ The translated document, along with other Hungarian materials published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*, was obtained by the Cold War History Research Center in Budapest for the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., in preparation for the October 2002 conference in Havana to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, a gathering the Archive co-sponsored.

The second document is a Czech record of a December 1963 meeting in Prague between a senior official of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) and a leading Cuban communist official, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, head of Cuba's National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA). Rodriguez, a member of the inner circle around Fidel Castro, candidly acknowledged some ongoing problems and "misunderstandings" in Czech-Cuban relations, though he tried to minimize them. Trying to rebut the "false" opinion that Cuba was backing the Chinese in international affairs,

he also tried to reassure his host (and through him, the Soviets) that some recent Cuban foreign policy moves (e.g., Havana's refusal to sign the treaty banning above-ground nuclear testing reached by the Soviets and Americans in the summer of 1963) "absolutely" did not reflect an alignment with the Chinese (who loudly denounced the limited test-ban treaty) but Cuba's own concerns; Rodriguez also felt compelled to explain (rather sheepishly) the fact that the Chinese embassy in Havana was allowed to continue spreading anti-Soviet propaganda.² On two other sensitive topics in which there was disagreement between Moscow and Havana, Rodriguez also discussed Cuba's promotion of a militant line to promote revolution in Latin America and its strong opposition to the "notorious" proposal of some countries (e.g., Mexico and Brazil) to create an atom-free zone in Latin America, which Havana opposed so long as it left unclear the right of the United States to use its bases in the Panama Canal zone and elsewhere for nuclear purposes. In sum, the document illuminates contacts between Cuba and the Soviet bloc (and between Cuba and Czechoslovakia, its most active partner within the Warsaw Pact³) at a delicate moment in their relationship, and in the communist movement as a whole. This document was obtained from the Czech National Archives by James Hershberg and translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.



DOCUMENT No. 1

Report from Hungarian Embassy, Prague, on Czechoslovak-Cuban Relations, 25 June 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

TOP SECRET!

499/top secret 1963.

Prague, 25 June 1963.

Official: L. Balassa

Subject: Relations between Cuba

Typed by: OE and Czechoslovakia

Written in three copies
Ref. No. 001254/1/1963.
To Center: two copies
To Embassy: one copy

Based on the above order, Stross, the deputy head of the Sixth Main Department [of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs], reported the following:

Since the victory of the Cuban revolution, relations between Czechoslovakia and Cuba have been developing at the highest level. Czechoslovakia has provided the young Latin American republic with both political and economic help from the beginning. In the field of politics [the relationship developed] in such a form that Cuba has been visited by different government delegations at ministerial level /the visits of the minister of foreign trade, the minister of educational and cultural affairs, and the foreign minister, etc./ and from Cuba have arrived similar level delegations in Czechoslovakia besides the President of the Republic [Osvaldo] Dorticos. Czechoslovakia has sent lecturers to Cuban universities and colleges, and a large number of various experts. Czechoslovakia has built a cultural center in Havana, a lot of students have come on scholarship to Czechoslovakian colleges, specialized schools, and factories from Cuba. The exchanges of delegations between the two countries covered almost all spheres of party, state, social, scientific and arts life.

A direct air service has been set up between Cuba and Czechoslovakia, being the first among socialist countries, and they [i.e., the Czechoslovaks] have also provided help to equip the Cuban army. In the field of economy, based on trade agreements signed between them, they have provided loans of different size and length for the Cuban government. Recently, the problems coming up in the economy on both sides have made the talks last for a long time. The loans demanded by Cuba, the prolongation of loans, and, mainly, the demands concerning articles of consumption have an influence on the talks to some extent because of our difficulties, but, as a result of the mutual efforts of both parties, they will end with success.

During the talks both parties are looking for the best solutions. According to Stross's information, the signed agreements are precisely carried out on both sides.

Cuba's present economic situation is very difficult. There are objective and subjective causes of the difficulties. Before Cuba's liberation, she played the role of a complementary, mainly agricultural base for the United States. Her production was of mono-cultural [i.e., sugar-based] character, her products were bought by the USA at a price determined by the buyer, at the same time, the USA supplied the industrial appliances needed by the country. Tourism played an important role in the country's economic life.

When economic life got under state control, Cuba did not have enough well-trained leaders and middle cadres, they did not have experience in the field of industrial planning and management and distribution. It cannot be ignored that from 1 January 1961, Cuba was in a state of permanent military preparedness, when the attention of the leadership was mainly drawn toward military-political matters and the problems of economic life were only of secondary importance. Despite the present difficult economic situation, the Czechoslovak comrades think that some economic consolidation will start, even if only slowly, with the help of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries. The firm price of sugar, Cuba's main product in world markets, will contribute to this, too. Production is getting systematic compared with the past and we can see the outlines of the prospects of the development of economic life. The assessment of needs has more and more come to the foreground when deciding about industrial and commercial tasks and in the field of distribution, too. One cannot ignore such problems as, e.g., that the existing Cuban industry is equipped mainly with American machines, the further functioning of which is made very difficult by the American embargo, which makes it almost impossible to get spare parts. So the mere functioning of factories is a great burden on the industrial leadership. Until recently, it has also been a problem that, since the victory of the revolution, few changes have been made in the organizational structure of industry and trade, basically, they have preserved it as it was inherited from the earlier system. As a consequence, while it was the industry that determined the need of new and old factories for machines to be bought, the distribution of purchased machines fell within the sphere of authority of the ministry of internal trade.

In the field of agriculture there have been long discussions about the line of production. Some suggested that they should give up mono-cultural production and start manifold production in the growing of plants. As a consequence, the territory of sugar cane plantations has decreased almost by half. According to the present position, on the remaining territory crops must be increased by the reconstruction of sugar plantations and the development of cultivation technology and, on the other territory under cultivation, they should grow mainly rice, peanuts, industrial plants /e.g. sisal/. The greatest guarantee of development is that the leaders now know the place and importance of economic problems in the life of the state and so, the solution of the problems of economic life is more and more moved to the foreground. The leaders can now also see that the development of Cuban economic life is far from being an internal question alone, but it is also an international political question of special importance. The popularization of the revolution cannot simply be limited to some questions

of principle, their influence may depend on to what extent Cuba can set an example to the peoples of Latin America in the sphere of the development of economic life, and in the raising of the standard of living of the masses.

Simultaneously with the understanding of economic problems, they started to realize a lot of other things. In the Cuban foreign policy, mainly toward the Latin-American countries, one could see the signs of dogmatism, avaturism [sic; adventurism] and subjectivism. One could seriously feel the Chinese Communist Party's influence on Cuban politics. These signs could be best seen in the guerilla fights in Guatemala and Venezuela, in the support of [Francisco] Juliao's Brazilian policy. The leaders of the Cuban political life and their enumerated allies did not understand properly the importance of winning over the national bourgeoisie in the interest of the revolution and they overestimated the role of peasantry as the leading force of revolution. They wanted to make Cuba a center of revolutions on the American continent, which resulted in the mechanical application of the experiences of the Cuban revolution to other countries, where the fight against imperialism and for national liberation had to be carried out in a different international situation and amid other internal political events, under different conditions.

They ignored that in every country every party had to work out their revolutionary tactic and strategy based on their own special situation. As a consequence of these realizations, e.g. they do not support the extremists any more in Brazil, but the BCP [Brazilian Communist Party].

In Cuba the formation of the Uniform Socialist Party has made little progress so far, which can be explained partly by the fact that the role of the party has not been clarified yet. Organization is also hindered by the lack of cadres, mainly middle cadres. The formation of the party and the triggering off of its activities are being realized after Castro's trip to the Soviet Union [27 April-3 June 1963]. One consequence of the mentioned lack of cadres is that after the creation of the basic organs they have not set up the district yet, so there is a large gap between the central leadership and the basic organs. Simultaneously with the organization of the party, we can observe the problems of ideological consolidation, the enforcement of the Leninist norms in the work within the party.

In the period of the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile] crisis and directly after it, the Cuban leaders generally did not understand the Soviet Union's position. As the majority of Cuban leaders come from the army, being equipped with modern weapons, they thought the conflict was a problem between Cuba and the USA only and could not understand that it would mean a fight between the camps. After the Soviet-American agreement, they felt alone, they were influenced in this direction by the Chinese CP's position too, and that it had a great impact can be proved

by [Anastas] Mikoyan's stay in Cuba longer than planned and that even at the time of his departure, he could not completely convince the Cuban leaders that the Soviet Union's position was right. Castro's trip to the Soviet Union meant a decisive turn in this field too.

As the Czechoslovakian comrades also see it, Castro's trip has had a decisive impact on Cuba's further development. The visit and the joint declaration published afterwards clarified the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union, the relationship between Cuba and the socialist countries. As a result of the visit, he considers unjustified certain dogmatic and avanturist [adventurist] views in the Cuban political life, and the Cubans themselves are beginning to pay more attention to the solution of economic problems, which they have only talked about so far. Castro still has a completely firm position and dominant influence in the sphere of ideology. His views are of decisive importance from the aspect of Cuba's general development. After his trip to the Soviet Union, he will completely clarify the role of the party as well, the party's organization will be accelerated.

Finally, Stross remarked that the relations between Czechoslovakia and Cuba did not change during the Caribbean crisis and the time following it, even amid the biggest hardships, and they are not changing in the future either. They treat their embassy accordingly, in the practice of which the problems of party and state relations are dealt with in the correct way as a result of the development. There has not been any change in the level of the relations either, and both parties do their best to carry out the signed contracts consistently.

Ambassador [Lajos CSÉBY]

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Budapest

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



DOCUMENT No. 2

Memorandum of Conversation between Vladimír Koucky, Secretary of Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) Central Committee, and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Head of Cuba's National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), Prague, 12 December 1963

TOP SECRET!

2618/7

Record of a conversation with c. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, member of the leadership of the Unified Party of Socialistic Revolution of Cuba (12/12/1963)

C. Rodriguez said, just like in his first conversation with c. [CPCz Presidium member Otakar] Simunek in the evening of the 11th of December 1963, that according to the opinion of the Cuban leadership, some misunderstandings persist with regard to relations between Cuba and the CSSR. At that, the Cuban leadership think that these misunderstandings do not involve the leading comrades. To c. Koucky's remark that misunderstandings can happen in various discussions and talks but these are no fundamental differences, and that misunderstandings can often be caused by certain nervousness because there are problems in every party and every country, c. Rodriguez said that according to his opinion, it is not just occasional nervousness but that some political, diplomatic and economic cadres display in many different ways some uncertainty related to the Cuban policy.

Leading Cuban comrades think that the ambassador to Cuba c. [Vladimir] Pavlicek, for instance, understands fully the complexity of Cuban issues while the rest of embassy officials and other diplomats in Cuba do not. The same applies to the Soviet embassy where Ambassador c. [Aleksandr Alekseyev] Alexeiev has very good contacts with leading comrades, and understands the situation in Cuba very well while the other diplomats are not as advanced. C. Rodriguez emphasized that the highest Cuban officials, including Fidel Castro, have very close personal contacts with especially these two embassies.

C. Rodriguez continued with the fact that one of the things that in the opinion of Cuban comrades caused some confusion, is promotion of Chinese publications, articles, and materials in Cuba. He said that the Cuban comrades could not agree with this Chinese activity and after consultation with c. Alekseyev, the Soviet ambassador to Cuba, c. [Emilio] Aragonés talked with the Chinese Ambassador in order to limit the scope of publications and materials published in the Spanish language.

It should be noted, c. Rodriguez further said, that in connection with all these activities of the Chinese Ambassador, a false opinion was created as if Cuba supported the Chinese views. It shows particularly in this case that some comrades do not understand the conditions of the Cuban revolution.

If a communist party took power in Cuba, there would have been a different situation. However, old Cuban communists now see even with the help of Fidel Castro, they are achieving number of successes, and they are aware that if Cuba were to use traditional forms of Communist activities while developing the revolution, it could lead to bad consequences. Particularly in this context, for example, Fidel Castro's statement that Cuba holds its "own line" was very much misunderstood. For instance, a CZPO (ČTK [Czechoslovak state news agency—ed.]) correspondent sent information, in which he directly said that Cuba's political line had changed; c. Rodriguez accepts with satisfaction that the material was not published in Czechoslovakia. Returning yet again to the issue of operation of the Communist Party of China, c. Rodriguez stressed that Cuba cannot take the same approach as the CSSR, and leading Cuban officials ask for understanding.

Another issue, which caused misunderstanding, is the position of the Cuban revolutionary government on the Moscow agreement about a partial ban on nuclear testing. The whole issue was widely debated in the higher circles of Cuba. In these discussions, Fidel Castro still hoped a possibility would arise that Cuba could become a party to the treaty. He was also aware that hesitation about signing the treaty might give the impression that the Cuban Revolutionary Government takes the same position on the treaty as the PRC [People's Republic of China]. C. Rodriguez stresses that their stance on the contract is Cuba's own and absolutely not that of the PRC. At that he pointed out that after his return from Moscow, Fidel Castro in his speech explained extensively the Cuban government's stance on issues of peace, peaceful coexistence, etc. At the same time, he suggested in his speech the possibility of negotiations with the United States, which could calm down the current tense situation between Cuba and the USA.

However, when negotiations about the Moscow treaty began, Cuba has become the object of a broad new wave of attacks from the United States. This of course created for the Cuban Revolutionary Government a new situation, in which they had no other choice, given the state of mutual relations with the United States, than not to sign the Moscow treaty. It would be a great mistake to believe that the Cuban Revolutionary Government takes the Chinese positions. C. Rodriguez stressed we can all see that there is no party nor government document that expresses support for controversial positions of the Communist Party of China. He further pointed out that Fidel Castro's speech in connection with the assassination of Kennedy [on 22 November 1963] was motivated also by the desire to clearly express differences in judgment of Kennedy as opposed to how he is judged by leading Chinese comrades.

According to the leading Cuban comrades, the Cuban line with regard to Latin America causes uncertainties as well. They decided in principle to patiently continue to develop relations with those countries that have until now maintained diplomatic relations with Cuba, i.e. Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, and Mexico. On the other hand, it is not possible to view the issue of Latin American countries through European eyes. Cuban comrades know very well what the situation in Latin America is. For example, they are surprised by some opinions at the Cs. Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding an assessment of actions of the Argentine President [Arturo Umberto] Illia. It seems to them that some of comrades too much overrate his progressivism in comparison with what was in Argentina before his election.⁴ Even though the People's Revolutionary Government of Cuba does not want to underestimate certain possibilities that are emerging in Argentina, it knows very well that the current regime in Argentina is aimed against the People's Cuba. In this context, c. Rodriguez mentioned the complaint of the Cuban Ambassador to Czechoslovakia about the reserved attitude of some staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs towards him.

Another issue about which C. Rodriguez spoke concerns Cuba's stance on the notorious proposal of some Latin American countries to create a nuclear-free zone in Latin America. C. Rodriguez said that the Cuban position on this issue has already been formulated in the past year in connection with the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile] crisis. Its position on this issue stems from the fact that the Cuban Revolutionary Government sees no advantage in creating a nuclear-free zone in Latin America in a situation, when in many Latin American countries, there are US bases, and the United States refuses to declare explicitly that it will not keep nuclear weapons at these bases. A speech by a Cuban delegate to the UN on this matter was very carefully worded in order for the Cuban position not to challenge the co-authors of the resolution on the nuclear-free zone in Latin America, namely Mexico and Brazil. In this context, Rodriguez rejected the alleged argument of some comrades, who compared the threat to Cuba from the United States to the threat posed by West Berlin to the socialist countries. Cuba does not think she might be under danger of nuclear war. On the other hand, she is aware of the danger of local wars in the Caribbean. Despite her own complicated issues, Cuba is trying to see things from a broader perspective.

S. Koucky responded to this part of Rodriguez's reasoning in the sense that our party understands the overall situation, in which Cuban comrades operate; on the other hand though, Cuban comrades should realize that, especially our lower ranking comrades may have and indeed have different questions concerning Cuban positions. At number of

meetings and gatherings, members of our party ask about Cuba's position on such issues as, for instance, not signing the Moscow Agreement; from our side, the position of the Cuban Revolutionary Government and leading Cuban comrades is explained in accordance with the way Cuban comrades formulate their policy and how they justify it. With regard to the issues associated with the position of the Communist Party of China, our party of course cannot pass in silence the fact that the Chinese CP in its literature grossly distorts the line of the international communist movement and attacks leading comrades of the CPSU and other communist and workers parties. He also emphasized that our party throughout its history has always assumed that it was necessary to adapt and possibly even to subordinate some of its own particular interests to the collective interests of the socialist camp and the international revolutionary movement.

Comrade Rodriguez then continued that the Cuban government and Cuban revolutionary comrades face a number of issues that must be addressed. They all realize that new problems may always arise. From this point of view, c. Rodriguez praises highly an article that was published in Pravda, in which some opinions on the development of the Algerian Revolution are newly formulated, and where the need is recognized for a broader understanding of issues related to building up socialism under various conditions (recognizes the need to take into account that religion, particularly Islam, will play a role in Algiers, which is deciding to go the socialist route). Cuban comrades, says c. Rodriguez further, realize that world peace is a question of paramount concern for Czechoslovak comrades. In contrast, the question of world peace does not have such a decisive influence on the masses in Cuba. They [Cuban comrades] believe that cadres of the fraternal parties should understand the situation in Cuba better. Yet some misunderstandings appear in specific contacts between Cs. and Cuban officials. Many comrades push their own opinions, and try to do separate analyses without consideration of the overall development of the revolution in Cuba. The worst is that some political uncertainties and differences are then reflected in economic relations. Some uncertainty about Cuba has its impact on business. Cuban comrades consider recent development of economic negotiations as unsatisfactory. Although they are aware that it is impossible to avoid problems, they still believe it is necessary to look above of all for what unites us and not what divides us.

He stressed that we must never forget about the enemy's activity when considering all these issues. He reminded [us] of his and Guevara's talks in years 1959-1960, when a purchase of capital equipment for Cuba was negotiated and when the revolutionary leaders had to overcome misconceptions of their experts who looked with despect on the capability of

socialist countries in terms of technology deliveries to Cuba. Also, very strong divisions over pricing for different products appear in many discussions. Further, as for the technological level of many products and equipment that are shipped to Cuba, there are shortcomings and Cuban comrades have to overcome in many aspects opinions of their own cadres who were used to the often perfect American technology.

After several queries of c. Koucky about the situation during the creation of the Unified Party of Socialist Revolution [PURS] of Cuba, in order to clarify some delays in organization of the party (the founding congress may convene in the second half of 1964), c. Rodriguez again emphasized that it was necessary to understand the special political situation that existed in Cuba. He explained that there were many anti-communists in Cuba, who, at the moment, especially under the guise of combating sectarian tendencies (Escalante case⁵), are actually trying to fight against communism. It is necessary to do everything possible to avoid creating suitable opportunities for their dark intentions. Cuban leaders have many concerns with the problem of youth in Cuba. For example, the entire leadership of youth organizations had to be replaced recently, because it did not follow the correct policy.



In subsequent partial conversations, c. Rodriguez stressed many times that an old former member of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba was deliberately sent on a trip to Czechoslovakia, GDR, Poland, and finally to the Soviet Union, so that communists in these countries could better understand the complex issues of the development of the Cuban revolution and also in order to prevent various problems and misunderstandings, which may arise

In a conversation with c. Koucky, the question of replacement of our ambassador to Cuba, and the case of our Ambassador-designate c. Kocman has been also discussed.

C. Rodriguez confirmed that among some Cuban comrades – he specifically named [Joaquín] Ordoqui, there are certain objections to his appointment as an ambassador to Cuba, and that he himself believes as well that this appointment should be abandoned. C. Koucky replied that c. Pavlicek is to be replaced within 2 months and that a new Cs. ambassador will be sent to Cuba.

On the way back, c. Koucky informed c. Rodriguez of the main issues discussed at the December plenary session of the CPCZ Central Committee.

[Source: Czech National Archives, Prague, CPCz CC collection, Kuba folders. Obtained for CWIHP by James Hershberg and translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.]

Notes

1 On Hungarian perceptions of the aftermath of Castro's spring 1963 visit to the Soviet Union, see translated documents in the collection of Hungarian materials elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

2 For more on Sino-Cuban relations during this period, see the collection of translated Chinese documents and analysis by Sergey Radchenko and James G. Hershberg elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

3 For more on the evolution of Cuban-Czechoslovak relations from 1959-62, see the collection of translated Czechoslovak documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

4 The Argentine elections were held on 7 July 1963 and Illa became president on 12 October 1963—ed.

5 A reference to the so-called Escalante affair, in which Fidel Castro purged from the leadership some members of the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), led by Aníbal Escalante, in March 1962, charging them with "sectarianism." This was seen as reflecting lingering tensions between Castro's "26th of July Movement" guerrillas and the old, urban, pro-Moscow communist party—ed.



Hungary and the Cuban Missile Crisis:

Selected Documents, 1961-63

Introduction by Csaba Békés¹ and Melinda Kalmár²

I.

Hardly a year after the Berlin Crisis peaked, a major East-West conflict erupted due to the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, bringing the world the closest it came to a direct superpower clash during the Cold War era. The unique feature of the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was that in this case, originally the idea of changing the status quo by exporting revolution to Cuba had never occurred to the Soviet leadership, yet it still arose, in an indigenous way, thanks to the victory of the revolution led by Fidel Castro.

In Cuba the fighting guerillas under Castro's leadership overthrew the pro-American Batista regime at the beginning of 1959. By 1960 the new left-wing system was rapidly expanding political and economic relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and it became increasingly likely that Cuba would soon become a member of the Soviet alliance system. The Eisenhower Administration initially implemented a wait-and-see policy, and hoped that with financial means it could topple the revolutionary regime. Later, however, US officials considered more urgent and extreme political and military solutions. In January 1961, shortly before John F. Kennedy became president, Washington broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba, and a few months later, in April, CIA-trained armed Cuban emigrants landed at the Bay of Pigs. Even though this military action failed, it became clear to the Cuban leadership that on their own they could not guarantee their country's security against the United States. Therefore, in July 1961, they signed a military agreement with the Soviet Union under which Soviet medium- and intermediate-range nuclear missiles were later installed in Cuba.³ It appears that this momentous and provocative Soviet decision had double aims. On the one hand the missiles were to defend Cuba against a possible American attack, for in such a case the USA would have had to risk nuclear retaliation as well as a direct military conflict with the Soviet Union. On the other hand with this step Khrushchev made an attempt to establish a global strategic balance at a time when the United States was significantly ahead of the Soviet Union in intercontinental missiles production, and this could not be hidden anymore due to satellite reconnaissance (Washington had made clear to the world in October 1961 that the "missile gap," if there were one, favored the United States, not the USSR).⁴ In this situation the geographic location of Cuba had a significant

strategic advantage because the installed Soviet nuclear missiles in the country—which had been produced in great numbers in the Soviet Union by that time—could threaten basically the entire territory of the continental United States. Khrushchev hoped that if the installation of the missiles could be kept secret, the American leadership would have to accept the fait accompli, all the more because the missiles installed in Turkey just recently threatened Soviet targets in a similar fashion. The calculation however, did not work, as the US intelligence discovered the missile sites under construction in Cuba in mid-October 1962. Kennedy, after considering all the possible responses, announced in his 22 October speech that he ordered a sea blockade ("quarantine") around Cuba, effective two days later, to prevent further shipment of missiles to the island. The Soviet and Eastern-European cargo ships which were on their way were approaching the island on 24 October, therefore undeniably there was a risk for an outbreak of a direct Soviet–American armed conflict. However, in the end, the conflict did not escalate into a military clash since Khrushchev called back the ships in time.

Kennedy also demanded the removal of the missiles which were already in Cuba, and indicated that otherwise the US was ready to make a preventive strike on the country. Intensive communications commenced between the parties, using various channels, the most important being the backchannel between the president's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and Soviet ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin.

We now know that during the crisis management both parties showed great flexibility and an ability for working out a compromise solution, although at the time this could be publicly perceivable only on the Soviet side.⁵ At the categorical American response Khrushchev quickly retreated, as soon as it became apparent for him that otherwise there was a serious danger of a direct superpower clash. In his message on 28 October Khrushchev promised to withdraw the missiles, and this did happen relatively soon (at least the medium-range and intermediate-range missiles, as opposed to the tactical nuclear weapons, still essentially undetected), in early November. In exchange, Kennedy effectively guaranteed that the USA would not invade Cuba.

We now know, that the Soviets would have retreated without conditions, but the American leadership, being not aware of this, and also extremely worried about the potential escalation of the crisis, facilitated the Soviet retreat even further: Kennedy, besides making a public announcement promising

that the USA would not attack Cuba, made another, secret concession as well: he also promised the withdrawal, within 4-5 months, of American Jupiter missiles from Turkey.⁶ This meant nothing less than that the American administration made a secret pact with the Soviets behind the back of their NATO allies. It is no wonder, that in exchange Kennedy asked that there be no written traces of this deal on the American side. So now it was the Soviet's turn: Ambassador Dobrynin, after hesitation, eventually was willing to withdraw the Soviet letter, which contained the American promise.⁷

So the peaceful solution of the crisis was at the same time a *victory and a fiasco for both superpowers*. The United States successfully barred the construction of a Soviet nuclear striking force on the American continent, but they had to give up on invading Cuba (despite withholding a formal commitment due to the absence of UN ground inspection of the missiles' dismantling and removal from the island). For the Soviets it had caused a significant loss of prestige from the perspective of international politics, as they had to withdraw their missiles from Cuba, nevertheless they had achieved one of their main aims, securing the survival of the revolutionary Cuban communist regime.

Based on all this, it can be said, that during the resolution of the Berlin and Cuban crises, which are still deemed to be the most dangerous ones of the Cold War from the aspect of world peace, the threat of starting a Third World War was in reality not as immense as world public opinion thought at the time. And this was exactly because while solving the crises, the leaders of the superpowers showed a great sense of responsibility and moderation. The lesson of these two grave crises was clear for both parties: in the future the emergence of such dangerous conflicts that could result in a direct superpower clash, threatening the destruction of human civilization, must be avoided at all costs, primarily through enhanced cooperation between Washington and Moscow. Arguably, the peaceful solution of the Berlin and Cuban crises became further successful test cases of the mechanism of compelled cooperation between the superpowers.⁸ All this significantly contributed to both creating new, more effective, institutionalized forms of superpower cooperation and to the success of the evolution of a new wave of the *détente* process unfolding from the early 1960s. The first concrete results of this understanding were the establishment of the hot line between the White House and the Kremlin and the conclusion of the partial nuclear test ban treaty in the summer of 1963.

II.

During the conduct of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Moscow's policy towards its allies was exactly the opposite of how it

had behaved while solving the Berlin problem a year earlier. Then the Soviet leadership consulted continuously and frequently with the Warsaw Pact member states, and with the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the coordination was downright intensive.⁹ This time, however, the Soviet response was prepared in the utmost secrecy, moreover during the resolution of the crisis they did not inform even the Cubans about the possible course of events. This is why news of the evolution of the crisis—of which they heard from the media—caught the countries of Eastern Europe totally by surprise and unprepared.

In Budapest it was not only the danger of a direct East-West military conflict, and the fear of a new world war that caused acute worries. It was also alarming that even in case of the eventual peaceful resolution of the crisis, a war hysteria could develop in the society which would be hard to control by the leadership. Such a turn could then seriously disturb the progress of internal pacification that had been going on successfully since the upheavals (i.e., revolution and Soviet invasion) of 1956.

Based on the currently available sources, a precise picture still cannot be drawn about the Hungarian leadership's actions, or of what information it possessed and when, during the crisis. At 10 a.m. on 23 October, the Hungarian minister of defense received the following telegram via military channels from Marshal Andrei Grechko, Commander in chief of the Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact: "Considering US President D. Kennedy's [sic] provocative announcement on 23 October 1962 and the increased danger of the outbreak of war caused by the Western aggressors, I hereby propose:

1. To introduce increased combat readiness for all troops of the services of the armed forces subordinated to the Supreme Command [of the Unified Armed Forces].
2. Please, report on the arrangements made by you on 24 October." (Document No. 8)

The "proposal" was put in effect on the same day and in Hungary mostly the air force and air defense units were put into combat readiness.¹⁰ Thus it is very probable that the Hungarian army was actually mobilized directly by Moscow, without the prior knowledge of the local party leadership. The same day the Political Committee (e.g., Politburo) of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP) held a regular meeting but according to the transcript of the session the situation in Cuba was not even mentioned there.¹¹ The session was probably over by the time the news of Grechko's telegram reached the political leadership.

Sometime later, however, after the news about a lengthy Soviet government declaration¹² arrived in Budapest, an ad hoc group of top leaders under the direction of HSWP First Secretary and Premier János Kádár and including the deputy prime ministers and the foreign minister, worded a short declaration on behalf of the Hungarian government in which it condemned the aggressive moves of the United States, threatening the independence of Cuba.¹³ The government itself, however, was convened only two days later, on 25 October (Document No. 9), when the cabinet members had to retroactively approve the announcement. However, there must have been considerable hesitation in the leadership—perhaps they were hoping to get more information from Moscow via diplomatic or party channels—so the declaration was not published the next day, on 24 October, but only a day later, on the 25th in the HSWP's daily, *Népszabadság*. At the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 25 October, Kádár, who since September 1961 held both the position of Prime Minister and the first secretary of the HSWP, enlightened the cabinet members about the Cuban situation probably based on the information gathered from Marshal Grechko.¹⁴ His report, however, as we now know, was very deficient. Kádár said, after reviewing the American moves, that combat readiness was ordered in the Soviet Union, but reserves were not called in. A significant number of new Soviet forces were transported to the territory of the GDR, while Poland made troop reinforcements on the Oder–Neisse border, and Bulgaria did the same at its borders with Turkey and Greece. Besides these measures, in every member-state of the Warsaw Pact the militaries were put onto combat readiness. Kádár also told the government that at the “request” of Marshal Grechko the Hungarian military leadership had also introduced the “necessary measures” and he now asked the Council of Ministers to retroactively approve that move as well.

Although the Hungarian leadership obviously did not possess adequate information about the situation, Kádár rightly evaluated the crisis as the gravest international conflict since the Second World War. While he evidently had no first-hand information from Moscow, as a pragmatist and one who knew Khrushchev's thinking rather well, he concluded that now the conflict would very likely be solved peacefully. This conclusion rested mainly on two factors: there was no clash between Soviet and US ships, “when the blockade and the ships should have clashed,” and in the meantime the Soviet Union announced that Moscow was ready to participate in a summit meeting. This convinced Kádár that now “the most critical danger is over and diplomacy has come to the fore.”

In accordance with this, the government authorized the “extraordinary cabinet,” as the ad hoc group of a few top leaders—now complemented by the minister of defense—could

be called, to take the necessary measures in connection with the crisis. During the following days, most probably this ad hoc crisis managing body handled the problems resulting from the crisis, although no documents of any kind have been found pertaining to its activity. The official organs of the Hungarian party did not deal with the situation connected to the Cuban crisis, according to the minutes of the Political Committee and the Secretariat meetings held on 2 November.¹⁵ Prior to that, on 25 October the Secretariat had decided by instant voting to send an MTI (Hungarian News Agency) reporter to Havana. This also suggests that the leadership already ruled out the possibility of a superpower clash at that stage. It seems the idea of convening an extraordinary session of the Central Committee, that would have been a logical move in such a grave situation, had also not arisen; at any rate, no such meeting took place. In the given situation the Hungarian leadership could not do much, because they could have no impact of any kind on the course of events, although the potential result of the crisis, if disadvantageous, would have crucially affected Hungary's fate as well. That is why the only field for activity became that of propaganda: state and party authorities tried to strengthen the population's empathy for Cuba, and organized solidarity meetings in factories and plants.

The most spectacular and largest mass rally was held in the Sports Hall in Budapest on 26 October where the main speakers were deputy prime minister Gyula Kállai and Cuban ambassador Quintin Pino Machado. At the rally a message was adopted to be sent to UN acting Secretary General U Thant asking for his mediation to solve the crisis.¹⁶ In another important gesture of solidarity, János Kádár received the Cuban ambassador along with two journalists of the Cuban paper *Revolution* and their conversation was published on the front page of *Népszabadság* next to the Hungarian government declaration on 25 October. Nevertheless, it is striking that when on 31 October Kádár addressed the party conference in Budapest, in preparation for the 8th congress of the HSWP held in late November, his speech contained not one word about Cuba or any other international issue.¹⁷ According to the confidential reports on the mood of the people at the time of the crisis, there was no war panic in the country, the population trusted the Soviet Union that it would avert the danger of a violent conflagration successfully.¹⁸ All of this is quite plausible, especially as the leadership did everything it could to make the people understand as little as possible about the true nature of the crisis.

Significant first-hand Soviet information was only given to the Hungarian leadership in the beginning of November. On November 5 at a closed, special meeting of the Political Committee of the HSWP, János Kádár reported that during

a phone call with Khrushchev that morning, they agreed that Kádár would immediately travel to Moscow.¹⁹ In the last days of October and the first days of November several Soviet-bloc leaders also visited the Soviet capital, so Kádár's explanation seems logical, according to which the meeting was requested by him, because "people could misunderstand" if the Hungarians did not participate in such a consultation. However another explanation is also possible: On 2 November, a British citizen, Greville Wynne, was arrested on charges of espionage in Budapest, while visiting the Budapest International Fair.²⁰ On the 14th he was transferred to the Soviet authorities with the explanation that most of his crimes were committed against the Soviet Union. Indeed, Wynne was a British diplomat in Moscow acting as an intermediary for the famous Soviet spy Oleg Penkovsky, who was selling military secrets to British intelligence. Wynne was sentenced for spying to eight years in prison in May 1963. He was released in exchange for the Soviet spy Gordon Lonsdale, serving a fifteen year prison term in Great Britain, in 1964. We know nothing of any similar case, neither from previous nor from later times, so it is not impossible, that this important international issue was at least one of the main reasons for Kádár's hastily-arranged visit to the Soviet capital on 7-10 November. The information about the Cuban crisis acquired in Moscow was not much more extensive than was already known by the Hungarian leaders by that time: the Soviet Union reached its goal, for basically it had managed to acquire an American guarantee that the Cuban communist regime would survive²¹ (Document No. 10).

III.

The leaders of the Warsaw Pact member-states learned a serious lesson from the Cuban Missile Crisis, suddenly grasping the extent of their defenselessness and vulnerability. It was especially hard for them to understand, that if the Soviet leaders had considered the Berlin crisis, which had generated significantly lower international tension, important enough to hold regular consultations with the allies, then how it could have happened that a third world war had nearly broken out while the members of the eastern military bloc just had to stand by and wait for the denouement without any substantial information. Nor had they known that, contrary to the claims of Khrushchev's propaganda, it was not the Soviet Union, but the United States that had a significant superiority with respect to intercontinental missiles at the time! It was the Romanian leadership that drew the most radical conclusion from the case: in October 1963, the Romanian foreign minister, requesting utmost secrecy, informed his American counterpart that Romania would remain neutral in the case

of a nuclear world war. On the grounds of this standpoint, he requested the Americans not to set Romania as a target for a nuclear strike.²² Thus the Romanian "trend" of conducting a deviant policy, which had appeared in the economic area as early as 1958 and was officially acknowledged in 1964, can be attributed, at least to a significant extent, to the impact of the Cuban Missile Crisis

The Polish leadership was equally indignant at the events, furthermore, they considered, that the Soviet leaders did not understand the significance of the affair and the Kremlin would continue to regard preliminary consultations with the allies as unimportant. Among other things, the Polish leaders objected to Moscow's lack of consultation with Warsaw Pact member-states concerning the nuclear test ban treaty, especially since they had to sign it as well after the treaty had been concluded. During his negotiations in Budapest in November 1963 (Document No. 25), Gomułka stated that Cuba intended to join the Warsaw Pact, which would pose a significant threat to the security of the eastern bloc as well as world peace.²³ Therefore he firmly stated that should the request be officially submitted, Poland would veto Cuba's admission. A similarly negative Polish stand prevented another Soviet Bloc ally, Mongolia from joining the Warsaw Pact during the same year. This plan was seen in Warsaw as a clearly anti-Chinese move that was to seriously exacerbate the Soviet Bloc's relations with Beijing and one that would make the Sino-Soviet split irreversible. The Polish position, nevertheless was based on the legal argument that the Warsaw Pact was a *European* defense alliance, therefore extending it to Asia would be a violation of the organization's statute. To avoid similar unexpected challenges in the future, the Polish leaders proposed intensifying preliminary consultations within the Warsaw Pact, and significantly boosting the political role of individual member-states.

Although the Hungarian leadership was much more cautious in criticizing the Soviet behavior than the Poles, it basically agreed with the Polish views pertaining to the nature of future co-operation within the Warsaw Pact. Kádár, during his visit in Moscow in July 1963, proposed to establish a Committee of Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers, long before the plans to reform the Warsaw Pact were officially placed on the agenda in 1965-66.²⁴ The clear objective of the initiative was to place the Soviet leadership under the pressure of necessity for consultation and information provision as well as to enforce the multilateral nature of the decision-making process. Kádár clearly stated to Khrushchev in July 1963 that "the question is that there must not be a case when the Soviet government publishes various statements and the other governments read them in the newspaper.... I thought of a preliminary consultation. I have also told [Khrushchev],

that experience showed it is better to dispute sooner rather than later.”²⁵ The proposal was rejected by the Soviet leaders—who, nevertheless, themselves came forward with this idea two years later—on the pretext, that at a time when a “sovereignty disease” broke out, the reaction of the member-states would be wrong, and they would only misunderstand the intention.²⁶

IV.

The Hungarian documents published here shed light on the prehistory, the history, and the aftermath of the crisis. Most of them are reports of the Hungarian Embassy in Cuba, which opened in December 1961. They give detailed accounts on the position and the views of the Cuban leadership on many issues. During these years Fidel Castro and his comrades were working hard to make Cuba a solid member of the Soviet bloc, enjoying the same privileges as the “old” Eastern European allies of Moscow, including extending the Soviet “nuclear umbrella” to their island. As it was formulated by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez during the crisis, “Cuba’s territorial sanctity and possibility of normal life” should be guaranteed not only by the United States “but in some form by the Soviet Union as well” (Document No. 11). However, they thought all this was compatible with their having a special approach to the issue of peaceful coexistence, the prospects of the revolution in Latin America, the Soviet Bloc’s split with Albania and the emerging rift between the Soviet Union and China. Hungarian Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód visited Cuba between 28 December 1961 and 6 January 1962, and conducted important political talks with Prime Minister Fidel Castro, Foreign Minister Raúl Roa, and senior communist Carlos Rafael Rodríguez. The long report prepared after his visit (Document No. 2) sheds light on the views of the Cuban leaders concerning the above mentioned issues of international politics, also highlighting important differences of opinion. While Fidel Castro deemed the probability of an American invasion to take place “not very high,” the foreign minister explicitly warned his Hungarian partner that an American invasion is to be expected “at around the meeting of the foreign ministers of the states [belonging to the Organization of American States] scheduled for 22 January.”

Castro, who during the missile crisis urged Khrushchev to start a nuclear war against the US if it attacked Cuba, had raised a comparable idea ten months earlier, during his talks with Mód in January. He explained that now the Soviet Union had an advantage in terms of military technology. He suggested he did not know “whether the advantage would remain, increase or, quite the contrary, decrease or totally disappear in the future. Therefore, as long as the Soviet Union

has this advantage, we need to make use of every opportunity to strike a blow at imperialism.” It is obvious then, that in October 1962 Castro, himself believing Khrushchev’s lies about the state of the missile competition, made his infamous proposal on the false assumption that Moscow had a significant advantage vis-a-vis the US in the nuclear race, while now it is clear that at the time Washington in fact enjoyed considerable superiority in ICBMs over the Soviets.²⁷

After the crisis, feeling betrayed by Moscow because of the withdrawal of the Soviet missiles, the differences of opinion with the Soviets were made much more explicit by the Cuban leadership than before, especially during the period between November 1962—when the tensions surfaced during Kremlin emissary Anastas Mikoyan’s visit to Cuba to mollify Havana—and the spring of 1963, when Castro visited Moscow and held extensive talks with Khrushchev. Several reports of the Hungarian Embassy in Havana are dedicated to documenting the anti-Soviet sentiments and the emerging divergences in the Soviet-Cuban relationship (see especially Document Nos. 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, and 19). The overly optimistic Cuban position concerning the role of the Cuban revolution and the prospects for Latin American revolutions, as defined by the Second Havana Declaration of February 1962, was unacceptable not only for the CPSU and East European communist parties but also for several Latin American communist parties. In the summer of 1962, when defense minister Raul Castro visited Moscow, Khrushchev explained to him that while the Soviet party did not want to interfere in the affairs of other parties, he thought that “the Cuban party should have a debate with the mentioned [Latin American] parties if they did not agree in everything, the Latin American parties could not be neglected, and one could not make decisions instead of them. ‘After all, you are not the Comintern,’” he added sarcastically.²⁸

Following the crisis, the main source of disagreement—according to the Hungarian Embassy reports—was that the Cuban leaders and especially Fidel Castro, despite all the Soviet (and Mikoyan’s in particular) efforts, did not believe or understand that, in connection with the missile crisis, Moscow’s aim was to ensure Cuba’s independence and her rescue from the threat of US invasion. They “were convinced that the Soviet Union was only maneuvering and being tactical, she used the Caribbean crisis and its solution and Cuba only as instruments in the political game with the United States.”²⁹ Their suspicions were further exacerbated by the fact that the Kremlin was indeed unwilling to give an explicit or iron-clad guarantee for Cuba’s security. As reported by Hungary’s ambassador, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez told him on 23 October 1962 that “Cuba was ready to agree to the removal of missiles and etc. if Cuba’s sanctity was ensured

also by the Soviet Union.”³⁰ During Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily V. Kuznetsov’s talks in Havana in January 1963, Fidel Castro also hinted unequivocally at the demand for a Soviet security guarantee, by saying that “Cuba’s situation was singular because the European socialist countries are guaranteed by the Warsaw Treaty.”³¹ Castro contradicted even the basic Soviet argument, i.e., that in turn for the withdrawal of the missiles Kennedy had formally obliged himself not to attack Cuba and thus Moscow had guaranteed her security. Kuznetsov had a hard time explaining that “there were several ways of making agreements between states and governments, one form of talks and agreement was e.g. what had been realized by the published correspondence” of Khrushchev and Kennedy.³² In such a mood it is not so surprising that at their first casual meeting in a theatre Castro greeted his guest with the following words: “I do not offer you a cigar, because Khrushchev, too, gave the cigar I presented to him to Kennedy.”³³ (However, the Hungarian reports from Budapest’s embassies in both Havana and Moscow also point to the improvement in Cuban-Soviet relations, and Fidel Castro’s impressions of his superpower patron, after he visited the Soviet Union in the spring of 1963—see Document Nos. 22, 23, and 24.)

Finally, to demonstrate that the leaders in Havana may have learned a lesson from the missile crisis in several ways, let us mention a quote from a report in March 1963: “Raul Castro mentioned to the Romanian ambassador in the past days, and it is not likely to be his private opinion, that for Cuba among the possible [US] presidents at present Kennedy is the best”³⁴



DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT No. 1

Hungarian Embassy in Havana, Report on Secret US Documents, 22 August 1961

The Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic
to Comrade Foreign Minister Endre Sík
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

Havana, 22 August 1961.
57/1961./top secret

Subject: The secret documents of the State Department of the

United States.

Encl.: three documents³⁵

Cuban Minister of Industry Che Guevara made two secret documents of the United States public at the CIES [Inter-American Social and Economic Council—ed.] conference in Montevideo [i.e., Punta del Este, Uruguay, in August 1961].³⁶ The documents were passed to the Cuban government by “friendly hands” in a way not specified further. One of the documents is addressed to the United States’ ambassador to Venezuela, [Teodoro Moscoso—ed.] in which the members of the US State Department present the principles concerning Venezuelan economic policy. The other secret document contains a summary report on the position of Latin-American states and the Latin-American public opinion concerning Cuba.

Both documents are extremely valuable. Their authenticity cannot be doubted, as even the American delegate [C. Douglas] Dillon participating at the Montevideo conference did not dare to doubt their authenticity.

The publication of the documents made an extremely great impression both at the conference and in Venezuela. The Venezuelan America-friendly government protested in a note to the Cuban government, they considered the publication of the document interference in their internal affairs. In their reply to the note, the Cuban government explained it in detail that the publication of the document took place just in the interest of Venezuela and other Latin-American peoples. (I have sent the press cuttings of the notes in a letter.)

I do not wish to make any special comment on the documents themselves, they speak for themselves.

I suggest that their exact Hungarian translations should be sent to all our embassies to Latin-America or maybe to all our embassies to capitalist countries. Our embassies to Latin-America and Washington should study the documents thoroughly by all means. I request you to inform our Embassy also about the opinions concerning this.

I have expressed our gratitude in a note to the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs for sending the document.

Miklós Vass
chargé d’affaires ad interim

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 2. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



DOCUMENT No. 2

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód's talks with political leaders in Cuba, 9 January 1962

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Havana, 9 January 1962

Subject: Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód's political meetings in Cuba

Comrade Mód visited Cuba between 28 December 1961 and 6 January 1962. He conducted important political talks with the following personalities:

- 1./ With Cuban Foreign Minister Raul Roa on the day after his arrival,
- 2./ With Prime Minister Fidel Castro on 3 January,
- 3./ With Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, one of the leaders of ORI and the chief editor of its central paper, on 3 January
- 4./ With the secretary of the county organization of ORI Oriente in Santiago de Cuba on 4 January.

Although I was present at Comrade Mód's every meeting and occasionally also participated in the discussion, I will not separately indicate what Comrade Mód said and what I said and I will not specify which answers refer to his or to my questions.

1./ Meeting with Foreign Minister Raul Roa

Foreign Minister Raul Roa explained that in his view the United States was preparing for another invasion against Cuba. There are several sign of this attempt, and the Cuban party also has some confidential information on these preparations. Actually, one should say that the invasion has already begun, not only in the form of political preparations and actions but also in a military sense. The United States has sent various agents, diversionary troops and saboteurs to Cuba through various illegal channels; weapons, ammunition, explosives, various types of bombs, transmitter-receiver units and various other equipments are constantly being smuggled into Cuba. The agents and saboteurs arriving in Cuba were ordered to kill, explode and destroy wherever they can. All this can be seen as the initial phase of the invasion. He stated that if the USA had begun using these tactics last winter on the same scale, it would have caused immense damages to Cuba, whose consequences would have been unpredictable. Since then, however, the so-called Comités de Defensa de la

Revolucion (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution) have been organized all over in the country in cities and villages. Thanks to their activity, the tactics of the United States have ended in failure and the damages caused by them are insignificant.

(By way of explanation I note here that on the one hand these committees were created at every workplace, and on the other, in the cities they were based on blocks of houses while in the villages the setup depended on the nature of the particular place. Their members were workers and ordinary people in general with a revolutionary conviction who signed up on a voluntary basis. There were a lot of women, housewives and old people among them since young people and those who were willing to take a greater sacrifice were doing service in the armed militia—also on a voluntary basis, giving up most of their free time. The work of each committee is led by the chairman elected by the members. Their task is to defend the revolution at their workplace or at home against the sabotage of counter-revolutionists as well as agents and saboteurs coming from abroad. They do not have an office, a budget, a uniform or any equipment of their own. They seem to be operating quite effectively.)

Furthermore, Roa said that one of the main political tools used for the preparation of the invasion was the OAS [OEA in original, for *Organizacion de Los Estados Americanos* or the Organization of American States]. The United States made every effort in the OAS—in vain—to maintain or get unanimous support for the resolution regarding Cuba. However, there has been a qualitative change in Latin America. The Cuban revolution gave rise to a new situation in every country. Although the Cuban revolutionary government declared itself to be Marxist-Leninist and the revolution to be a socialist movement, the OAS is no longer an obedient executive body that remains loyal to the USA to the very end. Several countries, among them some of the most important ones, object to the invasion plans of the United States. The political secretary of state [at the Cuban Foreign Ministry], Dr Carlos Olivares is just visiting the Latin American countries and—as far as it can be seen in the short telegraphs—he was given definite promises for the support of Cuba in several places (Brazil, Ecuador, Chile and Mexico), or at least for not adopting the American proposal that appears in the guise of a Columbian motion. He reported on bad news only from Argentina; it seems that [Argentine President Arturo] Frondizi decided to back Kennedy. A unanimous resolution is simply out of the question. Thus, the USA will take care not to submit, or not to have another country submit, a proposal that explicitly condemns or imposes sanctions on Cuba. There are two reasons for it: 1./ The USA wants to prevent the OAS from splitting apart or possibly being totally disintegrated as a result of

the opposition of the Latin American countries. This does not mean that it will not make every effort to obtain a two-thirds majority in accordance with the regulation, that is, 14 votes; 2./ The military sanctions proposed by the OAS requires the approval of the [United Nations] Security Council, which cannot be obtained because of the Soviet Union's right of veto; there is no point politically in trying to put military sanctions to a vote under such circumstances, with Brazil, Mexico, etc. objecting.

Nevertheless, all this does not mean that the USA will now give up on the political and military role of the Latin American countries in the invasion. As the OAS charter provides that in case one of the member states is attacked, the military sanctions adopted as retaliation will come into force immediately and in this case the only thing the charter requires is to inform the UN, there is a clear danger of self-aggression [i.e.—a US-organized provocation that could be blamed on Cuba]. Self-aggression may take place against the American base in Cuba (Guantanamo) where there are many Cuban counter-revolutionists that can be used for such a purpose, or against a Central American country, also using Cuban counter-revolutionists hired by the USA. This is what can explain the USA's efforts in the OAS.

Then the foreign minister stressed that the situation was extremely tense and we were having hard times. He was convinced that the USA would take serious action, perhaps including a second invasion at around the meeting of the foreign ministers of the OAS states scheduled for 22 January [in Punta del Este, Uruguay]. The invasion is to be expected right before, during or right after the meeting, depending on the course of preparations for it. He requested that this information be forwarded to the Hungarian government and announced that as soon as he had more detailed information, he would summon the ambassadors of the socialist countries one by one and inform them so that they could also report to their respective governments.

Finally I should note that Roa repeated the information that in the spring he will travel to the Soviet Union at the invitation of [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko and spend only two weeks there. Right before this visit, or after it, he will accept our invitation and visit Hungary too.

2./ Conversation with Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

After a rather casual introductory part, upon learning that Comrade M6d had lived and worked for quite some time in France and I had come to Cuba from there too, Fidel Castro asked us about our views on the situation and the activity of the French Communist Party. When he heard that although we did not wish to criticize the PCF's policy

or pass a judgment on it, we could not help mentioning the fact that we had some doubts whether their policy was right, he explained his own opinion. According to Fidel Castro, the French party's policy is not bellicose and fails to mobilize large masses of people, which is especially apparent in their policy regarding the Algerian war. He believes that it is not right to have only legal options in sight and consider only parliamentary methods.

Then suddenly, he put the following question: "Are there any preparations underway for negotiations between the Soviet Communist Party and the Chinese Communist Party to eliminate the antagonism between them? The answer was very briefly this: "I hope so." Next the Prime Minister explained at length how concerned he was regarding this antagonism, saying that in his view this was one of the major problems in the present situation, and with Albania the entire problem further intensified. Any break in the unity of the socialist camp can severely harm the fight against imperialism and the USA. The coordinated international action against the imperialists is threatened by serious dangers. One of the first signs of this danger is what happened at the meeting of the Peace Council in Stockholm. It should not go on like this and become even more serious, or else various international consultations, congresses and actions will meet with failure and the imperialists will benefit from arguments made public and from deepening antagonism. At the moment it seems that as soon as a discussion is started at an international forum, the disputed issues between the Soviet and the Chinese parties immediately come up. As if thinking aloud, he examined its impact on the international political situation, especially regarding the international position of Latin America and Cuba, and then spoke about the need for somebody—it could also be them, the Cubans—to take the initiative in order to resolve the issue.

Then he asked what the Soviet–Chinese debate was really all about; what was the essential reason for their antagonism.

The answer was practically the following: the Chinese view and position that differ from those of the Soviet party cannot really be understood in and of themselves because they are obviously based on the internal Chinese situation, the local conditions and working methods, etc. However, as we have not been to China, we don't know the Chinese conditions. Fidel Castro largely agreed with this but when he returned to this point during the conversation, he provided a different answer to this question, somehow like this: the Soviet–Chinese antagonism is essentially based on practical problems that arise in the cooperation between the two countries. He doesn't know the origin and details of these problems, nor does he fully understand the entire range of problems. He has heard about various things, including some problems that emerged

along the common border, some kind of a complication that emerged in connection with a tribe there.

Fidel Castro returned again to analyzing the extremely harmful consequences that may follow from breaking up unity in the socialist camp, and the analysis of the international, especially the Latin American situation led him to conclude that this was the worst time possible for a debate like this and especially the worst time for the deepening of the antagonism between the Soviet and the Chinese parties.

The response to this analysis was as follows: it is always the worst time for a debate or antagonism to emerge within the socialist camp during the fight against imperialism. However, Hungary and the history of the Hungarian counter-revolution demonstrate, among other things, that the issues raised at the 20th and the 22nd congresses of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] must be addressed and resolved. The failure to resolve the range of problems called a personality cult would, sooner or later, have led to much more serious complications than the confusion that has been caused by raising the issue.

Fidel Castro first explained in detail that the personality cult, everything that this term covers, should not be the topic of dispute. A personality cult is indefensible, and anybody who supports a personality cult is unable to conduct a political debate. He gradually returned to presenting the joint fight of the socialist camp against imperialism, stressing that coordinated action was not only possible but also necessary, despite any differences and specific features. The Soviet Union and Cuba are examples for that. We, he said, are talking about something in a way that the Soviet Union should not speak about, or at least not in this way. The differences in terms of actions and statements, he added, are only apparent among the rest of us; in reality they are coordinated. Despite any debate or antagonism, it should be like that in the entire socialist camp.

During the conversation Castro suggested that the Soviet-Chinese debate might have very harmful consequences here in Cuba too. For now it has not been made widely known but the public wouldn't understand it anyway. He noted that the nations that are engaged in a difficult, perhaps armed fight see things differently from those that are already enjoying the results of the fight they have already fought.

Here is where this part of the conversation ended. When we were saying goodbye before leaving, Fidel Castro noted he was not sure why he had raised these issues to us since he hadn't discussed anything like this with any of the delegations he had received before.

As for the probability of the invasion and its impact on Latin America if it occurred, Castro essentially said the following: in the present situation—disregarding the unpredict-

able factors that characterize the USA—the probability of the invasion to take place is not very high. Should it occur, a serious reaction with unpredictable consequences can be expected first of all in Venezuela. The situation in Venezuela is very unstable and [President Rómulo] Betancourt can hardly hold out.

Talking about the Latin American situation he said there was an opportunity for objective, armed revolutionary fight in several countries, mainly in Venezuela and Brazil but elsewhere too. These opportunities are not being utilized although their utilization could easily result in the acceleration and completion of the process that would, on the one hand, mean the total liberation of Latin America and on the other, a fatal blow to the American imperialism that would lose all of its strength. The United States is now making strong efforts to win or enforce the support of as many governments as possible against Cuba in order to keep the Latin American countries in a semi-colonial state. It is using huge economic pressure to achieve that. For example, there are serious economic problems in Brazil and if the situation doesn't change significantly, in two years a serious revolutionary situation may develop in that country. In some sense the USA is in a dead-end street. Instead of supporting highly reactionary layers of society, it should promote a land reform that would help the emergence of conservative land owners who are loyal to capitalism. By refusing to give loans and money it can only increase bitter feelings and create a revolutionary atmosphere. Sooner or later it will have to give money. Some of the Latin American governments still appear to be unable to recognize and make the best of this. The suspension [i.e., poor functioning—CSB] of the Alliance for Progress by Kennedy is a short-sighted policy. Chile's approach—which was surprising even to him—is typical. It seems that the conservative Chilean government took the firmest stand against the invasion [at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961—ed.] and by the side of Cuba's autonomy, apparently firmly resisting any economic pressure by the USA. Chile intends to rely on the Soviet Union in these efforts by significantly increasing Soviet-Chilean trade. In order to characterize the USA's difficult situation he mentioned the rapidly growing economic strength of the Soviet Union which is gradually becoming an important factor in dependent countries and in states being liberated as well as elsewhere. All this is taking place in a situation when on the one hand the imperialist powers are coming up against one another in different parts of the world (e.g. in Congo) and on the other hand, they are afraid to attack the Soviet Union because of its advantage in terms of military technology. Fidel Castro suggested he didn't know whether the advantage would remain, increase or, quite the contrary, decrease or totally disappear in the future. Therefore, as long

as the Soviet Union has this advantage, we need to make use of every opportunity to strike a blow at imperialism.

As for some of the other topics that were raised during the meeting, I need to mention that Fidel Castro sees the liberation of Goa by India [from Portugal in December 1961] as a major defeat for the USA. He finds it unlikely that Indonesia, that is, Sukarno, will decide to take a similar step [to capture West Papua New Guinea, i.e., West Irian Jaya, from the Netherlands—ed.]. He believes that Sukarno has made the best of the situation; although he is bluffing, the results can already be seen: the Netherlands has already made concessions and is willing to negotiate.

[insertion:] At the time of the preparations for the Moscow conference held in 1960, “when there was no collective leadership in the revolution yet” in Cuba, the Cuban position was worked out by a group made up of Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, and Ernesto [“Che”] Guevara as well as several other old communist leaders (Blas Roca, Anibal Escalante, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez), which was then represented by Anibal Escalante who participated in the preparation of the Moscow conference. At that time there was consensus on the issues to be discussed.³⁷

3./ Conversation with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez

This discussion addressed not only one but several issues of which I will report on the most important ones.

We informed Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, one of the Cuban leaders whose relationship is perhaps the best with Fidel Castro, about Fidel Castro’s statements on the relationship between the Soviet and the Chinese parties. Comrade Rodriguez said the following as an answer to this: the problem of unity and cooperation among the socialist countries and parties is extremely important for Fidel Castro, just like he is taking care of the unity of all the revolutionary forces in Cuba. The Soviet–Chinese relationship is causing problems in Cuba too. The old Communists see everything clearly; however, the situation is different with other revolutionists who have just joined the communists but have been raised in a different way. Fidel Castro’s careful and expedient work and caution are required to ensure unity and development for everybody. There had been a long debate in the leadership and it was difficult to achieve a unanimous decision on the adoption of Blas Roca’s article, which was then published in the December 4 issue of *Cuba Socialista* in 1961 (I wrote about it in my report 199/1961). By way of an example, he noted that when the Soviet Union recalled its ambassador and the entire embassy from Albania [in August 1961—ed.], several of the new people thought it was exactly what the

United State did to Cuba. Our experienced comrades had to work patiently for a long time to ensure that the honest but inexperienced and uninformed young people who had just joined the Communists, the Communist party, began to see things in the right way.

In addition, he said that in their talks with the members of the Cuban government and other leading politicians, the Chinese ambassador to Havana [Shen Jian] and the officials of the Chinese embassy always bring the conversation to the disputed issues and the result is: anti-Soviet propaganda. He mentioned one single example. He was asked to contact the Chinese ambassador and discuss the issue of reducing the volume of Chinese trade. After discussing the trade-related questions the ambassador started talking about Enver Hoxha’s article, so the conversation ended in a rather unpleasant atmosphere with Comrade Rodriguez pointing out the position of the party.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez was afraid that it would not be possible to prevent this debate from becoming public until the end of time, which will raise serious problems.

Later, when talking about economic matters, Comrade Rodriguez said that last year the Cuban state budget had a deficit of 400 million pesos (that is, dollars). They prepared a balanced budget for 1962, and essentially it will certainly be balanced. The current budget, without loans, etc. and investments to be implemented, amounts to 750 million. 270 million was earmarked for military spending for 1962 (obviously, this figure will not be made public). 115–125 million will be spent on education and culture. According to current plans for the future, the actual industrialization of the country will begin at around 1970; by that time they will have all the necessary conditions in place, e.g. metallurgy. At the moment, they are focusing all their resources on agriculture. The results will soon come and show their effect gradually in the near future.

As far as the talks on the Hungarian–Cuban exchange of goods are concerned, he noted that their results were satisfactory.

Later the conversation turned back to Fidel Castro again, and Comrade Rodriguez said the following: Fidel Castro and Soviet ambassador [Sergei M.] Kudryavtsev met on 2 January. Comrade Kudryavtsev requested the meeting because he had received a long telegraph from Moscow and he wanted to provide Fidel Castro with some information on international affairs, especially regarding Latin America. At the same time, he wanted to suggest in some way what kind of statements the Soviet Union would see as right and necessary regarding some issues that affected the Latin American countries and also some other matters. After three years [*sic*; Kudryavtsev was actually appointed in July 1960, roughly one-and-a-half years earlier—ed.], it was perhaps the first time that the Soviet

ambassador was able to send home a reassuring telegraph after the speech. Fidel Castro had never delivered such a successful speech before from the point of view of international political relations. When leaving the rally, Fidel Castro turned to Carlos Rafael Rodríguez in his car: “Tell me, did I break with any country today?” The political nature of the speech was shown by the fact that under its immediate impact even the Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto], who has just arrived in the country, and the ambassador’s deputy of Ecuador rushed to Castro still on the stand and very warmly congratulated him.

The foreign ministers’ meeting of the OAS states will be held on 22 January. The so-called Second Havana Statement will be issued on the same day. Fidel Castro has already prepared the draft, whose tone is very aggressive. This will be discussed by the leadership later. It will be based on the following principles: Cuba has the right to build socialism. Nobody has the right to intervene in it under any title. Worded in the necessary form, the Statement should also include that the independent Latin American countries have the right, at their own discretion, to be faithful to a different social order.

4./ Conversation with the ORI³⁸ organization in Santiago de Cuba

Unfortunately, Raul Castro was not in Santiago de Cuba when Comrade Mód visited Oriente County, so he only had a chance to meet with the ORI’s secretary. The conversation was about the situation of the party in the county. I can summarize it as follows (this county is significantly different from the other five counties in several respects): the county’s population is 2 million and 250 thousand. The number of party members is a bit over 8 thousand, about half of which came to the ORI from the 26th of July Movement. The creation of party branch organizations, so-called nuclei [*núcleos*] is nearly complete, and their number currently amounts to 1200. The average number of members in a branch organization is between 6 and 7. There is a branch organization in every state farm, in the majority of cooperative farms and sugar factories as well as in the major industrial plants, transportation and commercial companies, etc. In addition, there are branch organizations set up by residential districts as well as special branches organized for scattered villages in the highlands. Most of the members are between 20 and 40 years of age, with 20 to 30 year-olds slightly exceeding the number of 30 to 40 year-olds. The ratio of women is 11%. The number of black and other colored party members slightly exceeds the average national ratio of colored people (which is roughly 30%) in the city itself and along the coastal region of the county, while it is below the national average in other parts of

the county, with a county average below the national average. Members of the working class have a relative majority among the party members; the number of peasants is also significant, while intellectuals are very rare in the party.

Unlike the national leadership, which is not complete as it still has only 17 members, the county leadership is complete: it has all the requested 35 members. Unlike in the other counties, here, the county leadership also has a head: Raul Castro.

Credit should be given not only to the revolutionary nature of the county but also to the special form of organization in the highlands and the work of the ORI for the fact that there have been no counter-revolutionary gangs active in the territory of the county for a long time and for about a year, there hasn’t been a single perpetrator of diversionary attempts or sabotage acts that has been able to flee punishment; all of them were caught successfully.

After Comrade Mód’s departure I contacted Soviet ambassador Kudryavtsev and informed him about the meeting with Fidel Castro, especially about the discussion regarding the Soviet–Chinese debate. I added that both Comrade Mód and I had the impression that Fidel Castro might have received more information from one of the parties than from the other one.

Comrade Kudryavtsev made the following comments: Fidel Castro has received all the documents, including that of the 22nd Congress [of the CPSU]. After returning from Moscow, Blas Roca gave a detailed account, which was followed by a three-day long debate in the leadership of the ORI where Fidel Castro took the correct position. Speaking about the Chinese embassy in Havana he pointed out that the number of staff working there far exceeds the number of staff at the Soviet embassy, although the Soviet Union has a huge volume of trade with Cuba, there are a large number of specialists working in the country, and the Soviets provide a lot of aid for Cuba, while China is not doing anything like that. Under such circumstances, the main task of the Chinese embassy can only be propaganda—this may be the reason for the Cuban sympathy with China. He wonders what Castro may have meant when he talked about the border and a tribe, unless he was referring to the Mongolian People’s Republic. True, the Chinese are not happy about the existence of Mongolia, although they have never raised this issue. Anyway, what could be done now that Mongolia is already an independent state? With its excessively left-wing ideology and fake revolutionary slogans that assist the reactionary forces in the long run, the Chinese propaganda managed to have an effect on several Cuban leaders too, e.g. on Minister of Industry Ernesto Guevara, who cannot understand the need and the conditions for peaceful coexistence.

/János Beck/
ambassador

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives] Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 2. d. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.*]



DOCUMENT No. 3

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on the Federal Republic of Germany and Cuba, 16 March 1962

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic
To Comrade János Péter, Foreign Minister
Budapest

Top Secret!
98/1962/ top secret
Havana, 16 March 1962

Subject: The Federal Republic of Germany and Cuba.

There are normal diplomatic relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Cuba. The FRG is represented in Havana by an ambassador, who has a staff of seven diplomats and numerous administrative and assistant staff.

As I have already reported, the Cuban Republic did not recognize the GDR [German Democratic Republic; East Germany] officially because the GDR considers it more valuable than formal recognition that the so-called Political Commission headed by the ambassador may demonstrate in reality in Cuba, that is, in Latin-America, day after day the existence of the two self-governing and independent German states. Formal recognition would probably have meant the FRG breaking off diplomatic relations with Cuba corresponding to the Hallstein doctrine.

The number of the staff of the Embassy of the FRG, considered very large among Havana conditions, can by no means be justified by the diplomatic, economic, or other relations between the FRG and Cuba. The political relations between the two countries are well known and need no comments. Their trade relations can be considered insignificant compared with other great Western countries. Neither the

public, nor the Cuban authorities, know of any diplomatic, political, or maybe cultural or other work by the Embassy of the FRG. It may be presumed and I have heard this opinion of the Cuban side several times that the Embassy of the FRG took over the intelligence work of the USA Embassy after their leaving [in January 1961]. Anyway, once I found, myself, that on a commercial ship calling at the Havana port, among the crew there traveled an officer of the FRG military navy disguised as a sailor. Certainly this was not the only case.

At the great Cuban national events, at the receptions held to commemorate national holidays, etc. the ambassador of the FRG is present regularly and asks the protocol chief every time, pointing at the ambassador of the GDR, who this man is and what he is doing here. The protocol chief always explains that he is the head of the GDR political mission, who has been invited similarly to the members of the diplomatic corps to represent his country. The West-German ambassador is usually satisfied with the answer and it has happened several times that the protocol chief or other foreign affairs staff asked him whether he wanted to protest about it or something like that and he answered no and said he only wanted to point out and state the fact.

It seems that it is the interest of the Bonn government to maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba, they may not carry out the break off required by the Hallstein principle or if they did so, only with a heavy heart, because, on the one hand they would change their position in the Latin-American countries to the worse and on the other hand, it would make its now intensive penetration into the new African countries more difficult. West Germany tries to act differently from other imperialist countries in Latin American and African countries and she wants to penetrate into them with her great economic power as deeply as possible. Her anti-Cuban attitude or even her break off [of diplomatic ties] with Cuba would meet with antipathy in some of these countries in the leading circles themselves and everywhere in the various progressive or even patriotic petit bourgeois and other circles—and this would prevent her penetration. The Cuban side is aware of all this, but at present it is also in the interest of Cuba to maintain diplomatic relations with as many countries as possible, it would be particularly disadvantageous to heedlessly provoke breaking off diplomatic relations with one of the NATO countries.

János Beck
ambassador

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives] Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top*

*Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 2.d. Translated for CWIHP
by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*



DOCUMENT No. 4

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report
on meeting with Yugoslav Ambassador Boško
Vidaković, 19 March 1962

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic
to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest

Top Secret!
94/1962/top secret
Havana, 19 March 1962

Subject: Conversation with Yugoslavian ambassador to
Havana, Boško Vidaković

I had a long meeting with Yugoslavian ambassador to
Havana Boško Vidaković on 17 March. During this [meet-
ing,] Vidaković made the following remarks worth mention-
ing:

In some parts of the Cuban public, mainly among the
petit-bourgeois and intellectual supporters of Fidel Castro,
who are not Marxists though, but who have been the sup-
porters of the revolution for a shorter or longer time, he can
feel a turning point in their attitude toward Yugoslavia and
the Yugoslav embassy. While in the past he met with rebuffs
everywhere, many called him a revisionist openly and refused
any relationship with him, now more and more people visit
him, they are most willing to talk to him, they inquire about
the Yugoslav situation ("What is Yugoslav socialism?" "How
are production and distribution organized?" etc.) This has
two causes in his opinion: 1. The Cuban economic situation,
the difficulties in provision, organizational problems and the
political problems within the leadership, the interrelationship
among the three political organizations united in the ORI.
2. The political problems within the leadership, the inter-
relationship among the three political organizations united
in the ORI.

He knows from a completely reliable source that among
friends Fidel Castro made the following statement two
months ago: "He is completely aware of the help and is
extremely grateful to the socialist camp, first of all, the Soviet

Union whose all-embracing help has made the preservation
and development of the Cuban revolution possible. However,
he is still considering the idea of revolution according to the
Chinese."

Four months ago Minister of Industry Ernesto ["Che"]
Guevara, saying "you have not signed the declaration of the
81 parties, you are revisionists," refused to have talks with him
about the development of Cuban–Yugoslav relations, he con-
sidered trade relations with Yugoslavia the same as e.g. with
Belgium and refused to listen to the Yugoslav suggestions,
helpful proposals.

The second Havana declaration was written by Fidel
Castro alone—and he knows it from a reliable source—he
had not discussed it with any Cuban leading politicians. He
discussed the declaration only with one person, a Uruguayan
professor, who is something like his counselor.

Fidel Castro presented the declaration to the leadership
of the ORI before its reading at the mass meeting, and they
approved it. Referring to another—not named but completely
reliable—source, he said that Blas Roca did not agree with the
declaration in many points, but he accepted it in the interest
of the unity of the ORI, that is the leading layer of the Cuban
revolution. Vidaković has just returned from his trip to Latin
America lasting for a few days, during which he had the
opportunity to see that the communist parties generally did
not approve of the declaration. In Brazil the party criticizes it
strongly and [Brazilian Communist Party leader Luís Carlos]
Prestes threatened the Cuban party with public action if they
did not give up propagating views in Brazil that were contrary
to the position of the Brazilian party. He considers it a typical
fact concerning the declaration that the Western members of
the Havana diplomatic corps all consider the declaration to be
"the work of the communists," although the old communists
cannot have agreed with it because it was not written in the
spirit of the XXII. [CPSU] congress and [the doctrine of]
peaceful co-existence.

The behavior of the Cuban delegation at the Punta del
Este conference [in January 1962] was determined by Fidel
Castro. Neither President of the republic [Osvaldo Dorticos,
nor Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa agreed with the appointed
line, but they could do nothing but stick to it. This resulted
in the isolation of the Cuban delegation, in that they refused
or avoided meeting several Latin American statesmen and
politicians. If the Yugoslavian diplomats had not helped, they
would not even have known what was happening around
them. Foreign Minister Roa is too clever and too realistic to
agree with Fidel Castro's inflexible and leftist revolutionary
line, he does not often think what he says, or does things
without personal conviction.

The communists, however, did not agree with the sharply anti-Yugoslav articles published in the party's daily, the HOY about 10 months ago, as Vidaković was told by the editor-in-chief of the paper Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, but they were forced to publish the articles according to the Chinese wish. He considers revolting Fidel Castro's two latest speeches, in which he attacked those who had committed sectarian-dogmatic mistakes (cf. numbers 14 and 17 March 1962 of the Havana reports), because he continued in public the fight between the different groups going on behind the scenes in such a way that he gave no freedom of choice to the other party. According to Vidaković, Fidel Castro attacks the people of the Directory of 13 March on the one hand, and he makes it possible that the communists could be blamed for the consequences of the mistakes on the other hand, although it is just the communists who will make up for the damage caused by the egocentric and megalomaniac Fidel Castro.

Relying on Yugoslavian expert calculations, Vidaković thinks that Cuba is in a catastrophic economic situation. If there should be any deterioration, they must count on a change in the opinion of the peasantry (the first signs of this can already be seen), which would mean the beginning of the fall of the system. To prevent this, during 1962 and in the first months of 1963 the socialist countries must give a new loan—mainly in the form of transportation of food and articles of consumption. According to his calculations, this demand from the side of Cuba will be 100 million dollars.

Vidaković also said that the official Cuban side's attitude toward Yugoslavia had changed. Now their economic relations are better. They gave a 10 million dollar loan to Cuba (not state, but bank loan). If the Cubans follow the agreement and carry out the deliveries, this loan may be doubled in the future or even trebled.

In the sphere of politics, the Cubans seem to begin to understand his reasoning, which is the following concerning the Yugoslavian–Cuban relations:

Yugoslavia does not wish to interfere in internal affairs. But she would not like if in Cuba there was something like a cold war going on in connection with Yugoslavia. Out of general socialist interest, Yugoslavia wishes to provide help to Cuba unselfishly, she is willing to give loans as well besides the mutually advantageous trade. She has provided political help already before (e.g., she achieved that Cuba was able to participate at the Belgrade conference [of the Non-Aligned Movement, or NAM, in September 1961—ed.] against all the resistance) and will do so in the future too. It is an obvious interest of Cuba to maintain good political and economic relations with Yugoslavia, as the USA's policy—Cuba's economic isolation—is going to have its results gradually and it

is Yugoslavia that could serve as a gate toward the Western powers and neutral countries.

I have tried to sum up briefly what I heard from Vidaković. During the whole conversation, the Yugoslav ambassador represented the position of the XXII. congress, he referred to it and supported the old Cuban communists against the Chinese influence and Fidel Castro being under this influence. What he said reflected this position on the one hand—I do not know yet whether this is a position represented only by him and only toward myself—and the opinion of his circle of associates on the other hand. At the same time, he mentioned some things that give food for reflection. Concerning all this I am going to talk to other people and come back to the individual problems.

János Beck
Ambassador

[Source: Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives] Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 5

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Talk with Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos, 15 June 1962

János Beck
Top Secret!
ambassador
Written: in six copies:
Minister Péter
First Deputy of the Minister P. Mód
Deputy Minister Szarka
Deputy Head of Department Szűcsné
Embassy Department.

Subject: A visit to President of the Republic Dorticos on 15 June 1962

I was received by President of the Republic Dorticos on 15 June and we had a conversation lasting one hour and 45 minutes. I requested the hearing explaining the fact that I was going on my usual annual holiday and before it I would

like him to discuss with me all the problems he wanted the Hungarian government to be informed about.

The president said the following concerning the different problems:

Agriculture

Some time ago the Cuban leadership considered the solution of agricultural problems the most urgent task mainly in order to ensure the provision of the country with food on the one hand, and the production of their most important source of foreign currency, of sugar on the other hand, and finally to provide a part of the industry with raw material later. To achieve this, they started the complete reorganization of the INRA (National Institute of Land Reform), which is managed by the newly appointed director Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. As a result of the serious measures of the government and the INRA, they achieved at last—said the president—that they were on firm ground concerning agriculture. The results can be observed gradually, but the early results will be felt in the public supply itself only next year. The production of poultry (mainly chicken) and pork is increasing. There is also an increase in the production of various roots (batata and other roots that are considered primary goods of general provisioning in Cuba).

The stock of cattle is about five and a half million heads, but they are economical with them to ensure the possibility of multiplication. Maybe the number of slaughters could be raised, and the quantity of beef for consumption could be increased, but they are waiting, among other [reasons] because it will be inevitable to raise the consumer price of meat as well. For the rise in prices they must wait for the best moment politically and also prepare for it.

The present shortage of food cannot be done away with in some months anyway, it will last until the next winter and even until the next year.

In the long run the food situation will be substantially improved by fishing. Before the revolution fishing was carried out by quite primitive devices and the quantity that was caught played an irrelevant role in provisioning.

There have been taken serious measures already to increase fishing, but only a few days ago did they start to eliminate radically those mistakes that hindered the development of fishing. First of all, we must mention that the fishermen got so little money for the fish and the fishermen were paid so low wages in the cooperatives, which were formed a long time ago and which have acquired a dominant role in fishing (besides egalitarianism), that it was not worth fishing and they tried to sell the few fish they caught on the black market. They have already bought and will receive bigger fishing vessels from the

Poles, and some bigger trawlers from the Soviet Union, which will make it possible not to fish only in the near coast shallow waters but in the open seas as well, e.g. first in the Bay [i.e., Gulf] of Mexico, later in the South American seas. Both the Poles and the Soviet Union are sending the ships with crews and the crews are going to fish together with the Cubans for at least half a year to teach them the industrial fishing methods. The solution of the wage problem has changed the mood of the fishermen from one day to the other, the result of material incentive can be seen in the quantity of fish on the market right away, but from the point of view of general provisioning there will be a considerable result concerning fishing only in the distant future.

Concerning sugar, the situation is the following: the dry weather has caused damage in the sugar crop in prospect as well, as the planned 3000 caballerias could not be sown in spring, so only a part can be harvested in 1963. They are going to sow in the dry (winter) period as well, differently from the usual practice, but it will be harvested only in 1964. The prospects of next year's sugar production are worse than this year. Even if all preconditions are fulfilled, that is, all planned tasks are carried out according to the plans, next year there will be a maximum of 4.5—4.7 million tons of sugar, that is, less than this year, [a situation] which is further aggravated by the circumstance that next year will be started without any reserve of sugar contrary to this year. Next year in the harvest already 1,000 harvesting machines will take part and harvest about 30% of sugarcanes. But there will still be a shortage of manpower, which, similarly to this year, but to a much smaller extent, will be made up for by unpaid or voluntary permanent work. Mechanization will be of the size to do away with the shortage of labor force only by 1964 or 1965.

As far as the harvesting of coffee is concerned, there still remains the great shortage of manpower, so harvesting will be solved with voluntary work and e.g. by deploying students who receive grants in this work during harvest time. As in the past years a lot of people have left agriculture and e.g. started to work in public projects, they are going to take measures to redirect the labor force to agriculture.

To increase agricultural production in prospect and to eliminate the serious damage caused by the dry weather, one of the most important devices will be the creation of a water economy system at high technical level. The highest level Soviet expert delegation has been to Cuba, and after the departure of their leaders the remaining experts started work right away. There is a possibility to reach an immediate result or one that can be seen in, let us say, two years by a smaller investment, but they will start to make long-run plans as well to be able to begin the bigger jobs as well to the best of their ability. In Cuba earlier there was no water economy, they

could not make a step without Soviet help. This help means expert help from the highest level to the simplest skilled worker and the manufacturing and delivery of material equipment.

Industry

After they started tackling the crucial problems of industry, prospects have become better and normal progress seems guaranteed. These problems were mainly problems of norm and wages. They are far from being solved, that is, the planned solution from having been carried out, but they have started definitely. (Concerning this, the president repeated what I had written in my previous report on this question.)

Plan

This year's plan is not and will not be ready. It is strange and astonishing, but they have not been able to make a plan. The next year plan of 1963 is being prepared, it will be ready soon, but the president stressed that it would be a plan with a lot of unreliable and inexact details. Concerning the long-run plan, he emphasized even more that he personally could not trust even the main numbers. (Let me remind you that President of the Republic Dorticos is also the president of the Cuban Party's Economic Committee.) In contrast with the agriculture and industry, where the Cuban leaders believe, even if only in recent times, that they have reached firm ground after the swamp, concerning planning and organization, they do not know where they stand. As the president expressed himself, they have not managed to create the spirit of planning and organization and he cannot report on any long-run idea either. They do not even know at this moment which line to take to change the situation radically. The cadres working in central planning are quite weak, often much weaker than in the subordinated organs, that is, the comrades working in the ministries and elsewhere. But it is worth thinking over whether they should be moved higher to do central planning jobs, because they may fail in the central work and then the smaller detail planning jobs that are carried out tolerably in some places may become worse too.

(Here I wish to interject that, according to the news spread in Havana, there have been talks going on for a long time whether Minister of Industry Ernesto Guevara or Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the president of the National Institute of Land Reform, should be appointed to the leading post of the Planning Bureau. Even if for others, but the highest leadership of the Planning Bureau will be obviously substituted.)

The counter-revolution

The plan of the United States and the preparation for it is probably that she tries to increase the economic difficulties, which would contribute to the creation of a counter-revolutionary base in the population and the latter would provide a ground to carry out some kind of aggression. The saboteurs and counter-revolutionary organizers arriving from abroad, who organize and direct the internal counter-revolutionary forces, in contrast with the last year or the past situation, now receive not only superficial training and are not only poorly armed and supplied with financial means but are people at a higher level from all aspects and work in a new way. The experiences of the Cuban counter-revolutionary work have been evaluated by the USA, she has assessed the real internal situation realistically and on the basis of this, after long and thorough training, she is sending to Cuba people equipped with the most modern technical devices. Besides the excellent technical equipment, she provides them with a great sum of money contrary to the past. For example, recently such a group of seven people has been caught in the Eastern part of Cuba just after landing, who, apart from the modern and many arms, had serious technical equipment and not false but real Cuban money to the value of several ten thousand dollars per capita [person]. This Cuban currency is probably bought through legal emigration on the one hand, and maybe without any network of agents, through Western embassies on the black dollar market on the other hand.

The Cuban situation may be generally characterized—continued the president—by greatly increasing class struggle. After the elimination of old groups of bandits, now, partly in Las Villas and mainly in Matanzas county there appear newly organized and functioning groups of bandits. Following direct external direction, they partly lean on the richer peasants with a counter-revolutionary spirit, and partly on the middle and poor peasants, who can be easily deceived because of the sectarian and other mistakes committed by the Cuban leadership, and also they win their base in areas with scattered populations by terrorist intimidation. They carry out sabotage actions, which consist of setting places on fire, explosions and other actions, and they also kill people. In Matanzas county in most recent times the situation has become so much worse that they approached the highways as well, and raided vehicles or people. The make-up of the groups is always the same and it shows where the line of class struggle can be drawn in Cuba at present: the members of the groups are the sons off well-to-do farmers, clerical people, and people under their influence and the ex-members of the armed forces and power-enforcement organizations of the old system or their relations and the smaller part is made up of the petit-bourgeoisie of towns.

The Cuban leadership cannot allow the spread of this movement, not even its existence in such size in a county

neighboring Havana. But they cannot allow either, what the counter-revolution has already tried, that the counter-revolution formed even one group of bandits in the farthest county, Oriente county, which has always been the main fortress of the revolution. Therefore they have started the execution of the necessary measures both in the political and military lines. For this the experiences in Matanzas gave good grounds.

As an interjection, here I would like to report on the events in Matanzas, the details of which I have heard from President Dorticos: The counter-revolution managed to form a group of armed bandits of about 200 people out of small groups of 5-10 people in this county. These groups have been more and more active and in the past days they have managed to incite the population to a counter-revolutionary demonstration in a small village near the small town of Cardenas of Matanzas county. The main cause of the counter-revolutionary success is not to be found in the skillfulness of the counter-revolutionaries and their leaders in the USA, but the faulty policy led by the Cuban leadership and organs for a long time. Vice-Premier and Minister of Defense Raul Castro said that recently he had received reports one after the other from the commanders of the individual units that proved that the peasants began to see their only defender and help again in the Cuban revolutionary army exclusively, while they looked upon the party organizations and their leaders, that is the ORI, just because of the illegal sectarian arbitrary and terrorizing methods, as similar to the defeated authorities of the Batista-regime. The peasants often turned to the commanders of the individual units, not only with their problems, but with their complaints about the procedures of the ORI leadership and secretaries too. The organizers and leaders of the counter-revolutionary demonstration, the members of one of these groups of armed bandits were caught by the authorities right away and four were immediately sentenced to death through a summary procedure and shot dead. In the population the summary sentence met with protest against the renewal of death sentences and executions familiar from the time of the Batista regime. After this, the highest leadership immediately visited this place, gathered the whole population in the main square and explained for hours what had happened, then asked them to appoint and elect new leaders in place of the arrested and executed and fleeing counter-revolutionaries who held some post in the local administration or were the chemist, a cafe-owner and other bourgeois elements and in place of the badly functioning administrative and economic organs. It was during this assembly that the population of the village understood that the new revolutionary system was not the same as what they believed it to be on the basis of the activity of the local petty monarchs and under the influence of the counter-revolutionaries, and they appointed the new leaders

after several hours of debate, rejecting one by saying that he was a drunkard, the other [because he] belonged to the circle of friends of the counter-revolutionary cafe-owner, etc. In this village the counter-revolution will have no base any more. A few days later in the town of Cardenas, President Dorticos held a mass meeting and observed a military parade. After the parade some parts of the army together with the other organs and a part of the population began the all-embracing great military action against the groups of bandits in the county.

The Party

During the conversation President Dorticos emphasized that one of the main difficulties in eliminating economic problems and faulty political methods was that in Cuba there was not a party. The organization of the party has started only just now in the truest sense of the word (after the Escalante case) and it is going on very thoroughly and carefully, but slowly. They try not to make any new mistakes and strive to build a strong, uniform and firm Marxist-Leninist party. He does not doubt the success of this work.

During the conversation, mainly answering my questions, he stated that the provisioning of the population was not guaranteed this year and any food supply Hungary could help with, independently of quantity and quality, would be welcomed. He also said that they did not only need counselors, experts undertaking technical or other help in central and national work, but also at much lower levels for the solution of a small detail, to manage a smaller enterprise or institution, and sometimes for the solution of a particular task within a firm or institution requiring new technical or organizational skill, similarly to the Soviet Union, who lends us not only high and middle level experts but also skilled workers to organize e.g. the water economy and fishing.

He also stressed that in all cases when we thought that their Ministry of Foreign Trade or some organ or official within it wished to purchase something or in such quantity that did not correspond to our general situation or our prospects of development, or we could see that they missed to buy something that our more experienced organs or people considered necessary, we should not fulfill the wish of their Ministry of Foreign Trade but stand up for our position considered right and, if needed, even in smaller questions, if it could not be solved otherwise, we should turn directly to him, because even smaller things might have such major significance that he, as the head of the Cuban Party's Economic Committee, wished to deal with.

János Beck
Budapest, 25 June 1962

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



DOCUMENT No. 6

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Cuban President Dorticos' Trip to New York, 16 October 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest

TOP SECRET!
375/1962/Top Secret

Written: in four copies
Three to Center
One to Embassy

Havana, 16 October 1962.

Subject: The New York Trip
of President of the Cuban
Republic Dorticos

As I have already reported in another form, Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa informed the heads of the missions of socialist countries about the New York trip of President of the Republic Dorticos and his speech at the UN in advance of the announcement in the Cuban press.

All the chiefs of mission of the diplomatic corps were present without exception at Dorticos' and Roa's departure. It was conspicuous that Fidel Castro was not present.

As we learned from the press the day after, half-an-hour after take-off, the plane carrying the president of the republic, the foreign minister, and their entourage turned back so that some technical defects could be repaired, and the defect in the engine was fixed at the Havana airport. Prime Minister Fidel Castro arrived in the meantime and he had a long conversation with President Dorticos and Roa and the plane left only afterwards, now definitively, for New York.

Of course, the above sparked a great sensation and provided an opportunity for further guessing within the diplomatic corps, too.

During my visit with him, the Polish Ambassador [Bolesław Jeleń—ed.] expressed his deep disapproval about the case, bringing it up as an example of the carelessness and hot-headedness of the Cuban leaders. According to him, what happened was the following: as usual, Fidel Castro arrived late, the plane could not be held up because of the presence of the diplomatic corps, so he ordered the plane, already on its way to New York, to return so that he might give his final instructions to the delegation.

According to the above-mentioned comrade, Fidel Castro did not pay attention to the danger that the plane should pass certain points at given times, nor did he consider that it was dangerous for the plane, which was loaded with the fuel needed to reach New York, to land with the tank almost full. He considered the return order to have been given at random and without responsibility.

I inquired of some leading functionaries of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the causes of the return of the plane. They all referred to the minor technical defects also published in the press, which could not be fixed in the air and the plane [i.e., the pilots] did not want to make a forced landing before New York on the territory of the USA.

On the basis of these different opinions, I consider it likely that Prime Minister Castro wanted to have some talks with the delegation after the official farewell and it is possible that the recall took place on purpose and knowingly—but not because of the delay and out of hot-headedness.

President Dorticos' speech of October 8 at the UN was broadcast on Cuban radio and television. The television [broadcasts] grasped very skillfully those moments when American delegate [Adlai E.] Stevenson produced his notebook and took notes.

When returning to Cuba, President Dorticos was again welcomed by the chiefs of mission of all the diplomatic corps at the airport. All the chiefs of mission, including the papal legate, were present. So was Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

At the mass rally following the arrival, on the balcony of the presidential palace, however, I could see only the chiefs of mission of friendly and neutral countries.

The general assembly made an unforgettable impression on me. The square in front of the presidential palace, and the side-streets leading there, were black with the immense, unbelievably enthusiastic crowd, which fêted their returning president. Prime Minister Fidel Castro's speech (we have published its essence in a press review) was such an expression of faith in Soviet-Cuban friendship, the crowd shouting "Never" frenetically when Fidel Castro asked, "Can we give up friend-

ship with the Soviet Union?” was so deeply sincere, the sight of the two flag-bearers cheered by the crowd, who raised the Soviet and Cuban flags and intertwined them, was so moving that whoever saw it—and probably the observers of the Americans were present—could not doubt for a moment that this crowd, these leaders would rather choose “Fatherland or Death” proclaimed in their slogan but would never leave the road of alliance with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.

Erzsébet Görög
Chargé d’Affaires ad Interim

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



DOCUMENT No. 7

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella’s visit to Cuba, 16 October 1962

The Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest.

Havana, 16 October 1962
386/1962/top secret

Top Secret!
Written: in four copies

three copies to Center
one copy to Archives of Embassy

Subject: The visit of Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella to Cuba.

At midday on the day of courier dispatch, 16 October, Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella arrived in Havana on the plane of the revolutionary Cuban government sent for him.³⁹

After returning from the airport, I wish to report briefly on Ben Bella’s reception, which was grandiose. The press has been releasing articles for days about the visit of the Algerian Prime Minister, underlining the common features of the fight

of the Algerian and the Cuban people for national independence.

At the airport, headed by President [Osvaldo] Dorticos and Prime Minister Fidel Castro, the Cuban military and political leaders, the heads of diplomatic missions (with the exception of the French and Belgian ambassadors, I could see all the others were present) were meeting the Algerian Prime Minister and the car of Ben Bella, sitting with Dorticos and Fidel Castro, was hailed by immense crowds on the road leading from the airport to the town and decorated by signs with the picture of Ben Bella.

At the airport Fidel Castro gave a quite warm speech, in which he stressed how much he appreciated the heroic armed fight of the Cuban people and the Algerian people for their independence and the personal courage of Prime Minister Ben Bella, who was making his first official visit abroad to Cuba, which was threatened by blockade and American aggression.

Prime Minister Ben Bella replied to the welcome speech, also translated into French, in Spanish, for which he received special applause. He emphasized how happy he was to have been able to come to Cuba, to the country he had wanted to get to know so much and he said that the heroic fight, the victory at Playa Giron [i.e., the Bay of Pigs] was viewed as their own, national affair by the Algerian people.

Ben Bella underlined that by the victory of the Algerian people, the exploitation of man by man would cease and never return to his country.

Apart from this term, Ben Bella—in contrast with Fidel Castro—did not use any Marxist terminology, he talked about social progress but not socialism.

I was standing between the papal legate and the Chilean charge d’affaires in the line when Ben Bella and his suite got off the plane, the legate—with whom we had a really friendly conversation—remarked, “Look, there is a priest in Ben Bella’s entourage too.” To which the Chilean charge d’affaires replied: “Of course, Ben Bella is a clever man!” The Cuban deputy protocol chief—who was standing near us—said that the priest was one of the ministers of Ben Bella’s government. I will report on the further events of the visit and its evaluation in my next report.

Erzsébet Görög

chargé d’affaires ad interim

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



DOCUMENT No. 8

Soviet Marshal Andrei Grechko, Commander of the Warsaw Pact, telegram to Hungarian Minister of Defense Lajos Czinege, 23 October 1962

Highly Confidential!

To: Comrade Lajos Czinege, Colonel General—Minister of Defense of the Hungarian People's Republic

Considering US President D. [sic; "J."] Kennedy's provocative announcement on 23 October 1962 and the increased danger of the outbreak of war caused by the Western aggressors, I hereby propose:

3. To introduce increased combat readiness for all troops of the services of the armed forces subordinated to the Supreme Command [of the Unified Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact].
4. Please, report on the arrangements made by you on 24 October.

23 October 1962

Grechko, Marshal of the Soviet Union,
Commander in chief of the Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces
of the Warsaw Treaty Member States

23 October 1962 10.05 am—Reported to Comrade Köteles, lieutenant-general

23 October 1962 7.15 pm—Clarified with Colonel General Dagajev⁴⁰—"Effective as it was stated in Comrade Grechko's oral instruction."

Reported to: Comrade Köteles lieutenant-general, Comrade Tóth major general, and Comrade Szűcs major general, on 23 October 1962 at 6.50 pm.

Major Golovány

[Source: *Hadtörténeti Intézet Levéltára*, [Archives of the Institute for Military History]. MN VIII. 29. fond, 1962/T-4. d./6. ő.e.;

published in "A dolgozó népet szolgálom!" Forráskiadvány a Magyar Néphadsereg Hadtörténelmi Levéltárban őrzött irataiból, 1957–1972 ["I serve the working people!" Documents from the Archives of the Institute for Military History, 1957–1972], eds. Róbert Ehrenberger, Erika Laczovics, József Solymosi, intro. Imre Okvát (Budapest: Tonyo-Gráf Nyomdai és Grafikai Stúdió, 2006), p. 106. A short article, containing essentially the same information about Grechko's instruction appeared in the HSWP daily *Népszabadság* on 24 October 1962, with the notable difference that according to the published version Grechko contacted the liaison officers of the Warsaw Pact member states stationed in Moscow and there was no reference to his telegram to the defense ministers. Translated for CWIHP by Sabine Topolánszky.]



DOCUMENT No. 9

Minutes of the Meeting of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government (Council of Ministers), Budapest, 23 October 1962

Participants:

Comrade János Kádár, Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,
Comrade Béla Biszku, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,
Comrade Jenő Fock, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,
Comrade Gyula Kállai, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,
Comrade Dr Ferenc Münnich, Minister of State,
Comrade Sándor Czottner, Minister of Heavy Industry,
Comrade János Csergő, Minister of Metallurgy and Machine Industry,
Comrade Frigyes Doleschall, Minister of Health,
Comrade Ödön Kisházi, Minister of Labor,
Comrade István Kossa, Minister of Transport and Postal Affairs,
Comrade Imre Kovács, Minister of Food Administration,
Comrade Pál Losonczy, Minister of Agriculture,
Comrade Ferenc Nezvál, Minister of Justice,
Comrade Ms József Nagy, Minister of Light Industry,
Comrade János Pap, Minister of the Interior,
Comrade János Péter, Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Comrade János Tausz, Minister of Domestic Trade,

Comrade Dr Rezső Trautmann, Minister of Building and Construction

Members of the government

Comrade György Aczél, First Deputy Minister of Culture,
Comrade Gyula Karádi, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade,

Comrade Jenő Köteles, First Deputy Minister of Defense,
Comrade György Lázár, Vice-President of the National Central Planning Office,

Comrade Béla Sulyok, First Deputy Minister of Finance,

Representing the ministers in absentia

Comrade Sándor Rónai, Speaker of the Parliament,
Comrade János Brutyó, Secretary-General of the National Council of Trade Unions,

Comrade Attila Borka, First Deputy-Chairman of the Central People's Supervisory Committee,

Comrade György Péter, Chairman of the Central Statistics Office,

Comrade Géza Szénási, Attorney General,

Comrade József Veres, President of the Executive Committee of the City Council of Budapest,

Comrade Dr Tivadar Gál, Head of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers,

Comrade Géza Neményi, Head of the Information Office of the Council of Ministers,

as permanent invited participants of the government meetings.

Before discussing the agenda:

1./ Comrade János Kádár announces that Comrade István Dobi is on leave, Comrades Pál Ilku, Jenő Incze, and Dr Miklós Ajtay are abroad, Comrades Rezső Nyers and János Oczel are visiting places outside Budapest, and Comrade Lajos Czinege is sick.

The Government acknowledged the announcement.

Agenda:

1./ Information on the international situation.

Presenter: Comrade János Kádár

Comrade János Kádár informs the members of the Government on the international situation that has arisen as a result of the aggressive steps taken by the USA against Cuba and on the measures taken by the Hungarian Government.

He proposes that the Government should subsequently approve the government statement⁴¹ drafted on 23 October (and then published) by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs as well as the measures that have become necessary in the international situation which has emerged.

The Government approvingly acknowledged the measures that had been taken.

Comrade János Kádár proposes the Government to authorize the Prime Minister to take, together with the Deputy Prime Ministers, the Foreign Minister, and the Defense Minister, any pressing measures that may become necessary in this tensed situation on behalf of the Government.

The Government granted the requested authorization.

Dated as above.

[signature]

/János Kádár/

/Dr. Tivadar Gál/

Prime Minister

Head of the Secretariat,

Hungarian Revolutionary

Hungarian Revolutionary

Worker's and Peasant's Government

Worker's and Peasant's Government

[signature]

Comrade János Kádár: I welcome all the comrades and hereby open the session of the Council of Ministers. I announce that [Minister of Defense] Comrade [Lajos] Czinege is sick and is undergoing medical tests in the hospital. [Chairman of the Presidential Council] Comrade [István] Dobi is on leave, Comrades Ilku and Incze are abroad, and Comrades Nyers and Oczel are visiting places outside Budapest.

We have convened the Council of Ministers to provide information on the Cuban situation.

The current tension is due to the statement made by United States President Kennedy on 22 October and the measures specified in the statement. You, Comrades, know the statement, so I will cite only the main points. The first measure was the announcement of a blockade around Cuba, which means a blockade both in the air and on the sea. They are monitoring the situation in Cuba and will deem any attack coming from Cuba as an attack by the Soviet Union.

They evacuated all the family members from the American stations in Cuba and commanded nearly 100 vessels to the waters surrounding Cuba. The United States' troops were put on high alert, the granting of leave was discontinued, military service at the naval forces was extended by one year, and other measures were taken to complement these steps.

In the same speech they called upon the Soviet Union to withdraw their arms from Cuba as they had been informed that the Soviet Union has mid-range missiles in place in Cuba. The statement concludes by saying that the Cuban people are oppressed and calls upon them to rise in revolt. This statement was complemented by another statement issued by the United States government in which it was published that the blockade would begin on 24 October at 3 p.m. Central European Time.

The Soviet and the Cuban governments gave an adequate response to this decision of the United States government. They evaluated the American steps, basically stating that the blockade and the additional steps breach a wide range of international laws and violate Cuba's sovereignty, while the obstacle to free navigation also violates the sovereign rights of every country. The statements made it clear that the steps taken by the United States were warlike and unlawful, which the statements rejected by saying that the Soviet Union and Cuba would take the necessary measures to prevent the USA from realizing these steps.

It is worth noting a few things about the various steps that the United States has taken. I have already mentioned the 100 warships; these are quite large vessels and the number of effective force serving on them may be as many as 20,000. Two naval command headquarters were set up, as is usual under warlike circumstances: one for commanding the forces in the coastal area and one for the open waters. The USA put its forces stationed in Europe on high alert, and here the most important thing is that the number of patrol aircraft equipped with nuclear weapons was increased significantly. The number of these aircraft—which have been constantly in the air for years—is usually 4, 5 or 6, but now it was raised to 42 in the Mediterranean region and Europe.

As far as the NATO High Command is concerned, no special military measure that would be binding for the NATO countries was taken. If I remember well, the only thing that happened was that Italy's air force and air defense were put on alert, and so was the Greek army.

On our side, the following events took place: the existing effective force of the Soviet Union's army was put on alert. The granting of leave was discontinued, but those on leave were not ordered to return, nor were the reservists called up. Certain units of the Soviet army carried out the maneuvers

that are necessary in such a situation. Part of this was putting the army of the German Democratic Republic on alert.

As far as the member states of the Warsaw Treaty are concerned, the Polish People's Republic mobilized significant troops along the Odera border section, and so did Bulgaria along the Turkish–Greek border. All the member states of the Warsaw Treaty put their existing troops on alert.

In this situation we also need to consider what to do. It was necessary to make a political statement. We drafted the statement of the Hungarian government on the basis of the proposal made by the Foreign Minister [János Péter] and, given the urgency of the matter, we had it approved by the deputy prime ministers and had it published.⁴²

The commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Treaty [Marshal Andrei Grechko] is maintaining proper contact with and has informed the commanders of the Hungarian People's Army that are under the command of the Warsaw Treaty. The commander-in-chief requested us to take measures and inform him about them. We did that. Comrade Kőteles⁴³ and other competent comrades worked out the proposal, which we approved and informed the commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Treaty about them. The essence of the measures involved putting some troops of our army on alert, primarily in the air force and the air defense force. In other units we discontinued granting leave without ordering all those already on leave to return to service and without calling up reservists. Currently, the various commanders stay closely together and are in union. In addition, we made preparations internally to take further action if need be: the fuel reserves of the divisions were filled up, etc., and anything else that appears to be necessary in a situation like this [was done]. We also informed Marshall Grechko of our measures. He expressed his thanks for providing such effective support for him as the commander-in-chief in the present situation.

In my view, this is the most serious international conflict that has emerged since the Second World War. As for the steps taken by the US government, it should be known that there was no negotiation with the allies in advance, and that's what the reaction to them by some of the NATO member states reflects. Essentially, the NATO member states officially endorse the US steps but their informal statements make it very clear that they are offended and feel that they should not take part in any such military action. This is what the French and the English positions seem to suggest.

This step of the US government is especially dangerous because it suggests some kind of conceited arrogance, some frenzy by certain American politicians, which is based on the fact that ever since the USA was established as a capitalist state it has never been defeated anywhere, and also on the belief that America has control over the entire world. This is

supported by a wide range of facts. The American capitalists made incredible amounts of money during the First World War. The USA rarely got involved in dangerous or risky situations in the Second World War. They made a lot of profit during the Cold War period too, ousting their allies from different places whenever the occasion arose, e.g. Indochina or India. They even undertook to support the Algerian freedom fighters to some extent just to soften up the French in another respect.

We must understand the USA's motives very well because we need to consider the situation on the bases of these motives. They keep bragging, suggesting that they can make it in every situation, they are very strong, and nobody can face up to them. The Americans are characterized by the politics of bluffing; they find pleasure in scaring others. This is one of the aspects of this thing, although it is quite dangerous because it may lead to undesirable steps.

The other thing coupled with it is an atmosphere of panic, which has a number of realistic reasons. The position of the USA has become weaker in connection with most of the key international issues. The Common Market raises a lot of problems, which hit the American capitalists hard too. Their position regarding the issue of West Berlin is very bad. In Laos they were happy to be able to get out of the situation, and they don't have much to expect in Vietnam either. I could continue this list on and on as far as mentioning the fact that the UN is gradually slipping out of their hands too. There is an obvious deterioration in their general position. It is also important to know that there are very effective weapons in Cuba.

It is also worth considering that the position of the current US government is not rosy at home either. It looks like the Kennedy cabinet had a lot of progressive votes during the presidential elections; the trade unions supported them and cherished great hopes in a positive sense, but nothing has really been fulfilled. These supporters are already dissatisfied, and so are many of the aggressive monopolist circles. This is the kind of situation in which they decided to take this step. They deserve to be called a country playing with fire in a hazardous manner, and anything can come out of it.

In addition to the measures mentioned before, we have decided on launching a certain political campaign too. We can mobilize the Hungarian public in the correct manner regarding this issue. There are ad-hoc political meetings in the factories. Ten days ago I was asked to give an interview to Cuban journalists, and it seemed right to make use of this opportunity.⁴⁴ We also have some ideas how to proceed. We will continue with the campaign and we are planning to organize an important meeting today where several different

representatives of society will voice their position. This meeting will be held this afternoon in the Sports Hall.⁴⁵

We have introduced a duty service in the Worker's Militia, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Party. As far as we can tell now, the Hungarian people have taken the developments of this situation soberly. Some comrades kept calling us during the night asking what the latest news was. One of the county party secretaries was working on his report; another one said there was some positive concern in his county. The Ministry of the Interior complained that it could hardly dissuade a youth group from going out to protest. There is a healthy sense of sympathy with Cuba among the public.

This had been the situation until last night. Of course, there had been various developments on both sides in terms of both military and political action. As far as the political aspect is concerned, it's worth mentioning the document that is known to all the comrades already: all the three governments involved, the USA, the Soviet Union, as well as Cuba, demanded to convene the [UN] Security Council, all of them expressing the view that some kind of negotiation is required. This claim provided some basis for the work of the Security Council, which was complemented by several other things. The different governments issued a wide range of [draft] resolutions, including the governments of the socialist countries. In addition, a group of 40 non-allied states within the UN also discussed the situation and took action. Apart from a group of African countries, three neutral European states, Finland, Austria and Switzerland, also participated in this action. They also worked out their own position, urging negotiations and for every party to make an effort to prevent a military clash. The UN Secretary-General [U Thant] spoke in this spirit at the session of the Security Council held during the night, suggesting that the United States should lift the blockade and the Soviet Union should stop supplying Cuba for two weeks. Neither the USA's, nor the Soviet Union's, response to this suggestion is known at this point.

Other viewpoints on the situation cannot be disregarded either. Peace movements have also made their force tangible. [British philosopher Bertrand A.W.] Russell has also emerged, and what actually happened was that Khrushchev, Kennedy, and Russell began exchanging messages, some of which gave rise to hopes that it might be possible to prevent the further intensification of the conflict, and some of the positions appear to support the truth of our position politically. It is worth noting that the statement of the Soviet government⁴⁶ issued the day before yesterday was regarded even by the English and several others as very moderate and as calm as was possible in a situation like this. The Soviet government's statement has made a very good impression. Russell acted in accordance with this, primarily condemning the USA. In his

telegraph sent to Khrushchev he asked the Soviet party to try its best to avoid being provoked. In his message to the US president he called upon the US to stop provoking the other party. Making the best of this opportunity, Khrushchev gave a very good response, pointing out several important political aspects and unveiling the dangerous nature of the American position. Khrushchev said that if a particular situation emerged, the Soviet Union would take action by using its defensive weapons. The response makes it clear that there is room for negotiation and it also demonstrates that the Soviet Union is ready to participate in a summit meeting too. This approach made a good impression on the entire American public.

Yesterday there was a critical point in the afternoon when the blockade and the ships should have clashed. With respect to this, the tension has eased a little bit since then, as there is no news on any clash yet. So far there has been no clash between the ships that keep up the blockade and the ships that are bound for Cuba with supplies. It seems now that the most critical danger is over and diplomacy has come to the fore. I need to add though that the danger is certainly not over yet.

I request the Government to acknowledge the government statement that has been issued and the measures that have been taken to increase defense preparedness. The Government should give authorization to take any other necessary action in case of an emergency in consultation with the deputy prime ministers and the ministers of defense and foreign affairs. The situation changes from hour to hour, so prompt action is crucial at such times.

As a general task we suggest that the level of readiness that applies to us should be maintained but otherwise we should continue to work as usual. Whenever we have a chance to talk to people at various events and meetings, we should promote our fair standpoint and request the support of the Hungarian people. We should make it clear that this support requires discipline, composure, and, especially, hard work. We may have made a mistake when we omitted one section of the Soviet government's statement which was specifically addressed to the Soviet people, expressing the view that in the current situation the Soviet government is sure that the Soviet people will work even harder and will do everything they can to increase the defense capabilities of the country and accomplish any other goals of their work. This part was omitted from our statement but it should be taken into consideration when the tasks are being carried out.

[Minister of Domestic Trade] Comrade János Tausz: Since this situation emerged, we have been monitoring the sales of goods more intensively, as is usually the case at times when

people are likely to hoard goods. There are signs of hoarding here and there but they are quite sporadic, not general at all, so there is no cause for concern in view of the situation we saw in the morning. I understand that our task is to bear in mind that the requirement to be prepared also applies to us in the sense that we should run our reporting service with even more vigilance.

As far as the supply of goods is concerned, I believe we should continue with our correct policy of not imposing any restrictions. Restrictions tend to backfire, generally costing more than what we can gain by them. Should any local problems arise, we will try to localize them.

Comrade János Kádár: Obviously, we should pay attention to all sorts of phenomena; however, we should make sure that our reassuring measures do not drive people to believe that there should be chaos. I don't know the reporting service of domestic trade but it must be a huge organization. If any extraordinary tasks are given to the reporting service there, maybe one hundred thousand people will get the order and the same number of people will begin to wonder why there is no panic when there should be panic. Comrade Tausz should not order the reporting service to carry out any extraordinary tasks; our domestic trade organization is socialist enough already to report to the competent authorities should any signs of a hoarding craze break out. Instead we should approve of the normal procedure with respect to our reserves; that is, the reserves should be filled up. This point of time is not bad with respect to hoarding; it would have been a lot more inconvenient at the beginning of June.

[Minister of Metallurgy and Machine Industry] Comrade János Csergő: Not underestimating the dangers inherent in the US steps, it occurred to me whether these steps and the [US mid-term Congressional] election campaign that is underway are related. Isn't it just a mere election trick?

János Kádár: It's unlikely that the two are related but the issue should be viewed in accordance with its significance. The weakening of the position of the Kennedy cabinet is not temporary, it has been obvious for some years now, and it is not characteristic of the current period only. It should not be seen as a mere election bluff, though. We should not assume that they commit such a stupid [action] and use a short-term bluff like this because it would result in complete political destruction. The elections will be held on November 6. This crisis cannot be maintained at this level until that time. Certainly, the internal political situation has a role in it too.

Now I would like to inform the comrades about some of the diplomatic steps that the US government has taken

recently. The US chargé d'affaires to Budapest [Horace G. Torbert, Jr.] contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday at around 10 a.m. and requested to be urgently received by a senior official of the ministry. We were busy working on the government statement, so we put it off a bit, and eventually the audience took place in the afternoon at around 4 p.m. The ambassador's deputy handed over the USA's statement to our government and added some remarks that can be seen as threatening. He said it would be a grave mistake to doubt the resolution of his government because it will implement all the steps that are contained in the statement. He also requested that the Hungarian government should continue to ensure communication between the American mission in Budapest and its administration. That was a clear signal as to how serious the situation really was.

Last Saturday our chargé d'affaires in Washington [János Radványi] was summoned by the State Department and was given a piece of paper. This was part of trying to figure out the Hungarian position through diplomatic channels that has been going on since the summer. This time it was a specific proposal submitted by the American party to the Hungarian government. Its essence can be summarized as follows: they said if the Hungarian government was to declare, of its own free will, that nobody was in prison due to the 1956 events, the American cabinet would be willing to do a number of things. In such a case the US would be ready to take action in the UN and state that there have been changes in Hungary and the US no longer believes that the Hungarian issue should be put on the agenda. In addition they listed a number of other things that could be done: agreements have been proposed, disputed issues could be negotiated, the Mindszenty issue⁴⁷ could be discussed, ambassadors could be exchanged, etc. It could be called a real peace proposal. It appears that the USA's position is not very good regarding this issue either; therefore, they are seeking a way out.

We ordered Comrade Radványi to say, if the parties concerned happen to meet, that he has sent this proposal to Budapest where it will be studied carefully. The percentage of the votes on the Hungarian issue at the UN General Assembly is seen even by Western observers as a defeat for the US government, which does not seem to be too promising for them going forward. The US is also in a bad position as far as the issue of mandates is concerned.

I propose that the Council of Ministers should approve the government statement that has been issued and the measures that have been taken, and should authorize the government to take any other steps if need be.

As for the meeting planned for today [i.e., the mass rally in the Sports Hall in Budapest], we think it should be organized by the Party Committee of Budapest, the Popular Patriotic

Front, and the Council of Trade Unions. There will be two key speakers: Comrade Gyula Kállai and the Cuban ambassador. Comrade Gyula Kállai will speak on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party and represent our well-known position. I request the government to acknowledge that.

[Minister of Food Administration] Comrade Imre Kovács: Does anybody know what the Soviet Union is planning to do regarding its future supplies for Cuba? To what extent will the Soviet Union take into account the blockade and will its ships be defended?

Comrade János Kádár: I am aware of the legal position and the most important thing here is the joint statement issued by the Cuban and the Soviet governments in September which declared that the Soviet Union is supplying Cuba with weapons that can help Cuba preserve its independence. The latest Soviet government statement says that the US step is illegal, and then there is Khrushchev's letter, which puts it in a popular language, saying that you should not give a robber just part of your money because he will come back for the rest anyway. I don't know anything more specific regarding the other things, I could only present assumptions but there's no point in doing so.

I don't know what each of the two parties is doing on the sea. The sea is huge, it's dark at night, but there has been no clash so far. The US wants to kill Cuba and the socialist world should not let it happen, nor should the progressive forces accept it because if they shut their eyes to it, the Americans would attack us the next day. All the relevant international laws say that our position is right and the USA's aggression is directed not only at the socialist countries but it also affects the fundamental norms of international life.

Cuba has taken adequate measures and ordered mobilization. The Cuban people are resolute and obviously count on the support of the socialist world.

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Council of Ministers, XIX-A-83-a-245. jku.—1962. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.*]



DOCUMENT No. 10

Hungarian Socialist Workers Party First Secretary
János Kádár's account of his visit to Moscow to the
HSWP Central Committee, 12 November 1962

Strictly confidential!

Printed: in 3 copies

Attended: the members and the alternates of the Central Committee, the Heads of departments of the Central Committee—according to the attached list, along with the Chairman of the Central Revision Committee.

[...]

Comrade Lajos Fehér:

I welcome all the comrades. The first item on the agenda is the negotiation of the congressional report, presenter: Comrade János Kádár.

Comrade János Kádár:

Last week, pursuant to the [HSWP] Political Committee's [i.e., Politburo's⁴⁸] decision, I was in Moscow, I met with the Soviet comrades, and if you allow me, before I move on to the actual agenda, I would like to mention certain details concerning this trip.

The first and perhaps the most important is, that neither from our side, nor from the Soviet comrades' side, did arise any kind of burning question, what would have pressed this meeting. But as it turned out, last Sunday [4 November 1962] the Soviet comrades and we independently from each other thought that a meeting would not be wrong in this situation. As you know, on different issues though, but discussions were going on with most of the sister parties from the member countries of the Warsaw Pact during the previous days and week. We also had to take into account that people may misunderstand the situation here: such negotiations are ongoing with all parties, but not with us. Last week on Monday [November 5] we contacted Comrade Khrushchev via phone and we mentioned this, and we agreed that such a meeting never does harm.

At the discussion we naturally dealt with various issues of the international situation and with several current economic problems in the Hungarian-Soviet relationship. The meeting was useful and had a cordial atmosphere. Entirely new issues were not brought up or raised, we only clarified the situation on a few known issues and realized that we share the same opinion in all of the relevant issues. And it is splendid.

On the 8th I spent almost the whole day with the Soviet comrades. The company was more than just the members mentioned in the communiqué, there were other comrades from the Central Committee, and their relatives were

involved too. The atmosphere was as if the Soviet comrades would have been just amongst themselves.

I was urged by Comrade Khrushchev, [Frol] Kozlov, [Leonid] Brezhnev, [Rodion] Malinovsky, and all comrades one by one and also together to forward their best wishes and greetings. I told them that a Central Committee meeting would be held on Monday. Also in the name of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union they wished our party a pleasant work for the Congress. I felt it necessary to share this.

As to the agenda:⁴⁹ firstly, I would like to mention, that the external conditions for preparing the report were not very favorable, because the amount of time that we were to spend on this work, due to the tension of the international situation, the Political Committee could not devote to this. This text which is in your hands should be evaluated as follows: at a certain point it seemed that it was necessary to prepare a report after all, because of this I have dictated a text. Afterwards a four-member committee, set up for this purpose, dealt with this text: Comrade Szirmai, Comrade Orbán, Comrades Darvasi, and Endre Molnár are involved, who assist in data collection and wording. Then this draft was put on the agenda of and discussed in the Political Committee, then the Political Committee's comments—this again relates to my trip—were included in the text by the committee in question. Currently, this is how the case stands.

Regarding the future,—I will tell you this soon—if the Central Committee will have discussed the text which is to become the basis of the report and if the main directives are accepted, all we have to do is to finish it in two days and then, I think, I have to work on it to make the language smooth—and this will become the report. This is the idea. The work itself has requirements that around Thursday morning or shortly after we have to hand it over for translation, otherwise the Congress cannot work properly, because they have to hand the text to the foreigners. Currently, these are the conditions of the work. This additional work, of course, cannot differ from the approved principles.

I would like to mention, that in certain international issues one must take sides clearly and precisely. Now, briefly I wish to say a few words concerning these international issues.

First, of the Cuban question. The root of the question that raises great international tension, is the victorious people's revolution in Cuba that evolved further into a socialist revolution which has been constantly undermined by the United States imperialist circles from the beginning in hope of crushing, overrunning, terminating the Cuban revolution. Concerning the issue—most likely justly—the US sees a great, lethal danger against the country. Especially since the Cuban revolution shook all of Latin America under the American imperialists' feet. Since these South American and Latin American coun-

tries are colonies of the United States and the situation differs entirely from what the official reports declare in the United States. Furthermore, the domestic situation in these Latin American countries, the citizen's spirits, views, ambitions, hopes, fights are not the same as the American diplomats' views and positions talking there on behalf of them. Therefore the existence of the Cuban revolution indeed, means a lethal danger for the domination of the United States. This is the reason why the only goal was—through the economic embargo, through diplomatic tools, and through aggression if necessary—to annihilate the Cuban revolution. This is the root of the tension concerning Cuba. And these steps were carried into effect consecutively in the United States. The United States attempted political isolation, had already introduced an economic blockade around Cuba in order to crush the country economically. Also, they attempted invading the country by armed counter revolutionists last April. Hence, introducing all means available. Apparently inefficiently. The fact, that the United States was not able to achieve its goals by any means—that have been previously mentioned—depended solely on the determination and endurance of the Cuban people [and] furthermore on the brotherly help that the Cuban people enjoy on behalf of the entire socialist world and other progressive international partners. I do not think it is necessary to point out, that in this fight, for Cuba the biggest and primary help has been granted by the Soviet Union.

Due to constant American threatening and different attempts the situation evolved into an actual threat. In the past few months it became evident, that the United States has not refrained from using any means. Consequently, an agreement has been reached between the Soviet government and the Cuban government—a quasi military and defense agreement in which they have agreed that the Soviet government will provide proper weapons to Cuba and place them in the country. This agreement is several months old. The execution itself has been in effect ever since. Evidently, this could not have been kept in secret from the United States forever—though this has not been the intention at all—since in early September the two governments published the agreement in front of the whole world. They declared that such an agreement exists, according to which the Soviet Union grants weapons to Cuba. This event naturally caused general distress in the United States especially within government and imperialist circles. Concerning their former plan of attacking Cuba—we believed that the American government was basically influenced by two main factors: The first being the aggressive circles of the United States Department of Defense that is naturally backed up by the entire weapon industry of the United States, the monopolies that pursue a politics of war and aggression, circles that believe in [the] arms race,

circles that suffer from self-delusion and are puffing, bluffing constantly by nature. This factor have been made even worse by a general panic, hence aggression—the belief that they are better and stronger than all the rest—and a general desperation were present simultaneously. These were the two factors that motivated the American government. It has to be said, that both were visible in the government's actions. Moreover there is a certain minor disagreement between the Pentagon, the interest groups associated with weapons, and another group represented by Kennedy. There is a slight difference between these views and interests, however only minor, not important. In relation to this, the American elections were an external factor. The comrades know what kind of actions the Republican Party Eisenhower, Nixon, and the others have taken [on this issue]. At the end they were agitating that in fact communists were leading the United States. This also forced the government to take different actions. Therefore, the situation became as it was what triggered the events on the 22nd of October on the US government's side.

They announced the Cuban blockade, and were simultaneously prepared for amphibious landings and for a direct American invasion of Cuba. Both were already decided plans on 22 October.

We have to see this as a reckless game, when a certain group does not think of future consequences and puts all its eggs in one basket. This happened on 22 October and actually prevailed throughout this tense period. The Americans were determined to start another World War, rather than giving up on the termination of the Cuban revolution. Steps were taken accordingly. At that time, the ring of naval ships was publicly acknowledged that was set around Cuba. This was one of their force alignments, besides this there was another force alignment: 70 miles from Cuba on American territory significant forces were joined, three or four air transportable, most modernly equipped divisions, marine divisions, etc., namely made up of 7-8 divisions that would have served for the invasion of Cuba.

The third force alignment of the United States' government occurred in the European region, where mostly reactive forces were mobilized. The comrades are familiar with these planes, that carry around nuclear weapons, that have been in use for years. The number of these planes were raised by five times the usual number, then war ships in the navy and those stationed around the European region (equipped with nuclear weapons at the Mediterranean) were joined around Sicily and without mobilizing the entire army were combat ready (including the partial mobilization) that the comrades know very well from the news. This is what the government of the United States has done. Something was also done by the NATO organization, however not as much as the United

States has done. What happened there, was the following: the United States did not cross-check these decisions with her allies, legally pulled together the so-called Organization of American States [OAS]—this was the ally who they referred to. The United States did not cross-check these actions with the NATO. Consequently, NATO allies were not that active.

Some kind of monitoring system, a certain preparedness was present in the forces of NATO powers as well, but without any particular mobilization. Thus, this was the situation on the 23rd of October.

In the meantime on our side the following event took place: Cuba ordered a general mobilization, that the Cuban people managed effectively. Approximately one million people were armed during that time. The Soviet army was put in combat readiness, without calling in reserves. Essentially, the same happened with the rest of the armies of the Warsaw Treaty. In our country also. Not the entire army [was mobilized], but at certain divisions from air defense, air reconnaissance, and also at certain land forces preparedness was ordered by our government, since in times like these, all means of defense should be available.

In connection with this, I would like to mention a fact that is certainly well known by the comrades, that in this critical situation and also in the context of these measures our army both in the senior leadership, and in the entire personnel of the army, the behavior and the attitude was commendable. There was serenity, determination, and solidarity. Similarly, the population's behavior is well known by the comrades. You all know perfectly, that comparing to the last year's tension [regarding Berlin] it can only be said that our population stood one's ground calmly and politically well. This is a crucial point in this situation. It can be said, that testimony of high skill of political maturity, consciousness, correct political behavior were shown by the Hungarian masses, the toilers, and this discipline obviously demonstrates a general and fundamental trust towards the Soviet political system, towards the policy of our party and government. People knew that the situation was serious, but they did not have knowledge of the details, the moments, the hourly changing situation, they had no information and yet the Hungarian working people behaved so honorably in this situation, which is an evidence of general and fundamental trust in the matter of the socialism, towards the forces of peace, towards the Soviet Government's policy and towards the Hungarian Government's policy. This is a rejoicing and a very significant thing!

What is to be done by responsible parties in this situation? Here I mean the affair in the afternoon of the 23rd [of October], when the ships were due to meet.

When I gave a toast on the 8th [of November] in Moscow I also mentioned that in a situation like this I would like to

be anybody but Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev. Generally we envy everybody, except the Soviet leaders, because their position is like no others'. I said, that the view here is that at a push or if we cannot find a solution in an issue we can always go somewhere, we go to Moscow, and one will surely be smarter from it. But where you go in critical situations that are hard to tackle, that's your secret. But they cannot go anywhere. It can be said that an enormous responsibility rests on the Soviet comrades, when socialism, the socialist revolution, the cause of progress, the case of peace should be protected. In this situation the question was not the blockade, because the blockade is the blockade, that had to be there in Cuba. Actually, the issue here was the clash. The Americans were ready for the amphibious landing. A certain kind of minor clash did indeed happen. The main issue was not the blockade, between the US warships and the Soviet ships since there was a certain manoeuvring in order to delay the clash. The joined forces of the United States began the landing and the invasion of Cuba. Meanwhile, one of their reconnaissance aircraft was shot [down] over Cuba [on 27 October]. This aircraft is also significant, because in such an impulsive situation it happened for the first time—and I would say, from our side—that a weapon was used. Two anti-missile projectiles were launched—the two together means a 100% effectiveness—and the aircraft was shot down indeed. Such a situation occurred. What could be done if the options seemed like the Americans would manage the landing in Cuba or would arrive to the shores of Cuba? A strike should be launched at the United States. This is inevitable, it is not possible to fight in any other way. Furthermore, if they land in Cuba, they shall be destroyed. These two options together—this is not so difficult to figure it out—would have meant, that the main goal in this particular issue is the rescue of Cuba, or otherwise Cuba will be destroyed. That was the Third World War's seat of the fire, and in that case, that would not leave anything behind. The other [option] was that the [political] fight begins.

The Soviet comrades were thinking in that situation, and they came to the decision that is known to us. The opinion of the Soviet comrades in this issue is—and it is necessary to tell, that when we here were analyzing the situation, we were lead to the same conclusion—that the two basic goals are the protection of the Cuban revolution and the preservation of peace.

The decisions made by the Soviet Government served these two basic goals superbly. The US government declared that there were offensive weapons there and therefore they would attack Cuba in the spirit of self-defence. The Soviet Government therefore decided to pull-out these offensive weapons. Only the United States shall declare, that Cuba will not be attacked. Then the two main goals have been reached. That is what essentially happened.

The opinion of the Soviet comrades is, that these weapons have accomplished their task, without being compelled to shoot with them. Because neither the Soviet, nor the Cuban government's plan was to deploy any weapons there and then attack the United States, but to deter the enemy and protect Cuba and the Cuban revolution. Certainly, during those hours it looked—and there were such voices in the United States—as if the Soviet Union had retreated. But after two days, these people realized too, that they have not achieved the same thing as they wanted, and started to rampage and began to attack their own government anew. How come that non-aggression will be guaranteed? If the Cuban revolution remains and the United States guarantees non-aggression, they are in the same situation as they were, indeed, in a worse situation. Because, so far—since the victory of the revolution in Cuba—they always pronounced that they would destroy it and now they had to declare that they shall respect Cuba.

This was a truly responsible, correct, and revolutionary communist measure. It has served the fundamental purpose. What is there currently? Currently, the situation is that the United States is in diplomatic hot water and the wrestling is going on with the usual devices of politics. The United States Government invented that there are some kind of bombers [i.e., the IL-28s], and those shall be pulled out, too. The reply for this was that those are basically not offensive, and this is the point where the usual political and diplomatic wrestling starts, which means, that the issue is not completely solved yet. Simply we are far from that moment now, where we were in the afternoon on the 23rd of October, when the world and mankind was on the eve of the Third World War. We are far from that now. The issue has not been solved completely yet, the usual political and diplomatic struggle is still going on—of course, the Soviet government made it clear for the US government that they may keep on complaining about these bombers if they want, but they should think it over too, because the original situation can be set back.

And from that there is nothing good for the United States. Probably this political question now roughly will be resolved. I am saying roughly, because American imperialism will remain and the Cuban revolution will remain, too. And the two countries will continue to be neighbors. So the problem will be solved in this sense. Eventually, the irreconcilable antagonism will remain.

Anyway, probably we will return to our original position and will continue the old fight. The Soviet government promised to the United States, that after the elections have finished in the US, the Berlin issue will be brought up. And this promise will be kept by them. The wrestling will continue in this question as well. Similarly, the negotiations on the termination of nuclear-weapon tests, and the conclusion of

an agreement will be put on the agenda, which is a realistic option. Currently it looks that it is realistic. It is possible that such an agreement will be concluded. Apart from that, it is quite clear to us, that from this tension the world's people have learnt a lesson and we have to continue our general anti-imperialist propaganda and fight increasingly, to continue the fight in the issue of general disarmament, the elimination of the Cold War, etc. It is certain, that the conditions for this are much better than previously. The United States with her steps resulting from aggression and panic exposed herself completely as illegitimate, provocative, offensive, etc. Therefore people know that the preservation of peace was threatened greatly by the US Government and the Soviet Government was the one who saved humanity's peace. Currently this is the situation. For us the situation is the same as it was previously, we adopt the same policy, but at the same time vigilance is necessary, a certain level of readiness is necessary and the previous fight goes on. I would like to mention too, that in the general situation there are things also that are not the most pleasing for us. For example, the Soviet government's and the Cuban government's views are not exactly the same in certain issues. The situation is that not everything could be reconciled in those critical hours. It was not like the First World War in 1914, when there were six months for the parties to mobilize the forces to begin a serious clash, here it was about half-hours and [periods of] fifteen minutes. The Cuban government has some views that are not identical with the Soviet government's views. All in all, this not a world disaster, because at the same time, on the main questions there is consensus, but still, it left a small gap, wherein immediately joined our Chinese comrades, and with their usual revolutionary behavior they are hitting the tambourine. Why retreat, etc. ...

They interpret the measures of the Soviet government as concessions. For us, this is the inconvenient aspect of the situation, but we hope that the correct opinions will fully prevail. This situation will be clear and they will understand that with blustering, with phrases, and with slogans like “down with imperialism!” the world can be brought to flames extremely quickly. And it is not the communists' task to set the world on fire. This is the same as the principle of peaceful coexistence. If it is not a correct principle, then it has a logic. If that is impossible, then the other possibility has to be applied and then the Soviet Union has to start the war. If there is no chance of resolving the conflict peacefully ... This is why the Chinese comrades' logic cannot be accepted, besides, it is not Marxist, it is not realistic, it does not reflect reality.

Regarding our Congress, the topic on the agenda this means... I ask for the compliance of the Central Committee, so we may clearly and unmistakably express that we absolutely agree—not only generally with the behavior and the deci-

sions of the Soviet government but—also with the questions concerning Cuba and that we feel absolute solidarity towards those decisions. Those meet the interests of the Hungarian people, and they also meet the interests of the Hungarian revolution as well as the interests of the international proletariat.

[...]

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Central Committee, M-KS-288. f. 4/60. ö.e. Translated for CWIHP by Annett Szűcs and Sabine Topolánszky.*]



DOCUMENT No. 11

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Soviet-Cuban Divergence, 29 November 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter

Budapest

TOP SECRET!
436/1962/Top Secret
Written: in four copies

Three copies to Center

One to Embassy Archives

Havana, 29 November 1962

Subject: The appearance of a divergence of opinions between Cuba and the Soviet Union.

I still do not know what agreement between Cuba and the Soviet Union was the basis for sending the so-called "strategic arms" to Cuba in October. As a consequence, I have also no idea about what consequences the Soviet and Cuban sides reckoned with concerning the transportation of strategic arms to Cuba. But it is obvious that both sides were trying to calculate the expectable consequences and to determine in advance their position and tasks concerning them.

On the afternoon of 23 October, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez said during the visit paid to him that he, that is the Cuban leaders, thought that there was not only the possibility of war but the Cuban crisis might be solved in another way, too. As he said, there could be talks about reducing the Cuban army's armament to the defense weapons described in the well-known definition. By the well-known definition he meant the definition given by the President of the United States, the government of the United States. But the Cuban government could agree to this only if Cuba's territorial sanctity and possibility of normal life were not guaranteed only by the United States but in some form by the Soviet Union as well.

I have been informed by the Polish ambassador [Bolesław Jeleń] that there was an exact plan between the Soviet Union and Cuba concerning what they would do in case of an expectable and calculable reaction from the United States. The government of the United States reacted in such a way that was not on the list of foreseen possibilities. Consequently, such steps had to be taken by the Soviet Union and in such form that had not been calculated. Neither the Polish ambassador nor I could check the correctness of this information.

Neither I, nor the socialist ambassadors to Havana, have been able to form a clear picture of what happened from the morning of 27 to the morning of 28 October 1962. We are aware only of the following facts:

At around 10 o'clock on 27 October Saturday, a quite powerful American jet bomber formation flew over West-Cuba, Pinar del Rio county. I could not determine how many planes this quite powerful formation included, but according to some news, the number of American bombers was several hundred. At the same time from one point 600 anti-aircraft guns started firing at the formation, the bombers turned around at once and left for the USA at high speed. A quarter of an hour later a U-2. type plane flew in over West-Cuba at a great height and it was shot [down] with a missile. (In my report sent earlier it was a mistake that the U-2 had been shot in Oriente near the Guantanamo base.) After these two incursions until Sunday dawn no air activity could be experienced from the American side over Cuba. Moreover, the radar devices in Cuba showed that in Florida all air activity ceased after these two incursions. On Saturday afternoon we could hear the ultimatum-like demand of American President Kennedy, which was followed by Comrade Khrushchev's letter on Saturday night [sic; actually Sunday morning, Washington and Havana time—ed.], in which as a reply to Kennedy's promise to guarantee non-aggression toward Cuba, he announced the disarmament of missiles and their removal from Cuba. While in Comrade Khrushchev's previous letter, in which against the removal of missiles he offset the removal of American missiles from Turkey, he mentioned Cuba as a

country whose government should approve the control in order that it could be carried out, in this later letter of his the Cuban government and the necessity of the Cuban government's approval is not present. At least it is not included in the text the Cuban organs, the Cuban press, and I have received here in Cuba.

All of us here in Havana know that neither the Cuban government, nor the Soviet ambassador, Comrade [Aleksandr] Alekseyev, was notified in advance of this letter of Comrade Khrushchev, but all of them learnt it from the press and radio.

These two letters of Comrade Khrushchev to Kennedy, that is the letter of 27 October, in which he offset the removal of American weapons from Turkey against the removal of missiles, and the letter of 28 [October], in which he acknowledged Kennedy's promise and promised to dismantle and remove the missiles at once, had the effect of cold water on the Cuban masses. From reliable sources I learnt e.g. the following minor fact: Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara, the minister of industry, one of the most important Cuban leaders, was staying in Pinar del Rio county on Saturday 27 October and was reviewing the military units on the parade. In the meantime he received the news that the radio tower was transmitting Comrade Khrushchev's letter in which he undertook the removal of missiles if the USA withdrew her similar weapons from Turkey. Enraged, he dashed his cap to earth and repeated furiously that this was perjury as he, himself, had had talks in Moscow and they had talked about a different thing. I also consider credible the other information according to which Prime Minister Fidel Castro reacted more or less the same way too. He, completely broken, told President of the Republic [Osvaldo] Dorticos to take over the conduct of affairs for some time because he needed at least one month to recover from this great blow. He wanted to be a private individual for that time.

I share the opinion with others that maybe nowhere in the world did the wide masses have such love and enthusiastic respect for the Soviet Union and Comrade Khrushchev himself as could be experienced here in Cuba right until the 27 of last October. But from the 27th to the 28th, that is, in 24 hours, the mood of the masses changed from one extreme to the other. Out of the mass of phenomena I would like to mention only a few typical ones.

In some of the military units they expressed their opinion in the following way: It is all the same who comes, whether the Americans or Russians come, we will fire, we will defend ourselves even if all of us die. Many people turned to the Soviet Embassy on the phone and in letters and asked what would come now, whether the Soviet Union would leave them alone, whether they would be defenseless against the Americans and so on. The people in the streets, on the buses,

the officials in the various ministries we talked to all expressed their feelings of despair, abandonment, and disappointment. We could hear all kinds of anti-Soviet positions, such as the Soviet Union is only a super power just like the USA and she leads power politics, or she used Cuba only as a means of solving her conflict with the United States, and so on. Many were upset by the fact that she connected the removal of missiles from Cuba with the withdrawal of American weapons from Turkey, that is, she put a sign of equality between Cuba and Turkey and used them as the objects or means of bargain between the Soviet Union and the United States. Several people protested that they talked about Turkey and not the Guantanamo American base. These voices and remarks were not limited to passers-by or minor officials of different offices, I had the opportunity to witness that in the Cuban government itself, within the national leadership of the Cuban party there were many of one or other of the mentioned opinions and turned against the Soviet Union more or less.

From government members and the members of the party's national leadership and, of course, from lower-ranking people we could hear such disappointed remarks as the Soviet Union, with this step, undermined Cuba's international prestige once and for all, she made it impossible to continue the American policy, moreover, hindered the possibility of the victory of Latin American revolutions for a long time.

The feeling of disappointment in the Soviet Union had a demoralizing effect on the one hand, and demobilized the Cuban masses on the other hand. These days the Cuban press and radio reflected this mood of the masses, and as this mass feeling was present among the leaders as well, they could not stand up against it, but by taking no position, by publishing not well-selected news and information, by keeping important news a secret, they contributed to causing a chaos and an anti-Soviet nationalist mood.

Fidel Castro, seeing this more and more sharp atmosphere, decided to stand up against it in a radio and television speech. So the speech of 1 November took place. As far as this speech is concerned, I think that it was necessary, and the form Fidel Castro told it was correct and had due influence. But I do not want to say that I agree with what happened during the preceding days, that is, what made the speech necessary in this form, nor what happened after the speech from the Prime Minister's side. Several people in Cuba, the Cubans themselves, but most of all the foreigners doubt whether it was necessary and right that in his speech Fidel Castro announced to the whole world that there was a divergence of opinions between the Soviet Union and Cuba. I think this announcement was necessary, because the mood of the masses was such that denying these divergences of opinion would not have done away with this mood but would have intensified it. On

1 November, Fidel Castro could not say more and in a warmer voice about the Soviet Union and the Soviet people than he did say, because at that moment, the people would not have accepted any more and anything warmer. But we should add that we who watched Fidel Castro on television had the impression that the statement that he trusted the government of the Soviet Union, the party of the Soviet Union, and the political leadership of the Soviet Union was difficult to make even for him. We had the feeling that he was not completely convinced about it. This could be specially noticed in his case, because he was used to saying on the radio, on television, and in the different conversations and speeches what he thought, even if it was not always political and tactical.

János Beck
Ambassador

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 12

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Cuban–Soviet Divergence, 30 November 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

440/1962/ top secret
Written in four copies

Three copies to Center

One copy to Emb. Archives

Havana, 30 November 1962

Subject: The perceivable signs of the Cuban-Soviet Divergence of opinions.

The Cuban leaders personally and the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs have shown it to the outside world several

times that there is a divergence of opinions with the Soviet Union, the relations with the Soviet Union are different from earlier relations. I would like to list a few examples.

For the arrival of Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not organize such a reception at the airport as they usually do to welcome not only the prime minister or vice-premier, but a lot of times the deputy minister of foreign trade as well. The diplomatic corps were not notified at all, the Czech, Polish, GDR, Romanian and Bulgarian ambassadors and I decided together to meet him at the airport in spite of the lack of any invitation. The original idea of the Cuban side was that Comrade Mikoyan would be met only by Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa and Minister of Industry Ernesto [“Che”] Guevara. Fidel Castro decided to come to the airport at the last moment. He was really present together with his brother Raul Castro and some other leading functionaries. The reception can be considered cool compared to the usual receptions in Cuba.

The original idea concerning 7 November was that the center of trade unions would organize the ceremony. This was like that last year, too, when the ambassadors of socialist countries were invited to the celebrations and were given seats in the presidium, and there, apart from the head of the foreign department of the trade unions, the Soviet ambassador, that is, the Soviet charge d'affaires ad interim, gave a solemn speech. But this year the ambassadors of socialist countries were not invited. Then, on the morning of November 6, they changed the plan and the ORI, that is, the Party's Central Committee, became the organizer, and the ambassadors of socialist countries were notified on the phone that they would receive the invitation to the ceremony during the day. Then we were really present at the celebration, where we were seated in the first rows. The ceremony itself started three quarters of an hour late. At the presidential table numerous Cuban leaders were seated, the president of the republic and Comrade Mikoyan in the middle. But Prime Minister Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, and Ernesto Guevara were not present. As I learnt later, Fidel Castro, his brother, and the minister of industry arrived at the entrance of the theater, but then changed their minds and did not come in to the ceremony. At the celebration, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez gave a speech apart from the Soviet ambassador [Aleksey Alekseyev]. During the ceremony the president of the republic [Osvaldo Dorticos] behaved quite coolly, we must say, toward Comrade Mikoyan sitting next to him, and when Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, citing the Fidel Castro speech of 1 November, said that they trusted the government of the Soviet Union and the party of the Soviet Union, President of the Republic Dorticos did not applaud. We must say that the television that transmitted the speech was clever enough not to show him at this point and

all other parts when the president of the republic or other leaders behaved coolly or demonstratively, but we could see the applauding audience.

When the Soviet ambassador to Havana gave a dinner in the honor of Comrade Mikoyan, at which present were President of the Republic Dorticos, Prime Minister Fidel Castro, and all the Cuban leaders, the next day the press mentioned it in a hidden place with small print and very briefly, it reported only the fact with the comment that the dinner took place in friendly atmosphere. I can see in "*Népszabadság*", which has arrived since then, that our party's paper reported on the dinner in a more conspicuous place, in more detail.

Finally, I would mention the fact that it is true that at Comrade Mikoyan's departure at the airport all Cuban leaders were present beginning from the president of the republic, but the diplomatic corps were not invited, and the farewell can again be called cool compared to the farewells usually organized in Cuba.

This is not a very conspicuous sign of the divergence of opinions, but I would like to mention here the following: During his tour of Europe Comrade Blas Roca was in Denmark when these events happened in Cuba. In one of his statements in Denmark he agreed with the position of the Soviet Union. This was also published in one of the papers in Copenhagen. To counterbalance it, presenting it as the news of the *Prensa Latina*, HOY published it on the first page on 31 October that in Berlin Comrade Roca, talking to the Spanish people living in Berlin, said the condition for the solution of the Cuban situation, that is the crisis of the Caribbean, was the acceptance of the five points and the article did not say a word of the Soviet position. According to my information, Blas Roca did not make such statement in Berlin at all. This was published in Cuba to counterbalance Comrade Blas Roca's standpoint. Besides, he was called up and, as I hear, lectured and ordered back to Cuba at once. Although, according to the plans, he would have had to represent the Cuban party in Moscow at the 7 November celebrations. As a result of the ordering home, according to my information, there was no one as a delegation in Moscow from the Cuban side. When Comrade Blas Roca was waiting for an airplane in Prague to return to Cuba, he received the instruction not to return but to go to Sofia and represent the Cuban party there. And in Sofia to inform him and discuss the political questions with him, one of the functionaries of the party center at home was sent there.

János Beck
Ambassador

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign*

Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 13

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Cuban–Soviet Divergence, 1 December 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest.

TOP SECRET!
443/1962/ top secret
Written: in four copies

Three copies to Center

One copy to Emb. Archives

Havana, 1 December 1962

Subject: The essence of Soviet-Cuban divergences of opinion.

Since my return from New York on 20 October I have not once managed to talk to Cuban leaders. Since then no ambassadors of the friendly countries, including Czechoslovakia, have managed to contact any Cuban leaders. As for the Czechoslovakian ambassador [Vladimír Pavlíček], being the first representative of socialist countries to Havana, he used to meet first of all Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa several times a day and often the other leaders as well. Foreign Minister Roa first of all because in the United States Cuban interests are represented by Czechoslovakia, between the Czechoslovak embassy to Washington and the Havana embassy there is a special direct code connection and courier service. In this period he has not been able to get in to Cuban leaders and Foreign Minister Roa, who had the closest and most confidential relationship with him, has behaved toward him coolly, or even if this coolness has become relaxed in the past days, he has not been willing to say anything important to him.

As, similarly to the other socialist ambassadors, I was soon convinced that I could not get in to the higher leaders, similarly to them, I decided to turn to lower-ranking Cuban functionaries working in different places and talk to them

about the political problems. So since the end of October my colleagues and I, first of all counselor Görög and commercial counselor Sós, have talked to 20-25 middle functionaries.

I have had the closest relationship with Czechoslovakian ambassador Pavlicek since the beginning of my stay in Havana. We have often exchanged our information, we have always discussed the different problems. This relationship has become even more intensive in this period of crisis, and meant sometimes several phone conversations a day or, if necessary, meetings at night in each other's apartments. I have had almost such a close relationship with the Romanian and Polish ambassadors as well. They have met about 20-25 middle functionaries too, we have exchanged our opinions, we have discussed our conclusions, so what will follow in my report is not only my opinion but what I concluded from our conversations and their comparisons concerning the crucial issues.

I consider three factors important and I would like to deal with them one after the other. The first one is the individual attitude of Cuban leaders. I must say, when it comes to Cuban leaders, I think of three people, Prime Minister Fidel Castro, his brother Vice-Premier Raul Castro, and Minister of Industry Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara. As during the crisis it has turned out that no other than these three people have a serious and important say in the government, the party secretariat, and most of all in the party's central committee, as a matter of fact, the opinion of these three people in crucial matters cannot be successfully contradicted even by their closest colleagues. So President of the Republic Dorticos or Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the director of the national land reform institute, could not have a significant influence on the events.

The fact that Cuba became a country independent of the United States, the greatest imperialist power, unaided, through the movement led by Fidel Castro, that Cuba could develop the fight for independence and the democratic revolution into a socialist revolution on her own, made the people especially jealous and sensitive concerning everything related to the independence, self-government, and freedom of the country. This can be understood, as it is a relatively small country enjoying the benefits of modern technology but lacking industry, a mono-culture country with colonial conditions, which was liberated after several centuries of colonial or half-colonial oppression. This sensitivity and jealousy concerning freedom, self-government, and independence is especially strongly reflected in leaders, most of all, in the mentioned three leaders.

As for the leaders, this is also complemented by the fact that they arrived at the socialist revolution, Marxism-Leninism, in a different way from all other countries. This is also coupled with the individual ambitions of leaders, which is partly the consequence of the fact that they have been

appointed to lead a historic movement and victorious revolution and such a country that is in the center of world politics at the moment.

The second factor, which plays a role at every level, in the great masses of the Cuban people as well, but is particularly strongly seen among the leaders, can be called revolutionary romantics with many petit-bourgeois and anarchist features. It can also be mentioned here that the Cuban people and, of course, the present leaders of the Cuban people have never experienced any great events shocking the whole Cuban society like a war, revolution, or natural catastrophe.⁵⁰ So they know nothing of the country-wide misery, decay following the great war, the participation of large masses in the revolutionary fight, or the famine striking the whole society or at least its majority or other similar blows. It is a characteristic of the great Cuban masses and, I must repeat, particularly of the leaders, the different ranks of leading layers what can be described by the Spanish expression: *inmolación*. This could be translated as self-sacrifice. Here can be mentioned the lack of knowledge and under-estimation of economic building work, of doing small jobs for a long time every day and imagining all solutions by great, heroic, revolutionary deeds.

The third and most important feature, which is, however, related to the first two, is political. In the political ideas of Cuban leaders the idea that there have been three great revolutions in the world plays an important role. The first is the Russian revolution, the main significance of which is, however, limited to Europe. The second is the Chinese, which concerns Asian people mainly. And finally, the latest, the third is the Cuban, which is crucially important to Latin America. Taking such an idea as a starting point, the Cuban leaders often judge the events of world importance not from the aspect of the world-wide victory of socialism, or from the aspect of the international world movement, but from the so-called Latin American aspect.

This point of view is not Marxist. But when Latin America is concerned, their conception, opinion diverges from or is contrary to the Marxist-Leninist conception several times. The "Second Havana Declaration" could be a good example, which judges the origin, course, and victory of Latin American revolutions differently from the Marxist way in various aspects. (The preparation of the revolution and the revolutionary fight are not carried out by the Marxist-Leninist party, but mainly the small group of partisans supported by peasants, the working class joins the fight only later, and the Marxist class analysis and class aspects are completely ignored). The Cuban leaders under-estimate the role of the party in Cuba herself, which is proved by the extremely slow organization of the party. According to my information, the official number of the members of the party does not reach

four thousand. The reorganization is going on very slowly and since the [Anibal] Escalante case about two thousand earlier party members were excluded.

The above-mentioned explain taking offence toward the Soviet Union not having discussed her urgent steps with the Cuban leaders in the gravest moments of the crisis, this way already offending Cuba's sovereignty, for ignoring Cuba's self-government, independence during the talks with the Americans when she discussed control and other issues concerning Cuba's sovereignty. That they were unwilling to accept the solution suggested by the Soviet Union for weeks meant they did not disagree with the method only, but to some extent with the aim of the Soviet Union too, probably they always had in mind their idea about their Latin American role.

Finally I would like to present Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan's opinion concerning the Cuban leaders, which I agree with:

The Cuban leaders are young, honest people, they are true to the revolution, the people; in a difficult situation in their country they were able to ensure a greater unity and had less chaos than other nations would have had, for this they deserve respect and appreciation, and there is every reason to trust them and the impending progress in the future.

János Beck
Ambassador

[Source: Hungarian National Archives, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 14

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Anastas Mikoyan's meeting with socialist ambassadors, 3 December 1962

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Prepared in: 24 copies

Received by: members and substitute members of the Politburo, members of the Secretariat, Comrade Árpád Pulai and Imre Hollai

C o p y

of the report prepared by the embassy in Havana on 3 December 1962.

Subject: Comrade Mikoyan's meeting with socialist ambassadors.

Neither I nor the other socialist ambassadors had a chance to meet with the Soviet ambassador during the entire period of the crisis. We have not had a chance to meet with Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan either since his arrival, except for the reception at the airport, which obviously did not give us an opportunity to speak with him. The first time we were able to meet with him was right before his departure.

On 20 November, before Comrade Mikoyan's departure, we were invited by phone to attend a cocktail party at the Soviet embassy together with our spouses. The event at the Soviet embassy hosted by the ambassador was attended by Comrade Mikoyan, the delegation led by him as well as several officials of the embassy and their spouses. The ambassadors who were invited to and attended the event included, apart from myself, the Czech, the Polish, the Romanian, the GDR, the [North] Korean and the [North] Vietnamese ambassadors as well as the Chinese, the Bulgarian, and the Mongolian ambassador's deputies.

This cocktail party conversation took place after a day earlier I had contacted Comrade Byelous, first envoy of the Soviet embassy—this being my third approach during the crisis—to ask him a few questions regarding the situation and discuss my view of it with him. At the same time, I complained to him that for several weeks we had been unable to meet either the Cuban or the Soviet leaders and we had not received any information from them. I added that several colleagues, at least the Czech, the Romanian, and the Polish ambassadors had expressed the same complaints. Comrade Byelous said he would try to convince Comrade Mikoyan that he should receive and inform all of us. This is how the cocktail party took place.

We spent at least one-and-a-half hours with Comrade Mikoyan. At the beginning of the conversation, during which we were all standing, Comrade Mikoyan informed us about the situation for about 15 minutes, which was immediately translated into Spanish by the interpreter. The essence of the information provided by him was that the Cuban and the Soviet governments, including Comrades Khrushchev and Fidel Castro in person as well, fully agreed with the evaluation of the situation and the tasks to be done. However, the information did not really cover more than what was published that day or in a few days later.

Comrade Mikoyan said that the Cuban government also agreed with the Soviet Union's view that president Kennedy's

statement on Cuba's territorial integrity meant a great victory for Cuba and the Soviet Union as well as for the entire socialist camp. I need to note that the Cuban leaders had not publicly given any sign, either on that day or since then, whether they agreed with this view.

As for the tasks to do, Comrade Mikoyan did not go beyond what was made public in a few days after the discussion took place.

I asked Comrade Mikoyan on his view regarding the confusion that had emerged among the Cuban people and in the minds of a few Cuban leaders in connection with the situation. Drawing on his own experiences, Comrade Mikoyan told us in detail about the unprecedented confusion among the people, in the communist party, and the Central Committee at the time [March 1918] of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty in the young Soviet Republic, when for a time Lenin was in a minority and managed to get his position through only by threatening to resign from all of his functions in the party and the government. At that time Comrade Mikoyan was working in Baku as a party secretary. He said there was an awful lot of confusion in this party organization too, where most members of the party committee took the wrong position. He also mentioned that for a reason he could not recall now, he took the correct position and published an article on it in the local paper. At this point I took the opportunity to repeat my question in another way, and asked him when a similar article was going to be published in Cuba. However, Comrade Mikoyan pretended that he had not heard the question and went on explaining the Soviet–Russian situation during the time of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. He concluded by saying that the government and the party in Cuba were headed by excellent revolutionaries that were loyal to the people and were able to create and maintain a unity in this extremely complex situation which would certainly have been impossible in any other place. However big the confusion may have appeared to us, it was much smaller than it would have been among other leaders in another country. He was convinced that Cuba was going to see healthy development.

The first envoy of the Soviet embassy, Comrade Byelous told Comrade Mikoyan that I had spent years in prison during the time of the personality cult in Hungary, which gave Comrade Mikoyan an opportunity to talk about personality cults in general, explaining his views and impressions on Mátyás Rákosi⁵¹ and several former or present leaders of the European socialist countries. He held, first and foremost, Stalin responsible for the personality cult in the European socialist countries, so I felt obliged to say that I could not fully agree with this statement. Although Stalin himself and the prevailing international situation undoubtedly had a significant impact on the socialist world and Hungary, there were

no unlawful trials in the other socialist countries during the period of the personality cult that could be compared to what took place in Hungary and what consequences these trials had there, which demonstrates that Rákosi's responsibility cannot be seen as of secondary importance. Then Comrade Mikoyan talked at length and even provided some examples, saying that indeed, he himself had a chance to see that e.g. the Bulgarian or other leaders acted differently from Rákosi, and it was also obvious that in many cases the initiatives provided by Stalin were softened by them, while Rákosi tended to do more than what was expected from him.

During the entire conversation Comrade Mikoyan took every opportunity to give hints to and make remarks for the Chinese ambassador's deputy present regarding cooperation within the socialist camp, the coordination of actions, and real, comradesly collaboration. So, for example, when he was talking about his experiences in Hungary before the counter-revolution and then about his stay in Hungary during the counter-revolution, he stressed how strong the contact had been between them and the Chinese comrades, mutually informing and directly cooperating with each other. The Chinese diplomat did not say a single word during the cocktail party, and when Comrade Mikoyan was talking with the guests surrounding him about the period of personality cults and his own experiences in the Soviet Union, as well as about Poland, Bulgaria, or Hungary, he retired further back and didn't even ask the interpreter to translate some of the conversation.

Although apart from some details Comrade Mikoyan didn't give us actual information, the way he talked about the already known facts and the way he evaluated the Cuban situation did help both me and the other socialist ambassadors to get a better picture of the situation.

János Beck
Ambassador

[Source: Hungarian National Archives, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.]



DOCUMENT No. 15

Hungarian Legation in Washington (Radványi),
Report on Mikoyan's visit to Washington, 5
December 1962

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Received by: members and substitute members of the Politburo, members of the Secretariat, Comrades Árpád Pullai, Imre Hollai, Ferenc Szücs and Sándor Sárközi

C o p y
of the report made by the embassy to Washington on 5 December 1962

Subject: Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington

Comrade Mikoyan's four-day visit (from 29 November to 3 December) was made possible and necessary by the events that had taken place prior to it: negotiations between [Soviet deputy foreign minister Vasily V.] Kuznetsov and [US negotiator John J.] McCloy in New York, recent communication between Khrushchev and Kennedy, and Kennedy's already known press conference [on 20 November] in which he announced the lifting of the Cuban blockade.

The visit had aroused considerable interest, and the comments and news on it were treated by the press as a central issue. Before the visit, the comrades announced during talks conducted at the State Department that Comrade Mikoyan would be staying in Washington for a few days as Comrade [Soviet ambassador to the United States Anatoly F.] Dobrynin's guest and during this time he would be glad to meet with American officials. After consulting President Kennedy, the State Department answered that they were pleased with Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington and added that the American government officials were also ready to meet with him. They also raised the possibility of receiving Comrade Mikoyan as an official state guest. Comrade Mikoyan politely evaded this opportunity.

Then the program was worked out under which Comrade Mikoyan met with President Kennedy in the White House, State Secretary [Dean] Rusk at a lunch and Interior Secretary [Stewart] Udall at a dinner. He also met with [Attorney General] Robert Kennedy at this dinner.

This latter meeting was treated very cautiously. Although the Soviet comrades announced that the meeting would take place, they did not reveal any details about it.

The former American ambassador to Moscow, [Llewellyn E.] Thomson, was appointed by the American government as a permanent attendant during Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington. When he arrived and four days later left, the event at the airport was attended by the staff of the Soviet embassy as well as the ambassadors of the Socialist countries to Washington, and on behalf of the American party by Ambassador Thomson and chief of protocol Thonesk. Naturally, the representatives of the press were also present.

Comrade Mikoyan had a one-and-a-half-hour unofficial meeting with them on the night before his departure.

On 29 November, Comrade Dobrynin invited the ambassadors of the Socialist countries to a dinner on the occasion of Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington. During this dinner, Comrade Mikoyan gave an account of his experiences gained at the meeting with President Kennedy, and made some comments on his visit to Cuba and also on China.

I. Comrade Mikoyan characterized his meeting with President Kennedy as open, honest, and objective. The main issue of the discussion was Cuba; the issue of disarmament was merely touched upon. The president wanted to talk about Laos, too, but Comrade Mikoyan evaded this issue by saying that he had not prepared to discuss it.

In regard to the Cuban issue, Comrade Mikoyan strongly demanded that, since the Soviet Union had already performed its obligations stemming from the Khrushchev-Kennedy agreement, the American party should provide formal guarantees for not attacking Cuba. In his answer President Kennedy gave two arguments. On the one hand, he referred to Comrade Khrushchev's letter of 28 October in which Comrade Khrushchev promised to implement international monitoring on the territory of Cuba. On the other, he explained that given the internal situation (public opinion, the Senate), he was not able to give formal guarantees without international monitoring.

In his answer Comrade Mikoyan called Kennedy's attention to Comrade Khrushchev's letter of 26 November in which the Soviet leader expressly stated that the Soviet Union was ready to enable the international monitoring of dismantling the Soviet missiles provided that the Cuban government also agreed to it. As an explanation, Comrade Mikoyan noted that although the missiles were in the ownership of the Soviet state, jurisdiction over the Cuban territory was obviously exercised by the Cuban government.

Kennedy gave voice to the counterarguments provided by McCloy in New York, stressing that the United States also needed guarantees that Cuba would not receive new mid-range missiles either from the Soviet Union or, in a few year's time, from China.

Comrade Mikoyan left this latter comment by Kennedy unanswered. As an interesting piece of detail, Comrade Mikoyan mentioned at this point that on his way to Havana he met with McCloy in New York and agreed on the monitoring of the missiles on sea. Then Kennedy said that certain American newspapers, relying on information from Cuban émigré sources, were writing about Soviet missiles still being kept secretly in the territory of Cuba. Comrade Mikoyan called this allegation ridiculous; he said that to his knowledge

the air and ground reconnaissance of the United States had already covered every square mile of Cuba. The president admitted that too and noted that he had given orders to the Pentagon not to violate, if possible, the Cuban air space and take photos only by flying in international air space.

Returning to the issue of the American guarantee, President Kennedy asked Comrade Mikoyan to let Comrade Khrushchev know that during his presidency the Soviet Union should not be concerned about any invasion of Cuba by the United States.

At this point Kennedy asked Comrade Mikoyan what position the Soviet Union would take if, for example, the United States decided to set up missile bases in Finland. Would people be able to sleep well in Leningrad in such a situation? Comrade Mikoyan noted that they would sleep just as well as the people in Armenia because of the bases in Turkey, since the United States is aware of the counter-strike they should expect in the case of an attack. Kennedy noted to this that by now the significance and value of the American missile bases deployed in Europe had changed a lot. The United States and the Soviet Union both have intercontinental missiles that can reach each other's territory. At the same time, the Polaris-type submarines make the bases in England, Italy, and Turkey redundant. The American party had already worked out a plan, he said, to eliminate these bases. Kennedy had already given orders to the Pentagon in this regard.

When Comrade Mikoyan told the ambassadors of the friendly countries about it, he also added that to his knowledge these missiles were outdated, and even if they were to be or had already been dismantled, they were still there.

Comrade Dobrynin said (at a later meeting) that to his knowledge the dismantling of the Thor missiles had already begun by the Americans because the Polaris submarines to replace them were already in place. The Turkish bases had Jupiter-type missiles which were also outdated.

I would like to note here that according to the information received from the Czechoslovakian ambassador to Washington [Karel Duda], one of the main reasons for replacing NATO commander-in-chief [Lauris] Norstadt was that he objected to Kennedy's plan to eliminate the missile bases in Europe. Another piece of relevant information that belongs here is what military attaché Varga obtained during a conversation from colonel Roberts, the newly appointed military air attaché to Budapest. The colonel said that the complete dismantling of the missile bases in Europe—because they were outdated—could be expected in the near future.

Kennedy and Comrade Mikoyan had a lengthy conversation on the issue of the Cuban revolution. Kennedy kept on saying that Castro was the enemy of the United States and therefore, his presence in the Caribbean region represented a danger to them.

Contrary to this, Comrade Mikoyan insisted that Castro had been made an enemy by the United States and the best course of action would be to make an agreement with him on the basis of the principle of peaceful coexistence. Kennedy did not accept this view and then asked Comrade Mikoyan in a humorous tone: after all, for how long has Castro been a Communist? Answering in the same tone, Comrade Mikoyan said Castro had been a Communist for about one-and-a-half years, adding that this course of development might be dangerous to Kennedy too. Kennedy evaded this by saying that he was immune to these kinds of dangers, although in his family [Edward] Kennedy, who had just been elected senator, also had some socialist views.

At the end of the meeting the two parties issued a mutually-agreed joint communiqué, stressing that the negotiations to settle the Cuban issue should be conducted in New York by Comrade Kuznetsov and McCloy and [US UN Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson. They also agreed that in addition to the Cuban issue Comrade Mikoyan would negotiate with Rusk on several major international issues and there would also be a confidential meeting between Comrade Mikoyan and Robert Kennedy.

II. During the conversation Comrade Mikoyan said that he had left for Cuba⁵² with the task of not pushing Castro at any cost regarding the international monitoring.

On the basis of the information received it was clear, he said, that the main difficulty in the first few days would be to convince Castro. He made his well-known statement [when departing New York City for Havana] in order to achieve that, in which he supported Castro's five points [issued on 28 October] although it was clear to him that, for example, it was impossible to negotiate with the Americans on the evacuation of Guantanamo.

Castro, who originally did not wish to come to the airport, eventually came to meet Comrade Mikoyan after the communiqué mentioned above. During the first meeting Castro and Che Guevara stated openly to Comrade Mikoyan that they did not need the American guarantees. They did not have any confidence in such guarantees, so the Soviets should just leave the missiles where they were and the Cubans would defend themselves.

It took long discussion for Comrade Mikoyan to convince Castro and his companions that in the present situation Cuba could only be saved by political means. By the way, Castro and his companions received the Brazilian, Chilean, and Mexican rapprochement very well; especially [Brazilian President João] Goulart's special envoy [Gen. Albino Silva] whose action was seen by the Soviet Union positively from the point of view that it could end Cuba's isolation.

Comrade Mikoyan characterized Brazilian president Goulart as a clever, smart and realistic politician who did not execute the American orders at one hundred percent, thereby getting ahead of Argentina and achieving a leading role in the South American region.

In regard to the internal situation in Cuba Comrade Mikoyan said that sentiment among the people was good, the leaders were honest and pure people but they had very little experience and were not shrewd enough. They often combined revolutionary enthusiasm with romantic elements. The petit-bourgeois layers of people living in the cities were worse off than before the revolution but the living conditions of the workers and peasants had improved. Some of the land had been collectivized and state farms had been set up on them; and there were plans to accelerate this process. Comrade Mikoyan advised the Cuban comrades that they should act cautiously and slowly as far as the about 50% of land still in private ownership was concerned.

As an example of the bellicose nature of the Cubans, Comrade Mikoyan mentioned that after the Americans repeatedly flew in the Cuban air space, Castro and his leaders, in accord with the Soviet comrades, set their air defense system in action. The Americans always avoided fighting in such a case. Comrade Mikoyan noted at this point that anybody who stated that the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft had been shot down by a Soviet missile—was not wrong.

III. Comrade Mikoyan spoke very negatively about China's activity in Cuba. He said that with their ultra-left-wing views the Chinese confused some of the [Cuban] leaders, especially mid-level leaders, but they practically failed to help upset the enemy. For instance, they could have occupied Quemoy [Jinmen] and Matsu [Mazu] or Macao without any real risk. Instead, they were sending hundreds of thousands of petitions and attacked India, whereby they managed to turn India, at least temporarily, into a country supporting the western camp, to disrupt the Indian Communist Party and give a chance to the Indian right-wing to gain ground, etc.

Finally, Comrade Mikoyan openly said to the Cuban leaders that the Chinese position regarding Cuba was totally wrong. Castro and his colleagues understood this view and in his message addressed to Comrade Khrushchev Castro especially emphasized that Cuba was fully on the Soviet Union's side. As an example, Comrade Mikoyan mentioned the Tibetan and the Hungarian issues. He pointed out that the Chinese, in alliance with the top-level aristocracy, created a situation in Tibet that led to an uprising and they failed to draw the necessary conclusions from it. On the other hand, the Hungarian leaders, together with the Soviet comrades, acted on the basis of self-criticism, admitting that Rákosi

and the Communists were mainly responsible for the 1956 events.⁵³

The Cuban issue was only briefly touched upon during the meeting between Comrade Mikoyan and Rusk. They exchanged ideas in more detail on general disarmament [and] the ban on nuclear explosions, as well as on Berlin and the German issue. Essentially, the parties confined themselves to repeating their already known position. As a new element, Comrade Mikoyan noted that the Soviet Union was ready to give permission to set up sealed instrument boxes in the territory of the Soviet Union. The Soviet government also agreed that the boxes should be delivered to, set up in, and then removed from the country by an international monitoring committee to be set up later.

As far as disarmament was concerned, the issues discussed included the Brazilian proposal submitted to the UN on making Latin America a nuclear-free region and the measures to be taken in order to prevent an unexpected attack, which had already been discussed in Geneva.

As for the Berlin issue, Comrade Mikoyan raised the need for the withdrawal of troops stationed in West Berlin. Referring to their NATO obligations, Rusk said that it was not viable. Neither Comrade Mikoyan nor Rusk excluded the possibility of conducting further negotiations by representatives of the two parties on the issues mentioned above. Finally, Comrade Mikoyan suggested that the principle of progressivity, a "step-by-step" approach should be applied when discussing these issues.

János Radványi

Chargé d'affaires

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.]



DOCUMENT No. 16

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Soviet-Cuban Conflicts, 24 January 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

36/1963/Top Secret

Written: in four copies

Three to Center

One to Embassy

Havana, 24 January 1963

Subject: The essence of
Cuban–Soviet conflicts

Ref. No.:443/1962/top secret

The observation of events happening since my report submitted by the December mail and the various meetings taking place since then make it possible to prove what has been reported on the one hand, and to draw new conclusions on the other hand.

The Cuban position concerning the place and role of the Cuban revolution and the origin and course of Latin American revolutions is well-known. It was defined by the Second Havana Declaration, it has been completed and commented on by numerous speeches of the Cuban leaders and a series of editorials and lectures. It is not only the Soviet party and with them the European communist parties that cannot approve this position, but also numerous Latin American parties. Ambassador [Aleksandr] Alekseyev said that, in the summer of 1962, when Raul Castro visited Moscow, Comrade Khrushchev had a long conversation with him. He explained to Raul Castro that the Soviet party or himself, Khrushchev, could not interfere in the affairs of other parties and did not want to either; he could not give his opinion about the Havana Declaration, for example, but he thought that the Cuban party should have a debate with the mentioned parties if they did not agree in everything, the Latin American parties could not be neglected, and one could not make decisions instead of them. “After all, you are not the Comintern,” added Comrade Khrushchev.

I asked Ambassador Alekseyev what Raul Castro thought about this, whether he understood what Comrade Khrushchev meant. He answered: no.

Comrade Alekseyev said that the main Cuban leaders and, first of all among them Fidel Castro, despite all the Soviet efforts, had not [believed] and did not believe or understand that, in connection with the Caribbean crisis, the Soviet Union’s aim was to ensure Cuba’s independence and her rescue from invasion. They are convinced that the Soviet Union was only maneuvering and being tactical, she used the

Caribbean crisis and its solution and Cuba only as instruments in the political game with the United States.

Why do they not understand[?], I asked. He gave no answer. As the saying goes, ill-doers are ill-deemers, I continued, is that right? Alekseyev’s deputy, Byelous answered yes, it was nationalism.

I consider unnecessary to list here as evidence the facts that may be read, heard and observed day-by-day on the basis of which I came to the conclusion already earlier that in the Cuban leadership nationalism played an important role.

In Soviet-Cuban relations Cuba’s security and the Cuban ideas about it also play an important role.

Already on 23 October last year, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez told me (and at that time I also reported it) that Cuba was ready to agree to the removal of missiles and etc. if Cuba’s sanctity was ensured also by the Soviet Union.

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister [Vasily V.] Kuznetsov, visiting Havana recently, talked to Fidel Castro as well. Comrade Kuznetsov told us (the ambassadors of socialist countries) that during the conversation, without explaining his ideas and wishes, Fidel Castro had made three or four unmistakable hints, saying e.g. that Cuba’s situation was singular because the European socialist countries are guaranteed by the Warsaw Treaty, the member-states of the Warsaw treaty looked upon this or that so, but they...etc.

This repeated hint could have served as an answer to Comrade Kuznetsov to some extent, who, during his report on his talks concerning the Caribbean crisis, confirmed to Fidel Castro that the Soviet Union considered Cuba a member of the socialist camp, that is, Cuba was guaranteed by the socialist camp.

The idea occurs that the Cuban position concerning the solution of the crisis is not only a result of non-understanding, but, to some extent, also of extortion toward the Soviet Union. Other ambassadors representing European socialist countries and I have also experienced such a train of thought on the Cuban side as could be summed up in the following way: During the crisis and its solution it was proved that, because of Cuba, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union was willing to start a nuclear war, what would happen then in case of a local war by traditional arms started directly by the USA against Cuba?

János Beck
Ambassador

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 17

Hungarian Embassy, Havana (Beck), Report on
“The Visible signs of the Cuban-Soviet Conflict,” 25
January 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic TOP
SECRET!

41/1963/top secret Written: in four copies

Typed by: Elemérné Vajda three to Center
one to Embassy

Havana, 25 January 1963

Subject: The visible signs of the Cuban-Soviet conflict

Ref.No.: 440/1962/top secret

Through some conspicuous cases, I would like to show how the Cuban leading personalities, the Cuban press, radio, and television reflect the change in the Cuban-Soviet relations.

President of the Republic [Osvaldo] Dorticós’s behavior at the national cultural congress was the same as at the celebrations of 7 November.

Carlos Rafael Rodríguez continued the theoretical part of Cuban-Soviet economic talks in Moscow. During his stay in Moscow, he carried on talks with the Soviet Union’s highest leaders and with Comrade Khrushchev himself, he participated at the Supreme Soviet session, where he had a seat in the presidium together with Comrades Khrushchev and Brezhnev and the Yugoslavian President Tito. The Soviet Information Bureau gave only one photo to the Cuban press of the session of the Supreme Council, so in the Cuban papers was published the picture of the presidium of the mentioned composition. When Carlos Rafael Rodríguez returned from Moscow /I happened to be at the airport at that time/ from Cuban side he was only met by his family and from his office by a few colleagues and by no one from the government or the leadership of the ORI. On the whole, his trip was little discussed in the papers.

Comrade [Soviet deputy foreign minister Vasili] Kuznetsov came to Cuba formally at the invitation of the regular Cuban UN-representative, Carlos Lechuga. No official welcoming ceremony was organized at the airport. Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa gave a reception in the honor of Comrade Kuznetsov, where from the Cuban side only the following people were present: Members of the government: INRA President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Minister of Communal work Osmani

Cienfuegos and JUCEPLAN President Reginaldo Boti, From the ORI leadership: Juan [Joaquin] Ordoqui, the doyen of the late communist party. There was little reaction to his stay in the press. The biggest photo and news item showed his visit to the HOY redaction [i.e., editorial headquarters—ed.] /He was together with Blas Roca in the picture/.

The delegations visiting Cuba on the occasion of 1 January were given dinner by the ICAP, where Blas Roca gave a speech. In his speech he did not even mention the Soviet Union and talked little about the socialist camp, although at the main table was sitting astronaut [Pavel] Popovich, so by the composition of the delegation, by sending non-political personalities, the Soviet Union offered the opportunity to be talked of suitably without mentioning the disputed questions or even hinting at them. The Soviet delegation, in which also participated high-ranking soldiers /e.g. the commander of the Moscow district/ as special guests, considering the local circumstances and customs, we must say, was little dealt with by the press.

At the congress of Latin-American women, the leaders of the Cuban delegation headed by the president of the alliance of Cuban women, Vilma Espin /Raul Castro’s wife/, behaved in a scandalous way toward the non-member Soviet delegate, Comrade Fyodorova /they avoided shaking hands with her, did not talk to her, seated her in the wrong place, etc./ . In a way shocking the majority, Vilma Espin and her associates delayed the telegram to be sent to Comrade Khrushchev about the solution of the Caribbean crisis, which had also been voted on according to the rules, and forced its rewording.

Instead of listing similar events, I would like to add that, at the various celebrations and meetings, they prevented the masses from singing the International as usual by transmitting e.g. the march of the 26th of July Movement on the loudspeakers. Once I was present when, after the march, someone from the crowd shouted to the tribune: “And what about the International?”

The leaders put up with the fact but do not seem to like that the masses often shout the slogan: “Fidel, Jrusciov, estamos con los dos!” *Fidel, Khrushchev, we are with you!*

In his speech of 1 November last year, Fidel Castro said that he relied on the leadership of the Soviet Union. Since then the Cuban leadership has taken a step backwards practically.

The press does not publish anything either from abroad or from inside that does not completely support the leaders’ daily positions, even if it concerns a party or government statement, greeting or a declaration made in Cuba, or a decision of a congress, etc.

János Beck

ambassador
to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 18

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on
Soviet Deputy Foreign Ministry Vasily Kuznetsov,
28 January 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest

TOP SECRET!
46/1963/t.s.
Written: in four copies
Three to Center
One to Embassy

Havana, 28 January 1963
Subject: Comrade

Kuznetsov's Report

On the evening of January 17 in the apartment of the Soviet ambassador [Aleksandr Alekseyev], Comrade Kuznetsov gave a report to the Polish, Czechoslovakian, Romanian and Bulgarian ambassadors and me. (The GDR's ambassador was back home at the party congress.)

During the report he talked about the meetings between the Soviet Union and the USA concerning the Caribbean crisis, about the talks on disarmament, the ban on nuclear experiments and Berlin. I consider it unnecessary to report on this part because Comrade Kuznetsov said that in New York there had been close cooperation between the Soviet Union and the other socialist missions concerning one group of the questions. And about his meetings with Kennedy he informed the socialist missions already in the USA.

Comrade Kuznetsov had no pre-determined program for his stay in Cuba. He had his most important, single conversation with Fidel Castro on the 17th. It lasted about two hours. Previously, on the evening of the 15th, Comrade

Kuznetsov participated at the special closing sitting of the Latin American women's congress together with the Soviet ambassador, where Fidel Castro gave a speech (I will report on this separately). Here, in the theater, he was introduced to Fidel Castro before the beginning of the special sitting, who said to him, "I do not offer you a cigar, because Khrushchev, too, gave the cigar I presented to him to Kennedy."

Comrade Kuznetsov, who had never met Fidel Castro before, was surprised at this reception. And the speech heard afterwards shocked him. He scolded his ambassador why own earth he had to be there.

After such preceding events, he looked forward to the longer talks and meetings with Fidel Castro a bit worried. By the 17th, however, Fidel Castro had calmed down and proved a completely different person during his conversation with Comrade Kuznetsov. The conversation, which was interpreted by the Soviet ambassador, consisted of two parts. At the beginning, for about 40 minutes Comrade Kuznetsov reported on the talks between the Soviet Union and the USA on the Caribbean crisis, then a lot more briefly and not mentioning some of the important details he had mentioned to us, he outlined the talks concerning other problems.

Fidel Castro listened to him very carefully, without interjections, then he said he completely agreed with the Soviet Union concerning the essence of the talks on the Caribbean crisis, and he thought that they, that is Cuba, should not do or say anything that would lessen the Soviet Union's possibilities for maneuvers. But he criticized some things concerning forms.

At first Fidel Castro contradicted the evaluation according to which the USA president formally obliged himself not to attack Cuba or allow any other American states to do so. Comrade Kuznetsov had to explain it for a long time that there were numerous ways of making agreements between states and governments, one form of talks and agreement was e.g. what had been realized by the published correspondence of Comrade Khrushchev and Kennedy. After long explanations, Fidel Castro understood it finally.

Comrade Kuznetsov did not mention any other important things that Fidel Castro would have told him, except for the repeated hints, which I am reporting on in my report No. 36/1963.t.s. submitted by this mail.⁵⁴

Comrade Kuznetsov evaluated the conversation saying that Fidel Castro and the Cubans seemed to be forced by the situation to follow the correct policy.

During the conversation started following Comrade Kuznetsov's report, I told what I had heard from Blas Roca about the "details of form" Fidel Castro was criticizing. (Cf. my report No. 479 submitted by this mail.)

Instead of Comrade Kuznetsov, but with his approval, Ambassador Alekseyev gave a reply and repeated very emphatically that Blas Roca's statements were not true basically. The Cuban leaders had received the right explanation both from him and Comrade Mikoyan, when he was here. Concerning Khrushchev's letter of 28 October to Kennedy, the situation was the following: when it was ready, it was published immediately and announced on the Moscow radio. The statement concerning it sent by the Soviet government to the Cuban government arrived three hours after the publication as a result of the necessary double encoding and listening-in. The situation, however, did not make it possible to wait for three or more hours.

Anyway, the Soviet side has explained that at that time they considered this step pre-harmonized with the Cuban government and they have the right to stick to this evaluation.

János Beck
Ambassador

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 19

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on "Relations between Cuba and the socialist countries since the [Cuban Missile Crisis] crisis," 28 January 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

47/ 1963/ top secret Written: in four copies

Typed by Eleménné Vajda three to Center one to Embassy

Havana, 28 January 1963

Subject: The relations between Cuba and the socialist countries since the crisis.

Since the Caribbean crisis a by-stander has not been able to see any change in the relations between Cuba and the socialist countries. I could characterize the pre-crisis situation in the following way: The Cuban leadership /the party and government/ was on the right track to form such a relation-

ship with the Soviet Union and the other countries as was between us and the Soviet Union for example.

The crisis and its solution, however, brought up a lot of facts from the Cuban side that make it possible to achieve this only through a longer and more crooked development, in the long run. It has turned out that within the layer of Cuban leaders the number and, most of all, the influence of those who may be really called Marxists and communists is smaller than we believed. We can feel the impact of various nationalist or petit-bourgeois opinions and of the practical standpoints and measures originating from them. I would like to mention only a few phenomena: instead of the economic building work, they still pay the most attention to "world revolution," that is, as the Cubans put it, to the Latin American revolution; the organization of the party needs a long time undoubtedly, but its dragging-on results only from the fact that the importance and role of the party is underestimated; there has not evolved yet a form of collective leadership that can really be called collective; cooperation with the socialist countries is one-sided in the most different fields, it consists mainly of help provided to Cuba.

Before the crisis, the Cuban leaders at most different levels, beginning from the Prime Minister and the president of the republic [Fidel Castro] talked to the ambassadors of socialist countries, even if rarely, but always completely frankly and openly. It was so in the case of the delegates of different ranks visiting Cuba. These conversations did not only make the acquaintance with the Cuban situation possible, but for the Cuban leaders also the acquaintance with foreign opinions and examples, the lessons that could be learnt from them, etc.

Since the crisis Cuban leaders at all levels have avoided us and the delegations arriving from the socialist countries. If there is a conversation, it is far from being as rich in information as before, conversations are formal and empty.

But the main fact is that, without the socialist camp, mainly and first of all, the Soviet Union, revolutionary Cuba cannot go on existing even for days. The leaders are aware of this and, even if in a wavy line, they are leading the country in the direction to become a real and organic part of the socialist camp. Despite all the conflicts, individual opinions concerning the Caribbean crisis, or the divergence in various matters, they are on the side of the socialist camp and the Soviet Union. The elimination of nationalist and petit-bourgeois phenomena, however, will be achieved only by a long development.

So basically there has not been, nor can be expected, any change in the relationship of Cuba and the socialist camp.

János Beck
ambassador

to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 20

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Conversation with Cuban foreign ministry official re Hungarian-Cuban relations and Sino-Soviet split, 12 March 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

131/1963/top secret Written: in four copies
Official: Erzsébet Görög three to Center
Typed by: Vajdáné one to Embassy

Havana, 12 March 1963

Subject: The opinion of the head of the III. Political Department of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs /Socialist countries/ about the Cuban-Hungarian relations and the Soviet-Chinese dispute.

On 6 March, Comrades Görög and Sütő invited to a dinner the head of the Third Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador [José] Fuxa and the official in charge of Hungarian matters, Siomara Sánchez.

Comrade Görög asked Ambassador Fuxa if they were satisfied with the Cuban-Hungarian relations.

Ambassador Fuxa thought that the relations between the two countries were very good. He could say so both on the basis of the reports received from their embassy to Budapest and on the basis of the friendly, good relations between the Hungarian embassy to Havana and the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He has heard very good opinions about the Hungarian party congress and he has issued the instruction to compile the materials referring to it as he wants to study them more closely.

He considered that the good relations between our countries were characterized by the friendly atmosphere in

which the cultural talks had been carried out, by the useful exchanges of delegations of recent times, etc.

He mentioned that they were going to invite opera-singer András Varga, whose invitation was urged by Ambassador Quintin Pino Machado.

Siomara Sánchez, the official in charge of Hungarian matters told frankly that when he was moved to the Hungarian department, he had not been very happy about it as he had known little of Hungary, he had considered it a not very relevant small socialist country. But after studying Hungarian matters more closely, he dealt with Hungary with enthusiasm and interest. Comrade [First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party János] Kádár's speeches, the Hungarian party congress had made him unbelievably enthusiastic, he wanted to learn Hungarian. /On the day following the dinner, Comrade Görög sent him a Hungarian-Spanish and a Spanish-Hungarian dictionary./

According to my instruction, Comrade Görög tried to get information about Ambassador Fuxa's position concerning the Soviet-Chinese argument. Ambassador Fuxa—as the Cuban state and party functionaries usually—evaded taking a position, he only answered that the dispute was unfortunate, and he asked back whether she knew if there would be an inter-party meeting between the communist parties of the SU and China.

Otherwise, the dinner took place in a really friendly atmosphere, and even if it did not provide any genuine information, it served as a good starting-point for the creation of the possibility of further exchanges of opinion between the diplomats of the embassy and the competent officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

János Beck
ambassador

to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 21

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on US-Cuban Talks, 31 March 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter
Budapest

TOP SECRET!
144/1963/Top Secret
Written: in four copies
Three to Center
One to Embassy

Havana, 31 March 1963

Subject: Cuban–USA Talks

It is well known that from the American side, “lawyer” [James] Donovan participated in the talks concerning the release for compensation of the mercenaries taken captive at Playa Giron [the Bay of Pigs]. Since then, from the Cuban side, Fidel Castro himself has had talks with Donovan at the level of theory and politics, only the technicalities were discussed with Donovan at a lower level.

On “lawyer” Donovan himself, I would only like to make the comment that formally he acts as a private individual and as such did he lead the talks with the Soviet Union earlier concerning the release of [Francis Gary] Powers, the pilot of the shot [down] U-2 and his exchange for [Rudolf] Abel, the spy arrested and convicted in the USA, and it was also he who directed the exchange itself from the American side.

In connection with Donovan's frequent trips to Havana, the Western diplomats had the opinion that through him Fidel Castro carried on talks with the USA government and Kennedy himself, moreover behind the Soviet Union's back, without informing the Soviet Union. Yugoslavian ambassador Boško Vidaković, who appears such a friend of the Soviets before the socialist ambassadors that he looks more Catholic than the Pope, is saying directly that Fidel Castro is playing a double game and he is blackmailing or wants to blackmail the Soviet Union.

The public (abroad) knows only that Donovan's latest trips to Havana were aimed at getting American citizens released from Cuban prisons or their exchange for Cuban diplomats arrested in the USA.

During his conversation with the Czechoslovak ambassador [Vladimír Pavlíček] a few days ago, Prime Minister Fidel Castro, without mentioning the contents of his talks with Donovan, said the following:

He has got to know an intelligent and clever man in Donovan, who is a very hard-talking partner but, on the whole, not ill-willed. Seeing the Cuban reality, he acknowl-

edged a lot of things, the USA would lead a different Cuban policy if it were he who directed politics or had a decisive say in it. During his talks with Donovan, he—that is, Fidel Castro—provided an opportunity for the US government, that is, Kennedy, twice to take relevant steps to normalize relations with Cuba, but Kennedy did not use these opportunities. Never mind, says Fidel Castro, if Kennedy does not consider the situation right for it.

Donovan's talks with others (e.g. a Cuban under-secretary of internal affairs) were extremely violent and pointed, but they have never hindered further connections.

All I would like to add to this is (although it is a repetition) that the Cuban press and Cuban leaders have recently been making distinctions—at last!—in connection with the USA, they do not put everything and everybody in the same category. (There are not only Yankees, but also Pentagon, extreme imperialist circles, “the raging,” etc., as well.) Raul Castro has mentioned to the Romanian ambassador in the past days, and it is not likely to be his private opinion, that for Cuba among the possible presidents at present Kennedy is the best.

János Beck
Ambassador

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 22

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Fidel Castro's Television Report on his Trip to the Soviet Union, 6 June 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic
TOP SECRET!

242/1963/top secret
Written: in four copies
Typed by: Vajdáné three to Center
one to Embassy
Havana, 6 June 1963
Subject: Some comments on
Fidel Castro's television report
on his trip to the SU

Prime Minister Fidel Castro's television report on his [27 April-3 June 1963]. trip to the SU was presented briefly in the

press review of 5 June, and since then the Center has probably received it in its whole length too.

I would like to complete the speech with a few things, however, that were not shown in the press review and cannot even be felt when reading the complete text.

Fidel Castro answered the questions of the journalists on the day after his arrival [in Cuba], that is, still under the influence of his SU experience. But what always fascinates Fidel Castro's listeners during his speeches apart from his unheard of oratorical skills are his basic honesty, frankness and sincerity.

This time Fidel Castro was not an orator. He had chosen the form of a television interview because he had felt—with excellent sense of politics—that this subject was not a subject to be given an orator's speech about.

Fidel Castro is a passionate, excellent orator, but I had never heard him speak with such deep and sincere emotion. When he was talking about the Soviet nation, the Soviet people, he was almost disturbed by the journalists' questions.

Anyway, he seemed to be irritated by the journalists' questions lacking logic and sometimes being even provocative / the "dangerous" lag in agriculture/. He sharply criticized the Cuban press. When he was talking about the fact that the Cuban press had published exaggerated praising articles about his reception, in a subdued voice he said to Ithiel Leon, the interviewer of the *Revolución*: "I will talk to the *Revolución* separately!" Probably he was hinting at Juan Arcocha's disgusting reports always ranking him with Lenin, which I already reported on in the previous mail.

The keynote of the whole report was given by Fidel Castro's human modesty. There have been a lot of arguments about whether there is a personal cult in Cuba, what is meant by the special Cuban "cult of hero," whether what surrounds Fidel Castro here can be called a personal cult. Independently of the fact that the essence of a personal cult cannot be seen in the externals but in the lack of collective leadership and in unlawful acts, I would like to stress that it was not out of affected modesty on his part but out of sincere conviction that Fidel Castro, who attributes a great importance to the reaction of the masses, shifted the great celebration he received in the SU to the Cuban revolution and stressed that it had concerned rather the future than the achieved results. And in his report he rejected even more firmly the effusions addressed to his person and he raised his voice only when he was talking about the mistakes.

Fidel Castro's television interview has also shown what turn the Soviet experiences and talks will mean in Cuba's economic, internal, and foreign political life and first of all, in the question of party building and the role of the party.

Erzsébet Görög
chargé d'affaires ad interim

to Comrade Foreign Minister
Budapest

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 23

Hungarian Embassy in Moscow (Szipka), Report on Soviet-Cuban Relations, 21 June 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic
To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

486/top secret/1963

Moscow, 21 June 1963

Subject: Soviet-Cuban
Relations.

001254/1/top secret/1963

Official: Pál Mányik
Written: in three copies
Two copies to Center

One copy to Embassy

Since the victory of the Cuban revolution Soviet-Cuban relations have been characterized by continuous development. This is also a result of the anti-imperialist, socialist character of the Cuban revolution and the consistent, internationalist politics of the Soviet Union. The appearance and consolidation of the first socialist state on the American continent is due to the existence and never-ceasing continuous support of socialist countries, mainly the Soviet Union.

It is well-known that the Soviet Union has provided all help to defend the independence and restore the economy of the revolutionary country from the beginning. From the beginning the Soviet Union has fought for the rights of the Cuban people in the UN and at other international forums. The Soviet Union has sent her representatives and specialists to Cuba to assess on the spot what the Cuban people needed.

Parallel to the Cuban progress, personal connections between the two countries are increasing. Economic and cultural delegations have visited each other's countries. It was a great help to the Cuban economy threatened by American economic blockade that the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries supported them generously and directly when they took over the surplus of sugar of the country, which has a monoculture economic structure, and they provided the most needed means and loans to rebuild the country's economy.

The visit of the Cuban government delegation headed by Raoul [Raúl] Castro to the Soviet Union last fall [sic; summer] and the agreement signed as a consequence was of historic importance too. The declaration published about the talks pointed out unambiguously and clearly that the Soviet Union undertook the responsibility to defend Cuba's independence by all means—including the most modern military technology as well—if the imperialists should attack Cuba. It is well-known that during the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile] crisis the Soviet Union carried out this duty by providing the country with appropriate military technology, then, replying to the aggression of the imperialists, making definite and flexible political steps, she ensured Cuba's sanctity and, by this, peace in the whole world.

In the days of the crisis and afterwards, as a result of the complicated international situation, we could observe the signs of hesitation in the statements of some Cuban leaders, which the imperialist press and the opponents of the policy of peaceful co-existence tried to exploit. At the same time, Comrade Fidel Castro and other leaders have always stressed definitely the extremely important help received from the Soviet Union and the inviolable friendship with the Soviet Union. The Caribbean crisis meant great experience for the leaders of the Cuban revolution from an international political aspect too. Since then the events following it have proved numerous times the rightness of the Soviet politics. The Cuban leaders have seen this politics justified in connection with the situation of their own country as well. This was expressed to full extent in Comrade Fidel Castro's historic trip to the Soviet Union [27 April-3 June 1963]. It is well-known that Comrade Fidel Castro's declarations unambiguously and definitely pointed out their full agreement with the foreign policy steps of the Soviet Union.

The news published about the talks and agreements of Fidel Castro and his delegation in the Soviet Union show that the relations between the two countries will develop at an even greater pace in the future and are based completely on the principles of Lenin concerning cooperation between the socialist countries. The agreements signed here determine the direction of relations between the two countries for a long time.

Both among the representatives of the competent departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and among the leading members of the Cuban embassy, we can observe the opinion that Soviet-Cuban relations are developing in a really good direction and are characterized by sincere, comradely cooperation.

There was a great reaction in Cuba to Castro's visit, which increased the unity of the two countries. The mentioned opinions, however, reflect Cuba's present economic difficulties as well. But the country's leaders can see well that these difficulties can be counterbalanced only by persistent and pre-planned work, by the complete mobilization of the people for work. The party being formed now will play a crucial role in providing foundations for this development.

Cuba's international position has become consolidated due to Castro's visit and the political reactions to it. According to the head of the Latin American Department of the [Soviet] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cuban leaders have understood that they should achieve a firm position. They have understood that they belong to the American continent, the neighborhood of American imperialism, which requires a determined but, at the same time, flexible policy. In recent times, we have seen that the Cuban leaders have reacted in a reserved and moderate manner to the USA's policy and there has been a decrease in the sharpness of the declarations against American policy in general. The Cuban leaders can see that the Americans cannot ravage around freely in the Caribbean and the Soviet Union can defend the country's sanctity. They can also witness that Kennedy has given up aggressive experiments for a time and has taken measures to control Cuban emigrants. The head of the American Department of the MID [MFA; Ministry of Foreign Affairs] has considered recently that, although the Cuban crisis cannot still be looked upon as being solved, the tension has decreased considerably in the past weeks. There are still provocations and they can expect them in the future too, but it seems that it is not so important any more for Kennedy to maintain the tension in Cuba and American politics is paying attention mainly to other international issues. Kennedy can see that the Soviet Union always stands up for Cuba and Cuba has not become isolated. Fidel Castro's visit to the Soviet Union warned even the American leading circles to take a more sober position. Comrade [Vladimir] Bazikin has said that they are not sending a high level Soviet delegation this year to Cuba's national holiday on 26 July, because Comrade Khrushchev is expected to visit Cuba in the near future. This will probably take place in August. At the celebrations of 26 July last year, the Soviet Union was represented by Comrade Nina Popova, and they are likely to send a similar delegation to Havana this year as well.

During the conversation Comrade Bazikin confirmed that the Cuban press had published the letter of the Chinese CP. It is difficult to understand why the Cuban comrades considered this necessary.

As a result of the talks of the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963, the Soviet-Cuban goods exchange agreement concerning the year of 1963 was signed on 6 February 1963. According to the agreement, the Soviet Union is going to supply Cuba with crude oil and oil-products, black and non-ferrous metal, artificial fertilizers, chemical materials, sawn timber, cellulose, paper, cotton, various machinery, instruments, wheat, wheat flour, animal and vegetable fat, canned meat, medicine and other industrial, agricultural articles and articles of consumption to Cuba. In exchange Cuba supplies the Soviet Union with sugar, alcohol, articles containing nickel, tobacco, cigars and other articles.

The Soviet government provides Cuba with a long-term loan under the best conditions to counterbalance their advantage concerning the balance of foreign trade.

At present, the Soviet Union is on the first place in Cuba's foreign trade, about half of it concerns the Soviet Union. Such important needs of the people's economy as, for example, crude oil and oil-products, mineral artificial fertilizers, sulfur, asbestos, cotton, sawn timber, trucks and special cars, machine-tools and a lot of other important needs are satisfied completely from Soviet imports. Similarly, it is the Soviet Union that provides Cuba's population with bread and wheat flour completely.

Besides this, the Soviet Union also provides technical-scientific help to Cuba. Concerning the geological research work, the reconstruction of metallurgy works, power plants, oil-processing factories, car service stations; and concerning the building of educational institutions, the development of nickel and chemical industry, irrigation work and hospital equipment, Cuba receives considerable help from the Soviet Union.

A direct maritime and air connection has been established between the Soviet Union and Cuba. There is also a direct phone and telegraph connection between the two countries. In the Soviet Union there are a great many Cuban students, and a lot of Cuban workers attend professional re-training courses in the Soviet Union.

In 1960 an agreement was signed on Soviet-Cuban cultural and scientific cooperation. Since then they have laid down in cultural work plans the specific actions of cooperation every year. In the past three years the volume of cultural and scientific exchange has almost trebled. The work plan of 1963 signed in March (similarly to previous work plans) reflects the Soviet comrades' intention to help in all of its points. In 1963 about 350 specialists are travelling to Cuba and about

400 Cubans to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union provides Cuba with help in all spheres of culture and science, mainly in the training of specialists and in the organization of new institutions to be set up. In the near future about 120 Soviet specialists are travelling to Cuba to help with the building of a technical network, and numerous professors and university lecturers are going there to convey their experience in teaching economics. At present 100 Russian-language teachers work in Cuba and 75 would-be language teachers and translators study in the Soviet Union. This year about 360 Cubans attend the Soviet Union's higher education institutions (out of them 138 students will start their studies this year).

According to the cultural and scientific work plan, a group of 25 Soviet artists, the ballet of the Great Theater and, at the request of Comrade Fidel Castro, probably the Ukrainian Popular State Ensemble will travel to Cuba. In the Soviet Union the Cuban popular dance ensemble and popular orchestra will appear as guest-artists. They will organize the week of Cuban and Soviet films respectively to show the latest films of the other countries. The Soviet Union will send an exhibition of books, graphics; and posters to Cuba and will receive an exhibition of theatrical scenery. Besides the above, a great many directors [and] choreographers will travel on study trips to the Soviet Union. The work plan prescribes the regular exchange of publications between the central libraries; too.

The societies of artists (writers, composers, journalists, architects, theatrical and fine art artists, etc.) will exchange delegations according to the work plan. The Alliance of Soviet Fine Art Artists will send an industrial art exhibition to Cuba and will present a considerable part of the material to the Cuban comrades.

There is remarkable progress in health and sports relations between the two countries as well. At the request of the Cuban comrades, several expert physicians travel to Cuba, in the field of sports, apart from the various tournaments; the work plan includes sending Soviet trainers to Cuba.

According to the work plan, there will be a regular exchange of programs between the Soviet and Cuban radios and televisions.

The Soviet-Cuban scientific cooperation will become a lot wider through the agreement on scientific cooperation signed in Moscow recently. The Soviet comrades will provide help in the solution of various scientific problems and organizational help in the organization of a science academy in Cuba.

From the above it is clear that, in the present stage of Soviet-Cuban cultural and scientific cooperation, the most important factor is the help of Soviet comrades in training specialists in the various fields of science, education and culture and the experience they convey in the organization of the newly formed Cuban institutions.

I request you to send a summary report on the development and present situation of Hungarian-Cuban relations so that the Soviet organs could be informed about them.

Ambassador

[József SZIPKA]

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



DOCUMENT No. 24

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Reactions to Fidel Castro's Trip to the Soviet Union, 23 June 1963

The embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

255/ 1963/ top secret Written: in four copies

Typed by: Elemérné Vajda three to Center one to Embassy

Havana, 23 June 1963

Subject: The reactions in

Cuba to Fidel Castro's trip to the Soviet Union

Supplement: one

We still cannot assess the consequences of Fidel Castro's trip to the Soviet Union, little time has passed since his return.

But what are the results and reactions that can already be seen and heard?

What we have to emphasize first of all are the progress in socialist competition and the definite increase in efforts made in the field of production. Party organization has accelerated remarkably, even in the country local organizations and district committees are formed one after the other. The Cuban daily press and magazines deal with the details of the visit continuously, they always publish pictures of the visit and they deal a lot more with the SU than before. It is true, however, that the Cuban press—including the party paper, HOY [TODAY] also—published the 25 points of the Chinese party and the Chinese bulletin, the Sinhua [Xinhua, the Chinese state news agency—ed], is full of anti-Tito articles based on the Chinese press and cites the news of the Albanian press a lot, but the Cuban papers have not taken over anything since Fidel's return apart from the 25 points.

Out of the photos of Fidel Castro's trip, the party's agitation [and] propaganda committee has organized an exhibition, where the masses go as on a pilgrimage.

The public opinion is satisfied with the visit. The ordinary Cubans usually emphasize two things: the question of the price of sugar and the increase in Cuba's international prestige.

In the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs the general reaction *I have talked to 5-6 higher employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the question/* is the following: the visit has proved that Fidel Castro is not the "puppet" of the Soviets, Comrade Khrushchev talked to him as to an equal. Generally the grandiose reception has calmed down the agitation of Cuban national dignity of last October.

Reactions among the writers, artists, and the intelligentsia are quite weak, except for the more serious economic and technical intelligentsia, who were happy about Fidel's statement that the economic way of looking at things should be enhanced, people should think "in an economic way."

But the majority of writers and artists were indifferent to the visit. As they have a great fear of the SU's cultural policy, they do not like socialist realism, they worry about their "artistic freedom." I have talked to Fayad Jamis about this question, who—although he did not agree with this—said it would be completely impossible today in Cuba to apply the SU's cultural political principles. Fidel does not want to do so either.

The western diplomats accredited to Cuba stress mainly the following: Khrushchev managed to win Fidel over to his side in the Soviet-Chinese dispute. This opinion is shared by the French, English, and Egyptian counselors, [and] the Indian charge d'affaires, who recorded the fact with satisfaction. I will report on the English ambassador's opinion elsewhere.

The new Israeli charge d'affaires, who was on a first visit to me on 21 June, said that the normalization of North-American relations—despite the fact that Fidel Castro offered to do so repeatedly in his television interview—could be hardly imagined before the American presidential elections [in November 1964].

The visit stirred the Cuban anti-Communist emigration too. According to unverifiable news [reports], in the past two or three weeks there have been several attempts of landing and infiltration by small groups of 8 to 10 people without central direction. The aim of the Cuban emigration having their headquarters in Florida is to press the US government to make an official promise according to which if the Soviet army in Cuba interfered in putting down a Cuban "internal revolt similar to the Hungarian uprising of 1956," the USA would provide immediate military help.

The aim of the anti-Castro Cuban inroads is probably to provoke “Soviet interference” and to make it possible to turn to the US government with such an accusation.

I consider it unnecessary to emphasize that there is no danger of internal revolt. There are smaller active counter-revolutionary groups, but the Cuban army and militia are eliminating them one after the other.

Erzsébet Görög
chargé d'affaires ad interim

to Comrade Foreign Minister Péter János
Budapest

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



DOCUMENT No. 25

Views of Polish Leader Władysław Gomułka on the Cuban Proposal to Join the Warsaw Pact, 20 November 1963

[...]

On behalf of Cuba, Comrade Fidel Castro has suggested that Cuba should join the Warsaw Treaty. We believe that this suggestion is of great importance if it were to be put forward officially (so far it has not been).

We believe that by realizing this it would meet with total disapproval in the capitalist world. We would not support their entry and there are several reasons for this:

1) Cuba's accession would fundamentally change the present character of the Warsaw Treaty. Now, the emphasis in the Warsaw Treaty is on defense against the FRG's [Federal Republic of Germany's] militarist demands and imperialist tendencies. The treaty does not deal with the entire world, but rather primarily with West Germany. In case of the [Cuban] entry, the nature and fundamental principles of the treaty would have to be changed, and it should be expanded to the entire world. In our opinion, at present this would not be a correct move and this would not be the opportune action even against the United States.

2) The accession of Cuba would not mean the increase of her security; on the contrary, Cuba would likely provoke greater threats against the country.

3) By Cuba's joining [the Warsaw Treaty], the atmosphere of the Cold War would return and would surely influence the ongoing détente process unfavorably within the international political community.

The United States would consider this action as if the Soviet Union has stationed missiles in Cuba, it would create a war scare and would turn international public opinion against us.

Cuba is so far away geographically [from Europe] that when thinking realistically we should know that we cannot support or defend the country immediately. However, the United States would surely take more severe actions against Cuba. Our [positive] decision on Cuba's entry would be beneficial for [US President John F.] Kennedy, since by this he would feel justified and relieved from his publicly announced responsibilities concerning Cuba.⁵⁵

In case of signing [a treaty with Cuba], according to the Warsaw Treaty, armed forces, Soviet armed forces, thus nuclear weapons could and should be shipped to Cuba. In this case the critical situation that occurred two years ago [*sic*: one year ago] would be repeated. Kennedy then could make the world believe that the Warsaw Treaty does not serve the purpose of defense against the Federal Republic of Germany but rather the purpose of attacking the United States.

Since [in such a case] the United States would feel that her territories are threatened, they would surely attack Cuba more severely, with diversion, boycott, stopping ships, etc. All this would influence also international trade unfavorably.

Last but not least this would strengthen unity within NATO.

Against the counter-revolutionary diversion there is no way to protect Cuba, and as a sanction—it is difficult to imagine—to throw saboteurs to Turkey or Greece or to torpedo Western ships.

Diversions of the United States are carried out by conventional weapons, as it is close geographically, alas, there is no need for nuclear weapons. We however, could not grant any support by traditional means, only by nuclear weapons. However, in principle we only apply nuclear arms for defensive purposes, surely not for attacking. We will never initiate an attack, while in case of a diversion in Cuba we wouldn't even realize who the aggressor really was. However, in case we and the United States would intervene, it would surely result in a [major] war.

If Cuba formally requests to join member-states of the Warsaw Treaty, we will decline. Unfortunately Fidel's suggestion is not new and he continues to force this idea onwards determinedly which is the reason why this issue is so serious.

The Cuban leaders somewhat feel suspicious about us and the Soviet Union. Cuba fears to be left alone. On the other hand, on certain issues they do not support the position of the Soviet Union. They did not sign the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Concerning the Warsaw Treaty, if Cuba were to take action, they will surely apply pressure, the Soviet Union will find herself in a hard situation, declining the proposition will surely be difficult. These issues were discussed between [Polish Foreign Minister] comrade [Adam] Rapacki and comrade [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromiko who fully shared our opinion.

We have been informed about that comrade Khrushchev intends to return Castro's visit [to Moscow in the Spring of 1963] and travel to Cuba. Prior to this the debate [on Cuba's accession] in the Warsaw Treaty⁵⁶ would surface, hence our intention of discussing this issue with the Hungarian comrades.

[...]

[Source: *Notes on Władysław Gomułka's views on the issues of international politics. 20 November 1963. Minutes of the HSWP Political Committee session, 26 November 1963, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/320. ő. e. Translated for CWIHP by Sabine Topolánszky.*]

Notes

1 Csaba Békés, Ph.D. is founding director of the Cold War History Research Center (www.coldwar.hu) and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Political Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, both in Budapest. He is also Associate Professor at Corvinus University of Budapest and a recurring visiting professor at Columbia University. His main field of research is Cold War history, the history of East-West relations, Hungarian foreign policy after World War II and the role of the East Central European states in the Cold War.

2 Melinda Kalmár, Ph.D. is an independent historian and an associate researcher of the Cold War History Research Center in Budapest. Her main field of research is the history of the Communist system and its ideology in Hungary, 1945–1990. Her recently completed monograph on the topic, based on a 25 year archival research, will be published in 2013.

3 About the Cuban missile crisis see, e.g., Vladislav M. Zubok and Constantine V. Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 258–274; and Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *“One Hell of a Gamble”: Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy, 1958–1964* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1997). See also articles and documents on

Cuban missile crisis published in the CWIHP Bulletin, esp. issues no. 5 (Spring 1995) and 8/9 (Winter 1996/1997).

4 Earlier Khrushchev—since the facts could not be verified—did everything he could to make the world believe that the Soviet Union possessed a huge arsenal of intercontinental missiles, and thus was way ahead of the United States in this field. In an October 1961 speech, US deputy defense secretary Roswell Gilpatric made clear that in fact the reverse was the case. It turned out that in 1962 the US had four times more ICBMs than the Soviet Union. Fursenko and Naftali, op. cit., p. 171. In the following years the disadvantage continued to grow until 1967, and finally only in 1969 the Soviet Union managed to exceed the number of the United States' intercontinental missiles.

5 Due to Khrushchev's demand Kennedy secretly agreed to dismantle the American Jupiter missiles which were installed in Turkey. Since this formally required the approval of NATO, it did not happen until the following spring. About this secret Soviet–American deal only very few officials—including the President, his brother, Robert Kennedy, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk—knew in the US administration.

6 Fursenko and Naftali, op.cit., pp. 281–283.

7 Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the US Dobrynin to the USSR Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962, CWIHP Virtual Archive, www.cwihip.org.

8 On a new concept of superpower cooperation during the Cold War see Csaba Békés, “Cold War, Détente and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution,” in Klaus Larres and Kenneth Osgood, eds., *The Cold War after Stalin's Death: A Missed Opportunity for Peace?* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), pp. 213–233.

9 See Csaba Békés: “Titkos válságkezeléstől a politikai koordinációig. Politikai egyeztetési mechanizmus a Varsói Szerződésben, 1954–1967” [“From secret crisis management to political coordination. Political coordinating mechanism in the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1967”], in János M. Rainer, ed., *Múlt századi hétköznapiak. Tanulmányok a Kádár rendszer kialakulásának időszakáról*. [Everydays in the past century. Essays on the period of the emerging of the Kádár regime] (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2003), pp. 26–30.

10 After the Cuban missile crisis the combat readiness ended in Hungary on 22 November 1962. The tendency which started in the Spring of 1961 continued, therefore the defense expenditure was increased again in this period. According to the proposal of the Ministry of Defense in September 1962 the number of the army was to be raised to 85,000 by 1964, and 92–95,000 by 1970. In reality the increase became much more dynamic: in August 1963 the real headcount was already 106,400, and the planned number for 1970 was 120–122,000. Report of Lajos Fehér to the Political Committee, 30 August 1963. MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/312. ő. e. See also: the Introduction to Hungary and the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1989. Documents on the Impact of a Small State within the Eastern Bloc. Edited by Csaba Békés and Anna Locher, Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, web site: www.isn.ethz.ch/php, 2003.

11 Report from the Session of the HSWP PC, 23 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/280. ő. e.

12 It was published in the HSWP's daily, *Népszabadság* on 24 October 1962.

13 Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Ministers, 25 October 1962. MOL, XIX-A-83-a-245/1962 ő. e.

14 No written records have been found on Grechko informing the Hungarians about the situation concerning the crisis at that stage, only a vague reference is available about his "oral instruction," obviously by telephone (Document 8.). It is also possible that Moscow's ambassador in Hungary provided some information to the Hungarian leaders, since according to the minutes of the CPSU Presidium meeting discussing the Cuban situation on 22 October, "the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should inform Ambassadors representing the countries in the Warsaw Treaty," A. A. Fursenko, ed., *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954–1964* [CPSU CC Presidium, 1954–1964], Vol. 1, Chernovye protokoly nye zapisi zasedanii, stenogrammy, postanovleniya [Draft Protocols of Meetings, Stenographic Records, and Decrees] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003). Available in English at <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/kremlin>. Nevertheless, no record of such information has yet been found in the Hungarian archives.

15 Minutes of the HSWP Political Committee, 2 November 1962, MOL, M-KS-288.f. 5./281. ő.e., Minutes of the HSWP Secretariat, 2 November 1962, L, M-KS-288.f. 7./ 146. ő. e.

16 *Népszabadság*, 26 October 1962.

17 Speech of János Kádár at the party conference in Budapest, 31 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288.f. 11. 1048. ő. e.

18 Information report about the reactions to [lit. "echo"] the American provocation against Cuba, 24 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288.f. 11/1038. ő. e., Note about the reactions to the American provocation against Cuba, 26 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 11/1041. ő. e.

19 Minutes of the special closed session of the HSWP PC, 5 November 1962. MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5./281/1. ő. e.

20 Greville Maynard Wynne (1919 –1990) published his memoirs quite soon after his release. See *The Man from Moscow: The Story of Wynne and Penkovsky* (London: Hutchinson, 1967).

21 János Kádár's account on his Moscow visit at the session of the HSWP CC, 12 November 1962, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 4/60. ő. e.

22 Raymond L. Garthoff, "When and Why Romania Distanced Itself from the Warsaw Pact," *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 5 (Spring 1995), p. 111.

23 Document No. 20. On Poland, see also Wanda Jarzabek, "Hope and Reality: Poland and the CSCE, 1964–1989," *CWIHP Working Paper* No. 56 (May 2008); Douglas Selva, "The Warsaw Pact and the German Question, 1955–1970," in Mary Heiss and S. Victor Papacosma, eds., *NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Intra-bloc Conflicts* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2008), pp. 178–192.

24 The Hungarian leadership first proposed the establishment of the Committee of Foreign Ministers as early as 1958 but the Soviets did not even reply to the suggestion at the time. See Baráth Magdolna, "Magyarország a szovjet diplomáciai iratokban 1957–1964," in *Múlt századi hétköznapok*, 79. The forming of this body was originally decided on at the first meeting of the WP Political Consultative

Committee in January, 1956 in Prague, but no action followed that decision. As is known, it was eventually established in 1976.

25 Account of János Kádár on the visit of a party and government delegation in the Soviet Union, Minutes of the HSWP PC session, 31 July 1963, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/309. ő. e.

26 See the Introduction by Csaba Békés to *Records of the Meetings of the Warsaw Pact Deputy Foreign Ministers, 1964–1989*, edited by Csaba Békés, Anna Locher, Christian Nuenlist, Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, www.isn.ethz.ch/php, 2005.

27 Fursenko and Naftali, op. cit. 171.

28 Document No. 16.

29 Document No. 16.

30 Document No. 16.

31 Document No. 16.

32 Document No. 18.

33 Document No. 18.

34 Document No. 19.

35 Not published—ed.

36 Guevara actually made these documents public during his speech on 8 August 1961 to the conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay. See Guevara, "Economics Cannot Be Separated from Politics," 8 August 1961, and reproduced at www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1961/08/08/1961.htm—ed.

37 This paragraph was added to the document later on a special sheet titled „Insertion”—trans.

38 In July 1961 three revolutionary organizations were merged to form the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI), acting as the Communist party of Cuba. Soon, in March 1962, it was reorganized as the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution (PURSC) which, eventually was renamed the Communist Party of Cuba in 1965—CB and MK.

39 Just before coming to Cuba, Ben Bella had stopped in Washington and met with US President Kennedy—ed.

40 N.P. Dagajev, Colonel General was head of the 10th group at the Soviet general staff. At the time this organ was in charge of coordination with the Warsaw Pact member states' military leadership—CB and MK.

41 The Hungarian government's statement was published in the HSWP's daily, *Népszabadság*, on 25 October. The declaration of the Hungarian government—CB and MK.

42 The Hungarian government declaration adopted on 23 October was published in *Népszabadság* on 25 October. It is worth noting that Kádár gives no explanation, why the declaration was published only on 25 October, and not the day before, if preparing it had allegedly been so urgent that an ad hoc group had to do it on behalf of the government—CB and MK.

43 Jenő Köteles, lieutenant-general—First deputy minister of defence who was acting minister while Minister of Defence Lajos Czinege was hospitalized during the crisis—CB and MK.

44 Indeed, Kádár received the Cuban ambassador along with two journalists of the Cuban paper *Revolution* and their conversation was published on the front page of *Népszabadság* next to the Hungarian government declaration on 25 October—CB and MK.

45 A detailed account on the mass meeting, including the speeches of deputy prime minister Gyula Kállai and Cuban ambassador Quintin Pino Machado, was published in *Népszabadság* on 26 October. At the rally a message was adopted to be sent to UN Secretary-General U Thant asking for his mediation to solve the crisis—CB and MK.

46 The Soviet government declaration of 23 October was published in *Népszabadság* on 24 October—CB and MK.

47 Cardinal Mindszenty, the head of the Hungarian Catholic Church, sought refuge at the US legation on 4 November 1956 at the news of the Soviet military invasion, crushing the Hungarian revolution of 1956. He stayed at the mission for fifteen years, eventually leaving Hungary in 1971, after long and complicated negotiations among Hungary, the US, and the Vatican—CB and MK.

48 Here and below, the term “Political Committee” is used for this top-ranking party body, which was functionally equivalent to the “Political Bureau” or “Politburo” as it was called in some Communist countries, but not in Hungary—CB and MK.

49 This Central Committee meeting was dedicated to discussing the report of the Political Committee for the forthcoming 8th congress of the HSWP that was held in November 1962—CB and MK.

50 Beck is obviously talking about the lack of experience of the current, post-World War II generation in Cuba and when making general comments on the country’s history, he fails to remember the long struggle for independence from Spain in the nineteenth century. His claim that the present leaders know nothing “the participation of large masses in the revolutionary fight” clearly indicates that he regarded the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro as more a coup d’état than a genuine popular uprising—CB and MK.

51 Mátyás Rákosi—Head of the Hungarian Communist Party and the Hungarian Workers’ Party from 1945 through July 1956—CB and MK.

52 Mikoyan talked about his visit to Cuba in the first days of November 1962—CB and MK.

53 This was a serious obfuscation. While the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party indeed placed Rákosi and his clique on top of their “four reasons of the counterrevolution” list in December 1956, in official Soviet propaganda the main instigators of the 1956 events were the “Western imperialists”—CB and MK.

54 See Document No. 16.

55 An evident allusion to Kennedy’s political commitment not to invade Cuba in exchange for Khrushchev’s agreement to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba—ed.

56 Eventually no such debate took place and the Cuban proposal was never discussed in the Warsaw Pact—CB and MK.



Poland, Cuba, and the Missile Crisis, 1962: Ciphred Telegrams from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Warsaw

Documents obtained and introduced by James G. Hershberg, and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska

As a loyal Warsaw Pact ally of the Soviet Union, communist Poland dutifully endorsed Moscow's decisions and actions during the Cuban Missile Crisis, harshly criticized Washington, and loudly supported revolutionary Cuba against the threat of "imperialist" aggression. However, these public stands masked somewhat more nuanced views that included occasional disagreement with Fidel Castro's revolutionary government; recognition of occasional Soviet-Cuban tensions, especially after Nikita Khrushchev's decision, over Castro's head and without advance consultation with Havana, to withdraw Soviet missiles from the island under UN inspection; and acknowledgments of varying currents of opinion within the Cuban leadership and population.¹

Moreover, the Polish communist leadership, despite their fealty to the Kremlin, was not given advance notice of the secret Soviet missile deployment, and had only strictly limited enthusiasm for the notion of risking World War III for the sake of defending Cuba. A year after the missile crisis, Polish leader Władysław Gomułka, in private consultations with Warsaw Pact comrades, disdained the idea of allowing Cuba to join the alliance.²

For the most part, Polish diplomats left policy determination to the higher political (and ideological, i.e., communist party) level, and focused on reporting information to their superiors in Warsaw, led by Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki. And here the documents printed below offer a fresh source of hard information on a multitude of topics, including inter-communist interactions, often tightly cloaked at the time, not only on Polish-Cuban relations but Soviet-Cuban ties and on Soviet-Polish coordination regarding Cuba. They also provide first-hand, contemporaneous testimony as to the actions and atmosphere in Havana, Moscow, and Washington as the crisis occurred—albeit through the lens of Polish diplomacy.

The translated documents presented below, with one exception³, are ciphred telegrams (*szyfrogramy*) from Polish diplomatic outposts in 1962 that were obtained by the author during a research trip to Warsaw in 2003 from the *Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych* [Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] and translated for CWIHP by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).

Those preceding the outbreak of the missile crisis in mid-October 1962 cover several important events in that eventful year. The cables from Poland's ambassador in Havana, Bolesław Jeleń, in January-February concern Cuba's perspective on the gathering of the Organization of American

States (OAS) which occurred in Punta del Este, Uruguay, and took action, at Washington's behest, to further isolate Havana. Several additional cables in March-April concern what was known as the "Escalante Affair," a still-murky episode in which Fidel Castro purged, on the charge of "sectarianism," some members of the government affiliated with the *Partido Socialista Popular* (Popular Socialist Party (PSP), i.e., the pro-Moscow communist party, starting with its leader, Aníbal Escalante, who was forced to go into exile in the USSR; the Castroist leadership also indicated displeasure with the Soviet ambassador, Sergei Kudryavtsev, who was promptly recalled and replaced, putting Soviet-Cuban relations "on the verge of a crisis," as one important account states.⁴

Shortly thereafter, further cables from Warsaw's embassy in Havana document a June 1962 visit to Cuba by Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki, who met with Castro and sought to overcome what the Cuban leader complained was a "certain cooling in our mutual relations"—and by extension with the broader Soviet bloc in the wake of the Escalante affair. Rapacki's controversial visit also caused friction with Washington, arousing criticism from anti-Castro activists that complicated the Kennedy Administration's efforts to convince Congress to ease restrictions on trade with Poland.⁵ (There were some rumors at the time that Rapacki also sought to mediate tensions between Moscow and Havana, or Washington and Havana, or both—but no evidence has emerged that he made any progress if indeed he tried.)⁶

In September 1962, several Jeleń cables report contacts both on assessment of purported mounting US threats to commit aggression against Cuba and Soviet assurances of aid, meant to deter any such American attack—but no direct indication of the dramatic secret action that Khrushchev was already taking to send nuclear weapons to the island.

As the crisis actually breaks out, the documents enable to reader to follow its evolution through Polish embassy reports from Havana, Moscow, and Washington. Although efforts to obtain records of Gomułka's consultations in Moscow with Khrushchev in late October/early November were unfortunately unsuccessful—the Polish leader, like other Warsaw Pact notables, came to mark the annual celebrations of the Bolshevik Revolutions—a cable from Warsaw's envoy to the Kremlin does record a noteworthy conversation with Aleksei Kosygin, who would become the Soviet premier after helping to oust Khrushchev two years hence. "The situation of the

past few days has been exceptionally tense,” said Kosygin on October 30. “We were on the brink of war.”

The cables from Havana record the dramatic shift in mood from readiness to fight off an American invasion to shock, puzzlement, and even chagrin at Moscow’s decision to remove the missiles—and then the complex and mysterious maneuvering in Cuban-Soviet relations as Anastas Mikoyan, Khrushchev’s closest associate in the Kremlin and now his emissary to inform and, if possible, mollify Fidel Castro, flew to Cuba and spent several weeks in talks with the Cubans.⁷ The Polish reports of his talks with colleagues, including of course the Soviet ambassador, Aleksandr Alekseyev, but also others, both communists and non-communist, significantly enrich the record of the “secret” Soviet-Cuban crisis of November 1962 that followed the far better known US-Soviet crisis during the “thirteen days” the previous month. And, given the continued reluctance of Cuban authorities to release more than a limited number of internal records regarding the international aspects of the crisis and its aftermath—including its political and diplomatic contacts with the Soviets—the Polish records also provide invaluable evidence as to the reactions of Cuban leaders to developments before orthodox interpretations took hold (especially once Fidel Castro gave his own views).

Even though the Poles naturally lacked insider access to the secret decision-making deliberations of the Kennedy administration, their ambassador in Washington was able to report some intriguing tidbits and gossip from well-informed or at least well-connected Washingtonians such as White House aides Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and Walt Rostow and journalists Charles Bartlett and columnist Joe Alsop. And bringing it all together, in late November, the Polish ambassador in Washington reported a conversation with Anastas Mikoyan, who was passing through on his way back to Moscow after his long visit to Cuba. Mikoyan described his conversations both with John Kennedy and with the Cuban leadership—and, not surprisingly, put a rather rosy spin on the latter, compared with the version of those exchanges that emerges from internal Soviet records. The Poles did not get the full story, but they certainly heard more than US officials—let alone uncleared American newspaper readers—could easily about what was happening inside the complicated communist realm.

DOCUMENTS

Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 2 January 1962

Ciphergram No. 150

Dispatched from Havana on 01.03.1962 at 23:30 and received at 01.05.1962 at 13:50

Came to the Decoding Department at 01.05 at 16:50

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI⁸

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ⁹

...

5) There is an opinion among a small group of the heads of Latin American diplomatic posts that the US would push through the sanctions against Cuba, except for the military ones, as far as possible. The English and French [ambassadors] are implying that they are, once again, afraid that the US would make a mistake in their assessment of the internal mood in Cuba. During the group discussions with Western diplomats, the USSR ambassador emphasizes that the danger exists of expanding the conflict if a direct US intervention [in Cuba were to take place]. [However,] in a personal conversation with me, he expressed some doubt as to the possibility of a direct US intervention given the current situation.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 17 January 1962

Ciphergram No. 764

Dispatched from Havana on 01.17.1962 at 18:30 and received at 01.18.1962 at 14:04

Came to the Decoding Department at 01.18 at 16:50

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI,¹⁰ Urgent

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ¹¹

[This report] regarding Punta del Este¹² [has been compiled based on] the conversations with, among others, Blas Roca [Caldeiro],¹³ [Raul] Roa [Garcia],¹⁴ and [Carlos] Lechuga.¹⁵

- 1) Colombia is introducing four draft resolutions:
 - a. Calling on Cuba to break its relations with the communist bloc.
 - b. The statement saying that the socialist system is incompatible with the principles of the OAS

[Organization of American States].

- c. The obligation not to receive military bases of socialist countries by the American nations.
 - d. Appointing a permanent inter-American commission for control of communist infiltration and giving it extensive powers in the area of membership applications and executive powers. [This commission would be] analogous to the one which was formed during World War II in 1942. In practice, such a commission would have the authority to limit the sovereignty of the members of the OAS; [however,] especially strong resistance is being expected as far as the formation of such a commission.
- 2) The United States and some other participants are expected to introduce corrections to the above mentioned resolution drafts in order to apply sanctions according to Article 8 of the Rio Treaty¹⁶ as the justification of the report of the International Peace Commission, which will be presented at Punta [del Este] ([these are] consequences of the Peruvian resolution in the OAS, see our previous report).
 - 3) Argentina's position is still not clear. It is expected that [Argentina will introduce] drafts, stating that the communist system is incompatible with that of the inter-American [system], as well as [drafts] defining the deadline for Cuba to adopt [a political system] of a representative democracy (the latter point is still not completely specified).
 - 4) Mexico will not introduce its own drafts. It will question, from the legal point of view, the authority of the consultative organ of the OAS in the area of adopting resolutions which are going beyond those of the Rio [Treaty]. Such [resolutions] can only be adopted, according to the Mexican theory, by the same means that the treaty itself was adopted, that is, prior to the pan-American conference whose resolutions still need to be ratified. This approach opens up opportunities for possibly not adopting the resolutions from Punta [del Este]. Sanctions adopted according to the Rio Treaty (except for those in the military area), after all, apply to all of the [OAS] members.
 - 5) The latest changes within the Bolivian government, especially the [appointment] of their new foreign minister, is unfavorable to Cuba.
 - 6) It is expected that the following are Brazilian resolutions:

the [political] system [which is based on] the principles of Marxism-Leninism, is incompatible with that of the inter-American [system], [but] according to the principle of self-determination, Cuba has the right to adopt such a system. This fact itself therefore justifies the recognition of Cuba as a separate neutral status. Interlocutors (Roa): confirms the exchange of views [regarding this issue] with Brazil. [According to] Roca: they are assessing the Brazilian resolutions as cloudy, but also containing positive aspects, because they oppose [the imposition of] sanctions [on Cuba] and open up a possibility for conducting negotiations; the actual state of Cuba's international relations is neutralism.

7) Cuban tactics at Punta [del Este]:

[The adoption of an] offensive [position] by pointing out the aggressive aspects of the US; [the adoption of] flexible [tactics] in order to strengthen the trends which are against [imposing] sanctions [on Cuba] and those which are calling for further negotiations, but without compromising [Cuba's] already established internal system. ([Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos [Torrado] and [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez in the Cuban delegation represent the composed [calm] elements in the discussion, as opposed to the well-known nervous reactions of Roa)

8) According to Roca, they are moving the deadline for the massive People's Assembly from January 22 to January 28, because the Second Havana Declaration will be the response to the resolutions at Punta [del Este], and they are not going to be known yet on the 22nd. In addition, adopting the [Second Havana Declaration] could further complicate the negotiating position of Cuba at the [Punta del Este conference].

9) [This information is based on] the conversation with the Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto]: his definition of the Brazilian line is overall in accordance with our point 6 mentioned above in this cable. He states that one should not reject the possibility of reaching *modus vivendi* under the conditions of Cuba's neutrality, and that one should create such conditions which would mold the Cuban system once Cuba is faced with reality. Brazil is not going to break relations with Cuba.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 25 January 1962

Ciphergram No. 1155

Dispatched from Havana on 01.25.1962 at 21:

00 and received at 01.26.1962 at 13:42

Came to the Decoding Department at 01.26 at 17:30

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI,¹⁷

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ¹⁸

- 1) The information we are getting here from Punta [del Este] is fragmentary. We have noted disappointment here caused by the position assumed by Mexico, which has been far removed from the one they have assumed until now. In [Blas] Roca's article (see our claris 15), one can sense the allusion to Mexico's new position. [Carlos] Olivares, with whom I had talked today, sees this change as the expression of the complexity and inconsistency of the Mexican policy, but at the same time he allows for the possibility that Mexico is trying to create more space to maneuver at the negotiating table. According to Olivares, looking from the practical point of view, positive elements are predominant in the Brazilian position presented at Punta [del Este].
- 2) [This information has been compiled based on my conversation with [Aleksi I.] Adzhubei¹⁹ and [Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Sergei Mikhailovich] Kudryavtsev on the 24th of this month. Adzhubei pointed out that in his conversation with [Fidel Castro], Fidel decisively rejected the concept of "Finlandization"²⁰ of Cuba. On his part, Kudryavtsev emphasized that the Cuban delegation left [for Punta del Este] with a clear directive of exploiting the Brazilian concept in order to obtain a negotiating opportunity. A.[dzhubei] and K.[udryavtsev] think that neutralism of a Finnish type, although with some reservations, is an acceptable option. They are both in agreement that in Fidel's thinking the idea has not yet emerged as to reconciling his actual position as the people's leader on the [Latin American] continent with that of a national leader.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and

translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 3 February 1962

Ciphergram No. 150

Dispatched from Havana on 02.03.1962 at 17:00 and received at 02.03.1962 at 13:50

Came to the Decoding Department at 02.03.1962 at 16:00

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI²¹

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ²²

[Regarding the Eight Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of American States at] Punta del Este

- 1) There is no complete picture in the Cuban press regarding the resolutions adopted at [Punta del Este] and how each country voted on specific resolutions. Generally, there has been information published pertaining to the five adopted resolutions:
 - a. Cuba's exclusion from the inter-American system;
 - b. Cuba's exclusion from the inter-American defense committee;
 - c. Prohibition of supplying weapons and strategic materials to Cuba by the members of the OAS [Organization of American States];
 - d. "Solidarity towards progress;"
 - e. Concrete steps [taken by the OAS nations] to defend the [Western] Hemisphere.

It is still not known what other resolutions had been adopted. Also, the lack of the complete response to the adopted resolutions makes it all difficult to provide you with a fuller analysis.

- 2) [Based on] the conversations with, among others, ambassadors to USSR, Brazil, and Mexico, one can present the following remarks:
 - a. Given that the OAS charter does not allow for the exclusion of a nation [from the organization], they used an exclusion formula of [excluding] the current government of Cuba from its participation within

the borders of the OAS (see Article 32 of the OAS Charter).²³ The OAS Council was entrusted with the implementation of this resolution. The six abstaining countries [Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Bolivia, and Ecuador] do not agree even with this form of exclusion unless the charter is revised, a task that belongs to the pan-American conference. A complex discussion is expected to take place regarding this issue at the Council [meeting] of the OAS.

- b. According to Brazilian and Mexican [ambassadors], the conference at Punta del Este possessed the authority to exclude Cuba from the Defense Committee which is an autonomous organ associated with the OAS, but which is not subject to its authority.
 - c. It is not clear whether other than the prohibition of arms trade there were any other economic sanctions, as well as any concrete steps to defend the [Western] Hemisphere (with the possible application of the provisions of the fourth conference of [OAS] foreign ministers in 1951).
- 3) [Cuba's] exclusion from the [inter-American] system is also considered to be its exclusion from its obligations to the Rio Treaty. The Mexican and Brazilian [ambassadors] point out that it does not mean that Cuba is protected from the [Rio] treaty being used against it, since the sanctions included in Article 8 of the treaty²⁴ are foreseen to be used not only towards the countries which are associated with it. Both ambassadors assess that the resolution was carried out with the support of the necessary minimum of votes; [they assess this] as a defeat of the OAS and this is the fault of the United States; they stress that their governments did everything they could so such a conference would not take place. The result of such voting is unprecedented. In the case of the anti-communist [OAS] declaration [made] in Caracas in 1954, only Mexico and Argentina abstained from voting and only Guatemala voted against it.
 - 4) They are all of the opinion that because of [Cuba's] exclusion [from the OAS], the argument that the OAS [members should first turn to] the Security Council of the UN in case of a dispute between Cuba and the members of the OAS (see Article 20 of the OAS Charter)²⁵ is no longer valid.
 - 5) There is a general opinion that the United States will exploit the decisions made at [the] Punta [del Este

conference] in order to further undertake anti-Cuban steps.

- 6) We still cannot discern as to how Cuba plans to counteract as far as the decisions made at Punta [del Este]. Among other things, there is speculation that Cuba will appeal to the UN on the basis of the fact that the OAS is a regional organization within the [jurisdiction] of the UN.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 5 February 1962

Ciphergram No. 1675

Dispatched from Havana on 02.05.1962 at 20:30 and received at 02.06.1962 at 13:35

Came to the Decoding Department at 02.06.1962 at 15:40

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI²⁶

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ²⁷

- 7) The following conclusions can be derived from the conversations with some of the members of the Cuban delegation and the texts of the adopted resolutions at [The Eighth Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers] in Punta [del Este]:
 1. The United States was not able to obtain the sanctions to the extent initially proposed by Colombia. Even though the US has not achieved the maximum, it achieved quite a bit, including obtaining new tools which could be exploited in their future anti-Cuban actions.
 2. All of the resolutions (see the enumeration according to our claris 27) were adopted unanimously with Cuba voting against them. The unanimous vote pertained also to the political part of resolution IV²⁸ (only its legal and executive part in points 3 and 4)²⁹; as a result the entire resolution was adopted by a majority vote of 14 countries.

3. The connection between the principle of self-determination and the form of the so-called free elections has been achieved through resolutions I [Communist Offensive in America], III [Special Consultative Committee on Security Against the Subversive Action of International Communism], and IV [Holding of Free Elections].
4. The Security Commission [Resolution II] was initially thought out as one comprising of the members who were designated by the Inter-American Defense Committee. However, adopting a formula of selecting its members through the process defined in point 2-a of Resolution II³⁰ seems to tone down the original resolution. At the same time, points 1 and 2-c³¹ of this resolution may give the Committee far reaching powers.
5. Resolution VIII, point 2,³² opens up the possibility of further reaching economic sanctions than the suspension of non-existing arms trade.
- 8) The members of the Cuban delegation state that only Brazil showed a commendable position. They are expressing their disappointment with the attitude of Mexico [in handling] the problems at the conference.
- 9) The first opinions within the diplomatic corps regarding the Second Havana Declaration proclaimed on 4 February, express fears that it can further exacerbate the already worsening relations between the government of Latin America[n nations] and Cuba in the future.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 24 March 1962

Ciphergram No. 4098

Dispatched from Havana on 03.24.1962 at 18:00 and received at 03.25.1962 at 14:53

Came to the Decoding Department at 03.25.1962 at 19:30
To: [Director General Jerzy] MICHALOWSKI, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ³³

I. I am relaying the information presented today by Blas Roca³⁴ and Emilio Aragonés [Navarro]³⁵ (secretary of the ORI [Organizaciones Revolucionarias Intergradadas³⁶] to the heads of the diplomatic posts of the countries of the socialist camp. They asked that we relay this information to the central committees of [our] parties.

1. On the 22nd of this month, the national leadership of the ORI made a decision to exclude Anibal Escalante from the leadership of the ORI. A. E. remains a member of the ORI, but he's been removed from all the leadership positions.
2. [They said that the] motives [for the removal of Anibal Escalante were as follows]: as an organizational secretary of the ORI, A. E. used brutal and arbitrary methods of management, as well as intrigues aimed at concentrating control in his hands over the party and national apparatus. He used these methods towards other comrades regardless of their previous organizational membership [that is, whether they belonged to the former Popular Socialist Party or the "26th of July Movement"]. He managed to control of a series of ministries, among others, the Ministry of Internal Affairs; he undertook the steps in order to control the military cadres. A. E.'s arbitrary behavior could be already be detected in the 1940s, when he served in the leadership of the Popular Socialist Party, and later [when he was active in] the underground and [finally] after the collapse of the [Fulgencio Batista]³⁷ dictatorship. Various circumstances did not allow for putting an end to [Escalante's behavior] during these different periods.
3. The discussion related to the activities of A. E. began in February of this year under the older leadership. The resolution from the 22nd of this month was adopted without the participation of the new members of the current leadership (which was approved on the 8th of this month – see our Claris³⁸ 54), all of who did not participate in the previous phase of the discussion. [The resolution] will be presented to the public by Fidel [Castro]. The discussion focused only on [issues such as Escalante's] work methods and organizational matters, and not on the ideological issues.
4. The [Cuban] leadership will, unconditionally,

adopt methods of collective leadership. They will hold meetings once a week under the current composition (24 members). The secretariat meets daily regarding [making] current decisions. They accelerated the process of creating the Revolutionary Party Cells (the equivalent of our POP [Basic Party Organizations]). They have not openly carried out their activities everywhere until now; the[se] activities were predominant in workplaces, especially among the management and administration. The membership selection to the Revolutionary Party Cells will be carried out strictly by taking political and moral aspects into consideration. The party will be composed of the cadres and it should count no more than 10 thousand members. The [party] congress will take place no earlier than at the end of the year.

5. There will be changes in the positions of provincial committee secretaries in four provinces (there are six provinces overall [in Cuba]). [These changes] are not connected with the activities of A. E., and they are a result of the weaknesses [exhibited by] some of the current secretaries.
6. In order to streamline [the work of] some departments, there will be some changes in the leadership. The most significant change pertains to the position of the minister of internal trade, because the poor organizational situation in the area of distribution. These changes do not have any political background (see our Claris 69 – [Manuel] Luzardo – from the former Popular Socialist Party, Celia Sanchez – Fidel’s secretary until now).
7. There is going to be a change regarding the position of the head of the Security Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Brahanes is the one who is holding this position; he is a secretary and Fidel’s aide.

II. In our Claris 67, we have already reported that the members of the “26th of July Movement”³⁹ are numerically predominant in the secretariat and the commission. The only one from the former Popular Socialist Party⁴⁰ who is currently a member of the secretariat is Blas Roca (the function of the organizational secretary is fully held by [Emilio] Aragones). As far as the organizational commission, only Luzardo remains [as the member of the former Popular Socialist Party), and L. Pena holds a position in the syndical commission.

III. The information, which I presented in the first point of this cable, was relayed separately and individually to the ambassadors from the USSR, the PRC, and Albania, all of whom were not invited to the general meeting [of socialist countries]. [The North] Korean [ambassador] sent his secretary even though he attended a party soon before the meeting. The charge d’affaires represented the [North] Vietnamese embassy.

IV. Anibal Escalante – an old member of the leadership of the Popular Socialist Party and its long-time organizational secretary. He worked for the Comintern and represented the Popular Socialist Party at the conference of 81 [communist and workers’] parties.⁴¹ After the formation of the ORI, he served as the organizational secretary. He joined the new leadership of the ORI that was approved on the 8th of this month.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 5 April 1962

Ciphergram No. 4864

Dispatched from Havana on 04.05.1962 at 12:30 and received at 04.06.1962 at 14:17

Came to the Decoding Department at 04.07.1962 at 18:20

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI,⁴² EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ⁴³

- 1) The issue of the Escalante affair (see our ciphergram 101 [that is 4098] dated 03.24.1962) is still not entirely clear. Based on the knowledge we have acquired so far, it seems that the issue was broached to the leadership circles by Fidel [Castro] as a result of complaints [he received] regarding the fact that E[scalante] was removing those party members who were the members of the former “26th of July Movement” while staffing the party and state apparatus, as well as the local administration, [with his own people]. Also, the local organizations and institutions of the ORI [*Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas*]⁴⁴ included a minimal number of the active

party members of the former “26th of July Movement.” In practice, E. adopted the line of limiting the authority of the state administration and [strengthening that of] the party apparatus.

[As far as] the leadership of the ORI (which has been composed of the entire leadership of the former Popular Socialist Party [PSP] since March 8 of this year, to which eight leading party activists of the former “26th of July Movement” have been added (see our notes 2421/14/61 from July 10, 1961), the entirety of its organizational matters was concentrated in the hands of E. This fact did not seem to bother him. Also, it was not clear among the leaders of the former Popular Socialist Party as to the role of the party and the government in a socialist system. There was no division within the [Cuban] leadership between the members of the former PSP and the “26th of July Movement” regarding the E. affair. [Moreover], the methods adopted by E. were unanimously condemned. However, Fidel [Castro] accused the former leadership of the PSP for their inability to control the work [carried out by] E. and tolerating his methods, even though E.’s methods had been known before. Today, some of the members of the former PSP think that E.’s activities not only caused a great damage in the building of the state and party apparatus, but also influenced the emergence of anti-communist moods in Cuba.

2) Fidel’s presentation of the E. affair in his televised statement on March 26 caused a great shock. In some circles the statement was interpreted as the expression of deep rifts within the leadership between the old communists and the [members of the] former “26th of July Movement.” In some local organizations of the ORI, some of the old communists have been removed only because of their membership in the former organization [PSP]. The leadership reacted by announcing the communiqué which was signed by Fidel [Castro] (as the first secretary of the ORI) [and] which made all changes in local organizations impossible unless they were carried out with the permission of the state leadership. The situation became especially difficult for [the province of] Oriente where a commission of the secretariat, including [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos and Blas Roca, had to arrive in order to make organizational changes. There were expected changes in the leadership of the ORI in four provinces, but such changes were only made in two provinces (Oriente and Havana). In both cases, the positions of the first secretaries were appointed from among the combatants of the “26th of July Movement,” but those who were also former sympathizers of the ORI. (As far as Havana, Domenech, who was Fidel’s former

secretary, became the first secretary). There are some changes, which are expected as far as some positions in the CTC [Confederacion de Trabajadores de Cuba – The Workers’ Central Union of Cuba]. The entire campaign is being carried out under the banner of combating sectarianism and strengthening the revolutionary unity.

3) Escalante left for Moscow soon after his removal. According to [Soviet Ambassador Sergei Mikhailovich] Kudryavtsev, the [Cuban] leadership made a decision that E. should leave for one of the socialist countries. He chose the USSR and Fidel was the one who, allegedly, personally put in a request to facilitate E.’s reception by the USSR.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 14 April 1962

Ciphergram No. 5389

Dispatched from Havana on 04.14.1962 at 10:00 and received on 04.15.1962 at 13:55

Came to the Decoding Department at 04.15.1962 at 17:00

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI⁴⁵

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ⁴⁶

1) Your cable no. 4047 must have missed our cable no. 124 [see Ciphergram 4864]. Based on more information we obtained [regarding the Escalante affair], one can conclude that there are no rifts between the members of the former PSP [Popular Socialist Party] and the members of the former “26th of July Movement.” Due to the [condemnation of] the methods adopted by Escalante, there was some danger that some members of the former leadership of the PSP may be suspected for having anti-Castro tendencies. The issue, however, boiled down to [assessing] the principles of the party life as well as the methods of work adopted by E. himself. Old communists from the current leadership think that E. had dogmatic tendencies. Their mistakes, [they are saying], were: [1]

they did not draw appropriate conclusions from his activities before they began to work on the organizational unification [PSP and “the 26th of July Movement”]; [2] their inability to combat internal conservatism; [3] and their underestimation of the actual role of the “26th of July Movement” in the revolutionary process and the qualities of the new generation of communists. At the same time, it seems that these issues have not met with an understanding of a certain part of the old party apparatus of the former PSP which would fully overlap with the former leadership.

- 2) The summary of the personnel changes [within the Cuban leadership]: the position of the old communists has weakened within the central leadership of the ORI (see our Claris 101). The reorganization of three provincial committees has already taken place. In two of the provinces, the positions of first secretaries were taken by the activists from the former PSP (but not [its] sympathizers – see our cable no. 124 [actually Ciphergram 4864]. There are two old activists from the former PSP ([Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez [Minister – President of] INRA [Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria de Cuba] and [Manuel] Luzardo [Minister of] Domestic Trade). Within the overall changes that have taken place until now, there are no signs of removing [old] communists; however, there is an overall trend of rejuvenating the party cadres in order to increase the work effectiveness. The process of personnel changes has not yet ended.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 28 May 1962

Ciphergam No. 7922

Dispatched from Havana on 05.28.1962 at 20:30 and received at 05.29 at 06:25

Came to the Decoding Department at 05.29 at 09:30

To: [Director General Jerzy] MICHALOWSKI, Immediate, Very Urgent, Eyes Only

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ⁴⁷

I had a talk with the USSR Ambassador [Sergey] Kudryavtsev today (at his place).

1. K.[udryavtsev] informed me that he was recalled [back to Moscow] to work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Cuban government had already granted an agreement to his successor [Aleksandr] Alekseyev. K. is leaving next Friday or Sunday and therefore he will not be able to pay farewell visits, but he said that he would pay a visit to Fidel [Castro] and [President Osvaldo] Dorticos [Torrado]. The new ambassador (who is currently in Moscow on an official visit) is to arrive on Friday along with an agricultural delegation which is headed by [Sharof] Rashidov (deputy member of the CPSU Presidium [and First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party]). Alekseyev has been here since 1959, initially as a press correspondent and subsequently as the employee of the embassy for the matters of national military defense. He was then a counselor for cultural affairs (within the internal system [of the Soviet] embassy this means a Third Councilor).

On the one hand, the sudden departure of K., and the selection of a new ambassador on the other, point to the fact that this change is not normal. At the same time, it is noteworthy that after the changes within the leadership of ORI [*Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas* took place] at the end of March, there were many Soviet measures which meant to show [Soviet] support for Castro's policy and strengthening of their economic aid.

2. K. informed me that he had a talk with the [Cuban] president regarding deliveries of coke, emphasizing the gravity of the situation in this area and its political significance. He [Kudryavtsev] insisted that the matters be taken care of with our involvement, that is, that 35 thousand tons of coal be delivered to Poland to be turned into 22 thousand tons of coke. K. notified me that he asked Moscow to make all efforts to help the Cuban side.
3. Overall, [although] K. emphasized his support for Fidel's policy, he expressed concern about the stagnation within the party organization and [possible] political repercussions connected with people's moods caused by food shortages. He assesses [that] US tactics [are] aimed at [creating] internal repercussions [that are brought about by] economic difficulties.

Received by: [...]⁴⁸

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Foreign Ministry to Polish Embassy, Washington, 29 May 1962

Ciphergram No. 6543

Warsaw, 29 May 1962

URGENT

From: [Director General in the Foreign Ministry Przemysław] Ogrodziński⁴⁹

To: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK⁵⁰ - WASHINGTON [D.C.]

- 1) [Foreign Minister Adam] Rapacki is going to make an official visit to Cuba. The communiqué will be announced sometime between 1 and 4 June.
- 2) Prior to the communiqué's announcement, and without informing about the visit, it is important that you (or [Marian] Dobrosielski⁵¹) meet and talk with either [President's Special Representative and Adviser on African, Asian, and Latin American Affairs, and Ambassador at Large Chester] Bowles or someone appropriate in the Department of State, for example, [Counselor and Chair of the Policy Planning Council Walt] Rostow, regarding Cuba. The conversation should be of an unofficial nature (you can ask your interlocutor for lunch) and it should be aimed at getting to know [your interlocutor's] views on the current attitude and intentions of the US towards Cuba. During the course of the conversation, while showing that the hitherto American policy has made it impossible to [maintain] normal relations between Cuba and the United States, as well as it has been hurting the position of the United States in Latin America, you can outright ask: "what exactly do you want from Cuba?" Of course, you need to understand that we are far from interested in heating up our discussion with the United States over Cuba at the moment.

Received by:

Comrade Rapacki
Comrade Winiewicz
Comrade Michalowski
Comrade Milnikiel
Comrade Krajewski

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 29 May 1962

Ciphergram No. 7980

Dispatched from Havana on 05.29.1962 at 12:30 and received at 05.29.1962 at 20:24

Came to the Decoding Department at 05.29.1962 at 23:00

To: [Director General Jerzy] MICHALOWSKI, URGENT, Eyes Only

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ⁵²

Our [cable] 203.

- 1) Today's newspapers have published the information about the farewell visit of [Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Sergei Mikhailovich] Kudryavtsev with [President of Cuba Osvaldo] Dorticós [Torrado]. There is still no communiqué about the nomination of [Aleksandr] Alekseyev [for a new Soviet ambassador to Cuba].
- 2) The recall of K. coincides with the nomination of [Carlos] Olivares [Sanchez] to the position of the ambassador to Moscow. Although O. comes from the "26th of July Movement," he was closely connected with [Anibal] Escalante (who left for Moscow at the end of March of this year). There were allegedly suspicions here that the candidacy of O. will not be liked by the USSR. The most surprising is the selection of K. successor – this is rather unprecedented. Alekseyev as the [Soviet] embassy employee did not belong to the influential group and he always continued to maintain very close relations with [Anibal] Escalante. As of now, there are no commentaries regarding this issue. However, undoubtedly, there is

dissonance. At the same time, one can see clear signs of strengthening economic aid for Cuba by the USSR (the protocol of exchange of goods for 1962 has been seriously expanded; contracts for investment equipment; [Soviet] gifts in the area of medical equipment; and the gift of five fishing cutters [which] has not yet been published.

- 3) In connection with our cables 201 and 205, are we still keeping the dates of Rapacki's visit to Cuba? I am to see [Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa [García] either tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. Please send me your response regarding this matter (The new deputy foreign minister who replaced [Carlos] Olivares [Sanchez] is Professor Pelegrin Torras, an old communist activist.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droźniak), 1 June 1962

Ciphergram No. 8175

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 06.01.1962 at 18:30 and received on 06.02.1962 at 7:30

Came to the Decoding Department on 06.02.1962 at 7:30
To: [Director General in the Foreign Ministry Przemysław] Ogrodziński,⁵³ URGENT
From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŹNIAK⁵⁴

[This is a reply to] your cable no. 6543 [based on the information we received] from [Charles E. "Chip"] Bohlen/⁵⁵

- 1) Cuba has been currently removed from the list of priorities of US foreign policy. The development of events in Cuba, [which have been taking place] since the end of March of this year, has been less concerning for them than the previous situation. They have definitely given up the US military intervention and other violent [armed] attacks on Cuba, [because] they would only contribute to Cuba's prestige. They are counting on the fact that many kinds of difficulties, especially the economic ones, will force Cuba into making further changes in their hitherto policies and will eventually lead to [Fidel] Castro's fall.

In his [Bohlen's] opinion, [although] no fundamental change has taken place as far as the [US] attitude towards Cuba [is concerned], there has been a change in [US] tactics [towards Cuba] instead. Cuba continues to be potentially a location which can at any time become a main point of interest [for the United States] (this assessment made by Bohlen has been reflected [in the following]: other talks [we have conducted on the issue of Cuba?]; the [American] press' attitude which has been publishing very little on the subject of Cuba for the past few weeks; and [the US] attempts to move Cuban refugees to different parts of the United States instead of concentrating all of them in Miami.

- 2) B.[ohlen] confirms the content of the talks between [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk and [Soviet Ambassador Anatoly] Dobrynin, which we reported in our cable no. 460. The Americans are assessing that the USSR is not currently in any hurry to resolve the issue of Berlin. When it comes to a next meeting [between the Americans and the Soviets], they will wait for a Soviet initiative. B.[ohlen] thinks that the issue of Berlin will continue to constitute the most important element in [US] relations with the USSR and once this issue is taken care of, then they could come to an agreement [with the Soviets] in many other areas.

...

Received by: [...]⁵⁶

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 13 June 1962

Ciphergram No. 8791

Dispatched from Havana on 06.13.1962 at 9:30 and received at 06.13.1962 at 17:00

Came to the Decoding Department at 06.13.1962 at 17:10
To: [Deputy Foreign Minister Jozef] WINIEWICZ, Very

Urgent, For Immediate Delivery
From: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

Prensa Latina is reporting that a decision has been made regarding equipping the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany] in atomic weapons. Report immediately how it is looking, because [this information] would change the whole concept of my statement today, as well as the talks regarding the communiqué and my visit.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 13 June 1962

Ciphergam No. 8822

Dispatched from Havana on 06.13.1962 at 22:20 and received at 06.14 at 04:53

Came to the Decoding Department at 06.14 at 10:00

To: [First Secretary of Polish United Workers' Party Wladyslaw] GOMULKA, Immediate, Eyes Only

From: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

[This report is based on] the meeting with the Secretariat of ORI [*Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas*].⁵⁷ [The following] were present: Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, [President Osvaldo Dorticos [Torrado], Blas Roca, [and Emilio] Aragones [Navarro]. [Che] Guevara is out of town.

1. In the manner of warmhearted honesty, [Fidel] Castro complained about a certain [level of] cooling in our mutual relations. He thinks that we do not appreciate the specificity [of] their [situation]. He expressed his warmest wishes to strengthen [our] contacts. I thanked him for his honesty and said that indeed we also sensed their cool attitude towards us. I did my best to explain things (given that I had no concrete facts). I agreed that our relations should be strengthened so we can get to know each other better.
2. He broached the general issues of coordinating sugar trade and very extensive plans to expand the[ir] fishing industry. I said that I would look into the possibilities of

offering our assistance, especially in the area of providing specialists.

3. He was interested in the details of our policy toward the church.
 4. He talked about their agricultural policy: at the moment the most important thing is production, the pacification of rich peasants, they are carrying out collectivization progressively, but very carefully; state farms are buying out lands in exchange for old-age pensions. They are also sporadically organizing their cooperatives. I have presented briefly our own experience in this area.
 5. [Questions like] "Can and should the party replace the state apparatus" were [clearly] the allusions to the most current topic of the Escalante affair⁵⁸ [which is on their minds]. I presented our experience, which confirmed Castro's position and that of a non-dogmatic faction of the former Communist Party.
 6. While saying goodbye, I also reiterated that I hoped that the situation in Cuba would improve in the near future and that he [Fidel Castro] will be able to take advantage of your [Gomulka's] invitation to Poland.
 7. We established that we would only have a short mention in the press [of our visit to Cuba]. After a few hours, Blas Roca (a former member of the Communist Party) arrived and presented the content of their communiqué to be included in the press. We will send the text via claris through the Polish Press Agency; here are our observations based on the knowledge we acquired here:
 - a. They are using our experience⁵⁹ as an example [in resolving] the conflict with the proponents of Escalante.
 - b. The pacification of the peasantry [is taking place in Cuba].
 - c. They are publicly emphasizing the rapprochement with our party as the most palatable [lit. "digestable"], especially in Latin America.
- I did not think that it was necessary to introduce any corrections to their text, which was, after all, treated as "unilateral" information for the press. They are releasing it immediately. I think that we should also publish it extensively. I am sending my proposition via PAP [Polish Press Agency].

Received by: [...] ⁶⁰

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 15 June 1962

Ciphergram No. 8941

Dispatched from Havana on 06.15.1962 at 22:20 and received at 06.15 at 20:15

Came to the Decoding Department at 06.15 at 23:35
To: [Deputy Foreign Minister Jozef], WINIEWICZ, Urgent
From: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

In light of the party communique and a great response following an entire visit here in Cuba, we should encourage our press to give full weight to the visit. The [Cuban] response [we received] to the strengthening of the campaign of our visit, [especially] towards the end, will be really beneficial to us all over the world. We easily agreed on the communique. In my opinion, it is good. The German issue ⁶¹ [in the communique] has been clearly muffled due to their [Cuba's] relations with the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany]. Their support [for us regarding the German issue], which was after all declared on several occasions, will not brighten things up for us and it can only make things more difficult for them. We agreed that the communique will be published on Sunday morning.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 14 September 1962

Ciphergram No. 13698

Dispatched from Havana on 09.14.1962 at 13:10 and received on 09.15.1962 at 15:12

Came to the Decoding Department at 09.15.1962 at 16:00
To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI ⁶²

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ ⁶³ I conducted a conversation with [Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa [García] on 9 September.

1. I have generally informed him about the visits of [UN Secretary General] U Thant ⁶⁴ and [Britain's Leader of the Labour Party Opposition Hugh Todd Naylor] Gaitskell, ⁶⁵ and especially the aspects of the conversations pertaining to Cuba (see Your Cable No. 10835). It did not seem from our conversation that he had received this information from [Cuban Ambassador to Poland?] Perez. Roa informed me, within the context of our conversation regarding U Thant, that they were expecting his visit sometime in January [1963].
2. R. informed me that as for now he did not expect to attend the UN session. [He said that] he would only go if the process of the session required his presence. They are not expecting to bring up the Cuban issue at the session (if the events demand this, then they will bring up the matter at the [U.N.] Security Council). They are asking, however, that the delegations of friendly [socialist] nations bring up the issue of the threat to Cuba at the general debate by emphasizing that a path to solving the contentious issues should be resolved through bilateral negotiations between the United States and Cuba. They turned to all of the socialist countries regarding this matter. Their delegation has instructions to remain in close contact with the delegations of the socialist countries. They were informed that the United Arab Republic [Egypt] would broach the issue of adopting this solution during the general debate [at the U.N.]. Other countries of the Casablanca group ⁶⁶ will also support this proposition. They have turned to countries of Latin America, [asking them] to bring up the issue of adhering to the principle of non-intervention.
3. R. expressed his view that the Soviet declaration [made on 11 September 1962] ⁶⁷ removes, [at least] for now, the threat of a more serious military action against Cuba. It did not seem from our conversation that he had any more knowledge of the prospects of conducting [an] unofficial conference of foreign ministers of American nations.
4. [This part of my report has been compiled based on] my conversations with colleagues from the diplomatic corps (of socialist countries) whom I was able to see. These conversations point to the fact that the Cuban leadership

possessed information that very serious preparations were in the making as far as a military action [against Cuba]. A series of Western diplomats were also to share the opinion of such a possibility. The Hungarian [ambassador, János Beck] is saying that that in his conversation with the charge d'affaires of the nunciature [the Vatican], [the interlocutor] very sharply condemned the adventurousness of the United States [regarding Cuba]. From the same sources it seems that the Cuban leadership thinks that, following the Soviet declaration, there is currently a possibility that a series of attempts by isolated and heavy marine landings, [which are] aimed at unleashing a series of internal hotspots of the armed struggle [could take place].

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 22 September 1962

Ciphergram No. 14090

Dispatched from Havana on 09.22.1962 at 14:00 and received on 09.23.1962 at 14:04

Came to the Decoding Department at 09.23.1962 at 17:40

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI,⁶⁸ EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ⁶⁹

1. [This report has been compiled based on my] conversation with the USSR Ambassador [Aleksandr] Alekseyev:
 - a. A.[lekseyev] assesses that the Soviet declaration from the 11th of this month⁷⁰ removed the danger of a more serious [US] military action [against Cuba]. At the same time, he takes into account the possibility of the attempts of staging subversive landings, as well as the possibility of activities [carried out] by Cuban emigrant pirates against the ships. According to Alekseyev, the declaration was made because of the information [which was] presented [to them] by Cuba, indicating concrete facts that preparations were being made [to carry out] a serious military action against Cuba. Perhaps these facts were

exaggerated. However, the basis for concern existed. [Alekseyev] also implied [intimated] that this declaration was aimed at, among other things, strengthening the tendencies of [conducting] a sensible approach towards the Cuban problem which are present in the Kennedy administration.

- b. Alekseyev assesses the internal situation [in Cuba] with great optimism. He is rather minimizing the extent of internal difficulties. He is promising a serious increase in the Soviet economic aid and large deliveries of food, which are to achieve the last year's level of food supply. Not balancing the trade with the USSR is to achieve \$ 230 million USD, that is, over 30 million more than it was forecast.

2. Western diplomats generally take into account the possibility of a strengthened subversive action. They are expressing concern about the anti-Cuban history in the United States. They assess that the Cuban question received the level of significance [which is] equal to other problems that decide the future of world peace. [As far as the current state of affairs], the English [ambassador, Herbert Stanley Marchant] mainly sees the consequences of a flawed policy conducted by the United States [towards Cuba].

3. The reaction of [the Cuban] society to the Soviet declaration is being mainly expressed in organized assemblies and demonstrations. Even though the concern that a direct threat may have diminished, the level of anxiety of the Cuban society has entered into a permanent state which is living on a powder keg. The emigration tendencies continue to be on the rise (they are talking about [undertaking] administrative measures on how to stop the emigration wave). There is no significant change in the moods towards the USSR. One can still note signs regarding the reticence towards foreigners (who are usually perceived as Russians or Czechs); this attitude is especially caused by the difficulties in food shortages and thus far lack of direct impact on the market brought about by the economic aid. The activities of the PRC embassy have recently been very limited.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 28 September 1962

Ciphergram No. 14427

Dispatched from Havana on 09.28.1962 at 19:00 and received at 09.29.1962 at 14:30

Came to the Decoding Department at 09.29.1962 at 16:30

To: [Director General Jerzy] MICHALOWSKI

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ⁷¹

[Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa [García] called me in today and informed me about the following:

1. [President Osvaldo] Dorticós [Torrado] will leave on Wednesday for the UN Session in order to make a statement during the general debate. R. will assist him. The pronouncement of Dorticós is expected for 8 October. The communiqué, which is to announce the participation of Dorticós in the [UN] Session, will be published on 1 October. D. wants to conduct talks in New York with the chairman of the delegation of the socialist countries. R. asked that we relay this information to Comrade [Foreign Minister Adam] Rapacki. They are predicting that meetings with some Afro-Asian and Latin American delegations will also take place. They are also predicting that a meeting with the chairman of the Yugoslav delegation will take place. While taking this opportunity, R. also remarked that their relations with Yugoslavia have improved. [Soviet official Leonid Ilyich] Brezhnev's trip [to Yugoslavia in late September and early October, 1962]⁷² is making the whole process easier and they will further continue to improve their relations [with Yugoslavia]. (B. trip was covered in a special commentary in "Hoy" [major Cuban newspaper and the organ of the Communist Party of Cuba] which reminds one of the visit of [President] Dorticós in Yugoslavia last year on the occasion of the Belgrade Conference.⁷³ [The commentary also] points to the positive composition of the Yugoslav delegation "headed by President Tito" during the conference and its great participation in pushing through the resolution supporting, among other things, the rights of Cuba.
2. The departure of Dorticós is justified by the hitherto process of the general debate in which, thanks to [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko's pronouncement, the Cuban question has gained much attention. They

are assessing that the proper understanding of the Cuban question is deeper than last year. The pronouncement of the delegations of Latin American nations, with whom they maintained contacts, were taking into account defending the principle of non-intervention, something that corresponds with Cuba's wishes. As far as this aspect, they are positively assessing the pronouncements of Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, even though it was only Brazil which mentioned Cuba. Cuba did not make any special efforts, however, [to see] that their name be mentioned. They think that Bolivia's approach was good. They are now awaiting the statements of Mexico. There are serious chances that the United Arab Republic [Egypt] and the countries belonging to the Casablanca group will introduce a resolution, calling on the United States and Cuba to begin bilateral talks in order to solve their contentious issues. Cuba is supporting these tendencies and it will aspire to achieve wider support among Afro-Asian nations, especially among the participants of the Belgrade Conference.

3. The government is currently discussing the draft of the response to the resolution in the US Congress regarding Cuba. The declaration regarding this issue will be published on the 30th of this month.
4. As to my question regarding the overall situation, R. assessed that currently there was no danger of [US] military aggression against Cuba. (C.R. Rodriguez, with whom I had a lengthy talk today, assessed the situation in a similar manner. [I will send the report from this conversation] separately.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 18 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15383

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.18.1962 at 15:00 and received on 10.19.1962 at 2:00

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.19.1962 at 2:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL⁷⁴

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK⁷⁵

Our [cable] 786.

[US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk focused on [discussing] the history of Soviet-American relations over the past years... They [the United States] are not going to cause bloodshed in Cuba. Undertaking a [military] invasion against Cuba, without an open act of aggression on the Cuban side, would mean that the United States could find itself isolated among its allies... When asked about the rumors regarding the possibility of the alleged mediation between the United States and Cuba [to be carried out by the Algerian revolutionary leader Ahmed] Ben Bella, he stated that it was not an option.⁷⁶ They will wait for a change in the Cuban government and for Cuba to break political and military ties with the USSR. He denied rumors that there was ever a connection made between Berlin and Cuba in his conversation with [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko.⁷⁷ Cuba cannot be bargained for either for Berlin or for the [military] bases in Turkey.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droznia), 18 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15384

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.18.1962 at 16:00 and received on 10.19.1962 at 2:00

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.19.1962 at 2:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL⁷⁸

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK⁷⁹

Our [cable] 786.

[This report has been compiled based on] the statements made by Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs [Edwin M.] Martin:

They [the Americans] are well-informed, especially about the military situation in Cuba. They [the Cubans] do not possess missiles which are able to deliver nuclear weapons. The [US] administration believes that the USSR does not want [to unleash] a [world] war over Cuba, or even begin such a war in Cuba. The USSR has been opposed to provid-

ing China with nuclear weapons for years [and therefore] all the more it will not provide Cuba with such weapons. The military aid issued to Cuba is insignificant. The level of Cuban economy is twenty-five percent lower than prior to the period when [Fidel] Castro came to power. Cuba is currently much more dependent economically on the USSR than it was previously dependent on the United States. They are not expecting a quick collapse of [the] Castro [regime]. The situation in Cuba, in light of Castro's open declaration of Cuba's dependence on Moscow, is a big blow to communism in Latin America. The United States is going to continue to fully isolate Cuba, among other things, by exerting further pressure on the nations of Latin America. [The United States] is closely following the developments in Cuba.

Currently, they are excluding the possibility of a military invasion or a complete blockade of Cuba [because this] could be considered as an act of war by the USSR. A military action in Cuba could cause a military action in Berlin. They are not going to recognize a [Cuban] government-in-exile either. They are counting on an emergence of the opposition government in Cuba. If they recognized the [Cuban] government-in-exile, they would lose their rights to their [military] bases in Guantanamo. There are about two hundred Cuban immigration groups which are all different and at odds with one another. There are those among them who would like to start a war between the United States and the USSR.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droznia), 21 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15522

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.21.1962 at 13:00 and received on 10.21.1962 at 00:10

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.21.1962 at 00:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL,⁸⁰ EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK⁸¹

Our [cable] 786.

...

2. [This information has been compiled based on the

statements of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs William R.] Tyler: The aim of the United States is to avoid a total nuclear war. They are focusing on the production of missile defense weapons. They are foreseeing that in the near future all of the bombers will be fully eliminated. Presumably, China will constitute the gravest danger in the next ten years. They are getting ready to use tactical nuclear weapons in case of the conflicts in Asia. This will not be as dangerous as using such weapons in Europe. They are not planning a [military] invasion of Cuba, [because] this would require a much greater effort than last year.⁸²

3. [This information has been compiled based on the statements of Ambassador at Large, Department of State, Llewellyn E.] Thompson:⁸³ [Joseph V.] Stalin was a cynic. [Soviet leader Nikita S.] Khrushchev is “a flexible believer in Marxism.” During the last year of Thompson’s stay in the Soviet Union [as ambassador, from July 1961-July 1962] the pace of change, which began since the death of Stalin [in 1953], has clearly accelerated. The much stronger [Soviet] support for Cuba can be dated to Khrushchev’s visit to Beijing.⁸⁴ The Cuban ambassador [stationed] in Moscow was much more interested in Beijing and wanted to be transferred there. It is easier for the USSR to provide military than economic aid to Cuba, because they possess a lot of outdated military equipment. When asked about Khrushchev’s opinion regarding Kennedy, he said: “Khrushchev envies Kennedy his youth. He realizes that there is not much time left for him to carry out the goals he set out for himself. He changed his opinion of Kennedy after their meeting in Vienna [in June 1961]. Kennedy made a strong impression on him; he treats him now as a serious politician and a partner.”

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 23 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15622

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.23.1962 at 22:30 and received on 10.24.1962 at 7:50

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.24.1962 at 8:05

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL,⁸⁵ EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK⁸⁶

[This information has been compiled based on my conversation with Charles] Bartlett (a journalist who has befriended president [John F.] Kennedy):

- 1) Bartlett thinks that Kennedy was shocked by intelligence information, which reached the Republican senators already on the 14th of this month, that is, a week before they reached him. [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko and [Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly] Dobrynin were to make assurances that Cuba received only surface-to-air missiles with a range of 30 miles. But, “the revolver was placed to America’s head.”
- 2) According to Bartlett, the climate of trust, which has been emerging between Kennedy and Khrushchev, was ruined just like the game played by the Japanese prior to the [attacks] on Pearl Harbor [on 7 December 1941]. The steps [to address the crisis, e.g., the “quarantine” of Cuba], which [President] Kennedy announced [on Monday, 22 October], will be implemented in the atmosphere of a great pressure [stemming] from the public opinion.
- 3) The kind of missile bases [which have been installed by the Soviets] on Cuba was a shock to the [US] administration, [especially] following the Soviet declarations which have been made repeatedly on numerous occasions. [Fidel] Castro received many more modern missiles than [the Soviet] allies in the Warsaw Pact.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 24 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15721

Dispatched from Havana on 10.24.1962 at 21:20

Received on 10.25.1962 at 13:04

Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.25.1962 at 16:30

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI⁸⁷, Urgent
From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ⁸⁸
Based on the conversations with:

- 1) The Soviet ambassador [Aleksandr Alekseyev] is optimistic.
 - a. When discussing his country's position, he emphasized that doors towards negotiations should not be closed. He sees a possibility of counteraction, among other places, in Berlin. He also sees opening some kind of a way out for the United States.
 - b. He thinks that Cuba's defensive capabilities are currently sufficient. There is no need for new deliveries.
 - c. He assumes that the Soviet ships, if they are forced to do so, will have to submit to inspection in order to continue. These inspections, however, will have a negative political effect for the United States (he states that this is only his personal opinion).
 - d. He personally thinks that the tensions will subside after the presidential [sic; mid-term Congressional] elections in the United States.
 - e. He is not hiding his dissatisfaction with the Sino-Indian developments.
- 2) The Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto] is concerned. He continues to point to the increase in tensions of the elections in the United States.
- 3) [The opinions of] various Cubans. The mobilization continues in a normal manner. There is no internal disorder.
- 4) My impressions. There's a relative run on the stores, but without any signs of panic and fears of the threat of military operations.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Paszkowski), 24 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15677

Dispatched from Moscow on 24.10.1962 at 16:00

Received on 24.10.1962 at 19:40

Came into the Deciphering Department on 24.10.1962 at 20:00

To: [Foreign Ministry Director General Maria] WIERNA, URGENT, EYES ONLY

From: PASZKOWSKI

Based on Cieslak's conversations with the board members of *Pravda* (10.24 at noon):

1. When the initial information arrived regarding the heated consultations in Washington, the [Soviet] comrades believed that this was a typical pre-election bluff. Therefore, when Kennedy made the statement it was both a surprise and a wake-up call.
2. All of the interlocutors generally agree that even if the conflict were to take place based on individual encounters then one could isolate [localize] it. This subtext will be included in the materials prepared for publication in the press for tomorrow. They think that the Americans will not shoot, but instead "block the road" and impose arrests.
3. The Soviet ships were given orders to continue moving towards Cuba. It takes 2-3 days to get to Cuba and therefore tonight it will be the first time for the Soviet ships to "come in contact with Kennedy's orders carried out in practice."
4. They are receiving information from all over the country [Soviet Union] about the calm and disciplined attitudes of the Soviet people. They will not exacerbate the tensions more than necessary. *Pravda* intentionally emphasized Khrushchev's presence at the opera during the visit of the Romanian delegation.
5. They are expecting that the Chinese will exacerbate tensions. "They will triumph." The conflict in Cuba, however, will not have any serious consequences when it comes to the moods of the more conservative part of the society or the party apparatus.

Received by the following comrades: [...]⁸⁹

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 25 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15747

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.25.1962 at 17:50 and received on 10.25.1962 at 21:30

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.26.1962 at 00:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL⁹⁰

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK⁹¹

There have been some signs of a certain calm in Washington [D.C.] today. However, there are various and numerous rumors, as well as the information [we have been getting], which are all hard to verify. One of our embassies⁹² has been repeating [the following information] after the West German journalists: during the period of preparation for a ruckus [*awantura*], [US Attorney General] Robert Kennedy was allegedly in favor of an immediate invasion [of Cuba], while [Chief of Staff General Maxwell D.] Taylor was against it. The President [John F. Kennedy] chose to act by taking the middle ground. We do not know, however, whether his decision does not [constitute] a preliminary step towards the invasion [of Cuba], which could take place as a result of some kind of a drastic move made by the Soviet Union. The ambassador of Argentina does not believe in either the possibility of an invasion or even the fact that preparations are being made for such an invasion. [At the same time,] many people are pointing to the fact that the concentration of [US] military forces and [amphibious] landing equipment continue to be made against Cuba in various locations. There is a renewed rumor, [which comes] from the same source as the previous rumor, that an invasion [of Cuba] could take place, but this time such an invasion has allegedly been scheduled for next Monday.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 26 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15809

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.26.1962 at 14:00 and received on 10.27.1962 at 8:30

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.27.1962 at 8:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL⁹³

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK⁹⁴

The following assessment of the United States' position can be made based on the conversations with [foreign] diplomats and some more respected journalists:

- 1) The operation of installing the [Soviet] missiles in Cuba was carried out in great hurry, without special adherence to secrecy, and perhaps even with the awareness that the missiles would be discovered relatively quickly. This [fact] has been interpreted [by the Americans] as [a possible] attempt by the USSR to test Kennedy's "the will and readiness to fight." [Soviet leader Nikita S.] Khrushchev chose Cuba, because he considered Berlin to be too dangerous. It was also claimed here that Khrushchev, regardless of the abovementioned motive, intended to secure the additional bargaining advantage for the talks with [President] Kennedy at the end of November. In his decisions, Kennedy took a serious risk by counting on the fact that he could surprise the USSR and cause it to react nervously in other parts of the globe. [President Kennedy hoped that such Soviet actions could then] justify his future invasion of Cuba or cause the USSR to back down once faced with a prestigious [high-profile] confrontation. [However], the reaction of the USSR, which has been generally considered as a "responsible" one, thwarted these plans. The domestic situation of the United States, and the ongoing election campaign, were also a serious, although a secondary, factor in influencing [President] Kennedy's decision.
- 2) Despite the statement [made by US Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai] Stevenson in the UN Security Council (some of the journalists believe that by favorably talking about the Soviet reaction, he went further in his statement than the instructions allowed), there is an opinion that the Americans will not end the [naval] blockade until all of the missiles are disassembled in

Cuba. In any case, they will not give up the blockade unless some other form of inspection is established. It is also claimed that Kennedy got so deeply invested in the issue that now he has no choice but to liquidate the base⁹⁵ in Cuba in any form and shape, so he can bomb them, including even [launching] an invasion.

- 3) There have been pressures exerted on Kennedy, especially from the Republicans (among others [Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen], not to agree to a summit meeting on Cuba; there have also been pressures on the President from the far Right, demanding an immediate invasion [of Cuba]. [At the same time,] there have been other tendencies emerging among the intellectual circles, pacifist organizations, and partially among the youth, which oppose Kennedy's policy. However, the majority of [the American] society has shown its support for Kennedy's policy (the White House, among other institutions here, informed that it received about fifty thousand letters, favoring Kennedy's policy in the ratio of 22:1). The concentration of military forces and preparations for an invasion continue to take place in Florida. There is also an opinion that the stand of the USSR is impeding Kennedy's further adventurousness, as well as it is making him seek a way out through negotiations.

Received by: [...]⁹⁶

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droźniak), 26 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15815

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.26.1962 at 23:00 and received on 10.27.1962 at 7:25

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.27.1962 at 7:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL⁹⁷

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŹNIAK⁹⁸

[This information has been compiled based on] a reliable source: yesterday at a confidential meeting with some of the

leading journalists, [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk allegedly has said:

- 1) The latest statements of journalists, [claiming] that the relaxation of tensions of the overall political situation has allegedly taken place, do not correspond with reality. The situation continues to be serious.
- 2) The news and speculations in the press (including those of [the political commentator Walter] Lip[p]man[n] among others) that a possibility of reaching an agreement [between the United States and the Soviet Union] by means of simultaneously liquidating the bases in Cuba and, for example, in Turkey has allegedly surfaced, is not true. The issue of the liquidation of the bases on a foreign territory can be discussed later only within the framework of discussions on the question of the general disarmament.

Received by: [...]⁹⁹

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Paszkowski), 27 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15890

Dispatched from Moscow on 27.10.1962 at 17:00

Received on 27.10.1962 at 18:45

Came into the Deciphering Department on 27.10.1962 at 22:50

To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

From: PASZKOWSKI

Supplement to our [cable] 536.

[First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vasili Vasilyevich] Kuznetsov assessed the [UN] resolution of Ghana and the United Arab Republic [Egypt] as kind of a band-aid, but a one that nevertheless is significant. On the other hand, he considers the statement of the Afro-Asian nations as both good and strong. He also thinks that the atmosphere in the UN does not favor the United States. The pressure from the neutral nations on the United States is strong. If the consultations do not bring any results, then [UN Secretary General]

U Thant is prepared to move the issue regarding the [current] crisis to the General Assembly and to bring about a vote on the resolution [prepared] by the United Arab Republic. U Thant is convinced that many will vote in favor of the resolution, maybe even the majority. According to Kuznetsov, U Thant's intentions are bringing about some results. The tone of [US Ambassador to UN Adlai] Stevenson's [statements] has changed somewhat.¹⁰⁰ One should not exclude the possibility, however, that [President John F.] Kennedy could move towards making more provocations under the pressure of the most reactionary circles [in his administration]. The United States is looking for strong and convincing reasons that would allow it to directly carry out the invasion of Cuba. At this time, however, it is not that easy to find such reasons. At the same time, Kuznetsov emphasized that the situation continues to be dangerous and that under no circumstances can we relax.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 27 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15909

From Havana dispatched on 10.27.1962 at 18:00
Received on 10.27 [28?].1962 at 13:35
Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.27 [28?].1962 at 16:00
To: KRAJEWSKI, Urgent, EYES ONLY
From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ¹⁰¹

(27.10 at 22 GMT)

1. We only have some fragmentary information regarding Khrushchev's propositions (Cuba-Turkey). This would result in actual recognition of the change in the status quo of the deployment of strategic weapons. We don't have the Cuban reaction as of yet. There are signs of much confusion and anxiety. They are taking, quite seriously, the possibility of the bombings of military facilities. Some of our colleagues from the socialist countries (I did not see [Soviet Ambassador to Cuba

Aleksandr] Alekseyev) think so, too. They also think that the point of the Chinese proposition was to demand the guarantees of recognizing the actual status of Cuba in exchange for disassembling new military installations. The overall opinion, however, is that the decision [on how to solve the crisis] is currently beyond that of Cuba and therefore there is much anticipation as to the Cuban reaction related to this issue.

2. The significant development is today's communique about "unidentified" planes that entered the Cuban airspace but which were "chased out" by the Cuban air force. We do not have any details. Our information has not been verified about an alleged shooting down of a U-2 plane in a different region of Cuba.
3. The Hungarian ambassador [János Beck] is relaying the following based on his conversation with [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez on the 24th (after Fidel's speech) in which Rodriguez expressed the position of a possible acceptance of UN inspections and disassembling some of the military installations under the condition of obtaining a guarantee for Cuba provided by both the United States and the Soviet Union. Rodriguez also told the Hungarian ambassador that the Cuban ambassador in Beijing [Pino Santos] received a copy of the PRC's note to the USSR in which it was stated that not giving access to nuclear weapons to the allies was contrary to the spirit of [communist] internationalism.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 27 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15912

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.27.1962 at 20:50 and received on 10.28.1962 at 17:10
Came to the Decoding Department on 10.28.1962 at 17:15
To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL,¹⁰² EYES ONLY
From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK¹⁰³

[This information has been compiled based on my] conversation with [an American journalist and syndicated columnist] J.[oseph] Alsop:

The opinion prevails in the White House, the Pentagon, and the CIA that the operation of installing the missile bases in Cuba was carried out in order to change the strategic balance of power to the advantage of the USSR before further steps (either by means of negotiations or an outright military attack) were taken in Berlin. They are not sure whether they [the leaders] in the Soviet Union realized that the missiles could be so quickly discovered and so thoroughly photographed. [President John F.] Kennedy has been prepared for the past several months to act on his own without prior consultations with his allies in case a more serious conflict [erupted]. They think that the current decision made by Kennedy does not leave any doubt in [the minds of the leaders in] the USSR that the United States is prepared to carry out the job by means of an armed engagement, including a nuclear one. Despite the pressures, Kennedy is determined to maintain a moderate attitude and he is determined not to undertake any actions that could clearly be provocative. He has to carry out a quick liquidation of the [missile] bases in Cuba, because he started this process publicly [openly] and he is prepared to do it by using various means.

In case the process of the expansion of the bases continues in Cuba, then the following options are taken into consideration: a total naval and air blockade; an ultimatum issued to Cuba, threatening to bomb the installations of these missiles; and an invasion. The latter possibility is, in his [Alsop's] opinion, least realistic.

[President Kennedy] will strive, more than ever, to overthrow [Fidel] Castro. Most of all, they [Americans] are counting on a coup d'etat [in Cuba]. Kennedy does not even allow for the possibility of holding a bilateral summit meeting on Cuba. After the [missile] bases in Cuba are liquidated, he is prepared to regulate, among other things, the issue of eliminating the US [military] bases in Turkey and Italy. From the military point of view, these bases are useless to the United States. Similar bases in England are already in the process of being disassembled. The Soviet reaction up until this point has been assessed as one which is moderate [*tagodna*] and which allows for various possibilities [to reach a] peaceful solution. Kennedy also ensures, and will continue to ensure, that the current situation does not end up in a stalemate.

They do not understand the causes of China's attack on India,¹⁰⁴ but this development of events suits them very well. In case India turns to them for help, they will consider such a request with sympathy, but they will take their time.

Received by the Political Bureau [Politburo], Czesak,

Bordzilowski, Korczynski, Wicha, Moczar, Milnikiel, Krajewski, Siedlecki, Polish Embassy in New Delhi

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 28 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15943

Dispatched from Havana on 10.28.1962 at 10:00

Received on 10.29.1962 at 13:05

Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.29.1962 at 11:00

To: KRAJEWSKI, Urgent, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ¹⁰⁵

(10.28 21 GMT)

1) The press published the full text of Khrushchev's letter from the 27th, as well as the summary of Kennedy's reply from the same day. U Thant's letter from the 26th and Castro's reply from the 27th [were also published]. We know the rest of the information only from the radio broadcasts from abroad. It seems that the solution that is emerging from the letters, as well as Soviet and American statements, would in essence mean a significant progress towards creating an international status of today's Cuba. Kennedy's readiness to give guarantees of not invading Cuba, and expressing the conviction about the readiness of other countries from the [Western] hemisphere for such a move and allowing for a principle of international understanding to permanently solve the Cuban problem, should, in principle, give the Cuban side a far reaching atonement. We do not have any commentaries thus far and the headlines in the press are very cautious. I think that Fidel will submit to UN inspections.

2) [My comments regarding] the text of today's communique by the Cuban government which was sent to the Polish Press Agency (PAP): "Out of five conditions posed by the Cubans the one which can significantly exacerbate the situation is the condition regarding the liquidation of the [American] base in Guantanamo. However, the conditions posed by the Cubans were made after the decision of the USSR to withdraw the Soviet military installations. Cuban conditions may be calculated in order to show that Cuba

participated in making the decision. This is all in addition to a very troublesome situation for Castro caused by Khrushchev's statement that the only caretaker of the new military installations is the USSR. The interpretation of the condition regarding Guantanamo can however boil down to the Cuban definition made until now, that is, that this is the only one which is recognized by international law. It is also worth mentioning that today's communique by Fidel announced that Cuba would open fire on military planes that violate Cuban air space.

3) According to unverified, but credible information, [Brazil's President João Goulart] is said to have had a telephone conversation with Castro on the 22nd soon after Kennedy's statement. [Goulart is to have] insisted that Cuba accept inspections and suggested that Castro have a full authority to decide the composition of the inspections. Castro is said to have decisively rejected even the thought of the inspection. Allegedly, on the 27th, [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa is said to have come out with a request to the Brazilian government for Brazil to use its influence in order to solve the crisis.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 29 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15952

Dispatched from Moscow on 29.10.1962 at 18:00

Received on 29.10.1962 at 16:50

Came into the Deciphering Department on 29.10.1962 at 19:20

To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI, EYES ONLY

From: JASZCZUK¹⁰⁶

Upon my return, I paid a visit to [Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai] Firyubin. Here are some important points:

He did not have much to add to the already published statements made by Khrushchev. He believes that they will serve as the basis to eliminate tensions and to protect Cuba from [American] aggression. Based on [Soviet Ambassador to the US Anatoly] Dobrynin's information, it looks like Kennedy does not doubt Khrushchev's statements. When I mentioned that there were no clear guarantees of Cuba's

security provided by Kennedy, Firyubin replied that in their [US-Soviet?] conversations that will take into consideration propositions that were put forth by F[idel] Castro.

When I asked about how the issue of eliminating the military bases in Turkey looked like, Firyubin answered that this problem has not left the daily agenda. He stressed that it was no accident that the issue of the military bases in Turkey was not mentioned in the statement made by Khrushchev on 28 October.

Carrying out this action takes some time and is connected with the issue of NATO-Warsaw Pact put forth by Kennedy. The issue of the Guantanamo Bay will surely constitute one of the points of detailed conversations. Firyubin is aware of difficulties connected with fully securing Cuba given the stormy moods in the Pentagon. Firyubin thinks that this fact, that is, that these events are not taking place after the elections, inhibits Kennedy's actions, but that after the elections the common sense will deepen within the US governing circles. As to the summit meeting, the USSR is not exerting any pressure in this direction, but there are those in the USSR who believe that talks at the highest levels are beneficial. The issue of a summit meeting is only a matter of time. The English, according to Firyubin, are feeling dissatisfied because they "were excluded from the game." Firyubin is fully convinced that the recent developments are in favor of the USSR and our countries and that the first goal (Kennedy's statement renouncing the US aggression against Cuba) has already been achieved. Firyubin thinks that the shooting down of the American U-2 plane by the Cubans should slow down the talks between [First Deputy Foreign Minister] Kuznetsov and [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk.

Concerning the Sino-Indian border issue, he actually did not have much to say. He showed some concern. He thinks that the US does not want to get involved in the problem. Undoubtedly, SEATO is benefiting much from this event when it comes to spreading their propaganda. According to Firyubin's personal opinion, this conflict should be resolved by the parties involved. Firyubin promised that they he would keep us updated on the issue of Cuba.

Received by the following comrades: [...]¹⁰⁷

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 29 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15998

Dispatched from Havana on 10.29.1962 at 16:30

Received on 10.30.1962 at 12:50

Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.30.1962 at 16:00

To: KRAJEWSKI, Urgent, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ¹⁰⁸

1. The only direct and official reaction to the USSR's decision to withdraw the military installations is yesterday's speech by Raul Castro in Santiago. Overall, he outlines the USSR's position as calm and reasonable. He reminds that the oral commitment of the United States [not to invade Cuba] is not sufficient. At the same time, he states that the liquidation of the Guantanamo base must take place sooner than later, but through peaceful means.
2. Based on the information from various sources it would seem that Fidel is not pleased with how the decision to withdraw [the missiles] was made and the disclosure that the installations are exclusively the property of the USSR. One can sense much bitterness on the part of Cubans regarding these issues. It is noteworthy that the prestige of Fidel Castro could seriously suffer within the Latin American context. I do not exclude the fact that the "five conditions" (see our cable no. 437 point 3) were also Fidel Castro's reaction to the Soviet position.
3. My forecast as far as tomorrow's talks with U Thant: they will be rather difficult. There is said to be an especial envoy on the way sent by [Brazilian leader João] Goulart who is carrying a letter to Fidel.
4. The Yugoslav ambassador [Boško Vidaković] thinks that he was the one to relay a proposition from Tito to [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos of inviting U Thant and that this influenced Fidel's letter from the 27th which contained this invitation.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 30 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15997

Dispatched from Moscow on 30.10.1962 at 15:00

Received on 30.10.1962 at 15:20

Came into the Deciphering Department on 30.10.1962 at 15:25

To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI, IMMEDIATELY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JASZCZUK¹⁰⁹

From the visit at [First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers Alexei] Kosygin's:

1. [First Deputy Foreign Minister Vasili] Kuznetsov has not begun the talks yet. He was well received by the Americans, who are pleased with his arrival.
2. The situation of the past few days has been exceptionally tense. We were on the brink of war. The USSR had information about an imminent invasion of Cuba. Khrushchev's statement regarding the dismantling of the starting devices was made pretty much at the last minute. If the Americans went into Cuba and wiped it out, half of the Cuban population and many Americans, could perish in the process. A war would begin. This would not have been a nuclear war, because only a madman would dare drop an atomic bomb. The long distance between us and Cuba, [Kosygin said,] would pose a great obstacle. We received guarantees from Kennedy of not attacking Cuba. We are relying on this [as this is] the president's statement. If he were to break the promise, then all international norms would be trampled.
3. The blockade of Cuba continues, but the Soviet ships were already given instructions to leave the Cuban ports.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 30 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16025

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.30.1962 at 14:00
and received on 10.31.1962 at 04:00
Came to the Decoding Department on 10.31.1962 at 05:00
To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI
From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK¹¹⁰

Yours 12930.

The police security around the embassy building has somewhat decreased, but it still continues although it is less visible. The building of the [Embassy's] consular section, the [Embassy's] economic cone, and the Consulate General in Chicago have not been protected by the police.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jelen), 30 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16053

Dispatched from Havana on 10.30.1962 at 15:00
Received on 10.31.1962 at 13:35
Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.31.1962 at 16:25
To: KRAJEWSKI, EYES ONLY
From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ¹¹¹
Politburo
Czesak¹¹²
[?]
Milnikiel

[Handwritten text:] Relay this [information], if possible, today, but not at night, to [Foreign] Minister [Adam] Rapacki and [Deputy Foreign Minister Marian] Naszkowski, 31 October

1. Based on the conversation with [Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Aleksandr] Alexeyev:
 - a. He confirms the fact that there is confusion within the [Cuban] leadership, as well as dissatisfaction with how the decision had been made about the

withdrawal of the military installations. One can sense that he [Alexeyev] is seriously depressed. During the talks [with the Cuban leadership], which he had conducted here at the highest levels, it was emphasized to him they [the Cubans] could not trust verbal declarations of Kennedy. The major concern of the [Cuban] leadership is the internal decrease of prestige for Fidel [Castro]. However, Alexeyev counts on the fact that Fidel will understand the situation.

- b. Fidel stubbornly continues to reject even the thought of inspections in Cuba. Alexeyev expresses hope, however, that some kind of a formula will be found [to solve this issue].
 - c. The "5 conditions" proposed by the Cuban side are, in the opinion of Alexeyev, a correct and official request for the evacuation of the [US naval base at] Guantanamo. This kind of a request had to be made and the timing was appropriate. Alexeyev understands that Castro is only making a formal request while realizing that fulfilling this request cannot take place at this time.
2. My observations: Fidel lost a good opportunity, which was proposed by [Brazilian President João] Goulart (see our 437 point 4), because at the same time the concept of having Swedish inspectors had been proposed. What is not good for the Cubans is the fact that General [Indar Jit] Rikhye, who is described by the Prensa Latina in New York as "a military adviser to the Secretary General for UN Military Forces in the Congo," is to accompany [the UN Secretary] U Thant on his announced visit to Cuba.
 3. They announced Fidel Castro's speech for 1 November.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 30 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16028

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.30.1962 at 22:00 and received on 10.31.1962 at 4:50

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.31.1962 at 5:00

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL,¹¹³
URGENT, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK¹¹⁴

(From an important American interlocutor).

- 1) [The interlocutor] thinks that the unpublished exchange of letters between Kennedy and [Soviet leader Nikita S.] Khrushchev contains a far-reaching obligation on the part of Kennedy to liquidate the American [military] base from Turkey.
- 2) The [US] administration is not going to exploit the withdrawal of the [Soviet] missiles from Cuba for maximum propaganda purposes as a victory achieved from the position of strength. Kennedy is getting ready to make a statement at a press conference on November 1, [in which he is going to] warn against adopting such an attitude, [and instead] he is going to draw attention to the fact that reaching an agreement in the area of disarmament is now more urgent than ever. K. postponed the press conference until Thursday in order to have more time to assess the process of disassembling [the missile bases] in Cuba. The local disarmament agency [i.e., the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; ACDA] has recently revived its activity, among other things, through making contacts with the delegations of different countries associated with the United Nations in order to find out in what areas they could come to an understanding as quickly as possible. [The issues that have been given] primary attention [are as follows: the ban on nuclear tests; the ban on nuclear weapons' proliferation; [issuing] a declaration or [signing] a treaty of non-aggression between NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and the Warsaw Pact; the elimination of some [military] bases; declaring both Africa and Latin America as non-nuclear zones. The [US] administration was happy to hear that [First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vasili Vasilyevich] Kuznetsov was appointed as the head of the delegation [to discuss the issue of] Cuba as a sign that the USSR is going to quickly resolve the Cuban Crisis.
- 3) He thinks that as long as there are no complications in implementing the agreement regarding Cuba, there is a real possibility for a summit meeting [to happen] relatively quickly and for a serious relaxation [of tensions] in the international situation. They [the Americans]

fear complications on the part of [Fidel] Castro ([such as his] hindrance of the work of the UN Commission, among other things, by demanding the removal of [the US Naval Base in] Guantanamo), as well as [other issues such as] the moves by China [on the international arena, including] a further exacerbation of the conflict with India, egging Castro on to oppose the reached agreement, and presenting the USSR position as a serious concession to the United States. All of these could prevent the development of the [positive] events [described above].

Received by: [...] ¹¹⁵

By Dispatch to Moscow

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 31 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16071

Dispatched from Moscow on 31.10.1962 at 12:30

Received on 31.10.1962 at 19:28

Came into the Deciphering Department on 31.10.1962 at 21:50

To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JASZCZUK¹¹⁶

From the visit at [US Ambassador Foy D.] Kohler's (which lasted 50 minutes):

1. Cuba. The United States will not go into Cuba and it does not intend to topple Castro from outside of Cuba. He thinks that the [Cuban] nation will change its system from within, and that the United States will continue the blockade until they receive the guarantees of the full elimination of [Soviet military] bases. I pressed him on the issue of normalizing US-Cuba relations. He clearly dodged taking any position on the issue. Kohler stated that the United States is really surprised that the USSR thought that America would allow for the creation of the missile bases right under its nose and for the change in the nuclear balance in the world. They continue to

ask themselves this question and they don't seem to find the answer. I took up the issue of the so called "offensive nature" of the missile weapons and I also returned to the issue of unfriendly US policy towards Cuba [...]

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington, 31 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16075

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.31.1962 at 12:00 and received on 01.11.1962 at 0:30

Came to the Decoding Department on 01.11.1962 at 0:40

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL,¹¹⁷ EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK¹¹⁸

/From A.[rthur] Schlesinger, [President John F.] Kennedy's adviser./

S., to a large degree, confirms the content of [our previous] cable 825.¹¹⁹ In his opinion, the assessment of the [Soviet] installation of the missiles in Cuba as the attempt to strengthen the [world] position of the USSR before a possible confrontation over Berlin, ended up prevailing within the [US] administration. [Schlesinger said that] despite the criticisms made by the Republicans, claiming that [President] Kennedy should have exploited the opportunity [of the crisis] to topple [the regime of Fidel] Castro and that he should have called for a policy based on a position of strength, among other places in Berlin, President Kennedy is determined to seek peaceful solutions and those based on compromise. [The President] is most interested in concluding a treaty to ban nuclear tests. He is sympathetic to the idea of the projects of [creating] non-nuclear zones in Africa, and possibly in Latin America. [The President] characterized [Nikita S.] Khrushchev's unpublished letter as very personal and one that expressed [the Soviet leader's] concern over the possibility of a nuclear war to a much larger degree than in his published text. There was no mention in that letter of the [US military] bases in Turkey. [US Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs W. Averell] Harriman was the first one to see that Khrushchev's intentions and behavior [exhibited during] the crisis aspired

to [bring about] peaceful solutions. They [the Americans] think that right now the disassembling and transport of the missiles back to the USSR will take place very quickly. This is because, [they think,] the Soviet Union will not want to create a precedent [according to which] the international commissions control the "disarmament process." It [the Soviet Union] will make the effort for [such an international] commission to merely state facts.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 31 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16052

Dispatched from Havana on 10.31.1962 at 14:20

Received on 10.31.1962 at 12:12

Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.31.1962 at 16:25

To: KRAJEWSKI, URGENT, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ¹²⁰

1. The whole [Cuban] propaganda action is carried out in a very rigid manner and is based on the arguments made by Fidel in his speech on 23 October (see our 424). [This propaganda] does not take into consideration the decisive events that followed afterwards and continues to press for the "5 points" proposed by Fidel on 28 October. I think that the main aim of such pressure is not to show [Cuba's] initial rigid position for negotiations with [UN General Secretary] U Thant, but it is the main reflection of the confusion which is taking place among the party apparatus and the [Cuban] leadership. The existence of such confusion is becoming more and more apparent in different conversations with the Cubans. It is very clear that they do not understand the international situation and one can sense among many of them the feeling of being abandoned by the USSR.
2. [Brazilian President João] Goulart's delegation arrived and talked through the night with [Cuban President Osvaldo Torrado] Dorticos. A letter from [Mexican President Adolfo] López Mateos has arrived – we don't

know the content.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 31 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16077

Dispatched from Havana on 10.31.1962 at 13:30

Received on 11.01.1962 at 6:50

Came into the Deciphering Department on 11.01.1962 at 7:00

To: KRAJEWSKI, URGENT, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JELEŃ¹²¹

1. According to unofficial information, the first conference with U Thant is said to have been difficult even though they have not yet discussed the issue of inspections. The Cuban side is said to have pressed the issue of the necessity to guarantee that the “5 points” proposed by Fidel Castro are taken into consideration. Cuba’s hardline position is expected on the issue of inspections. [Cuba’s Foreign Minister Raúl García] Roa is expected to leave for the U.N. Goulart’s emissary [Gen. Albino Silva] left [Cuba] – as of now we still do not have the content of his conversations; he also met with U Thant.
2. The appointment of [Carlos] Lechuga as [Cuba’s] permanent representative to the UN is generally understood as a tendency toward a more flexible position [of Cuba] in this [international] forum.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 1 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 16109

Dispatched from Moscow on 11.01.1962 at 19:00

Received on 11.01.1962 at 19:31

Came into the Deciphering Department on 11.01.1962 at 12:25

To: [Director General of the Foreign Ministry Maria] WIERNA

From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JASZCZUK¹²²

Based on the conversation with Deputy Director of United States Department in the Ministry of International Affairs [Sergey] Kudryavstev¹²³:

Kudryavstev thinks that Kennedy’s assurances not to invade Cuba is a main achievement. Now, the major issue is to have it encapsulated in some kind of an international document. As to my question of how Fidel sees the solution to the crisis, he responded that now we should see a major problem. Besides, he is not aware of anything else other than what has already been announced publicly regarding Fidel’s opinion. This morning, [First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union Anastas] Mikoyan left for New York City and then onto Cuba in order to more broadly discuss current problems.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 1 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 16203

Dispatched from Moscow on 11.01.1962 at 19:00

Received on 11.01.1962 at 21:07

Came into the Deciphering Department on 11.01.1962 at 22:35

To: [Director General of the Foreign Ministry Maria] WIERNA, URGENT

From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JASZCZUK¹²⁴

Based on the conversation between Paszkowski and Deputy Director of United States Department in the Ministry of

International Affairs [Sergey] Kudryavstev¹²⁵:

1. It was agreed upon between the USSR and the US that regardless of Cuba's maintaining the blockade, Soviet ships will be able to go into Cuba's seaports without any problems.
2. We need to wait a few days for the results of the talks regarding Cuba. It seems that the United States will not insist on the UN supervision of disassembling the rocket launchers and removing the missiles.
3. Kudryavtsev positively assessed Fidel's 2 November speech.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 3 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 16211

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 11.03.1962 at 11:40 and received on 11.04.1962 at 01:50

Came to the Decoding Department on 11.04.1962 at 01:55

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL¹²⁶

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK¹²⁷

[This information has been compiled based] on several different and important sources which are informing us about the following:

- 1) There is an opinion within the White House, the State Department, and the US delegation to the United Nations that the USSR is acting towards eliminating the Cuban [missile] crisis with the utmost honest intentions, and it is also showing a far-reaching will for cooperation.
- 2) The [US] administration is seriously taking into consideration replacing the UN inspections with those carried out by the International Red Cross in case [Fidel] Castro continues to show further resistance.
- 3) In case [Fidel] Castro continues to make things difficult, the [US] administration will not aspire to complicate the situation. In case [Fidel] Castro does not allow for any inspections [in Cuba], they [the Americans]

will give more thought to their own plan of naval and air inspections, so they can be definitely sure that the disassembling of the [missile] bases takes place.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 3 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 16212

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 11.03.1962 at 16:00 and received on 04.11.1962 at 01:50

Came to the Decoding Department on 04.11.1962 at 01:55

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL¹²⁸ and [Juliusz] KATZ-SUCHY¹²⁹

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK¹³⁰

/From the conversation between [Mieczyslaw] Rakowski¹³¹ and [Deputy Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Walt] Rostow/.

R.[ostow] compared the initial stages of the armed conflict in Cuba to the [Japanese attacks on] Pearl Harbor [on 7 December 1941]. [He said that President] Kennedy was ready for war. The most pressing issue at the moment is a quick removal of the [Soviet] missiles from Cuba. The Americans are ready for serious disarmament talks and they are interested especially in reaching a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. They [the Americans] are not planning on giving them [nuclear weapons] to the [West] Germans. [Rostow said that] this state of affairs would be difficult to maintain in case other countries [also] obtained nuclear weapons.

By dispatch to Moscow

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 8 November 1962

Secret

Of Special Significance

Making copies is prohibited

Ciphergram No. 16483

Dispatched from Havana on 11.08 at 21:00 and received at 11.09 at 12:49

Came to the Decoding Department on 11.09 at 16:20

Krajewski, EYES ONLY

From: Ambassador JELEN

Politburo

Czesak¹³²

[??]

Siedlecki

Milnikiel

/8.11./

[This is based on the information from] the Soviet and Cuban sides: they are both restrained in providing information and the assessment regarding the course of the talks:

- a) Based on the statements made by the Soviet side (Bazikin – Director of the Latin America department in the International Department [and] former ambassador to Mexico; ambassador [to Cuba] Alexeyev, and councilor Belons) one can conclude the following: the talks are difficult, Fidel's position is hardline, his overall outlook on the issue and its implications is narrow-minded, and guided by prestige in some matters. Right now, they are taking a break from the talks, as they are awaiting instructions from Moscow. The talks are being excessively prolonged and this does not bode well, especially [when it comes to maintaining a uniform position] externally; one cannot foresee when they will end, perhaps by the end of the week. They are also going to discuss economic matters.
- b) From the Cuban side (based on conversations with various interlocutors, among others, [Foreign Minister Raul] Roa [Garcia] who is not partaking in the conversations at the party level and with C.R. Rodriguez who is taking part in the conversations in place of Blas Roca): a fundamental difference in views continues to persist, they are not providing any specifics regarding the current situation on the issue of inspections. Roa is of the opinion that even the USSR's consent to carry out inspections at sea

creates a negative precedent. Rodriguez assesses, however, that the [Cuban and Soviet] views are converging, but the situation is exacerbated by "the increased demands of the US," especially when it comes to the withdrawal of the [IL-28] bombers, something that the USSR does not consent to. Raul Castro confirms that the Cuban Anti-Air Forces has the orders not to shoot. He points out, however, that a situation may develop when they will have to shoot. The Americans are very careful at the borders at Guantanamo, and the internal counterrevolutionary forces are keeping quiet (even a Western diplomat points to the fact that no arrests are being made in times of the current crisis).

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 9 November 1962

Secret

Of Special Significance

Making copies is prohibited

Ciphergram No. 16482

Dispatched from Havana on 11.09.1962 and it was received at 11.09 at 13:15

Came to the Decoding Department at 11.09 at 13:20

TO: Krajewski

From: Ambassador JELEN

Politburo

Czesak¹³³

[??]

Siedlecki

Here are some elements of the overall propaganda with regards to the current crisis:

- a) The public opinion is being mobilized around Fidel's 5 points; they have a world opinion behind them and the actions in Latin America, especially the sabotage in Venezuela.
- b) Those foreign statements, which approve of Soviet actions during the crisis, are being omitted in the press,

but at the same time they are also avoiding to print those statements which would put the Soviet Union in negative light. They only printed a succinct summary of Kosygin's statement, emphasizing only the sentence of Soviet support and aid to Cuba; as far as [Soviet defense minister Rodion] Malinowski's statement, they only printed the part which condemns the aggressive moves of the US; both statements are wholly lacking in the assessment of the whole crisis. They have printed a large report according to AP and UPI of Khrushchev's statement at the Kremlin and the full text of a letter to Mikoyan. There is no mention of comrade Gomulka's article. As far as comrade [Polish Premier Josef] Cyrankiewicz's speech, they only briefly mentioned the part on the collapse of the colonial system. There is no mention of [Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos] Peter's interview for the MTI. As far as the information given by the Xinhua agency, they published only those parts of statements and declarations supporting the elements of [Castro's] 5 points.

- c) The celebration of 7 November [October Revolution] was much more extensive than in previous years and evidently exposed the aid of the USSR [to Cuba]. The speech of C.R. Rodriguez at the central academy did not broach the details of the crisis, but it contained a series of allusions to the divergences between the USSR and Cuba, including issues like principles in politics, condemning the weakness, the equality between both big and small countries, [and] peace attained under conditions of maintaining dignity.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 12 November 1962

Secret

Of Special Significance

Making copies is prohibited

Ciphergram No. 16645

Dispatched from Havana on 11.12.1962 at 24:00 and received at 11.13 at 13:45

Came to the Decoding Department at 11.12 at 16:30

Krajewski, EYES ONLY

From: Ambassador JELEN

Politburo

[??]

Krajewski

This information is based on the conversation on with [Raul] Valdes Vivo who is the editor-in-chief of Hoy [*Today*] during the absence of [Blas] Roca. He is in constant contact with the party leadership, he comes from the old PSP [Popular Socialist Party] apparatus. Here's his view on the situation:

- 1) The missiles were installed at the Soviet initiative. They were quickly transported [to Cuba]. The installation took place without the camouflage; this was not understood by those who were in the know or the witnesses. During the preceding talks, they bilaterally considered all possibilities and the most far-reaching ramifications, as well as the variant of a possible withdrawal in exchange for an analogous idea of the US with taking into consideration the Turkey option. The variant which was adopted, when it came to the withdrawal, was perhaps the only one which was not considered bilaterally; it caused a surprise and future fears.
- 2) The prolonging of negotiations facilitates increased demands on the part of the US. The [Cuban] leadership believes that the withdrawal took place too suddenly. The IL-type of airplanes was the possession of Cuba and they could not be withdrawn only with the decision made by the USSR.
- 3) The most difficult issue is not just the inspection of Cuba. The principle could be adopted but on conditions that are not humiliating for Cuba – the formula for the inspection, its extent, its duration and composition (they could possibly accept a composition of Latin countries maintaining relations with Cuba or neutral nations). The crux of the problem is [to obtain] guarantees, including the guarantee given by the USSR, the latter requires the explanations and specifying the appropriate form. They are awaiting a reply to the memo delivered to [Anastas] Mikoyan. The point is also to insure the delivery of conventional weapons and the degree of Soviet involvement in case of a possible military action carried out by the countries of Latin America, [including] a direct attack carried out by the US
- 4) Fidel is embittered by the position of the PRC. The Warsaw Pact countries reacted immediately after 22

October while the PRC [reacted] only after 28 October when the USSR announced the disassembly [of the missiles]. After 22 October the Warsaw Pact announced the state of emergency for the armed forces; the PRC could have also shown [force] toward the offshore islands [i.e., Nationalist-controlled islands such as Matsu and Quemoy (Mazu and Jinmen)], but instead it exacerbated the situation [on the border] with India, something that does not help Cuba.

- 5) The anti-Soviet moods have both widened and deepened. Even though the old communist apparatus best understands the line of the USSR, it had to unconditionally support Fidel in order to strengthen unity and counter the anti-Soviet tendencies. Among the [Cuban party] leadership, it is Fidel who shows the biggest understanding for the Soviet position and for the school of thought of the old cadres.

/-/ Jelen

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droźniak), 16 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 16831

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 11.16.1962 at 10:00 and received on 11.16.1962 at 17:30

Came to the Decoding Department on 11.16.1962 at 17:40

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL¹³⁴

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŹNIAK¹³⁵

/From [columnist] J.[oseph] Alsop/.

There is a belief within the [US] administration that [First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union Anastas] Mikoyan was not successful in convincing [Cuban leader Fidel] Castro as far as adopting a Soviet point of view. The [US] administration thinks that the USSR has lived up to all of the obligations, which [it] has taken upon itself. In case of complications on the part of [Fidel] Castro, they [the Americans] will consider the Cuban issue as a

problem concerning [President John F.] Kennedy and Castro. They are foreseeing a possibility of maintaining, and even expanding, the [naval] blockade; the continuation of their own aerial inspections; or entirely suspending their guarantees of not invading [Cuba] [...]

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jelen), 16 November 1962

Secret

Of Special Significance

Making copies is prohibited

Ciphergram No. 16889

Dispatched from Havana on 11.16.1962 at 22:30 and received at 11.17 at 16:00

Came to the Decoding Department at 11.17 at 17:45

Krajewski

From: Ambassador JELEN

/-/ Michałowski

Politburo

[??]

Krajewski

/16.11./

1. [Anastas] Mikoyan, whose arrival was expected today, was however postponed. Now they are saying that he may come either on Saturday or Sunday.
2. The Soviet embassy is confirming that there are serious divergences. They are not providing any specifics. The tone of their statements, however, is rather pessimistic. They are expressing fears that the announcement of shooting down American planes, an announcement that was included in the letter to U Thant from November 15, could cause grave complications if it were carried out. They are also saying that besides the reconnaissance flights there are also provocative ones which are at low altitudes.
3. As far as who possesses the [IL-28] bombers, there are diverging opinions.

4. Some Cuban interlocutors who are close to the leadership think that the divergences are much more serious than they thought, but they are not giving any specific examples.
5. My impressions;
 - a. The Cuban side stiffened their position, but they have not yet closed the doors for carrying out inspections (the letter to U Thant rejects “one-sided inspection” of Cuba). The example of stiffening their position is also the postulate to include Puerto Rico and the area of the Panama Canal into the area of non-nuclear sphere (Brazilian proposition [to denuclearize Latin America]).
 - b. There are two opposing views as to the prospects of Latin America that emerged in the talks with Mikoyan: the second Havana declaration – the thesis of the conference of the 81 communist parties. The differences in views as far as these matters were rather deepened.
 - c. In case Cuba continues to maintain a stiff position, then from the Cuban point of view and its interests, Cuba is threatened by losing a historic chance of merging the US and USSR guarantees.
 - d. There are divergences within the Cuban leadership regarding all issues that had been considered thus far. They are expecting an internal discussion, if conditions allow, following the conclusion of negotiations.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jelen), 21 November 1962

Dispatched from Havana on 11.21.1962 at 2:00 and received at 11.21 at 13:45
Came to the Decoding Department at 11.21 at 16:00
To: Krajewski

From: Ambassador JELEN

A meeting between [Anastas] Mikoyan and the heads of diplomatic posts of socialist countries took place today. M[ikoyan] informed [us] about the results of “the work with Cuban comrades” so far.

1. A joint Cuban-Soviet draft was submitted to U Thant (its content is the same as in our report to [Deputy Foreign Minister Jozef] Winiewicz in our dispatch from the 15th [of November]) and is based on the exchange of letters between Khrushchev and Kennedy, as well as Fidel’s 5 points.
2. The withdrawal of the bombers [from Cuba, which is to take place] within the period of one month following the lifting of the “blockade,” is necessary in order to appease the Caribbean nations. The result will be the lifting of the blockade.
3. There is some progress towards obtaining the guarantee [for US non-invasion of Cuba in the future?]. The US aims to postpone the issue and this is why this will be the issue over which they will fight right now (M.[ikoyan] stated that there were different opinions on this issue within the US administration). This is related to the issues of inspection and American [reconnaissance] flights over Cuba.
4. Castro’s disclaimer regarding inspections that were proposed until now is well-founded. There is currently a new draft put forth by U Thant [which proposes that inspections should be carried out by] a group with a headquarters in New York which carries out inspections if needed in the Caribbean. The draft seems interesting.
5. Fidel’s warning about shooting down the planes was a correct one and it was made following consultations with Khrushchev. The effect until now [is] that the number of flights has significantly decreased. In two cases, they opened fire without hitting the targets. [Mikoyan] thinks that these were American planes that were sent in order to test the veracity of [Castro’s] warning.
6. [They assess] the role of U Thant [as] positive, the Cuban issue will be a test for him as a secretary general.
7. The Brazilian proposition of the non-nuclear zone is significantly flawed, as it foresees the denuclearization of an area which remains under the jurisdiction of Latin American nations, and it does not include the

denuclearization of US bases in Latin America.

8. He assesses the overall development of the Cuban issue as a success. The withdrawal of the newly introduced strategic weapons is to recognize the existence of Cuba as a socialist country and to give it guarantees. Cuba will also end up having enormous defensive means.
9. To the question of the Hungarian [ambassador, János Beck] regarding an internal confusion [within the Cuban leadership], M[ikoyan] replied that he was not surprised. The new [Cuban] party is still in the making and their cadres are still young. [He said] that in Russia the Treaty of Brest[-Litovsk] also caused a proportionally greater confusion. M[ikoyan] further gave the sense that the concept of “no war, no peace” emerged in Cuba.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 21 November 1962

Dispatched from Havana on 11.21.1962 at 19:00 and received at 11.22 at 12:55
Came to the Decoding Department at 11.21 at 16:30
To: Krajewski
From: Ambassador JELEN

Here is the supplement to our dispatch no. 481

- a) [First Deputy Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers Anastas] Mikoyan did not mention the issue of Soviet-Cuban differences. He also did not mention the objectives of bringing the missiles to Cuba. He suggested, however, that a situation emerged in which one could compensate for the recognition of Cuba as a socialist country. Ipso facto, the Monroe Doctrine and the Rio Treaty had been struck. [Mikoyan] pointed out that the US will not give up on its anti-Cuban policy, and he emphasized within this context that the current balance of power [was] favorable to Cuba. He also added that although the United States may have much space to maneuver in the

Caribbean region, the situation is looking differently in other parts of the world.

- b) In a casual conversation, he mentioned his visit to Hungary in 1956; in this moment he turned to the Chinese [ambassador and said]: “at that time we were in constant consultations with the government of the PRC.”
- c) He made a remark regarding the Poles from the time of the [October?] [R]evolution and the leaders of the Polish Communist Party [KPP].¹³⁶ He emphasized his appreciation on several occasions to [the Polish leader Władysław] Gomułka.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 27 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 17355

Dispatched from Havana on 11.27.1962 at 19:00 and received at 11.28 at 12:05
Came to the Decoding Department at 11.28 at 14:20
To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI¹³⁷, Eyes Only
From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEN¹³⁸

In the conversation with [one of the Polish embassy employees] Czyżycki, Gallan – a Mexican journalist – relayed the following statement made by [Fidel?] Castro in the conversation with him on the 26th of this month (after the departure of [Anastas] Mikoyan):

1. The decision to install, and subsequently to withdraw, the [missile] bases, was not well thought out. Cuba would never have agreed to the proposition of their installation had it known that there was a possibility of their dismantling. Cuba agreed, and it was ready to bear consequences, because it believed that the point here was the strategic goals of the [communist] camp [as a whole]. Besides, the deciding [factor in their decision] was their trust they placed in the Soviet assessment of the

international balance of power.

2. If the installation of the [missile] bases resulted from ignoring the abilities of the opponent, something that had already taken place not for the first time in the Soviet [foreign] policy, for example in 1941,¹³⁹ then the [decision] to dismantle the missiles resulted from the exaggerated [assessment of the opponent's abilities].
3. It was a mistake to withdraw the missiles and the bombers separately, because it was like swallowing a bitter pill twice.
4. Castro is absolutely convinced about the honesty of the Soviet intentions during the crisis. However, it will take time to calm down the emotional [passionate] moods of the [Cuban] society.
5. Cuba does not put too much hope in the ongoing talks [taking place] in the UN. The principle [espoused] in the second Havana declaration should be intensively implemented in Latin America. However, this issue is related to the overall attitude of the USSR towards the policy of the communist parties of Latin American countries, which do not support the declaration. [The issue] is also related to the idea of [peaceful] coexistence under the specific [conditions] in Latin America.
6. The possibility of a renewed visit by [UN Secretary General] U Thant to Cuba is quite great.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Minutes of Conversation with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, President of the INRA¹⁴⁰ 27 November 1962

Secret

The conversation took place on 27 November and lasted over three hours from 9:00pm until 12:00 midnight. The position of CRR could be largely summarized as follows:

1. Cuba did not ask for the missiles. The decision of the Soviet government regarding the installation of missiles

and strategic weapons in Cuba was put before Cuba as an accomplished fact. Cuba's approval of these installations resulted from the conviction of the republic's authorities that the rocket launchers are a part of the global strategy plan of the socialist camp. Having expressed approval for the installation of the Soviet missiles, Cuba was aware of the enormous responsibility and the enormous risk, such as nuclear bombing of the island in case of a world conflict. However, the plans of the camp and the interests of the revolution took precedence.

2. Nobody from the Cuban leadership took into account any circumstances in which these weapons would be removed from Cuba. Therefore one of these two points applies: the mistake was either sending them [missiles] to Cuba, or the mistake was removing them. Most likely both decisions were flawed, but surely the latter one was.
3. The decision to remove [the missiles], formulated in Khrushchev's letter, was a total surprise. This message found Fidel Castro at breakfast on Sunday morning, 28 October. He initially did not want to believe it. Then suddenly, without communicating, but only with the co-workers who were at hand, he formulated a declaration about the five additional guarantees and immediately announced it.
4. The procedure adopted by the USSR is not to be tolerated and is not acceptable for a sovereign nation. The fact that the decision itself was not coordinated, as well as the consent for inspections without consultations with the Cuban government, has led to an open conflict between Moscow and Havana.
5. The USSR gave away a lot without getting anything in exchange. Retreating in the presence of imperialism is a flawed and futile policy. The guarantees, such as have been formulated by Kennedy, do not present any value and in fact do not guarantee anything. The announcement of the continuation of the policy of economic pressure and diversionary activities clearly attests to that. Even if one were to treat the decision to remove the missiles as saving peace, then giving away the bombers was absolutely unfounded.
6. During the secret part of the talks between Fidel and U Thant, the UN Secretary General stated in Havana that he forewarned the US president that in case of an assault on Cuba he would call a U.N. session, he would accuse the US of aggression and he would resign his post. After

the missile pretext, U Thant reiterated his warning in case the US did not lift the blockade after the removal of the Soviet installations.

7. The Soviet concessions are thus one-sided and ineffective. This is the worst policy. The only correct one would be a response of force to force, and the USSR was capable of that. It [the USSR] did not do that because the fear of war is the main element of the policy in Europe and it leads to mistakes. But at the same time it was certain that the Americans were not ready to go all the way and risk a war. The version that [Soviet leader Nikita S.] Khrushchev decided to make concessions as a result of Fidel's sudden letter indicating that the Soviet missile bases would be bombed in a matter of hours is not true because Fidel [Castro]'s warning reached Khrushchev after the Soviet premier had already sent [US President John F.] Kennedy the letter expressing agreement to remove the missiles. An individual armed with a small caliber revolver who withdraws his weapon in the face of an enemy's bigger revolver cannot state that he saved the peace; for the threat remains. The only correct response would be to introduce yet a bigger gun to the discussion. Armed conflict would not take place because in fact this was not what the US intended. The rickety and weak position of the USSR made possible the success of the United States' imperialistic policy.
8. An invasion or some other type of US aggression against Cuba has not taken place not because the US is taking into account the armed response of the USSR, but because it would be an enormous and politically costly military operation. Cuba is splendidly armed; it has a superb army and the landing operations would have to cost [the US] 60,000 American soldiers. It would be a very long-lasting loss of face politically and a definitive decline in US prestige.
9. The essence of our differences lies in different understandings over the issue of coexistence with imperialism and over the nature of the main conflict of the era. It [reference unclear – *Trans.*] cannot rely on constant concessions. The movements for protecting the peace did not develop in Latin America because that is impossible under conditions where an armed encounter is the only solution to conflicts between countries or where the masses are left to colonial dependence on the US. The point here is not that the masses in this hemisphere do not know the horrors of war, but that they know the horrors of imperialism. From this point of view, one should recognize the current solution of the Caribbean conflict as a delay in the revolutionary process in Latin America and a strengthening of the most reactionary circles, above all in the US, as well as in other countries on the continent.
10. On that score, [First Deputy Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers Anastas] Mikoyan's talks in Havana did not lead to anything. After the first two meetings and the exchange of opinions on the history of the most recent days, and after Mikoyan's explanation of the Soviet stance, it was jointly decided not to focus on an analysis of the past as there was no hope for agreement. The entire matter should be seen on a somewhat broader plane, that is, a flawed one in relation to the general lack of any Soviet policy toward colonial countries and the colonial revolution. The examples of the Congo, Guinea, Algeria and now Cuba testify that the USSR does not possess a proper conception of its assistance to the anti-imperialist revolutionary movements. At one of the international conferences not too long ago, [Vyacheslav] Molotov as the minister of foreign affairs included Cuba in the national territory of the United States. The current draft of the protocol by Mikoyan, that is, the joint Soviet-Cuban proposal (currently in the possession of U Thant) is an example of the ignorance of Soviet officials in the MFA¹⁴¹ with reference to the Caribbean zone. Among other things, he treated the countries of Central America as entirely subject to the US and he assumed the right of the US to make decisions on their behalf without taking into consideration even the formal sovereignty of these nations.
11. The ending of the exchange of opinions with Mikoyan over the analysis of past mistakes and the degree of correctness of Soviet policy does not mean that the matter will not be returned to at an appropriate time. The plenipotentiary status and the position of Mikoyan, however, did not render possible a fruitful exchange of opinions on this topic. In relation to this the Havana talks exclusively referred to the future, the joint tactic in the UN, the content of the joint proposals, etc. In substance, the goal of Cuba's policy is to impose possibly an immediate discussion of Fidel's five points, where the first four are not debatable, and the fifth is a motion to remove the base at Guantanamo; the point of this minimal program is to begin negotiations on the matter.
12. The fact that the Soviet press, along with the press of other socialist countries, did not publish the part of

Fidel's speech from 1 November in which he talked about the difference of opinions with the USSR made an unusually ill-fated impression on Cuba's leadership. This is a shameful policy of concealing the most serious matters from public opinion. It is hard for communists to criticize the Soviet leadership, but one cannot not do it if one wants to follow one's conscience and be in accord with history. The fact that the Polish press published this excerpt of Fidel's speech should be treated very positively. In this regard, one should not attach more importance to the distrust towards certain political aspects of the PUWP¹⁴² which one can observe in some circles of the ORI¹⁴³ apparatus, mostly on the part of comrades who were recruited from the previous PSP¹⁴⁴. These young cadres, of a low ideological level, live by the old formulas. Despite, for example, critical opinion of its films or too great of a retraction in the area of agriculture policy, Poland deserves respect and admiration. One should contrast the level of Kalecki, Lange, and Schaff with the low theoretical level in the Soviet leadership. The fact that it was precisely Mikoyan who distinguished himself in the field of certain theoretical generalizations attests emphatically to the theoretical level of the present leadership of the USSR. In relation to this one should emphasize the exceptionally low and primitive level of Ponomarev's article.

13. The main question currently boils down to how far the USSR is inclined to move and engage itself in the defense of Cuba. Thus, there is not so much a lack of American guarantees as of Soviet guarantees. The Soviet position in this matter is not known and Cuba is inclined to think that it is difficult to count on a Soviet decision to join [*przystąpić*] a war in defense of the island. This problem will be raised by Cuba at an appropriate time and in an appropriate forum.
14. Cuba is currently confronting an enormous task. One has to repair the consequences of the mistakes of Soviet policy both on Cuba's territory and on the territory of Latin America, and even Africa. There were two questions facing the revolutionary forces and their allies:
 - a) Can the USSR give economic assistance to countries that are so far away?
 - b) Is it [the USSR] able to defend them militarily?
15. As far as the first question is concerned, after years of complete fiascos and the humiliation of the USSR due to

not fulfilling commercial contracts with Argentina, Brazil or Uruguay, Soviet assistance for Cuba is making and may make a full rehabilitation. In terms of the military, or rather war, it turned out that such assistance is not possible. This significantly weakens the revolutionary forces on this continent, because it is known that even if one comes to power following a peaceful path, let us say the party in Chile, a putsch from the right, from the military and oligarchic elements, is unavoidable. The incidents with Cuba showed that the party would then be defenseless. The only future lies exclusively in a very active Cuban policy. One has to respond to the aggressive policy of imperialism with a policy of an armed fight with imperialism. The example of the tumbling, and near abolition, of the Brazilian communist party of [Luís Carlos] Prestes testifies to where reformism leads. One should remember the report of [Finnish Communist Otto] Kuusinen at the VII Comintern Congress.

16. Thus, contrary to the rumors, the Second Havana Declaration is current and alive. It was badly understood. It does not signify the export of revolution but every possible assistance to existing and active revolutionary movements. The national bourgeoisie, not because Stalin said so at the XIX [CPSU] Congress but because it is rickety and afraid of socialist transformations, is not capable of and cannot lead revolutionary movements. Only the working class can lead the revolution.
17. Certain anti-Soviet moods undoubtedly have been born. Taking away weapons from Cuba had ill-fated psychological consequences and the view that Cuba is alone became very widespread. The consent of the Cuban government to the request by the Soviet authorities not to shoot down American aircraft that were inspecting the removal of the missile installations demoralized the Cuban army. Thus, currently the great work of restoring sympathy towards the USSR awaits the authorities of the republic. Obviously, the conduct of the Cuban press, which contains elements of acrimony or mockery directed at Mikoyan, does not contribute to the success of this action.
18. The articles of Victor Rico Galana, printed in the Mexican weekly, "Siempre", (the main article was delivered after a proper dispatch through the mediation of PPA¹⁴⁵ – L.U.) are, in principle and according to the main lines, in accord with the views of the Cuban leadership. One may remark on certain details, but in principle they are correct. Personally attacking Khrushchev can be taken

as unfortunate, even though one should not attach too much importance to it. One has to emphasize that Galan wrote his articles before contacting members of the Cuban leadership, and these are exactly the articles which enabled him to get access to Fidel and Dorticos (he has conducted an interview with the president which will appear on Thursday, 29 November in “Siempre”).

The conversation ended after three hours due to fatigue and the late hour. At the request of the interviewer, C.R.R. agreed to come back to it in a few days. At the same time he announced that he would deliver to his interviewer the text of the article which C.R. wrote in 1950 on the topic of the Leninist conception of coexistence –an article that is entirely topical. C.R.R. is a member of the national leadership of ORI, he participated, in the absence of Blas Roca, as the only ex-member of the PSP in the talks with Mikoyan, and on 7 November this year he gave a speech at the October Academy.

Leopold Unger¹⁴⁶

[Source: *Archivum Akt Nowych, Warsaw, Poland. 237/XXIII/1090, 1961-1963, karty 245. Translated by Małgorzata Gnoińska.*]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droźniak), 30 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 17488

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 11.30.1962 at 10:00 and received on 11.30.1962 at 21:50

Came to the Decoding Department on 11.30.1962 at 22:00

To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI,¹⁴⁷ IMMEDIATELY, BUT NOT AT NIGHT

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŹNIAK¹⁴⁸

[This information has been compiled based on my conversation with Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan, [First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union]:

- 1) [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk and [Ambassador at Large Llewellyn] Thompson, who did not talk, as well as [Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly] Dobrynin, participated in the conversation with President [John F. Kennedy]. The tone [of the conversation] was relaxed,

but very serious. The main topic was Cuba. They briefly broached the issue of Laos. He [Mikoyan] will have meetings (unofficial ones) with [Secretary] Rusk and [US Attorney General] Robert Kennedy. The President evaded giving a formal guarantee of [US] non-aggression as far as Cuba, referring to the [Soviet] failure to keep the promise [to allow] inspections in Cuba. Mikoyan [counter-] attacked by pointing out that Khrushchev fully carried out the substantial promises [he had previously made]. [Mikoyan said that] it was Cuba's sovereign right to consent or not to the inspections [on its territory]. [Fidel] Castro proposed that a multilateral inspection [could be carried out in Cuba and elsewhere]. [Mikoyan] outright asked whether K.[ennedy] was reneging on his promises. The President expressed his readiness to issue yet another personal declaration regarding the [US] non-aggression [towards Cuba]. [He said that such a declaration could be made], for example, at a press conference. Mikoyan insisted that [President Kennedy's declaration] be of a formal nature and under the auspices of the United Nations. The President stated that as long as he remained the president he would keep his personal promise of non-aggression [towards Cuba]. The issue of [obtaining] the guarantees [of not invading Cuba] will be the subject of future discussions in New York.

- 2) Besides, the president called for maintaining status quo and, while joking, asked that [the Soviet Union] does not make any revolutions in other countries. Mikoyan stated that revolutions are taking place, and will continue to take place, whether with or without the [assistance of the] Soviet Union. He gave the example of Cuba. The president also stated that he was in the midst of preparations for disassembling of [US military] bases, for example, in Turkey. They talked about the [U-2 reconnaissance] flights over Cuba. The president stated that such flights were only flying at high altitudes. But M.[ikoyan] said that such flights were no less piratical [rover] than those carried out at low altitudes.
- 3) M.[ikoyan said] that he was pleased with his visit to Cuba. Initially, he was received [by the Cuban leadership] with anxiety, because the American press stated that M.[ikoyan] would be pressing for [Cuba] to agree to inspections. Mikoyan's statements, [which were made] still prior to his departure from New York [and which concerned the Soviet support for Castro's five points, as well as the process of the talks [he held with the Cuban leadership], fully calmed Castro down. [Mikoyan said that the talks in Havana] were very interesting and

productive. [Mikoyan came to] a complete understanding with Castro and his farewell took place in a friendly manner. M.[ikoyan] assesses Cuba's economic situation as a very difficult one.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 18 December 1962

Ciphergram No. 18243

Dispatched from Moscow on 12.18.1962 at 13:20
Received on 12.18.1962 at 5:55
Came into the Deciphering Department on 12.18.1962 at 9:40
To: Zenon KLISZKO¹⁴⁹
From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JASZCZUK¹⁵⁰

From [Minister of Defense Marian] Spychalski's visit to meet Khrushchev:

2. Cuba. The Soviet missiles that were installed on Cuba were ready for action. So, they were brought in, assembled, and disassembled in the period of two months. "As soon as we took the kulak out of our pockets," the Americans gave up their aggressive intentions towards Cuba. We did not plan on using the missiles. The point was to show them off and to show how quickly we could act. The Americans got surprised at how quickly the missiles were disassembled. After we received Kennedy's pledge [not to invade Cuba], we withdrew the missiles. We are not divulging everything we know about Cuba. Given the prospects of future relations with the US, we are holding our tongues.

...

4. The Cuban issue, as well as that of Laos, shows that the United States acknowledges that the Soviet Union is essential in solving world problems. After all, Cuba is in the region of the Monroe Doctrine, but the United States had to agree to our activity and we forced them to make a decision regarding Cuba...

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and

translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 25 December 1962

Ciphergram No. 18512

Dispatched from Moscow on 12.25.1962 at 20:30
Received on 12.26.1962 at 14:25
Came into the Deciphering Department on 12.26.1962 at 15:30
To: Zenon KLISZKO, Eyes only
From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JASZCZUK¹⁵¹

Based on the conversation with Yuri Andropov in the Central Committee on the 25th:

4. The Section for [Soviet relations] with the socialist countries in the International Department of the CC CPSU has recently encompassed Cuba.

...

5. Cuba. The Cuban comrades understand the Soviet moves following the explanations by [Anastas] Mikoyan. At the same time, they do not agree (without showing it externally) with the withdrawal of the missiles without asking them first. They are pointing to the issue of [American] guarantee. To be sure, everyone is aware of the fact that we cannot have complete guarantees from the Americans. However, we will not unleash a nuclear war in defense of Cuba. We need to help Cuba economically and politically; this is our responsibility. Andropov reiterated this by making the following statement: "Comrade Jaszczuk, we must help Cuba and we must help it a great deal." The party situation in Cuba is complicated. There are 10 thousand communists in the Revolutionary Workers' Party of Cuba for the total of 25 thousand. This is an organization which is patchy and loose. Besides the dedicated Marxists, there are those in the organization who do not agree with Marxism. They are all very honest people but they have no revolutionary experience. This is why there are possible deviations within the party. The Cubans reprinted the article from *Renmin Ribao* [People's Daily] entitled "The Proletarians of All Countries Unite!" Then, they explained themselves that, initially, they had received the first part of Khrushchev's speech to the session of the

Supreme Council. They fully agree with the international situation and the Cuban conflict. Having received the second part of Khrushchev's speech which contained a secret criticism of the position and conduct of the CCP, they thought it right, after they had printed it, to also publish the content of the Chinese article. As we can see, they are following a policy of balancing two sides.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*

Notes

1 Despite occasional grumbling about the Cubans, Warsaw continued to provide political, moral, and some material support—a pattern repeated during that stretch of the cold war in Poland's approach to the Vietnam War and its relations with the communist government of North Vietnam in Hanoi. See James Hershberg, *Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam* (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 2012).

2 See Gomulka's 20 November 1963 comments, reported in a Hungarian record located and translated by Csaba Bekes, published in the collection of Hungarian documents published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

3 The exception is a Polish journalist's report of a 27 November 1962 conversation with senior Cuban communist Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, which was obtained by the National Security Archive for its October 2002 conference in Havana to mark the 40th anniversary of the missile crisis.

4 Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"—Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy 1958-1964* (New York: Norton and Co., 1997), pp. 163-65.

5 Records in the Poland folder of the National Security Files at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston show that US officials tried vainly to convince the Poles to cancel Rapacki's visit to Cuba, arguing that it would inflame critics who would oppose improving economic relations with a communist country, regardless of claims that it deserved better treatment in view of domestic reforms. Comparable domestic political complications also plagued and ultimately derailed Kennedy administration efforts around this time to secure Congressional approval to remove trade barriers with Yugoslavia.

6 See Henry Raymond, "Poles Try, But Fail to Calm Castro," *Washington Post*, 9 September 1962.

7 On Mikoyan's visit, see esp. Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Press/Stanford University Press, 2012), which includes a virtually complete Soviet record of Mikoyan's exchanges in Cuba and his cabled dialogue with Khrushchev back in Moscow.

8 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the Vice-Chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

9 Poland's Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

10 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

11 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

12 On 5 May 1948, the foundation of the Organization of the American States (OAS) took place in Bogota, Colombia. Cuba was one of its founding members. On 22 January 1962, the OAS held the Eighth Meeting of Consultation of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Punta del Este, Uruguay. As the result, Cuba was effectively suspended from the OAS from January 22, 1962 until June 3, 2009.

13 Blas Roca (1908-1987), Cuba's leading communist theoretician and supporter of Fidel Castro.

14 Raul Roa Garcia (1907-1982) served in the Foreign Ministry of Cuba from 1959 to 1976; he was a lawyer and an intellectual.

15 A journalist and the Cuban ambassador to Mexico and then the United Nations in the early 1960s.

16 The reference here is to the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (commonly known as the Rio Treaty). Article 8 of the Rio Treaty states: "For the purposes of this Treaty, the measures on which the Organ of Consultation may agree will comprise one or more of the following: recall of chiefs of diplomatic missions; breaking of diplomatic relations; breaking of consular relations; partial or complete interruption of economic relations or of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and radiotelephonic or radiotelegraphic communications; and use of armed force." Source: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decad061.asp#art8.

17 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the Vice-Chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

18 Poland's Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

19 Aleksei I. Adzhubei (1924 – 1993), Soviet journalist (editor of the newspaper *Izvestia*) and the son-in-law of Nikita Khrushchev; a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; political insider, speechwriter, and advisor to Khrushchev.

20 Commonly used in reference to Finland's policies of not challenging the Soviet Union during the Cold War; the term is also used when referring to a country's policies of not challenging the policies of its greater neighbor (e.g. Cuba and the United States) while maintaining its national sovereignty.

21 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

22 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

23 Article 32 of the OAS Charter states: The Organization of American States accomplishes its purposes by means of: a) The

Inter-American Conference; b) The Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs; c) The Council; d) The Pan American Union; e) The Specialized Conferences; and f) The Specialized Organizations. Source: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decad062.asp#art32.

24 Article 8 of the Rio Treaty states: "For the purposes of this Treaty, the measures on which the Organ of Consultation may agree will comprise one or more of the following: recall of chiefs of diplomatic missions; breaking of diplomatic relations; breaking of consular relations; partial or complete interruption of economic relations or of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and radiotelephonic or radiotelegraphic communications; and use of armed force."

25 Article 20 of the OAS Charter signed at Bogota Conference of American States, Charter of the Organization of American States; March 30-May 2, 1948, states: "All international disputes that may arise between American States shall be submitted to the peaceful procedures set forth in this Charter, before being referred to the Security Council of the United Nations." Source: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decad062.asp.

26 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the Vice-Chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

27 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

28 The reference here should be to Resolution VI not Resolution IV, as it is Resolution VI – The Exclusion of the Present Government of Cuba from Participation in the Inter-American System – which was adopted at Punta del Este by majority vote of 14.

29 Points 3 and 4 of Resolution VI state, respectively: 3. That this incompatibility excludes the present Government of Cuba from participation in the inter-American system. 4. That the Council of the Organization of American States and the other organs and organizations the inter-American system adopt without delay the measures necessary to comply with this resolution. Source: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/intam17.asp#b4.

30 Resolution II, point 2-a, states: "The Council of the Organization shall select membership of the Special Consultative Committee on Security from a list of candidates presented by the governments, and shall define immediately terms of reference for the Committee with a view to achieving the full purpose of this resolution." Source: <http://www.oas.org/consejo/meetings%20OF%20consultation/actas/acta%208.pdf>.

31 Resolution II, point 1 and 2-c, respectively state: 1. To request the Council of the Organization of American States to maintain all necessary vigilance, for the purpose of warning against any acts of aggression, subversion, or other dangers to peace and security, or the preparation of such acts, resulting from the continued intervention of Sino-Soviet powers in this hemisphere, and to make recommendations to the governments of the member states with regard thereto. 2-c. The Special Consultative Committee on Security shall submit to the Council of the Organization, no later than May 1, 1962, an initial general report, with pertinent recommendations

regarding measures which should be taken. Source: <http://www.oas.org/consejo/meetings%20OF%20consultation/actas/acta%208.pdf>.

32 Resolution VIII, point 2: To charge the Council of the Organization of American States. in accordance with the circumstances and with due consideration for the constitutional or legal limitations of each and every one of the member states, with studying the feasibility and desirability of extending the suspension of trade to other items, with special attention to items of strategic importance. Source: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/intam17.asp.

33 Poland's Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

34 Blas Roca (1908 – 1987), a leading theoretician of the Cuban Revolution and the leader of the former Popular Socialist Party.

35 Emilio Aragonés Navarro (1928 – 2007), one of the original members of the 26th of July Movement; friends with Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

36 Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas was formed in July 1961 following the Cuban Revolution and the fall of the Fulgencio Batista regime. The ORI was comprised of the members of the revolutionary organization called the "26th of July Movement" of Fidel Castro, the Popular Socialist Party of Blas Roca, and the Revolutionary Directorate of March 13th of Faure Chomón Mediavilla. On March 26, 1962, the ORI was transformed into Partido Unido de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba (PURSC). In 1965, the PURSC was transformed into the Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) which exists to this day.

37 Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar (1901-1973) served as Cuba's president twice: 1940 – 1944 and 1952 – 1959.

38 Claris is an embassy/consular letter reporting on information included in the press.

39 "The 26th of July Movement" – movement led by Fidel Castro that overthrew the regime of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba in 1959. After Castro's victory, the movement was integrated into the Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas (ORI) in 1961.

40 The Popular Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Popular*) was formed in 1925 by a group including Blas Roca, Anibal Escalante, Fabio Grobart, and Julion Antonio Mella. It was later merged into the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI), the precursor of the current Communist Party of Cuba.

41 The November 1960 Conference of the Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties was attended by delegations from 81 countries and took place in Moscow.

42 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

43 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

44 Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas was formed in July 1961 following the Cuban Revolution and the fall of the Fulgencio Batista regime. The ORI was comprised of the members of the revolutionary organization called the "26th of July Movement" of Fidel Castro, the Popular Socialist Party of Blas Roca, and the Revolutionary Directorate of March 13th of Faure Chomón Mediavilla. On March 26, 1962, the ORI was transformed into

Partido Unido de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba (PURSC). In 1965, the PURSC was transformed into the Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) which exists to this day.

45 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

46 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

47 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

48 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Winiewicz, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki, Comrade Krajewski.

49 Przemysław Ogrodziński (1918 – 1980), Polish diplomat, Poland's head of mission to the International Commission for Control and Supervision in Vietnam, Poland's ambassador to India and Norway.

50 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

51 Marian Dobrosielski, professor of philosophy, a long-time employee of the Polish Foreign Service; he served as the ambassador to England (1969-1972); the head of the Polish delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1972-1981); and as Poland's deputy foreign minister (1978-1981).

52 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

53 Przemysław Ogrodziński (1918 – 1980), Polish diplomat, Poland's head of mission to the International Commission for Control and Supervision in Vietnam, Poland's ambassador to India and Norway.

54 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

55 Charles E. "Chip" Bohlen (1904 – 1974), US career diplomat; he served as the US ambassador to the Soviet Union (1953-1957), to the Philippines (1957 – 1959), and then to France (1962-1968).

56 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Winiewicz, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki, Comrade Milnikiel.

Deputy Prime Ministers: Comrade Wierblowski, Comrade Kasman, Comrade Gede, Comrade Trampczynski, Comrade Wicha, Comrade Bordzilowski, Comrade Moczar, Comrade Szlachcic. Point One to Comrade [Aleksander] Krajewski.

57 This political group was formed in July 1961. The group consolidated the 26 July Movement of Fidel Castro, the Socialist Party of Blas Roca, and the Revolutionary Directorate of March 13 of Faure Chomon. The ORI was dissolved on March 26, 1962 when it was replaced by the Partido Unido de la Revolucion (PURSC) de

Cuba. Given that ORI was dissolved in March 1962, it is curious why Poland's authorities continued to refer to the Cuban leadership as ORI and not PURSC. On October 3, 1965, PURSC was replaced by El Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) – the Communist Party of Cuba.

58 In early 1962, Fidel Castro openly denounced Anibal Escalante – First Secretary of the Communist Party.

59 Reference here is most likely to the 1956 events in Poland, known as the Polish October, in which the Polish United Workers' Party went through a crisis (brought about by poor economic conditions in Poland, Khrushchev's Secret Speech, destalinization, etc.), which resulted in the reinstatement of a moderate Władysław Gomułka as first Secretary and a compromise between the proponents of Stalinism and those wanting more political and economic liberalization.

60 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Winiewicz, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki.

61 The reference here is to Poland's post-WWII western borders along the Oder-Neisse line which were not de jure recognized by the Federal Republic of Germany.

62 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

63 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

64 U Thant visited Poland in September 1962.

65 Gaitskill visited Poland in August 1962.

66 The Casablanca group was founded in 1961 and included Algeria, Egypt, Ghana and Morocco. The group, which represented more radical and socialist attitudes combined with the idea of Pan-Africanism, was eventually dissolved and merged into the organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

67 Reference here to the Soviet Declaration that the US attack on Cuba will lead to nuclear war.

68 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

69 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

70 Reference here to the Soviet declaration that the US attack on Cuba would lead to nuclear war.

71 Poland's Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

72 Brezhnev met with President Josip Tito of Yugoslavia and became an honorary citizen of Belgrade.

73 Reference here to the conference of Afro-Asian nations held in Belgrade in 1961, a conference which led to the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War.

74 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

75 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

76 [Ben Bella had just visited Washington, where he met with President Kennedy, and had gone on to Havana—ed.]

77 [Gromyko, who was in the United States to attend the UN General Assembly session in New York, had come to Washington on October 18 to meet with President Kennedy and Secretary of State Rusk—ed.]

78 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

79 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

80 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

81 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s Ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

82 The reference here is to the failed Bay of Pigs invasion launched in April 1961 and carried out by CIA-trained Cuban exiles.

83 Llewellyn E. “Tommy” Thompson (1904 – 1972), John F. Kennedy’s Adviser for Soviet Affairs and former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union; he served as ambassador to the Soviet Union twice: 1957 – 1962 and 1967 – 1969.

84 The reference here is to Khrushchev’s visit to Beijing in October 1959 (following his successful visit to the United States in September 1959 during which he met President Dwight D. Eisenhower), the last visit which the Soviet leader paid to China and the last visit with Chinese leader Mao Zedong.

85 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

86 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

87 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the Vice-Chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland’s ambassador to Brazil.

88 Poland’s ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

89 Gomulka, Cyrankiewicz, Gierek, Jedrychowski, Kliszko, Loga-Sowinski, Ochab, Rapacki, Spychalski, Zambrowski, Zawadzki, Jarosinski, Strzelecki, Starewicz, Wicha, Moczar, Korczynski, Naszkowski, Wierna, Michalowski, Birecki, Katz-Suchy, Siedlecki, Milnikiel, Krajewski.

90 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

91 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s Ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

92 It is not clear which communist embassy the Polish Ambassador is referring to here.

93 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

94 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

95 It is not clear whether the reference here is to the United States Naval Station at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, which the United States began to lease, starting in 1903 during the Spanish-American

War, and continued to keep even after Fidel Castro came to power. Most likely, the reference here is to the Soviet missiles installed in Cuba.

96 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Wicha, Comrade Bodzilowski, Comrade Korczynski, Comrade Naszkowski, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki, Comrade Katz-Suchy, Comrade Milnikiel.

97 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

98 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s Ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

99 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Wicha, Comrade Bodzilowski, Comrade Korczynski, Comrade Naszkowski, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki, Comrade Katz-Suchy, Comrade Milnikiel.

100 Reference here to Adlai Stevenson’s famous presentation on October 25, 1962 at the United Nations Security Council during which he challenged the Soviet representative Valerian Zorin to admit that the Soviets had installed missiles on Cuba. When Zorin refused to say whether there were Soviet missiles on Cuba, Stevenson said: “I am prepared to wait for my answer until hell freezes over,” after which he presented photographs taken by U-2 planes which proved the presence of these missiles in Cuba.

101 Poland’s ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

102 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

103 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

104 Reference here is to the Sino-Indian border clashes when the Chinese forces launched an offensive across the McMahon Line and in Ladakh, a region of Jammu and Kashmir, the northernmost state of India, on 20 October 1962.

105 Poland’s ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

106 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland’s Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

107 Gomulka, Cyrankiewicz, Gierek, Jedrychowski, Kliszko, Loga-Sowinski, Ochab, Rapacki, Spychalski, Zambrowski, Zawadzki, Jarosinski, Strzelecki, Czesak, Naszkowski, Wierna, Michalowski, Birecki, Katz-Suchy, Milnikiel, Krajewski

108 Poland’s ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

109 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland’s ambassador to the Soviet Union from 2 December 1959 to 25 September 1963.

110 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

111 Poland’s Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

- 112 Józef Czesak, the head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party.
- 113 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).
- 114 Edward Droźniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 115 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Bodzilowski, Comrade Korczynski, Comrade Naszkowski, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki, Comrade Katz-Suchy, Comrade Milnikiel.
- 116 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland's ambassador to the Soviet Union from 2 December 1959 to 25 September 1963.
- 117 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).
- 118 Edward Droźniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 119 The reference here is to Cable No. 16028 (printed above) from the Polish embassy in Washington, D.C., to Warsaw, dated 30 October 1962 based on a conversation with "an important American interlocutor."
- 120 Poland's Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).
- 121 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).
- 122 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland's ambassador to the Soviet Union from December 2, 1959 to September 25, 1963.
- 123 Former Soviet ambassador to Cuba. 1960-62.
- 124 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland's Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 2 December 1959 to 25 September 1963.
- 125 Former Soviet ambassador to Cuba, 1960-62.
- 126 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).
- 127 Edward Droźniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 128 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).
- 129 Julisz Katz-Suchy (1912 – 1971), former Polish ambassador to the United Nations and ambassador to India (1957-1962).
- 130 Edward Droźniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 131 Mieczyslaw Rakowski (1926 – 2008), Editor-in-Chief of *Polityka* weekly.
- 132 Józef Czesak, the head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party.
- 133 Józef Czesak, the head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party.
- 134 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).
- 135 Edward Droźniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's Ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 136 This party was established in 1918, but it was dissolved the Comintern in 1938 as part of Stalin's Great Purges.
- 137 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.
- 138 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).
- 139 The reference here is to the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 known as the "Operation Barbarossa," which followed after Stalin signed the Treaty of Non-Aggression (commonly known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact) on 23 August 1939.
- 140 INRA (Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria) – NIAR (the National Institute of Agrarian Reform).
- 141 Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 142 PZPR (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza), the PUWP (the Polish United Workers' Party).
- 143 ORI (Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas), the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations.
- 144 PSP (Partido Socialista Popular), the Popular Socialist Party.
- 145 PAP (Polska Agencja Prasowa) – PPA (the Polish Press Agency).
- 146 Leopold Unger (1922 -2011) was a Polish journalist, columnist and essayist who left Poland in 1969, permanently settling in Brussels, Belgium.
- 147 Adam Rapacki (1909 -1970), served as Poland's foreign minister between 1956 and 1968.
- 148 Edward Droźniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 149 Polish leader Gomulka's right-hand man.
- 150 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland's Ambassador to the Soviet Union from December 2, 1959 to 25 September 1963.
- 151 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland's Ambassador to the Soviet Union from December 2, 1959 to September 25, 1963.

Polish-Soviet Exchanges on Cuba, 1963-1965

In the following excerpts, drawn from Polish archival records translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska, Polish communist leader Władysław Gomułka and Soviet leaders discussed various issues related to Cuba during their meetings. Cuban sugar was discussed during a conversation between Gomułka and Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow in April 1964, in particular the subject of Soviet purchases of the commodity and aid to Havana to increase production. Interestingly, the Pole seems far more skeptical than the Soviet about Cuba's capacity to meet promised sales figures. A year earlier, Khrushchev had written Gomułka regarding a shift in the prices they were going to pay Havana for sugar, to recognize a rise on global markets. The May 1963 letter is included here. Both documents make clear that buying Cuban sugar, thereby replacing the missing American buyer that had vanished due to the US economic embargo, constituted an ideological obligation, to support a threatened fraternal country, rather than merely an economic or trade matter.

Excerpts from two summits in 1965, after Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964, deal with other issues—most visibly the Sino-Soviet split, especially against the background of the escalation in Vietnam. In April in Warsaw, the new general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), Leonid I. Brezhnev, and Soviet prime minister Alexei N. Kosygin—two of the leaders of the group that had toppled Khrushchev—referred to the recent visit to Moscow of Cuban defense minister Raúl Castro, and both were pleased to note a recent precipitous decline in Sino-Cuban relations.¹ And that October, at a Belarussian forest retreat, Brezhnev happily cited the further isolation of the Chinese—to the point that, in this zero-sum contest for support within the communist world, Fidel Castro's trust in Moscow had so greatly improved that even his unpleasant memories of Soviet-Cuban discord during the missile crisis exactly three years earlier had receded.² As events would show, that assessment of mutual trust was somewhat premature.—J.H.



Note of Polish-Soviet Talks in Moscow on 13-15 April 1964

Secret of Special Significance

Participants from the Polish side: Comrade(s) Władysław

Gomułka, Józef Cyrankiewicz, Zenon Kliszko, Stefan Jędrzychowski, Adam Rapacki, Edmund Pszczółkowski, Roman Fidelski, Marian Dmochowski, Henryk Różański, Manfred Lachs and Tadeusz Findziński

Participants from the Soviet side: Comrades N. K. Khrushchev, A.N. Kosygin, A. I. Mikoyan, N. V. Podgorny, J. V. Andropov, M.A. Lesechko, P. F. Lomako, A.A. Gromyko, A. B. Aristov, M.R. Kuzhmin, N.P. Fiurbin, and B. P. Miroshnichenko

[Excerpts regarding Cuba]

...

Gomułka: How much sugar is Cuba going to provide?³

Khrushchev: The agreement amounts to 10 million tons annually.

Gomułka: Our people didn't believe it.

Khrushchev: I am not going to lie. I am not a Turk.

Jędrzychowski: This is impossible.

Khrushchev: Don't say these things. Cuba possesses ideal conditions for sugar production. They want to have a monopoly [in this area]. Last year, [they sent] 2, 600 thousand [i.e., 2.6 million] tons of sugar. They are going to increase it gradually every year and by 1968 they will have provided 10 million [tons of sugar].

Gomułka: With my hand on my heart: I don't believe it.

Khrushchev: I trust Fidel's estimates. He came to us recently [in January 1964] as a totally different person. He was [like] the Flying Dutchman before.⁴ He was even like that on 1 May, but now I was pleasantly surprised. He thinks practically and [sees] that his own people are being subjective. Some of our comrades also share your attitude, but I am of a different opinion. We proposed to him [Fidel] that we would increase the mechanization of sugarcane planting and harvesting. We designed a combine-harvester which works well.

Gomułka: [Ernesto Che] Guevara said that mechanization [of agriculture] does not always work under Cuban conditions. They ran out of workers and they were late with their harvest that was [to constitute sugar deliveries] to Chile.

Khrushchev: This is because they only had two such combine-harvesters for a trial period, but they will receive 500 [such machines from us] next year. The only thing, though, is that they need to be tested for one season and the Cubans do not want to wait. They are asking us to produce more such combine-harvesters according to the same model. They

are also saying that they would not lodge any complaints towards us in the future if these machines don't work properly. [Sugarcane] is such a plant that easily submits to mechanization. Our machines are not complicated at all – [they are] planters. We even have machines that can plant forests. They have been technically tested fifteen years ago back in the Urals. Castro asked for such machines. We will continue to mechanize their agriculture. What we have left now is [to mechanize their] transport and sugar refineries. The production ability of their sugar refineries is higher. However, there has been a decrease in the production of sugar. Until 1970, we will produce on our own 9 million tons of sugar for our own needs. Besides, we will receive sugar from Castro. He forced us to agree to accept yet 10 million tons at 6 cents per English pound. It is more expensive and we are going to incur losses, [but all of this is to] help Castro [See below, Khrushchev's letter to Gomułka regarding Soviet assistance to Cuba.]

Gomułka: Will you export that sugar?

Khrushchev: We cannot because we should not compete with Castro. If we decide to export that sugar, we will do so in our traditional markets. However, we will not go on the market as Castro's competitors. Sugar will cost us more than our own production, but the price will be more beneficial to the people. The several millions [that we will lose on] sugar are aimed at aiding the world revolution. He [Fidel] asked us to give him a permanent price, [but], these are temporary prices. [Fidel], however, counts on the fact that he will be able to maintain the prices at this level.

Gomułka: Other countries are developing their [sugar] production. Latin America is building [sugar] refineries, as is France, and so on.

Khrushchev: To be sure, we signed an agreement [with Cuba], but we will also develop our own production because, as the saying goes, you can count on God, but it is better to count on yourself. Castro told us that if we did not agree to these prices, then he did not know how he could show up back in Cuba.

Gomułka: I don't think that there is much danger of him providing you with the 10 million [tons of sugar which he promised].

Khrushchev: I believe that he will, because sugarcane is the kind of plant which easily submits to mechanization. The [Cuban] workers will make very good wages and they will cherish their professions.

Gomułka: But, the production of sugar in Cuba has been going down for the past three years now.

Khrushchev: You should not believe in what they are writing. This information is only for you. They are decreasing the numbers on purpose. The floods have not destroyed anything. Castro told me this himself. This year, they have carried out

their obligations towards us very well. And, after all, this was the hardest year. Castro is buying ready[-to-use] production from America and Japan. The Cuban issue is the issue of sugar. I counted on our Kuban.⁵ I thought that it was going to provide us with sugar.

Gomułka: When it comes to sugar, there is never enough of it. Khrushchev: We have 25 sugar refineries. We get a lot of sugar [from them]. I would do things differently. I would build [refineries] in Siberia. And I would leave the Kuban lands for growing wheat. We get 300-400 quintals of sugar. Even if we were to get between 200 to 150 of Siberian sugar, then we would not have to transport it. Kuban is a wheat country. There isn't a better region to grow wheat than Kuban. Maybe we will change machines in the sugar refineries in Kuban...

...

[Source: *Andrzej Paczkowski, ed. Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego PRL-ZSRR, 1956-1970 (London: Aneks Publishers, 1998), pp. 182, 203-204. Translated by Margaret K. Gnoińska.*]



Letter from Nikita Khrushchev to Władysław Gomułka regarding Sugar Prices, 16 May 1963

6 May 1963

[Translation from Russian]⁶

Dear Comrade Gomułka!

In connection with a drastic change [in prices] of the sugar world market, the Soviet government examined the prices of unrefined sugar purchased from the Cuban Republic.

At the end of 1960, the Soviet Union, while buying Cuban sugar, agreed to Cuban proposals to purchase sugar from Cuba [at] 4 US cents per one English pound, which amounts to 75 rubles and 37 kopek per one ton of sugar. At that time, sugar prices were less, that is, about 5 rubles per one ton.

Recently, [however], the prices of sugar on the world market have greatly soared and are currently significantly higher than the price which we are paying the Cuban side for sugar deliveries. And so, for example, in January 1963, the average price of sugar on the world market, according to our foreign trade organizations, amounted to 107 rubles per ton, in February [it was] 102 rubles, and in the second half of April [it] went up to 157 rubles.

We realize that [this change in] price is of a temporary nature. However, we must take into account the situation that

had emerged on the world market. We must also take into account our trade relations with the Cuban Republic, especially since our country is not only an importer of sugar, but it also acts as an exporter in the internal [communist] market, while exploiting favorable situations in some cases.

The Cuban side has not broached the issue of revising the prices of sugar provided by Cuba and continues to adhere to the agreement which we made.

However, in order to maintain and to develop fraternal relations between Cuba and our nations, the Soviet Union made a decision to increase the price of the Cuban sugar in 1963 by about 40 rubles, establishing the price at 120 rubles per ton. In case the world prices go down, this price will be appropriately readjusted. We consider it imperative to inform you about this decision [made by] the Soviet government.

Respectfully,

N. Khrushchev

[signature]

First Secretary of CC CPSU

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

[Source: Andrzej Paczkowski, ed. *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego PRL-ZSRR, 1956-1970* (London: *Aneks Publishers, 1998*), pp.169-170. Translation by Margaret K. Gnoinska.]



Note of Polish-Soviet Talks in Warsaw on 5 April 1965

Participants from the Polish side:

Comrade(s) Władysław Gomułka, Józef Cyrankiewicz, Zenon Kliszko, Stefan Jędrzychowski, Adam Rapacki, Marian Spychalski, Bolesław Jaszczuk, W. Wicha, M. Naszkowski, Edmund Pszczółkowski, and other experts and advisers.

Participants from the Soviet side: Leonid Brezhnev, A. Kosygin, Y. Andropov, N. Krilov, T. Kisielov, W. Drozdenko, A. Aristov

[Excerpts regarding Cuba]

...

Brezhnev: Raul Castro came to visit [recently]; he hunted for two days. We have very good relations. Their leadership, including Fidel [Castro], [seem to] have better understood

[what] the Chinese [are about]. They feel offended by them; especially after [Chairman] Mao [Zedong] refused to receive [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara during his visit to China [in February 1965]. Raul explained that Fidel's statement was not directed at us, but against the Chinese. They are concerned about a possible withdrawal of our troops from Cuba. He assesses our moves in Vietnam as correct ones. He approves of them, because, as they say, by defending Vietnam we are also defending the whole world and our camp. They insist that I visit Cuba, but I have many other planned activities. Besides, in connection with the events in the [Far] East one should not spread oneself [too] thin. They understand that...

...

Kosygin: China is becoming more isolated, for example, they have already lost Cuba and therefore their hope of creating some kind of a base in Latin America has been shattered. They have done this in a very brutal manner...Castro advised us to strengthen our influence in Asia...

...

[Source: Andrzej Paczkowski, ed. *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego PRL-ZSRR, 1956-1970* (London: *Aneks Publishers, 1998*), pp. 267, 277-278. Translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska.]



Note of Soviet-Polish Talks in Bialowieza Forest (Belarus) on 29 – 30 October 1965

The following participated on the Polish side:

- Władysław Gomułka, First Secretary of the CC [Central Committee] PUWP [Polish United Workers' Party]
- Jozef Cyrankiewicz, member of the Politburo CC PUWP, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the PPR [Polish People's Republic]
- Zenon Kliszko, member of the Politburo and Secretary of CC PUWP
- Stefan Jedrychowski, member of the Politburo CC PUWP, Chairman of the Planning Commission at the Council of Ministers of PPR

The following participated on the Soviet side:

- L.[eonid] I[llich] Brezhnev, First Secretary of the CC CPSU
- K. T. Mazurov, member of the Presidium of the CC CPSU, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of

Ministers of the USSR

- Y. V. Andropov, Secretary of the CC CPSU
- V. N. Novikov, member of the CC CPSU, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR

[...]

Brezhnev: And now, we can't even help the Poles, the Germans, and Cuba (they are asking for an additional delivery of 100 thousand tons).⁷ Cubans belong to people who are expansive. They would want everything all at once. We explained to them: why do you need to reconstruct 140 factories? We told them: do half, that is, 70 plants and then construct the second half. I wrote to Fidel (Castro) regarding this issue. [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez [Chairman of the National Agricultural Reform Institute in Cuba] immediately came to see us. They have not understood our intentions well and they were concerned. But, we have explained to them how many people, how much technology, and how much it would all cost. We advised them to build key plants whose reconstruction would increase their production by 80% and the remainder would be reconstructed in the second place [later]. We managed to convince them, they calmed down, and they thanked us. And now we need to give them 100 thousand tons for this reconstruction. Therefore, such unforeseen matters have emerged...

[...]

Gomułka: ...Had we received from you potassium salts, we could give up on purchasing them from capitalist nations, and then we could immediately send soda ash to you.

Mazurov: But, we only have one factory. This [potassium salts] is a very scarce commodity.

Jedrychowski: But, you are exporting it to Czechoslovakia, Hungary and to Cuba.

Mazurov: [Yes, we do, but in] very little amounts and only because Cuba can't purchase this commodity from anywhere else.

Gomułka: It is not nice to talk about a fraternal country, but the Czechs are using more fertilizers than we are. You, comrade Brezhnev, don't want to agree with what I am saying in order to treat us equally. The fact, however, is that the Czechs are richer...

[...]

Brezhnev: The Romanians, Czechs, Bulgars, Germans, Vietnamese (four times), and then a Korean delegation, visited us [this year]. Ayub Khan, Shastri, and four times Cubans (Raul [Castro], [Ernesto Che] Guevara and [Osvaldo Torrado] Dorticos)...[also visited us...They all wanted to get to know the new leadership, but not only that. Some of them discussed their relations with others, e.g. Iran, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan...

[...]

Brezhnev: I have talked about the process that is taking place in the world. Therefore, if this [process] is not a total isolation of the Chinese, then it is totally clear that they are dogmatists, brawlers, and provocateurs. Right now, in Fidel's feelings towards us, and his trust towards us even the Caribbean Crisis has disappeared [lit. drowned]...Therefore, the process of isolating China continues, including that of their position, their theory, and their policy. They are aiding in this process with their own policies, for example, towards Vietnam, Indonesia, Pakistan...

[...]

Brezhnev: The last thing [I would like to discuss] is the issue of the international conference of the communist movement and the possibility of convening such a conference. Now, we have no possibility to talk about the dates of the conference, but we should not give up on the idea. Neither regional nor bilateral meetings can serve as a substitute for an international forum. But, we must continue bilateral, trilateral, or multilateral conferences. In this year, the CPSU followed exactly such a line. We have invited them to take a rest and we proposed an exchange of opinions. Party delegations came to visit us, we conduct exchanges of experiences, etc., at a significantly wider extent than before. During this time, there were regional—Italian and French meetings—these are large and influential parties, but they also have their conflicts. It is not a bad thing that there was a conference of communist European parties in Belgium. There is to be another one this winter.

It is also good that there was a conference of communist parties of Latin America in Havana, and it was even better that they all went to China to listen to the heavenly Marxist and came back spitting in all directions. [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez simply was afraid to return to Cuba, he was simply afraid that Fidel would not believe him. And indeed, Fidel sent [Ernesto Che] Guevara and everything fell into place.

Rodriguez feared that they [the Chinese] would murder him. Of course, you know the story of the visit.

In a word, if we were to analyze this whole chain of events then we could easily say that the process of isolating China continues and so does [our further] understanding of their rowdiness, differentiation of Marxism from Trotskyism, etc.

[...]

Gomułka: Raul Castro visited us in March. I extensively argued that China would not go for such an agreement.⁸ [I said to them]: ask the Chinese whether they would go for making such an agreement to help Cuba. No, they would not, [I said]. They would not go for it in Vietnam either.

Brezhnev: Yes, this is a very acute and interesting problem...

[Source: Andrzej Paczkowski, ed. *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego PRL-ZSRR, 1956-1970* (London: Aneks Publishers, 1998), pp. 300; 316 – 317; 319-320; 332; 340; 345; 352; also in *AAN, KC PZPR XIA/83 pp. 195-274; translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska.*]

Notes

1 On Raul Castro's early 1965 trip to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, see translated Polish, Bulgarian, and

Czechoslovak documents published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*. On the downturn in relations between Havana and Beijing in late 1964 and early 1965, see Yinghong Cheng, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9:3 (Summer 2007): 78-114.

2 On Soviet-Cuban tensions during the period through 1968, see James Blight and Philip Brenner, *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba's Struggle with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

3 Fidel Castro unexpectedly came to Moscow in mid-January 1964 and extended the [Soviet-Cuban] agreement regarding sugar deliveries.

4 A legendary ghost ship that can never make port, doomed to sail the oceans forever. It probably originates from 17th-century nautical folklore.

5 Kuban is a geographic region of Southern Russia on the Black Sea between the Don Steppe, Volga Delta, and the Caucasus.

6 This letter has been translated from Russian into Polish. This translation is from Polish into English.

7 It is not clear from the context what 100 thousand tons Brezhnev is referring to here. It could be either cotton, nitrogenous fertilizers, or metals for metallurgical industry.

8 Referring to the lack of agreement and coordination of military aid for North Vietnam between the Soviet Union and China.

Gomulka on the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Danger of War

Ed. note: On 19 November 1962, with the memory of the Cuban Missile Crisis still fresh (and Kremlin emissary Anastas Mikoyan still negotiating its outcome with Fidel Castro), Polish communist leader Władysław Gomułka conversed with David Astor, the long-time editor¹ of the London newspaper *The Observer*. Much of the conversation concerned efforts for nuclear disarmament (and China's evident race to acquire the atom bomb), but the talk also touched on the recent US-Soviet showdown over Cuba. In this excerpt—taken from a Russian-language record found by Vladislav M. Zubok in the former Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) archives in Moscow²—the General Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party, who had come to power amid a surge of nationalism in six years earlier, reflected on the meaning of the recent crisis for the danger of nuclear war. Not surprisingly, as a loyal Warsaw Pact ally, Gomułka praised Nikita Khrushchev for making the “main contribution” to preserving peace and denied the Soviet leader had been “scared” or “forced to retreat” under pressure.³ Yet, observing that the world was but “one careless step, one careless action [from] the abyss of war,” Gomułka also commended US President John F. Kennedy for his sensible and moderate actions, restraining those military commanders eager to use America's military advantage to destroy the Soviet Union. Ultimately, while cautioning that cold war tensions could still erupt into violent clashes elsewhere in the world (e.g., Berlin), he optimistically and, it turned out, prophetically observed that the frightening recent brush with disaster could prompt leaders of both superpowers to move toward détente.—J.H.



Memorandum of Conversation between Polish leader Władysław Gomułka and British journalist David Astor, 19 November 1962 (excerpt)

Top secret
Copy No. 1

Record of conversation
of comrade Władysław Gomułka with the editor of the

newspaper “[The] Observer” Mr. David Astor
19 November 1962

[the conversation begins with the two discussing nuclear disarmament—trans.]

Gomułka: [...] What is the situation today? Recently we witnessed the stand-off between forces of two powers, between two positions in connection with the events around Cuba. The danger of war, when it is talked about for a long time, when it lasts for a long time, becomes psychologically absorbed in the people's consciousness [*soznanie*] so that they no longer fully appreciate it. Like bacteria in a body get used to certain conditions and resist them, so people, too, get used to the danger of war, when it is talked about for a long time, and no longer react to it. Recently, this danger of war, which had not been clearly defined, became reality, a question of today, a question of the hour, it became an immediate threat, which the entire world faced. One careless step, one careless action could have pushed the world over into the abyss of war. The stand-off of the USA and the USSR made everyone feel the sharpness, the extent of this danger. And there were certain forces in the USA, who wanted to take matters to that, who consider that they have a military advantage over the Soviet Union and that they can destroy it. Fortunately, [US President John F.] Kennedy did not represent these forces.

Kennedy did not want a war. If it happened that the position of the President of the United States was occupied by a person who represented the military forces, then one cannot know what could be happening in our world today. (A[stor]. agrees.)

The main contribution to saving peace was made by the Soviet Union, was made personally by [Nikita] Khrushchev as the leader of government and of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I do not want to give an appraisal of the Cuban crisis itself. I only say one thing, that those voices in the West [who say] that the Soviet Union yielded under the pressure of the United States, before the danger of war, that [the Soviet Union] was forced to retreat, that it got scared – are not based on anything. They have no basis.

A[stor]. adds that these views are also dangerous; Kennedy himself and a number of people in the USA government do not believe that the Soviet Union retreated in Cuba as a result of a threat.

G[omulka]. The Soviet Union provided demonstrative evidence that it seeks the solution of international problems by means of compromises. For other than by means of mutual concessions, these problems cannot be solved. The last stand-off between the forces of the USA and the Soviet Union made everyone understand that war is not something far-away, something that one should not now be apprehensive about. By contrast, it showed that the war can be unleashed at any time. Today a clash like this occurred around Cuba; tomorrow there may be clashes in other parts of the world, for example, in Germany, in West Berlin, which is a time-bomb, placed under peace in Europe.

A[stor] fully agrees to this.

G[omulka] continues. The new thing that appeared in connection with the stand-off of forces around Cuba is that in the minds of leaders of many countries, in the minds of the

people responsible for the fate of the world, there ripened a conviction that one must necessarily look for a way towards détente, towards the resolution of ripe international problems. If this is so, if one can move forward détente everywhere in the world, this will be a positive side of the Cuban crisis. [...]

[Source: *Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), Moscow. Obtained by Vladislav M. Zubok. Translated by Sergey Radchenko.*]

Notes

- 1 Astor edited *The Observer* from 1948 to 1975.
- 2 The document was marked "Top Secret," so presumably the conversation was off-the-record.
- 3 Gomułka had met with Khrushchev in Moscow two weeks earlier, on 4 November, in one of a series of bilateral meetings the Soviet leader had with Warsaw Pact party chiefs. The record of that conversation has not surfaced (either from Russian or Polish archives), but for other documents on Polish policy toward the crisis, including translated cables from Warsaw's ambassadors in Moscow, Washington, and Havana, see elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

Romania and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Soviet Nuclear Warheads for Romania?

Documents obtained, translated, and introduced by Petre Opris

In recent years, historical research in the Romanian archives has revealed several new aspects regarding the potential endowment of the Romanian Army with Soviet nuclear missiles and the Cuban crisis in the fall of 1962. Thus, at the conference of Defense Ministers of the Warsaw Pact states (Prague, 30 January – 1 February 1962), Marshal Andrei Grechko informed Romanian General Leontin Sălăjan that “[he] intends to propose to the Soviet Government to agree to the delivering of *missiles’ equipped with atomic warheads* to the Warsaw Pact countries (Gheorghiu-Dej’ underlining with a red pencil).”¹ The Romanian Minister of Armed Forces said in his report of 6 February 1962 that Marshal Grechko envisaged the warheads of nuclear missiles requested by Romanian authorities would reach Romania beginning in 1963.²

The Romanian authorities had purchased 12 R-11 Soviet missile systems (“SCUD-A” in NATO code) in 1961 to equip the 32nd Tactical-Operative Missile Brigade (established in Tecuci, in 1961) and the 37th Tactical-Operative Missile Brigade (established in Ineu, in 1962). At the same time, one R-11 system was purchased for training purposes in Ploiești at the Missiles Training Center. It could launch an 8 K 11 missile, which had had a maximum firing range of 170 km and a warhead with different types of loading: explosive (950 kg), nuclear (50 kilotons) or chemical (950 kg).³

In order to equip the army with 2 K-6 “Luna” or “FROG” tactical missile systems, the Romanian authorities had established 113, 115 and 180 Tactical Missile Battalions in 1962 (the first and the second one based in Ploiești, and the third one in Craiova) and had bought six 2 P-16 launcher systems and two types of missiles for them: 3 R 9 “Luna 1” and 3 R 9 “Luna 2” (“FROG-3”). Both missiles had a firing range of up to 44 km and one warhead with an explosive or training load (450 kg).⁴

Fortunately for Romania, the intention of Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces the Warsaw Pact never materialized, the nuclear warheads of missiles purchased by the Romanian authorities since 1961 remaining permanently in the USSR until the end of the Cold War. One possible cause which led Marshal Andrei Grechko to abandon his idea may be related with the failure of the Soviet authorities in the fall of 1962, when the crisis erupted over Soviet nuclear missiles deployed to Cuba.

From another new document found in Bucharest it is possible to see that the proposal to move the Soviet nuclear warheads to Romania beginning in 1963 was not mentioned at

all by Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow on 23 October 1962—the day after US President John F. Kennedy announced the discovery of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba—during his meeting with a Romanian delegation headed by Romanian Communist Party (RCP) General Secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Prime Minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer. They had been returning by plane to Romania after their visits to Indonesia, India, and Burma over the prior two weeks and their stop in Moscow (for twenty hours) on 23 October had as a nominal reason a discussion with Khrushchev about the results which the Romanian delegation obtained during the three visits. But the Cuban crisis changed the planned agenda and Gheorghiu-Dej and Maurer were very surprised by the events. They had learned from the press about the Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba and during the luncheon on 23 October Khrushchev told them that the USSR Council of Ministers had already approved some measures to counter possible actions of the United States against the USSR, Cuba, and the member states of the Warsaw Pact.

After the returning at home, Foreign Minister Corneliu Mănescu prepared a secret report on discussions that Romanian delegation had had with their Soviet counterparts in Moscow. This document was completed on 30 October, and sent to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, who circulated the report which would then be read by all members of the RCP Politburo.

In another original Romanian document, sent by the Minister of Armed Forces to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej on 6 November 1962, General Leontin Sălăjan mentioned several military measures which had been adopted by the Soviets and imposed on the member states of the Warsaw Pact, as a result of the Soviet nuclear missile crisis in Cuba, thus:

Speaking about the international situation, [Marshal Grechko] described it as the sharpest post-World War II situation, showing that the danger of the outbreak of war has not passed yet.

For it, we must always be ready and he asked for reports to Defense Ministers to continue the actions for maintaining and improving the troop readiness.

[Marshal Grechko] said that it is necessary to keep the troops in No. 2 combat capability, namely all major units of the first echelon must be ready in barracks, with fully effective strength, fully fitted and 100% equipped with the combat technique and vehicles.

The signal units necessary to conduct major units from the first echelon must be completed 100%.

The aviation would remain ready for action to the base aerodromes; the number of combat aircraft in service must double it.

The radar system must operate in continuous research. It would ensure continuous operation of links.

It must strengthen the security for the military objectives and it must guard strategic objectives which have not been guarded until now.

It must take urgent action to repair the combat technique (airplanes, tanks, cars etc.) and the repair techniques that would be able to ensure a perfect shape for combat.

The border divisions must have proper ammunition and fuels as planned in such situations for being ready to give a proper response to the aggressor. It must ensure the viability of access roads in the districts of concentration.⁵

Those measures were mentioned by Marshal Andrei Grechko at a meeting to assess the combat preparedness of the armed forces of the states of the Warsaw Pact (Moscow, 29-30 October 1962).

It is interesting to note that in mid-October 1962, Marshal Grechko visited Romania for several days (together with General Pavel I. Batova, Marshal of Aviation N.S. Skripko, Rear Admiral Seraphim E. Ciursin, Generals A. S. Kharitonov and A. Babadjanian) to assist the Warsaw Pact maneuvers that were held on the Danube River, the Romanian seaside of the Black Sea, and in Bulgaria (16-18 October 1962).⁶ Although he could have informed the Romanian Minister of Armed Forces about the operation “Anadyr,” which was ongoing, the Supreme Commander of the Warsaw Pact Unified Armed Forces made no gesture in this direction, and General Sălăjan was also surprised as Gheorghiu-Dej and Maurer were by Kennedy’s revelation on October 22 of the existence of Soviet missiles in Cuba.⁷

In fact, it appears that Romanian authorities didn’t know anything about the existence of the Soviet operation “Anadyr” (i.e., the secret Soviet deployment of nuclear missiles to Cuba) until US President John F. Kennedy revealed to the world on 22 October 1962. A new argument is the statement of Khrushchev, who told Nicolae Ceausescu on the occasion of receiving an official invitation from Gheorghiu-Dej to visit Romania (Moscow, 8 June 1963). Khrushchev was somewhat apologetic about his failure to inform Gheorghiu-Dej in advance, but explained that few knew the secret even in Moscow, and defended his decision to deploy the missiles as necessary “to frighten America” and thereby protect Cuba from being lost to the socialist camp.⁸

According to some reports, however, Bucharest found Khrushchev’s conduct in the Cuban case less than compelling or reassuring. Former US official Raymond L. Garthoff has revealed that following the crisis, in the fall of 1963, Romania’s foreign minister secretly informed US Secretary of State Dean Rusk that Bucharest had not approved of Khrushchev’s deployment to Cuba, would remain neutral in any East-West conflict triggered by such an aggressive Soviet step, and asked, consequently, that Washington refrain from targeting Romania for retaliation. According to Garthoff, it was clear that the missile crisis was the “precipitating event” in Romania’s decision to distance itself from the Warsaw Pact, a development that only became evident publicly in the ensuing years as Bucharest—under both Gheorghiu-Dej and (his successor after Dej’s death in 1965) Ceausescu—refused to back Moscow in the Sino-Soviet split and in other major foreign policy controversies.⁹

No supporting Romanian documentation on this crucial step has yet been located, but it is clear that Bucharest’s reaction to the Cuban Missile Crisis, and relations with Fidel Castro’s Cuba during these turbulent years in the Cold War and the fragmenting communist world, represent important and potentially fruitful subjects for researchers to tackle in the coming years.



DOCUMENTS

Report on Romanian Government Delegation Visit to Moscow and Soviet-Romanian Talks, 23 October 1962

30 October 1962.

The report submitted by Foreign Minister Corneliu Mănescu to the members of the Politburo of the RWP CC, regarding the discussions of the members of a Romanian government delegations and several members of the CPSU and Soviet state’s leaders (Moscow, October 23, 1962).¹⁰

[Manuscript records:]

16 b USSR

(P.B. plenary)

G[heorghe Gheorghiu-]D[ej]

N[icolae] C[eașescu]

C[hivu] S[toica]

I[on Gheorghe] M[aurer]

E[mil] B[odnăraș]

G[heorghe] A[postol]
A[lexandru] D[răghici]
A[lexandru] M[oghioros]
P[etre] B[orilă]

Comrade GHEORGHE GHEORGHIU-DEJ

- Sole copy.
- I propose to send [the record] to the members of the Politburo.

October 30, 1962
ss. Corneliu Mănescu

Affairs Department of the RWP CC
Top Secret
No. 1522 / S 16 XI 1962

Politburo Archive of the RWP CC
Nr. 1493 / 16.11.1962

REPORT

of the discussions of the government delegation of the PRR with the CPSU and Soviet state's leaders on 23 October 1962

In the honor of the government delegation of the PRR who had visited Indonesia, India and Burma and had stopped in Moscow for about 20 hours, during his travel to the country, comrade N. S. Khrushchev offered a meal at Kremlin in the afternoon of October 23, that was attended by [the following] comrades: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, Corneliu Mănescu, Nicolae Guină [the Romanian Ambassador in USSR], Ștefan Voicu, A[ndrei] Păcuraru, Tudose V[asilii] from the Romanian side and L.I. Brezhnev, Frol Kozlov, [Alexei] Kosygin, A. Mikoyan, [M.A.] Suslov, E. Grishin, Vasilii V. Kuznetsov (first deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR), Medvedev – Deputy Chief of External Relations Department of the CPSU CC – and Molochikov – Director of Protocol in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. Even from the beginning, the RWP and Romanian state's leaders and the CPSU leaders bound a friendly discussion.

After the moment when comrade N.S. Khrushchev was interested about how our comrades had traveled, by the manner Sukarno welcomed them, he asked if they already had been informed about the latest decisions of the Soviet government (referring if the comrades Brezhnev, Kozlov and Kosygin, who had met the delegation at the airport, informed the Romanian comrades). As comrade Kozlov said that they

had talked very little, only during the time when they had traveled in the car from the airport to the residence, comrade N. S. Khrushchev began to narrate the problem to which it refers. Thus, he mentioned that during the same day (October 23) he had signed a decision of the Council of Ministers for postponing the demobilization of the old quotas from the missiles, air defense and submarine units.

It also sets the performance of some military maneuvers on the border with Turkey and Iran, and in the GDR [German Democratic Republic; East Germany], where will be sent several additional divisions. Marshal Grechko, the supreme commander of allied military forces of the countries from the Warsaw Pact, was tasked to discuss with the representatives of the armed forces of these countries to give currently special attention to the raising preparedness of troops in similar units (missiles, air defense, and submarine). From the Soviet government commission, V. V. Kuznetsov – Deputy Foreign Minister of USSR – summoned the ambassadors of all the socialist countries on the same day (October 23) and informed them of these decisions.

In this way – comrade N. S. Khrushchev emphasized – what Americans resolved within several days (comrade Brezhnev added that they had worked even one Sunday), “we have done in one single night”. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!]*

In fact, it is also normal to be so because [John F.] Kennedy has no authority, due to general conditions in which a president of state is elected in the capitalist world and because that person does not differ by special qualities. [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant!]* Do they want the blockade?

He had been an ordinary journalist, who had written chain stories, and then [he was] member of Congress, but this doesn't mean anything because it is known that in the US a member of Congress may simply be the one that pays more. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!]*

Finally, of course, he was elected president by a series of machinations. *So he didn't come to power because of intense work, made to earn the trust of the people, while enjoying authority. Only in socialist countries leaders are elected based on merit and proven quality of service.* [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant!]*

After that, comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej briefly presented the visit of the governmental delegation of the PRR in Indonesia, India and Burma, dwelling more on the impressions that our delegation had left from these countries. Stressing particularly the very bad impression of the delegation that was created by the struggling of the people from the countries that they had visited with miserable conditions, *the impressions made in connection with certain leaders of these countries, comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej showed that, after the visit, our delegation's belief is that Sukarno enjoys more authority in Indonesia and he has a more focused ori-*

entation to the socialist countries. Subandrio's attitude – the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is more withdrawn and it seems that the most times he has a reactionary position, similar to [Gen. Abdul Haris] Nasution's position. Ne Win, highlighted by comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, seems to be quite shrewd and far-sighted in international affairs. Nehru seems more resigned in a number of problems.

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev showed that the opinions and conclusions reached by the Romanian comrades are the same as those reached by the Soviet comrades, after the visits of comrade N. S. Khrushchev, comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan, and other companions in these countries and currently.

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev insisted more on the attitude of [Indian Premier Jawaharlal] Nehru and the Sino-Indian problem. In this context, comrade [Khrushchev] generally mentioned that Nehru had oscillated between the line of imperialist countries, neutrality and the socialist countries. Lately, [being] under the influence of the ruling party, of the reactionary forces, Nehru seems to be closer to the line of imperialist countries. The position he occupies in the last time, toward the issue of border conflict with China, is downright reactionary. The Chinese side (the Soviet ambassador in China was informed directly by Zhou En-Lai about this) recently proposed the withdrawal of Chinese and Indian troops at 20 km, on each side of the border. Also under the pressure of the reactionary forces, the Indian side rejected this proposal on the grounds that the border should remain the McMahon line. [Manuscript comment:] at[tention!]

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev said that this is not fair because the McMahon line was established by the British in 1912, when India was an English colony and, of course, the British had every incentive to take as much Chinese territory as possible. Therefore, based on proposals of the Chinese side, now would be normal to start bilateral negotiations. [Manuscript comment:] v[ery] i[mportant]

The point of view of the Soviet side was communicated to the P.R. of China on 8 October and India on 20 October (through a confidential discussion of the Soviet ambassador in India with J. Nehru). Basically, Nehru considered that the USSR's opinion is good, but in fact he didn't give any practical response that could show the decision that will be taken by him. [Manuscript comment:] at[tention!]

But most troubling is the fact that the General Secretary of the C[ommunist] P[arty] of India [E.M.S. Namboodiripad] was in a wrong position this time, supporting the view of J. Nehru. This is dangerous because it can lead to divisions among the party. He has taken measures in order to know the opinion of CPSU, including the opinion of General Secretary of the C[ommunist] P[arty] of India.

After this brief presentation, comrade N. S. Khrushchev toasted to the Romanian-Soviet friendship and mentioned

that the relations between the two parties, between the two countries are very good, very close.

After comrade Gheorghiu-Dej had similarly toasted, we followed the Soviet comrades' proposal and left together to the Grand Theatre (the show "Boris Gudunov") where the discussions have continued during the breaks. Comrade N. S. Khrushchev informed our delegation on issues related to the Soviet relations with Indonesia, the situation in Yemen, Cuba, the USSR–US negotiations on the issue of banning nuclear experiments [tests], the disarmament debates etc.

Regarding the Soviet relations with Indonesia, comrade N. S. Khrushchev said that during the conflict between Indonesia and the Netherlands, conflict generated by the intention to free the ex-Portuguese colonies' territories from Indonesia, Sukarno took the initiative and sent Subandrio to Moscow for asking a military aid – submarines, aircraft and commanders for these things. Starting from the idea that the Soviet carriers can do a good attempt to destroy Dutch aircraft in case of an air attack of the Dutch aviation, the Soviet comrades accepted the help requested, at the same time saying the argument mentioned to Subandrio as well. Yet it seems that he sent all to the Americans. [Manuscript comment:] V[ery] i[mportant] assessments

On this occasion, comrade N. S. Khrushchev mentioned that *he doesn't have any guarantee that Sukarno had known about this*. The fact is that, in order not to reach a further decline of US prestige (in case of military clashes [with the USSR], the USA must provide military aid to the Netherlands, which can look like a war of the USA against the colonies and neutral countries in the eyes of world public opinion) *these have influenced the Netherlands to accept negotiation. On the other hand, to prevent excessive growth of the prestige of the USSR in Indonesia, reactionary circles of the world have convinced Sukarno probably not pay much attention to the aid received from the USSR and to reduce the number of Soviet soldiers who are in Indonesia. The fact is that this trend is observed by Sukarno*. However, the discussion revealed that now the Soviets intend to do something in the way of aiding Indonesia.

Further on, comrade N. S. Khrushchev showed that it creates an interesting situation currently in Yemen. The things – he said – happened as follows: the former head of the Royal guard, Colonel A. Salall, man with progressive views, addressed to the Soviet comrades for requesting military aid. In principle, the Soviet comrades agreed to the military aid, but it couldn't directly be done because it hadn't been a free way [from the USSR] to Yemen. *But here intervened [Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel] Nasser, who was interested in supporting the achievement of the coup in Yemen. Under these circumstances, an agreement was established and the USSR provided to Nasser Soviet bomber aircraft, flown by Soviet crews. These aircraft were operated in*

Yemen under the flag of U[nited] A[rab] R[epublic, i.e., Egypt]. It didn't tell anything about this to the Yemeni Prime Minister, but he likely realized what it is about because, when the bombers had arrived, he saw that they had the flag of UAR, but were flown by Soviets. Nasser certainly won a lot from this action. This – comrade N. S. Khrushchev mentioned – did not interfere too much because even though Nasser doesn't go on the line of building socialism, all the Arabs will come sometime to socialism as it is understood by the Marxist-Leninist. [Manuscript comment:] *V[ery] i[mportant] inf[ormation]*

Nasser represents an intermediate step, which will be removed in time. At present, principle is that it has succeeded to achieve a victory in the Middle Eastern world, which means a new curtailment of the forces of imperialism. [Manuscript comment:] *V[ery] i[mportant] assessment*

Regarding the issue of Cuba, comrade N. S. Khrushchev emphasized that even here it being obtained was a positive thing. In this “has contributed” President J. Kennedy, who in one of his recent speeches reminded the danger posed by the Soviet missiles installed in Cuba for a number of US cities (it seems that Kennedy has even nominated, add comrade Mikoyan), Canada and Latin America. [Manuscript comment:] *the same Ken[n]edy without authority ... at[tention!]*

These statements will awaken a little the consciousness of the American public opinion, which so far has been dormant thinking that Russia is still far away and, in case of a new war, the US will remain unharmed, creating conditions similar to those of previous wars, when the Americans were enriched because of the war. [Manuscript comment:] *At[tention] to these assessments*

This is particularly important that, for the first time, the leaders of imperialism come and show to people the danger that awaits him; *this shows the weakness of imperialism, which began openly to show the fear.* [Manuscript comment:] *Faced [with this declaration] with Ken[n]edy and Khrushchev's declarations and the comments as well that have occurred in connection with all about these – and you [should] dra[w] objective concl[usions]*

Referring to the Berlin issue, comrade N. S. Khrushchev said that this issue has no longer the acute character which it once had. Currently it has more importance in terms of moral factor. The creating of “The Wall” in Berlin closed the door through which to slip weights in the GDR and other socialist countries. Currently there is a substantial change in the mood of the population of the GDR. So, for example, if a little time before the German doctors were using the term “Sir”, addressing to the Soviet people in GDR, recently they have begun using the term “Comrade”. A new spirit prevails even among the working class. Previously, some workers came and put conditions on the payroll of enterprises employing, threatening to go the

other side [in West Berlin]. Such situations are not repeated today. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]*

On tests with nuclear weapons the issue of a ban [on testing] began to take shape with the prospects of reaching an agreement with the Americans. Regarding the terrestrial [nuclear] tests, in the atmosphere and in the cosmos, there are already common views. [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant]*

A problem remained questionable: the underground [nuclear] tests. But even here there have appeared new items. British scientists have recently proposed to solve the main proceedings problem by installing an automatic control stations, without people. The Soviet Union is inclined to accept this proposal, especially because in early November will be the last experiment by [the] internal program. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] V[ery] i[mportant]*

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev said that the tests made so far have given not only data on existing weapons, but also on the new weapons to be equipped with the Soviet armed forces in the coming years. Series of experiments conducted under a nuclear test were performed only in the atmosphere, as the costs of underground experiments are enormous. Comrade N. S. Khrushchev stated that there is the possibility of signing an agreement with the US Nuclear-Test-ban issue, but the Cuba's issue currently prevents achieving this. Perhaps later it will be reach the mentioned agreement. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]*

With regard to the general and total disarmament, the Soviet comrades have adopted a somewhat new position, which seems to interest the Americans (as reported by A. A. Gromyko at the current session of the UN): the first stage of acceptance preserves part of the means of transport of nuclear weapons. Initially, the USSR proposed the destruction of all these means. [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant] at[tention!] Concessions are made*

Americans said that the new Soviet position is interesting and deserves to be studied. [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant] at[tention!] to feedback*

At the same time – emphasized comrade N. S. Khrushchev – we believe that this problem will continue to be discussed for a long time because the US practically rejects disarmament. As the prestige and authority of the US continues to decline, the only force that this country can still rely on is the military. [Manuscript comment:] *And then? What do the Chinese say?*

Another issue in brief referred to by comrade N. S. Khrushchev was about the end of crop year in the USSR. Comrade said that it got a good crop this year, but it hadn't obtained the planned amount of grain. Until now, it entered 3.354 billion pounds of grain into a centralized state fund and expects this figure to rise, whereas in some regions it is still harvesting the corn. If it will also get about 170-180 million pounds, it will reach the amount

of grain produced in 1958, namely the highest amount [of grain crop] obtained in the USSR. The livestock sector also have good results, but not as good as expected. [Manuscript comment:] *Agr[iculture]*

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev stressed *among others that the experience of this year shows that the reorganization of agriculture's management proved to be a welcome step*, which gives good results.

The Soviet industry – comrade N. S. Khrushchev stated – *work well*, in the third quarter it produced more steel than the US So thus it is obvious that the US can be matched in the production of the main industrial products. [Manuscript comment:] *Ind[ustry]*

Of course – comrade N. S. Khrushchev mentioned – *it is necessary to bear in mind that the US is not currently working at full production capacity. In the third quarter of this year, the steel industry only used 52% of production capacity.* [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]*

But this is nothing other than a sign of the superiority of the socialist system. [Manuscript comment:] *Yes*

In the same time, comrade N. S. Khrushchev stressed *that the Soviet industry still has great possibilities. For using them, it will require some improvements in the system of organization of the party work in industry.* [Manuscript comment:] *what org[anizational improvements?]*

When there is only one regional party organ that deals with problems of industry and agriculture issues, inevitably one of the two sectors suffers. *Lately, more attention was given to agriculture, but industry still has the lead role and it will have it in the future as well.* [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]*

Therefore, *it was concluded that in each region should have two party committees: one to deal with industry issues and another one to deal with agriculture issues.* In this respect, it developed a material that was sent to the party organizations for discussion (the material was also sent for information to the RWP CC and on this occasion comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, being asked if he received it, he confirmed the receiving) and it will be submitted to the Central Committee on 19 November [1962], during the plenary session of the CPSU CC.

Another issue presented by comrade N. S. Khrushchev was *about the USSR relations with the GDR. Firstly, comrade [Khrushchev] started with simple information from our delegation about the visit which comrade Walter Ulbricht is going to do in the USSR on 31 October. He visited [Moscow] for an economic delegation of the GDR, led by himself, to be received for consultation by the Soviet comrades, starting from 24 October.* [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant]*

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev showed that they couldn't receive in this day and answered that they are busy (he has hinted that he considered the presence of our delegation in Moscow). *Referring to the economic situation of the GDR, comrade N. S. Khrushchev said that the GDR achieved a fair proportion between the labor productivity growth and the wage growth, for the first time in this year. Until this year, the wages grew faster than the labor productivity, [situation] which gave no possibility for the socialist accumulation to be achieved. The state plans were drawn up so that deficits were foreseen from the beginning.* [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant]*

The practice of comrades from GDR was also wrong. Once they develop such plans, they came for consultation in the Soviet Union. In fact – comrade N. S. Khrushchev stressed – *it was the form in which it demanded economic aids.* [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]*

Lately, however, the Soviet comrades showed to the comrades from the GDR that it creates an abnormal situation; the Soviet people fought against Germany, they defeated and helped the German people for establishing the bases of socialist construction, but the Soviet people's standard of living was lower than the GDR people's standard of living. In addition, all the Soviet people must give economic aid to the German people. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]*. *From here we can learn v[ery] imp[ortant] lessons 1. When you stan[d on] the position of the hand reached for s[uch] aid, you are not enjoying the prestige; 2. You should keep in mind the realities, to rely firstly on them – you house well, to stay on their feet [.] Each socialist country must stand on its own feet.*

Note that, while comrade NS Khrushchev was playing this discussion that he had had with a comrades from the GDR, comrade Frol Kozlov intervened and said, addressing comrade N. S. Khrushchev: “yes, I remember that you seriously criticized them in that moment”.

[Source: A.N.I.C., fond C.C. al P.C.R. – Cancelarie, dosar 39/1962, f. 118-127. Gavriil Preda, Petre Opreș, România în Organizația Tratatului de la Varșovia. Documente (1954-1968), vol. II, Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, București, 2009, p. 91-98; translated by Petre Opreș.]



Report on Conversation with Yugoslav Leader Josef Broz Tito re Cuba, November 1962

Bucharest [22 December 1962]

The report of Academician Ștefan S. Nicolau referring to the visit carried out to Yugoslavia by a delegation of the National High Assembly (12-22 November 1962)

Participants: Ștefan S. Nicolau, Nicolae Armencoiu, Petre Blajovici, Ștefan Boboș, Geo Bogza, Teodor Marinescu, Nicolae Petre, Zoe Rigani, Stoian Stanciu, Gheorghe Timariu, Ștefan Tripsa, Viorel Uibaru.

During the meeting with Iosip Broz Tito, Ștefan S. Nicolau learned the opinion of the Yugoslav leader regarding the crisis of the Soviet missiles from Cuba and the war between India and China: “Tito said «the war danger is very high. It could start from nothing, from a weapon fire or a challenge. The fight for peace is hard also because it is believed that only the weak want peace. The wise step of the Soviet Union, of comrade Khrushchev that made for solving the Cuban problem was interpreted as a weakness. This kind of interpreting is done by mean, irresponsible people, who never experienced war in their country. We hope we will succeed in saving peace. The Chinese-Indian conflict is a sad situation». Then, Tito continued: «We have to do something about this too. It is winter and the fights still continue. The problem is extremely delicate. India has 400 million inhabitants and China 650 million. In India the reaction is very powerful, and the progressive forces, who want to go with the socialist way, regardless of which socialist way, and we must keep them away from the reaction. To me – said Tito – India is the key to this area of the world (Asia). We must not lose it. Many people do not see this constellation; nobody should be humiliated; they need to sit down and solve the problems. I don’t believe anything can be grown in the Himalayas – no corn, no grape vine. If they consider the old friendship between India and China, the strategy is gone, the border must be adjusted. If we want to build socialism and we want to abolish the borders, the gravity of the issues loses its intensity».

On the observation made during the conversation, meaning that the imperialist circles get in the middle of the Chinese-Indian conflict, Tito said that the imperialist circles will continue to do so unless the other party (meaning China) won’t take any measures, it’s lack of action being the trigger. «We have enough problems – said Tito – and for solving them we need wisdom and patience».

[Source: C.H.N.A., the Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Chancellery Collection, file 55/1962, pp. 108-123; translated by Petre Opris.]



Report on Talk between Nicolae Ceaușescu and Nikita Khrushchev, Moscow, 8 June 1963 (excerpt) 8 June 1963, Moscow.

Ceaușescu was sent in the USSR by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej to establish a meeting between Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nikita Khrushchev.

During the meeting, Nikita Khrushchev said to Nicolae Ceaușescu:

“By sending missiles to Cuba, we ourselves put our head in a bind. I know comrade Gheorghiu-Dej was upset that I had not informed about sending missiles to Cuba. And he has been rightly upset. When I will meet him, I will explain. Last year I met him personally to tell. Gomulka, Zhivkov, Novotný, Ulbricht knew. I told to Ulbricht’s ear.

Comrade [Gheorghe Gheorghiu-]Dej didn’t know, but I think he will understand me. I didn’t want to inform him through Ambassadors. Here, not even the whole general staff didn’t know. Only the Presidium knew. I went to the adventure. The Chinese didn’t know that we have missiles in Cuba. China thinks the US will absorb Cuba. Do you know when I got the idea of sending missiles to Cuba? When I returned from Romania [18-25 June 1962—P.O.]. I thought well and I realized that the socialist camp will lose Cuba. I sent missiles there to frighten America. The presence of Soviet strategic missiles in Cuba would have been a danger of destruction to American cities.”

[Source: C.H.N.A., the Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Foreign Relations Department Collection, file 17U/1963, p. 46; translated by Petre Opris.]



Record of Romanian Workers Party Politburo Discussion, 26 June 1963, re Nikita Khrushchev Visit to Romania

Bucharest [30 June 1963]

Shorthand record of the meeting of the Political Bureau of C.C. of R.W.P. (26 June 1963), after the visit of Nikita Khrushchev in Romania (24-25 June 1963)

Comrade Leontin Sălăjan: Why it bothers him that issue raised by the Chinese, who said that primarily each one should rely on themselves [?]

Comrade Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej: He [Khrushchev – *our note*] only confirmed that the people of that country are building socialism and we do not know what it is based on.

Comrade Leontin Sălăjan: Of course here, with Cuba, I think that he never forgot that he had said to Comrade [Gheorghe] Gheorghiu[-Dej].

Comrade Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej: He forgot. I asked myself “why did he forget?” He didn’t talk with me, he didn’t ask my opinion, but just so, I only was informed by him that he sent missiles to Cuba. I am glad that you understood and you were not itching for a drubbing to tell [your views to him], because first you have offended him, is a bad sign for him, it wasn’t a simple problem or secondary.

Comrade Leontin Sălăjan: Such a problem should be discussed; by himself he said that we were close to war.

Comrade Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej: First of all, the way in which [Khrushchev] presented the problem about Cuba doesn’t stand to logic. He said at one point that it was an adventure on their part, that we couldn’t know if it will generate or not generate a war, then, during the exposure time, expressing his opinion to the end, he wanted to show us how many times they had met and discussed this problem on the Presidium, to indicate that they seriously treated these things and eventually they had to send those missiles for defending Cuba and that were strictly necessary to defend Cuba.

[Source: C.H.N.A., the Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Chancellery Collection, file 34/1963, pp. 10-11; translated by Petre Opris.]

Notes

1 Central Historical National Archives, *Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Politic-Administrative Collection* (abbreviated in Romania as A.N.I.C., *fond C.C. al P.C.R. – Secția Administrativ-Politică*, for Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, *fond Comitetul Central al Partidului Comunist Român – Secția Administrativ-Politică*), file 2/1962, 11. (This source will hereafter be referred to as CHNA, *CC of RCP – Politic-Administrative Collection*).

2 Report of General Leontin Sălăjan, Minister of Armed Forces, Romania, on the Defense Ministers’ meeting of the member states of the Warsaw Pact (Prague, January 30 – February 1, 1962),

6 February 1962, Central Historical National Archives, Bucharest, Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Political-Administrative Section Collection, file 2/1962, pp. 1-13; translation by Petre Opris. For the full text, see the CWIHP Digital Archive.

3 Adrian Stroea, Gheorghe Băjenaru, *Artileria română în date și imagini [The Romanian Artillery in Data and Pictures]*, (Bucharest: Editura Centrului Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei, 2010), p. 113.

4 In 1967 the Romanian authorities also established three battalions of tactical missiles – at Lugoj, Oradea and Corbu (Constanța county) – and they bought six 2 K-6 systems, equipped with missiles 3 R 10 „LUNA” („FROG”) – which had a maximum range of 30 km.

The twelve 2 K-6 „LUNA” missile systems, purchased in 1962 and 1967, were replaced in 1982 with the tactical missile systems 9 K-52 „LUNA M”. *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 141-142.

5 CHNA, *CC of RCP – Politic-Administrative Collection*, file 3/1962, 4-5.

6 For details, see Petre Opris, *Warsaw Pact Military Exercises during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962: The Romanian Point of View*, on *Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact*, http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_cuba_romania.htm (2006); Petre Opris, *România în Organizația Tratatului de la Varșovia. Documente (1955-1991) [Romania within the Warsaw Treaty Organization (1955-1991)]*, (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 2008), pp. 114; 139-141; 295-296; Gavriil Preda, Petre Opris, *România în Organizația Tratatului de la Varșovia. Documente (1954-1968) [Romania within the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Documents (1954-1968)]*, second tome, (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2009), pp. 48-50, 59-86.

7 After the official start of Cuban crisis, General Sălăjan received at least one report from the Intelligence Directorate of the Romanian General Staff on the situation in the Caribbean Sea, but this was based only by the Western broadcast radio news.

8 CHNA, *CC of RCP – Foreign Relations Department Collection*, file 17U/1963, 46.

9 See Raymond L. Garthoff, “When and Why Romania Distanced Itself from the Warsaw Pact,” *CWIHP Bulletin*, no. 5 (Spring 1995), p. 111

10 The second document was stamped and registered at the Affairs Directorate of the RWP CC and the Politburo Archive of the RWP CC. The underlining and manuscript comments were written by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej with colored pencils (red, blue, green, and brown). We have used italic characters to emphasize these details.

Bulgaria and the Cuban Missile Crisis:

Documents from the Sofia Archives

Obtained and introduced by Jordan Baev

According to Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs, the Soviet leader thought for the first time of deploying missiles in Cuba during his one week visit to Bulgaria. Walking around the Bulgarian state residence *Euxinograd* at the Black Sea coast near Varna in mid-May 1962, Khrushchev looked at the sea line toward the Turkish border reconsidering the newly available intelligence information that the US Jupiter missiles sites in Turkey had become operational at the end of April. He was furious that US missiles were deployed so close to the Soviet border and associated his concern for the fate of "fraternal" Cuba with his broader desire to challenge the US by deploying Soviet nuclear missiles close to its territory.

Actually, the thought of deploying Soviet missiles to Cuba seems to have first crossed Khrushchev's mind in late April 1962 while he was on vacation at his Black Sea residence in the Crimea. However, most probably that idea took shape while he was in Bulgaria between 14-20 May. A special paragraph at the joint Soviet-Bulgarian declaration at the end of Khrushchev's visit announced "the fervent decisiveness to lend full support to the glorious Cuban nation." The question for deployment of Soviet missiles to Cuba was put on the CPSU CC's Presidium agenda a day after Nikita Khrushchev's return from Sofia at a session on 21 May. Three days later, on 24 May Marshal Rodion Malinovski, Soviet minister of defense, and Marshal Matvei Zacharov, Chief of General Staff, gave Khrushchev a top secret handwritten proposal to organize a military operation code-named "Anadyr" which would station the 43rd missile division to Cuba.

The Bulgarian leadership was not informed in advance about the Kremlin's decision to deploy Soviet missiles to Cuba. In his memoirs Khrushchev testified: "While in Bulgaria, I couldn't even share these thoughts with [Bulgarian leader Todor] Zhivkov, because I hadn't discussed them with my own comrades."¹ Zhivkov confirmed in his own 1997 memoirs that there were no any bilateral or multilateral (within the Warsaw Pact) consultations on the issue. Nor was there direct consultation between Moscow and Sofia at the height of the Cuban Missile crisis in October 1962. The Bulgarian leadership just followed the official information from the available open sources, collected at the Foreign Ministry and "Foreign Policy & International Relations" department of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party (CC BCP).² Obviously, a few directives on raising the combat readiness of the Joint Armed Forces and on intensification of military intelligence activity against Turkey and Greece were received

from the Warsaw Pact Allied Forces Command. In its public declaration of 23 October 1962 the Bulgarian Government announced that an order has been issued to raise the combat readiness of its Armed Forces.³ Similar actions were taken as well by other Warsaw Pact allies.

According to later testimony by Bulgarian Ambassador to Moscow Luben Gerasimov, on Sunday evening, 28 October 1962, he was in the Kremlin watching a performance of Bulgarian National Theater "Ivan Vazov" together with Nikita Khrushchev, when the Soviet leader was urgently informed that the US government accepted the last Soviet proposal to resolve the Cuban crisis. After a "deep sigh of relief" Khrushchev turned to the Bulgarian ambassador with only one word: *Nakonéc!* (At last!)⁴. Bulgarian Communist leader Zhivkov had a chance to meet Khrushchev personally during his confidential visit to Moscow on 2-3 November 1962. However, the key issue discussed between the two leaders was the sudden decision to oust Bulgarian Prime Minister Anton Yugov and replace him with Zhivkov. A day after returning from Moscow a CC BCP plenary session approved Zhivkov's proposal for excluding Yugov from CC BCP membership and expelling former Bulgarian dictator Valko Chervenkov from the Communist party. Those decisions were confirmed by the 8th BCP Congress (5-14 November 1962). Thus, in less than nine years (April 1956-November 1962) Zhivkov had defeated consecutively all his former political rivals and finally established his monarchy, which continued until his own removal from power in November 1989.

At the 8th BCP Congress in mid-November 1962 the Cuban missile crisis was a crucial point in the statements of the most of the 66 foreign delegations. During the congress by initiative of the Cuban representative Blas Roca, the delegates from sixteen Latin American countries carried out a secret consultative meeting to discuss the post-crisis situation in the region.⁵ Soon after the crisis resolution the Bulgarian-Cuban political, economic, and cultural relations received a new impetus and a more dynamic development.

In Bulgaria, the Cuban missile crisis was closely related to the state of nuclear proliferation on the Balkans, particularly with the eventual removal of US *Jupiter* missiles in Turkey. As many Diplomatic and Intelligence documents showed, in the following months, the Bulgarian and Soviet leadership observed very carefully each sign for replacement of *Jupiters* with more modern Polaris nuclear weapons. However, one of the side effects of the Cuban crisis for Bulgaria was the visible

improvement and development of its relations with the US and other major Western powers in the mid-1960s.

This collection of Bulgarian documents on the Cuban missile crisis below was selected from four major state archives. Most of the documents were found at the former BCP CC records, stored after 1993 at the Central State Archive [*Tsentralen Darzhaven Arhiv – TsDA*] in Sofia. The second main source was the Diplomatic Archive [*Diplomaticheski Arhiv – DA*] of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Several documents were taken from the Bulgarian military records, which were subsumed under the Ministry of Defense to the Central State Archives in 1999 under the name State Military History Archive [*Darzhaven Voennoistoricheski Arhiv – DVIA*], located in the city of Veliko Tarnovo. The fourth source was the Archive of the Ministry of the Interior [*Arhiv na Ministerstvoto na Votreshnite Raboti – AMVR*], in particular, the State Security records, which are currently in a process of relocation to a repository newly established in 2010, the Archive of the Committee for Disclosing the Documents and Announcing Affiliation of Bulgarian Citizens to the State Security and the Intelligence Services of the Bulgarian National Armed Forces (AKRDOPBGDSRSBNA).

DOCUMENTS

Note from Cuban Ambassador to Bulgaria, Salvador Garcia Aguero, to Bulgarian Foreign Minister, 2 September 1962

Sofia, 2 September 1962

Comrade Minister,

I have the honor to send Your Excellency a copy of a recently received declaration, prepared by the Prime Minister of my country, Commandante Fidel Castro, with regard to recent libels and threats against Cuba by the US government.

The content of this declaration absolves me from the need to provide a detailed description and comments, which are not necessary for Your Excellency, since you are aware of the maneuvers of the aggressive North American imperialists.

I am sending the media and other authorities copies of the same declaration.

I take this opportunity to pay once again my deep respect to you.

Salvador Garcia Aguero
Ambassador

[Source: Diplomatic Archive (DA), Sofia, Opis 19, a.e. 924, p. 3; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Message from the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry to the Cuban Embassy in Sofia, 24 October 1962

VERBAL NOTE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs pays respect to the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba in Sofia and in response to Note 219 from 31 August 1962 has the honor to announce that competent Bulgarian authorities have included the Republic of Cuba as a socialist country in the plan for 1963.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes this opportunity to assure once again the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba of their respect.

Sofia, 24.10.1962 [24 October 1962]

[Source: DA, Opis 19, a.e. 921, p. 35; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Chief of Staff, Bulgarian Navy, Order re Naval Combat Readiness, 24 October 1962

Secret

Only 1 copy

O R D E R

OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE NAVY

24 October 1962

Nr. C 3198

Varna

Ref. Preparation to raise combat readiness in the formations and units of the Navy

With regard to the Declaration issued by the Bulgarian government dated 23 October⁶ and instructions from the General Staff – MoD [Ministry of Defense], in addition to all other planned activities to increase mobilization readiness in the Navy, the Navy Commander

ORDERS:

1. To check force recruitment, ammunitions, fuel and lubricants, food provisions and other necessary supplies with regard to the requirements for combat readiness and preparation for combat tasks.
2. To pay special attention to efficient ship repairs and where possible to finish repairing ahead of schedule without compromising quality.
3. Duties shall continue in the Navy staff, formations and units.
4. For the effective command of the Navy and the staffs in 11th and 12th BrOVR [naval bases or coastal defense brigades], to nominate people for operational groups, to identify secret documents, equipment and transport ready to deploy within one hour.
5. To terminate the authorization of military personnel to go on leave, and not to call upon those who are already on leave.
6. To appoint officers and enlisted personnel on permanent duty in storages and workshops in the Navy.
7. To increase the number of duty forces in TKA [torpedo boat] units armed with torpedoes - readiness within 30 minutes, and a duty helicopter with mounted machine-gun and readiness within 40 minutes.
8. To check communication devices to ensure command of forces in KPKP [command posts].
9. To prepare SNO [aids to navigation] and to be ready to enter into special working regime.
10. To mount DShK machine-guns on KATSh [minesweeper] and stations "Rome-K" in 11th and 12th Brigade OVR [naval base or coastal defense brigades] on those ships specified in the plan.
11. To check the state, readiness for deployment and completion of tasks of coast radio-location stations "Mis", stations "Rome-B" and torch parties in accordance with the plans.
12. To check the state of portable devices (torpedo barge, floating workshop, automobile transport, auto cranes), to prepare them for use in the Navy.
13. To raise alertness, guard and camouflage of coast areas in the naval formations.
14. The Navy staff shall work out a plan with activities to enhance visual and radio-technical surveillance and be ready to use them when an additional order is issued.
15. By 27th this month, to check the magnetic state and to demagnetize all ships, subject to demagnetization by 5 November this year.
16. By 25th of this month, the commander of 11th Brigade shall organize every two days during the dark part of the day surveillance with SKR-1 [frigate] of the territorial

waters from cape Emine to cape Kaliakra in order to reinforce the security in the sea garden and to make the operational regime more efficient in the zone of operation of the Navy. When surveillance with SKR [frigate] is not possible, it shall be performed with a PRM [small antisubmarine hunter] in the area Kaliakra-Galata.

17. Starting from 26th of this month, the commander of 12th Brigade OVR shall organize every two days at night, surveillance with a PRG [antisubmarine hunter] of the territorial waters between the parallels of cape Emona – Sinemoretz in order to reinforce the security in the sea garden and to make the operational regime more efficient in the zone of operation of the Navy.
18. The commander of OPLEV [ASW helicopter squadron] shall organize surveillance of the territorial waters with a helicopter during daytime as follows:
 - south of cape Emine to Ahtopol on 26, 28, 30 October 1962, 1 November 1962, etc.
 - north of cape Emine to cape Shabla on 27, 29, 31 October 1962, 2 November 1962, etc. in order to improve surveillance over the sea border.
19. Results from the helicopter and ship surveillance shall be reported to the naval staff not later than 4 hours after their return in the base (airport).

This order is in force until superseded by another order.

Chief of Staff Bulgarian Navy
Capt /N/ [signed] [Vasil] Yanakiev⁷

Printed in seven copies

[Source: DVIA, Fond 1027, Opis 12, a.e. 10, p. 40-42; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Chief of Staff, 2nd Bulgarian Army, Order re Raising Army Air Defense Combat Readiness, 29 October 1962

Top Secret
Copy Nr. 1

ORDER
OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF 2ND BULGARIAN ARMY
29.10.1962 [29 October 1962] PLOVDIV

Ref. Raising the combat readiness of air defense in the army

With regard to order N 00190/25.10.1962 [25 October 1962] aiming to raise air defense combat readiness in the army, the Commander of the 2nd army

ORDERS:

1. The air defense command post of the army, the air defense posts in the formations, anti-aircraft regiments and divisions shall organize and maintain continuous combat duty.

The air defense command post shall maintain continuous contacts with the command post of 2nd anti-aircraft brigade.

2. One combat ready battery shall be formed in each anti-aircraft division in the formations and in 32nd anti-aircraft regiment, and they will be deployed in the vicinity of the barracks and will stay on combat duty.
3. Stations P-10 from air defense of the army and 32nd anti-aircraft regiment shall be deployed close to the garrison and shall be ready to act by additional order.
4. The army commander shall give permission to the anti-aircraft batteries to open fire after permission is granted by the General Staff.
5. All important information from the Instruction for fire interaction between air defense and air force and air defense in the troops shall be provided to the commanders of anti-aircraft units.
6. Each anti-aircraft battery shall be supplied with 0.5 set of shells.

CHIEF OF STAFF OF 2ND BULGARIAN ARMY

Colonel /sign/ Alexiev

Printed in 6 copies

[Source: DVIA, Fond 317, Opis 4, a.e. 1, p. 249; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Bulgarian Legation, Washington, to
Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, 27 October
1962**

Strictly Confidential! By courier

Legation of the
People's Republic of Bulgaria
2100 16th Street NW
Washington DC
Outgoing Nr. C 561/29.X.62

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CABINET OF THE MINISTER
SOFIA

As we have already informed the Ministry with a cable, with regard to the extremely tense international situation and a direct threat of an imminent war, we have destroyed all confidential reports, memos, instructions, work plans and accounts, as well as correspondence, in order to prevent the enemy from getting hold of them. We have kept only the materials concerning the code, the Embassy annual work plan and the last quarterly plan, which are of confidential nature but due to their small volume, are easy to destroy if the need arises. All destroyed materials were included in a list with incoming and outgoing reference numbers.

With regard to the Cuban crisis and the high chance for provocations and attacks against legation facilities, employees and their families, we have strengthened the security of the room where the coded materials and other secret correspondence are kept. For this purpose, we have appointed three guards on over-night duty after working hours - two in the room with secret materials and one in the adjacent room - who will be able to give a timely warning of any imminent threat. All flammable materials have been thrown away from the offices and the basement, and all fire protection facilities [have been] checked.

The employees and their families were summoned and instructed what precautions to take in order to increase their level of alertness and to prevent provocations like kidnapping, attacks, beating, etc.

I should mention that during these days of extreme tension and anxiety, a sense of duty and the self-confidence [on behalf] of all employees in the Legation, in the Commercial and Military missions is required. We are proceeding with all special measures to strengthen security and to raise the alertness and readiness of employees and their families.

27 October 1962
Washington

[Source: DA, Opis 18-P, . . . 128; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Bulgarian Embassy, Havana (Hubenov), to
Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, 12 November
1962**

Confidential!
Havana, 12 November 1962
XIII – 0 - 12
70714
Embajada de la Republica
Popular de Bulgaria
La Habana

Nr. 634

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
SOFIA

By the order of Ambassador K[onstantin] Michev, on 28
October 1962 the confidential archives of the Embassy were
destroyed by burning.
Attached are two protocols and a list of the demolished
materials.

Deputy Chief of Mission /signed/ Hubenov

*[Source: DA, Opis 18-P, a.e. 630; translated by Greta
Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



**Bulgarian Minister of Internal Affairs to
Deputy Minister of Defense, Information
Report on Military Actions in West
Germany during Cuban Missile Crisis,**

14 December 1962 (excerpt)

MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS,

Personal. Top Secret!

TO COMRADE GENERAL SEMERDZHIEV⁸
INFORMATION
N 433

[...]

5. During the Cuban crisis, all northern and north-western

ports in the Federal Republic of Germany were subject to
NATO command and combat readiness. There were intensive
transportation activities and stockpiling of large quantities of
ammunitions, especially in the area of Lübeck, where military
supply troops were deployed. English military troops were
transported over the Channel to reinforce the garrisons in
the FRG. There was intensive movement of supply troops
from the ports to the inner regions of the country, tanks and
artillery – mainly anti-aircraft.

Wealthy West German families were hoarding stocks of
food and were getting ready for evacuation to Switzerland,
Spain and other places. Due to the strong and effective pro-
paganda, a large part of the population justified the aggressive
acts of the Americans, who averted Soviet actions not only in
the western hemisphere, but also in Berlin.

MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
/sign/ Gen. Diko Dikov

14.XII.1962
Sofia
Nr. 1558/NS - 3 copies

*[Source: AMVR, Fond 1, Opis 10, a.e. 80, p. 216-219;
translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



**Bulgarian UN Representative Milko
Tarabanov, Report to Bulgarian
Communist Party Politburo on
Disarmament Negotiations, 27 December
1962**

TO THE POLITBURO
OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

INFORMATION
on the work of the Committee of the 18 States on
Disarmament⁹
26 November – 20 December 1962

Upon termination of their work at the beginning
of September this year, the Committee of the 18 on
Disarmament had not come to an agreement on any disput-
able issues, except on the coordination of the future program
on measures, planned for the first stage of disarmament in the
Soviet and in the American projects, as well as on the first four

articles of the future agreement regarding common responsibilities of countries, including a number of contradictory formulations placed in brackets and presented to the USSR and the US respectively.

With regard to cessation of nuclear tests, the Western nuclear states have put forward two new draft agreements – one for cessation of all tests with on-site control regarding underground tests, and the other – for cessation of nuclear tests in the atmosphere, under water and in outer space without on-site inspections. Thus, the Americans confessed that no control and verification was necessary to stop the tests in these three categories. No agreement was reached because the Western countries insisted on compulsory verification after the cessation of underground tests. The question of cessation of nuclear tests became a primary issue in the debates on disarmament at the 17th United Nations session.

Even before the interruption of the work of the Conference of the 18 with regard to the 17th session of the UN General Assembly, the Western countries insisted that the Committee convene on 12 November, right after the end of the discussion on UN disarmament. Their aim was to create the impression among non-committed countries that they were willing to achieve an agreement with the USSR on some urgent questions regarding disarmament as soon as possible.

Western countries had in mind not only the public opinion in neutral countries but also the reaction to every interruption of the negotiations in their own countries, which was extremely sharp. The public reaction in Great Britain and Canada is indicative in this respect. They came to the conclusion that continuing the negotiations on disarmament does not imply any particular risk for their opposition to disarmament to be entirely disclosed, taking into account their methods of procrastination by inquiring “explanations,” asking questions with regard to verification, [submitting] requests for founding technical commissions and working groups for investigating some issues related to the Soviet proposals.

The socialist countries, [which are] members of the Committee of the 18 [e.g., the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania—ed.], were also ready to resume the talks right after their return from the discussion on disarmament in the United Nations. On the one hand, they were willing to meet the requirements of neutral countries for achieving consensus on cessation of nuclear tests, and, on the other hand - to elaborate on the new Soviet proposals, raised at the 17th session with regard to liquidating the means of procuring nuclear weapons, namely: proposals made by Soviet Foreign minister [Andrei] Gromyko at the beginning of the 17th UN session concerning the storage of a restricted number of missiles by the US and USSR until the second disarmament stage. These proposals, made in order to respond to the opinions and fears of Western delegations

expressed during the Geneva talks, were echoed at the 17th UN session among neutral and even among some Western countries.

The willingness of countries to stay in contact immediately after the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile—ed.] crisis contributed to the quick resumption of work in the Committee for disarmament.

The main issues to be discussed in the general debates after the resumption of work on 26 November in the Committee of 18 were suspension of nuclear tests, on which the UN General Assembly voted a special resolution, as well as the question of removing the means for procurement of nuclear weapons with regard to the latest Soviet proposals.

Neutral countries highlighted their eagerness to achieve an agreement on nuclear tests by the end of the year. A series of proposals were made in order to create an opportunity for bringing views closer. These proposals, although with different nuances, offered possibilities for on-site control and verification and thus came closer to the US view. This was a kind of diversion from the main topics in the Memorandum of the 8.¹⁰ These proposals could be characterized as follows:

1. Establishing a temporary commission of scientists and experts to control the implementation of a temporary cessation of underground nuclear tests;
2. On-site control in dubious situations by the decision of the temporary commission;
3. Determining a certain number (a quota) of inspections which nuclear states are obliged to allow on their territories.

During the last session of the Committee of the 18, India demonstrated considerable uncertainty and stepped back from their earlier statements on cessation of nuclear tests and disarmament as a whole. The Indian representative defended the idea of a certain “quota of invitations” which nuclear states should be obliged to extend in case dubious tremors are registered on their territory. On the other hand, in the very beginning when the question of the need for prioritizing the elimination of the nuclear threat was put forward, the Indian representative reacted in a strange way stating that conventional weapons shall not be neglected either since they could also be a serious threat to peace. There is no doubt that the position of the Indian delegate was provoked by the border dispute between the People’s Republic of China and India with the hope that the latter will be supported by Western countries against eventual further aggravation of the conflict with the People’s Republic of China.

Generally speaking, during this session all neutral countries expressed their reserved attitude towards the positions of socialist countries. They tried to create an atmosphere for

negotiations on nuclear tests between the Soviet Union and the US even beyond the memorandum framework. However, under the pressure of socialist delegations in the course of debates, as well as with regard to the talks we had with these delegations, they prepared a general declaration saying that the measures they suggest are neither interpretation, nor explanation of the Memorandum of the 8. This declaration considerably deprived Western countries of the opportunity to create the impression that the Soviet Union does not accept the Memorandum of the 8 and facilitated the position of the socialist countries on nuclear tests.

Although the Soviet proposal, made officially at the end of the session, for utilizing automatic seismic stations (so-called “black boxes) to determine the nature of some suspicious seismic phenomena was received with some reservations by Western delegations, it introduced a new element in the negotiations for cessation of nuclear tests. A number of neutral countries emphasized that it opens new opportunities to solve the problem with nuclear tests suspension.

The position of Sweden was typical for the position of the neutrals. All the time, Sweden was trying to support the US in their attempts to impose their position on compulsory on-site inspections, even in the presence of automatic seismic stations. Relevant to this context is the report by Swedish scientists, submitted by the Swedish delegation, which contains conclusions on the impossibility to identify [automatically/remotely—ed.] all underground phenomena.

Despite the seemingly constructive tone of the declarations of the American delegation at the start of the session, later statements aimed at creating the impression among the neutrals that the United States have superior nuclear power. This became particularly obvious in the speech of the American delegate in the Committee of the 18 on 14 December, on the opening day of NATO’s session. In his speech, he summarized the US positions on disarmament underlying that they would never agree to such kind of disarmament which would pose a threat to the existence of their military political alliances. In unofficial statements during a lunch, attended only by Czechoslovakian and Bulgarian delegations of all other socialist countries, the US delegate tried to create the impression among the present neutral representatives that the US was in fact the only nuclear power. When asked what that meant and wasn’t the Soviet Union a nuclear state, the American delegate replied that the Cuban crisis had proved that the United States was the only nuclear country. This statement was immediately mitigated by another American delegate who explained that they mean the only real nuclear country without underestimating the entire military power of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp. In this context, the US representative severely criticized US allies who should not have strived to become independent nuclear

powers since they lacked resources and capabilities, and they did not need their own nuclear power. This entire activity of the US delegation on disarmament coincided with the US-led campaign against the English nuclear weapon “Skybolt” and against France’s nuclear armament.

Neutral states expressed their concerns that the Americans would continue underground tests after 1 January 1963 in order to prove that they are not committed to this date. With respect to nuclear tests, the leader of the US delegation mentioned in a private conversation that in case the US and the Soviet Union reached an agreement, they hoped to convince France to join the agreement. They believed that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries would succeed in convincing the People’s Republic of China not to undertake, or not to proceed with nuclear tests.

Information provided by the Italian delegation shows that the Americans intended after the resumption of talks to make new proposals on cessation of nuclear tests, most likely in mid-February.

Considerably less time was allocated to the agreement on total disarmament.

Although in his first statement the US delegate [Arthur H. Dean] characterized the new Soviet proposal concerning missile weapons as interesting, deserving attention and opening opportunities for negotiations, in his speech on the general principles of disarmament on 14 December the US representative rejected these suggestions. The United States, however, did not succeed in making neutral countries or their allies accept their negative attitude concerning the Soviet proposals.

The behavior of Great Britain is typical. According to information from the Indian delegate, when Dean¹¹ delivered his speech to reject the Soviet proposal, the British delegate had a printed copy of his speech for the same session in which he made clear that they were ready to negotiate on the new Soviet proposals. Taking into account the decisive American position, he had to abandon the printed text and [had to] speak extemporaneously, not to differ from the US delegate’s statement. The British representative stated that the US position surprised and even disappointed Great Britain. Later, the chief British delegate and his deputy made clear in their statements that they differed from the US positions and assumed a more constructive attitude towards the issue of automatic stations for nuclear tests control, as well as on the proposal for keeping a strict number of missiles on the territories of the USSR and the US until the end of the second phase.

Typical for the differences between the US and other Western countries is Canada’s position on tests. Almost every time delegations meet informally, it is said even as a joke that Canada is a non-committed country.

As far as Italy is concerned, the Italian delegation always supports the Americans unconditionally, but the Italian rep-

representative cannot help emphasizing that the Italian government is openly trying to stop nuclear tests and that it is for serious discussions on the Soviet proposals. When speaking in the lobby, the Italian participants are considerably more inclined to mutually acceptable decisions than in their official declarations in the Committee.

Regardless of some differences on some disarmament issues and particularly on some Soviet proposals, US allies usually succeed in imposing their attitude during the Committee sessions.

Debates and talks in the Committee give reasons to believe that the chances for reaching an agreement on cessation of nuclear tests in the near future are not very big. The attitudes in some influential circles in the US, which have been reflected in private conversations with US representatives, concerning the possibilities of closing American bases under the pretext that they have become redundant with the new US strategic capabilities, give some reason to expect more productive negotiations on disarmament.

During the Caribbean crisis, the topic of finding appropriate ways and time for closing some foreign military bases in the near future was discussed repeatedly in the US media and in the statements of politicians. A similar attitude was present in private talks at the Geneva Conference. For example, a member of the American delegation and representative of the so-called "Agency for armaments and disarmament control in the US" [Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; ACDA—ed.], by the name of Mark, made it clear that they did not exclude the possibility of closing some of their bases which from [a] military and strategic perspective were considered redundant. However, this would not happen under the pressure of the USSR or neutral countries, but only when the US reckoned this as necessary and possible.

Prospects exist as well for more productive discussions of some parallel and partial measures in disarmament in order to minimize risks from an accidental war through declaring maneuvers, establishing fast direct links between the leaders of great powers, as well as between them and the UN General Secretary; the issue of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and more specifically for establishing non-nuclear zones in some areas in the world, especially in regions where the US believe that this could be favorable and would not pose any difficulties to them, such as the case with South America, Africa, the Balkans, etc.

In this situation, it could be expected that at the next session of the Committee of the 18 the United States would try to divert negotiations on disarmament towards some of the above-mentioned events. In this context, Western countries will find support among most of the neutrals. A number of statements, made by neutral delegations, show that neutral states are

looking for a way out in the negotiations on total disarmament through reaching an agreement on some partial issues.

Sofia, 27 December 1962

(Signed)

Milko Tarabanov¹²

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 91, a.e. 927, pp. 26-36; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Ivan Budinov, Minister of Foreign Trade,
Report to Todor Zhivkov, Chairman of the
Council of Ministers, Report on Granting a
Credit to Cuba, December 1962**

Top Secret

Copy Nr.

TO

THE CHAIRMAN OF

THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

COMRADE TODOR ZHIVKOV

R E P O R T

From IVAN BUDINOV

Minister of foreign trade

REF. Granting a credit to the Republic of Cuba¹³

COMRADE PRIME MINISTER,

According to the special export plan for 1963, our country is supposed to export to the Republic of Cuba special equipment at the amount of 5 million currency leva. Preliminary studies and talks held with representatives of the Revolutionary armed forces of the Republic of Cuba show that the Republic of Cuba is in demand of a number of nomenclatures of special equipment that we could provide from our current production or from supplies available in the Bulgarian National Army, a large part of which are not in use anymore. The Republic of Cuba, however, has requested that our country supply part of the special equipment on credit due to economic difficulties in the country. Such credits have been offered by the USSR and the CSSR [Czechoslovak Socialist Republic].

Taking into consideration the difficulties in Cuba, its request for import of special equipment from our country, as well as our capabilities, I believe it would be correct and reasonable to grant a credit to the Republic of Cuba at the amount of

up to one-third of the total cost of the special export, which will be negotiated in 1963, with loan repayment term of five years. The credit amount will include all special equipment from the availability of the Ministry of National Defense, planned for export to the Republic of Cuba, amounting at 800 000 currency leva and the rest from new production.

In 1962, 30 000 Mauser rifles were provided through the Republic of Cuba as a grant to the revolutionary movements in Latin America. We received wholehearted gratitude and requests for future deliveries. With regard to this, I reckon that we could deliver from the supplies of the Ministry of National Defense free of charge up to 5 000 Mauser rifles, up to 10 000 Mannlicher rifles with 8 mm cartridges up to 10 million pieces, and 30 000 hand grenades type F-1, which will be delivered in support of the revolutionary movements in Latin America through the Republic of Cuba. The above-mentioned equipment is not in use in the Ministry of National Defense and currently there are no opportunities for sale.

I suggest that the Council of Ministers approve the following DECISION:

The Council of Ministers authorizes the government delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, which is to hold negotiations with the government delegation of the Republic of Cuba, with regard to the exchange of goods in 1963:

1. To grant upon request a credit to the Republic of Cuba at the amount of up to 1 500 000 currency leva to pay for part of the special export of the People's Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Cuba in 1963 for a 5-year repayment term.
2. To render free of charge, as support to the revolutionary movements in Latin America through the Republic of Cuba, the following equipment: up to 5 000 Mauser rifles, up to 10 000 Mannlicher rifles with 8 mm cartridges up to 10 million pieces, and up to 30 000 hand grenades type F-1.

The implementation of the decision is assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Trade.

Sofia, December 1962

MINISTER: /signed/

[Source: TsDA, Fond 1-B, Opis 64, a.e. 303, p. 2-3; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Bulgarian Legation, Washington (Shterev), Cable to Foreign Ministry, 21 January 1963

=Top Secret!

Making a copy is forbidden!
To be returned to Cipher
Department in 48 hours

INCOMING CABLE Nr. 650
21 January 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
From: Washington
Written on 18 January at 11.00 am

During the lunch with the Greek Charge d'Affaires, Counselor Kalougeras, I learned that at the NATO session in December it had been decided to grant military assistance to Greece for 1963, amounting to 23 million dollars.

During the NATO session, Turkey once again put forward the question of accelerating its accession as an auxiliary member to the Common Market [i.e., the European Economic Community, or EEC—ed.]. However, the western countries were not in a hurry since the bad economic situation in Turkey would be a heavy burden for the Common Market.

I was astonished by the fact that Kalougeras was continuously asking me about details on our relations with the United States – financial, cultural, etc. It seems as if Greece is once again concerned about our relationships with the US.
[Ambassador] SHTEREV¹⁴

Deciphered on 22 January 1963

[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 10, p. 12; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Bulgarian Consulate, Istanbul (Karadimov), Cable to Foreign Ministry, 28 January 1963

Top Secret!

Making a copy is forbidden!
To be returned to Cipher
Department in 48 hours

INCOMING CABLE N 938

28 January 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From: Istanbul

Written on 28 January 1963 at 5.00 pm

Ref. Your cable N 694

In addition to my cable from a few days ago regarding *Jupiter* missiles, located on Turkish territory, I would like to add the following: according to the Istanbul newspapers, on 24 January the Turkish Foreign minister confirmed in front of *Milliyet* newspaper that the *Jupiter* missiles on Turkish territory had been dismantled. They will be replaced by *Polaris* missiles, which will float in the Mediterranean and will be under the command of Sixth US Fleet. Today, Istanbul newspapers published statements from foreign media agencies according to which Turkey and Italy are not going to be at a disadvantage after the removal of *Jupiter* missiles since NATO will obtain access to *Polaris* missiles and they will be deployed in the Mediterranean this year. Generally, the comments are short. We have no precise information whether NATO is engaged in this matter, when the dismantling of *Jupiter* missiles will start, etc. We are going to observe and inform you in due time.

[General Consul] KARADIMOV¹⁵

Deciphered on 29 January 1963

[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 59, p. 34; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Bulgarian Legation, Washington (Shterev),
Cable to Foreign Ministry, 12 February
1963**

Top Secret!

Making a copy is forbidden!

To be returned to Cipher

Department in 48 hours

INCOMING CABLE Nr. 1522

12 February 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From: Washington

Written on 12 February at 12.00 pm

According to information by the journalist Paul Scott¹⁶, the government of the United States intended to send a

squadron of B47 jet bombers in Turkey, immediately after the disassembly of the bases, housing the *Jupiter* missiles.

Thus the US government would demonstrate before the world its military presence in Turkey.

[Ambassador] SHTEREV

Deciphered on 13 February 1963

[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 10, p. 37; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Bulgarian Legation, Washington (Shterev),
Cable to Foreign Ministry, 15 February
1963**

Top Secret!

Making a copy is forbidden!

To be returned to Cipher

Department in 48 hours

INCOMING CABLE Nr. 1686

15 February 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From: Washington

Written on 13 February at 1.00 pm

US Deputy Secretary of Defense [Roswell] Gilpatric has stated that US would send three *POLARIS* submarines on April 11th to replace the missile bases in Turkey and Italy. These submarines are intended to be under the control of the NATO Commander-in-Chief and to be assigned operationally to the Sixth US fleet. The submarines will be based in the port of Rota in Spain.

[Ambassador] SHTEREV

Deciphered on 16 February 1963

[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 10, p. 38; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Bulgarian Embassy, Athens (Minchev),
Cable to Foreign Ministry, 17 March 1963**

Top Secret!

Making a copy is forbidden!
To be returned to Cipher
Department in 48 hours

INCOMING CABLE Nr. 2996
17 March 1963
To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
From: Athens
Written on 16 March 1963 at 5.00 pm

Today's newspapers present brief information on the NATO meeting that was held in Athens yesterday. In his introductory remarks, the Chief of the Greek General Staff General Pipilis stated that the purpose of the meeting was to further strengthen the relations and cooperation between the Greek and Turkish armed forces. The Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General [Cevdet] Sunay, the Commander of NATO Staff in Izmir, General Brown, and the Chief of Staff of South European forces, General Seyds, also expressed their positions on the same issue.

All the speakers demonstrated their solidarity on the topics discussed: further strengthening of defense in the sensitive region around Greece and Turkey; new NATO common goals regarding defense in the Balkan region, which needs special attention and support since the two Balkan countries were poor and were not in a position to meet the requirements of a wide allied defense; conducting summer military exercises. [Ambassador] MINCHEV¹⁷

Deciphered on 17 March 1963

[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 26, p. 142; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Bulgarian Embassy, Athens (Atanasov),
Cable to Foreign Ministry, 6 June 1963**

Top Secret!

Making a copy is forbidden!
To be returned to Cipher
Department in 48 hours

INCOMING CABLE Nr. 6153

6 June 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
From: Athens

Written on 6 June 1963 at 12.00 pm

The afternoon government newspaper *Apogevmatini* published on 5th this month a special report by its Paris correspondent that NATO command was informed that Soviet nuclear submarines with missiles had entered the Mediterranean in response to the presence of three US submarines with missiles *Polaris* in this region. According to this information, the armed forces of the Soviet Union and its allies were quickly procuring most modern weapons, especially Bulgaria, which has modernized its troops systematically with Soviet assault weapons. NATO received information that during the last two months the Bulgarian army had conducted a series of maneuvers close to the Greek and Turkish borders. The maneuvers included exercises aiming at achieving full combat readiness.

According to newspaper *Katimerini*, a NATO declaration states that in the upcoming months the fast adoption of NATO forward strategy in Greece will start, according to which Greek divisions will be deployed in a new pattern at a short distance along the borders. This strategy aims at the preparation for attacks from 50 divisions, used by the Soviet Union. The most dangerous were the divisions located in Romania and Bulgaria. According to NATO command, possible attacks against Greece could come from the north along the rivers Mesta, Struma and Arda. The defense of Greece and particularly of Thrace was estimated as vitally important, and NATO would not leave a single inch of Greek land [unprotected].

ATANASOV

Deciphered on 7 June 1963

[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 26, p. 214; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Bulgarian Foreign Ministry (Angelov),
Cable to Bulgarian Embassy, Ankara, 23
June 1963**

Top Secret

To be preserved in
1 handwritten copy only

OUTGOING CABLE Nr. 5190

From: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
To: Ankara

According to information from [Bulgarian Ambassador Radenko] Grigorov from London, the Turkish Ambassador has told him that US submarines visit the Turkish waters, thus constituting a more powerful defensive nuclear weapon and that Turkey had agreed for the creation of NATO fleet, equipped with *Polaris* missiles. According to the Ambassador, there was a Soviet submarine in the Mediterranean Sea.

[Deputy Foreign Minister] ANGELOV¹⁸

23 June 1963
Ciphred and delivered
on 24 June 1963

[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 56, p. 115; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Ministry of Internal Affairs, Information Report, 5 July 1963

Personal, Top Secret

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Information No. 300

NATO Military Intelligence Services had developed instructions concerning the work of their agents in the Warsaw Pact countries. The latter had to keep under observation the activity of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative and Military Committees, the possible carrying out

of joint military training and maneuvers, to find out and examine the Army command network, AA Defense, communications, etc.

In 1962 the NATO member-states' Defense Attaches, working in our country, had received definite instructions to gather information about Soviet arms deliveries, eventual missile sites and nuclear weapons storage, military exercises, and Armed Forces battle readiness.

Special attention was paid to visual observation. The American Attaches coordinated the activity of all NATO Defense Attaches.

In the period 19-30 January 1963, nine meetings for exchange of information had been carried out.

During the Cuban crisis of 1962, the US Defense Attaché Col. Cleary brought the instructions from the Istanbul Intelligence Center for carrying out active spy activities. Under his guidance interaction and coordination with the Defense Attaches from France, Greece, Turkey and other NATO countries took place. Some diplomats were included as well. Military bases, movement of the military units and roads were kept under observation night and day.

In October 1962 Col. Cleary informed his French and Greek colleagues Paul Murat and Loumakis that in the actual situation it was difficult for the US diplomats to travel inside the country; that's why he relied entirely on the collaboration with them for receiving new intelligence information. He had asked his colleagues in Bucharest to report on troops' movement through the Danube River as well. When Col. Cleary said to the former Turkish Defense Attaché Oljai that he would pay him for the obtained information, Oljai responded that they were representatives of one same Alliance, and he would deliver the requested information voluntarily. The Greek Defense Attaché informed that he heard about several missile sites in Bulgaria.

Joint intelligence activities were evaluated highly by the US Plenipotentiary minister, [Eugenie] Anderson, who sent information to Washington, thanking NATO member-states Defense Attaches.

During the visual observation, one of the most commonly used tricks was the usage of Russian language. The French Defense Attaché even introduced himself as a Russian. The agents made photos of the barracks and the military equipment. Some of them used special intelligence equipment. Part of the information [they] gained showed that the Defense Attaches used an agents' network for gathering of intelligence information which could be obtained with no other means. The regular visits to the legations were also used for gathering of information and for arranging secret meetings with some agents.

The official press was used as an additional information source, too.

The capitalist Intelligence Services possessed the following more specific data about our Army:

They had found out that our Armed Forces were organized under the scheme of the Soviet one and were completely mechanized. They knew that there were different Staffs of the different Armed Forces structures: the Land Forces, the Air Forces and the Navy, and they had defined the exact location of many military formations and units. Some of the secret designations of the military units were known, too. The Intelligence Services had quite detailed data for several military warehouses and exact data for the technical equipment in use. Common information about the new AA Defense and Air Forces structures was available and more concrete information about the military airports and some missile bases.

Second and Third State Security Directorates had taken measures against the subversive activities of the capitalist Intelligence Services. But no Military Attaché was denounced for working with agents. The weak points of Bulgarian counter-activities were briefly noted.

5 July 1963

THE SECRETARIAT [of Ministry of Internal Affairs]

[Source: AMVR, Fond 1, Opis 10, a.e. 83, pp. 96-107; translated in summary by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Bulgarian Consulate, Istanbul (Karadimov), Cable to Foreign Ministry, 5 August 1963

Top Secret!

Making a copy is forbidden!

To be returned to Cipher

Department in 48 hours

INCOMING CABLE Nr. 8411

5 August 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From: Istanbul

Written on 4 August 1963 at 12.00 pm

From the consulate, I received the following information regarding the latest visit of the Chief of the Greek General Staff to Turkey and the talks held.

The two parties exchanged their considerations over the proposal to sign an agreement for non-aggression between the Warsaw Pact member-countries and NATO.

The Greek delegation stated that they were not prepared to accept *Polaris* submarines in Greek territorial waters and suggested that Turkey deploy these submarines, which will be used for the protection of Turkey and Greece, in Turkish waters. The Turkish side stated that they could only accept these submarines, in case that they were used for the defense of Turkey. [General Consul] KARADIMOV
Deciphered on 5 August 1963

[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 59, p. 214; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]

Notes

1 Nikita Khrushchev, *Memoirs*, Vol. 3, *Statesman*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 324-326.

2 The Cuban Missile Crisis folder at the Diplomatic Archive in Sofia contains a collection of information from UPI, Reuters, Agence France Press (AFP), the Soviet agency TASS, and the Bulgarian agency BTA – DA, Sofia, Documentacija, IV/39/1/X-1962.

3 *Vanshna politika na NRB* [Bulgarian Foreign Policy], Vol. 1, 1944-1962 (Sofia: Nauka I izkustvo, 1963), 613-615.

4 Cited in: Mitev, Trendafil, “Karaibskata politicheska kriza 1962 godina,” *Voennohistoricheski sbornik*, Sofia, 1999, No. 6, 86.

5 *TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 769, 2-3.

6 Declaration of Bulgarian Government on the situation at the Caribbean Sea – published in *Rabotnichesko Delo* daily, No. 297, 24 October 1962.

7 Admiral Vasil Yanakiev was Commander of Bulgarian Navy from March 1972 until May 1990.

8 Col.-Gen. Atanas Semerdzhiev, Chief of General Staff and First Deputy Minister of Defense (1962-1989), Minister of Internal Affairs (1989-1990), Vice President of Bulgaria (1990-1992).

9 Eighteen Nations Committee on Disarmament – established by UN in December 1961 in Geneva. Met regularly until September 1969. Its predecessor was Ten Nations Committee on Disarmament (1960), which was formed by five representatives from NATO countries and five representatives from Warsaw Pact countries.

10 Not further identified—ed.

11 Most likely Arthur H. Dean, head of the US delegation to the 18 nation disarmament committee in Geneva, rather than Sir Patrick Dean, UK representative at United Nations—ed.

12 Ambassador Milko Tarabanov was a Bulgarian representative to the United Nations in New York with a rank of Deputy Foreign Minister (1962-1970). In the 1940s-1950s he was chief of diplomatic missions in Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Turkey.

13 The proposal was approved with a special top secret decision by CC BCP Politburo of 13 December 1962 signed by Todor Zhivkov and other Politburo members.

14 Kiril Shterev was Charge d’Affaires in US (1962-1963), and Ambassador to Canada (1967-1971), Iran (1973-1979), and Great Britain (1980-1987).

15 Dimo Karadimov – General Consul in Istanbul, Turkey (1962-1966).

16 Paul Scott Mowrer – worked for *Chicago Daily News* and *New York Post*, a Pulitzer Prize Winner.

17 Nikolai Minchev – Ambassador to Greece (1962-1967) and Yugoslavia (1972-1974), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1974-1979).

18 Lubomir Angelov – Ambassador to Yugoslavia (1953-1956), Charge d’Affaires to Great Britain (1957-1958), Deputy Foreign Minister (1958-1966).

Documents on Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 1960-1975: New Evidence from the Sofia Archives

Documents obtained and introduced by Jordan Baev

The first ever contacts between Bulgarian and Cuban Communist leaders had been established via Moscow within the network of the Communist International (Comintern), Red Labor International (Profintern), Red Peasant International (Krestintern), and Communist Youth International (CIM). In 1935 - 1936 the Secretary General of Comintern Georgi Dimitrov had several talks with the representatives of the Communist Party of Cuba Francisco (Blas Roca) Calderio (alias *Bueno*) and Severo Aguirre, who were elected in the Executive Committees respectively of Comintern and CIM.¹ However, the political contacts between the two parties for most of the decade-and-a-half after World War II were scarce and rather fragmentary.

The armed struggle against the Batista regime in Cuba and the name of its leader Fidel Castro appeared in the world news of Bulgarian media only in 1958. On 3 January 1959 the official party daily *Rabotnichesko delo* published an editorial about the victory of the "Cuban national democratic revolution." The *Information Bulletin* of the "Foreign Policy & International Relations" Department" of the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee (CC BCP), which was published "for internal use only," informed its readers on Blas Roca's appeals for full support for Fidel Castro's "provisional revolutionary government."² The first political contacts and bilateral correspondence in 1959 - 1960 were accomplished initially between the youth and student organizations of the two countries.³

On its way back from Argentina and Mexico in late May - early June 1960 a Bulgarian governmental delegation visited Cuba and had talks with Raul Castro, Ernesto "Che" Guevara and other Cuban officials. At the end of June the proposals for the establishment of diplomatic, commercial, and cultural relations and Bulgaria's rendering of economic and technical aid to Cuba were coordinated between the two governments' representatives. At the Fifteenth UN General Assembly session in September 1960 in New York the first personal meeting between Todor Zhivkov and Fidel Castro was organized. Years later Zhivkov related that their improvised unofficial meeting happened on 27 September 1960 in a small room at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem, where Castro also more famously met Nikita Khrushchev.⁴ On 8 October 1960, the Bulgarian minister of foreign trade Luchezar Avramov and Ernesto "Che" Guevara signed in Havana a bilateral commercial agreement. The same day an official communiqué

announced the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Cuba.

At its peak, soon after the Cuban missile crisis, the Bulgarian-Cuban relationship attained more significance focusing on Sofia's economic, technical, and military aid for the Castro government. The first group of Bulgarian agricultural experts was prepared to be sent to Cuba in October 1962. In the next fifteen years more than 4300 Bulgarian technical and agricultural experts worked in Cuba, while in 1962-63 only about 130 Cuban students and technicians arrived in Bulgaria to continue their education and training.⁵ In May 1965 a joint intergovernmental committee for economic, scientific and technical cooperation started its work. In January 1964, the Bulgarian minister of defense Gen. Dobri Djurov visited Cuba for the first time, and Raul Castro returned the visit the following March.⁶

Meanwhile, similar to the other East European countries, the Bulgarian leadership watched closely the propaganda campaign of the Cuban leaders of the "Cuban guerilla warfare example" as a unique way of social transformation for Third World nations. Several reports and surveys, sent to Sofia from the Bulgarian embassy in Havana in 1964-68, emphasized specific Cuban views and secret attempts to promote the continental revolution in Latin America. Additional political tension emerged from the categorical insistence of the Cuban representatives to organize the 9th world youth and student festival in Havana, thus opposing the Soviet effort to organize the festival in Sofia. The Cubans even accused the leadership of the world leftist youth federation (WFDY) of "opportunism" and continued to demand participation only of the "revolutionary organizations" who accepted the armed struggle as a political imperative. The analysis of the archival documentation indicates that Bulgarian leaders tried carefully and consistently to overcome the divergences and rivalry between both organizations and even to develop further cooperation.⁷

On 5 October 1967 the CC BCP Politburo approved a resolution and measures for increasing and strengthening of Bulgarian-Cuban relations. However, the envisaged first visit of Todor Zhivkov to Cuba in the beginning of 1968 was postponed mainly because of the sharp anti-Soviet critique Fidel Castro made in a secret speech to a Cuban Communist Party plenary session in January 1968. The change of the official Cuban position toward closer relations with Moscow after the Warsaw Pact military invasion in Czechoslovakia

in August 1968 made possible to renew the preparation for Zhivkov's visit to Cuba, which was subject of special discussion at the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry in March 1969. Todor Zhivkov's official visit in June 1970 – the first ever visit of an East European leader to Cuba – played a significant role not only for the development of the bilateral relations, but also gave an impetus for the improvement of Soviet-Cuban relations in the near future. The first visit of a Soviet leader (Leonid Brezhnev) to Cuba was carried out in late January–early February 1974.

The talks between Zhivkov and Castro in June 1970 and December 1975 in Cuba and in May 1972 in Bulgaria were held in extremely friendly, informal and frank atmosphere, even without following the customary diplomatic protocol. The next talks between the two leaders in Sofia in March 1976⁸ and in Havana in April 1979 confirmed the existing quite informal and confidential nature of their relations. They were indicative in general for the bilateral political relations between Bulgaria and Cuba in the 1970s-1980s, which influenced the development of economic, cultural and public contacts between the two nations as well.⁹ The same could be said even for the secret contacts and collaboration between the intelligence and Security services of the two countries. During the visit of the director of Cuban State Security service Manuel Piñeiro to Bulgaria in November 1968 an exchange of Intelligence information and operational equipment was agreed. In 1976 and 1978 the first bilateral long term agreements were signed for intelligence and security cooperation, which were extended during the visit of the Cuban minister of Internal Affairs Ramiro Valdés to Sofia at the end of December 1982.¹⁰

Cuban-East European relations suffered drastic changes after the “velvet revolutions” of 1989. Soon after the “palace coup” on 10 November 1989 in Bulgaria the bilateral ties with Cuba, which were established on a purely ideological base, deteriorated visibly. Several new Bulgarian periodicals published in the beginning of 1990 for the first time criticized the Castro regime,¹¹ while the Bulgarian delegation at the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva together with the delegations of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia voted in favor of an anti-Havana resolution. This episode led to a sharp emotional critique by Fidel Castro towards his former allies in a public speech on 7 March 1990.¹² However, in the next months the Cuban leaders had to realize the new realities and the irreversible political process in Bulgaria and other East-Central European countries. Soon after the victory of the anti-Communist opposition Union of Democratic Forces in the parliamentary elections in October 1991 in Bulgaria and the election of the first non-Communist president Dr. Zheliu Zhelev in February 1992 the Cuban leaders confirmed

with official messages the intention of their government “to activate and stabilize the traditional friendly contacts between the two nations.”

CC BCP Politburo Resolution Re: Establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba, 1960

CC BCP Politburo Resolution No. 136/30 June 1960

Re: Establishment of diplomatic relations with Republic of Cuba

[...]

VIII. Regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Comrade Todor Zhivkov reports.

1. Gives one's consent to establish diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cuba and to announce the latter in the press after coordinating it with the Cuban government.
2. The Foreign Affairs commission at Politburo should work out concrete measures

regarding the establishment and expansion of political, economic and cultural relations between our country and the Republic of Cuba.

3. Raul Castro should be invited to visit our country.

[...]

To
The Prime Minister
Comrade Anton Jugov¹³

Report
By Georgi Kumbiliev – minister of foreign trade
Re: the establishment of trade relations with Cuba.

Comrade Prime Minister,

For some time now Cuba has been showing an interest in signing a trade agreement with our country.

The USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and others among the socialist countries have already signed trade agreements with Cuba. This year the USSR is going to buy 425 000 tons of sugar, and in the next four years – a million tons a year. The USSR has granted a .100 000 000 dollar loan to Cuba at a 2.5% interest rate. Czechoslovakia and some other socialist countries have already come to an agreement on the construction of different enterprises in Cuba.

A Cuban economic delegation led by [Antonio Núñez] **Jiménez**, the director of the National Institute for Agricultural Reform, is at present in the Soviet Union. The delegation is negotiating and it has already been declared that it has signed an agreement for the supply of petrol and petrol products from the USSR. It has also signed a joint communiqué on the trade-economic relations etc. The same delegation will also visit other countries from the socialist block – Poland, the GDR and others, where it will also negotiate. Cuba is interested in being emancipated from its economic dependence on the USA. Hence it is necessary to ensure the export of sugar on the one hand and the import of petrol and petrol products, agricultural machines and others on the other, e.g. goods with which it has so far traded with the USA.

Since the ideas of the Cuban revolution and the socialist community are close, the USSR and other socialist countries view the development of trade and economic relations with Cuba as a support for the Cuban revolution. For the time being **Jiménez's** delegation is not expected to come to Bulgaria. We consider it appropriate to invite the delegation to visit our country after signing the trade agreement.

Preliminary research has shown that we could export to Cuba some of our goods.

With a view to the development of trade relations with Cuba, it is necessary to sign a trade agreement with Cuba, under which our country could eventually ascertain preferential treatment in terms of either duty tariffs or on the foreign trade regime.

Under these circumstances the question about our import from Cuba arises, which is practically harder to solve. If the delegation comes to our country it will by all means want us to buy certain amounts of sugar from Cuba, in return for which we would export our goods. Yet we do not import sugar for satisfying our own needs. The preliminary research made by the Ministry of Foreign Trade regarding the opportunities for importing raw Cuban sugar and after processing it in our plants re-exporting it, showed that it is not economically profitable due to the high freight and processing costs and other [factors]. It would be more profitable if the sugar, after being processed were left for the internal market, while the Foreign Trade Ministry would export the respective quantity of our sugar. One way or other, we must be ready to buy

some sugar; the latter is very important for Cuba's economy, especially taking into account the great quantities of residual substances of sugar.

I suggest that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs entrusts the Bulgarian ambassador in Warsaw to invite the Cuban delegation to visit our country as well. It should be explicitly declared that if the delegation has the authority to do it, we are ready to sign a trade agreement and to buy certain quantities of sugar, exporting our goods in return.

Depending on the answer, we will announce the negotiation delegation members and a draft version of the delegates.

Regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Comrade Todor Zhivkov reports.

1. Gives one's consent to establish diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cuba and to announce the latter in the press after coordinating it with the Cuban government.
2. The Foreign Affairs commission at Politburo should work out concrete measures regarding the establishment and expansion of political, economic and cultural relations between our country and the Republic of Cuba.
3. Raul Castro should be invited to visit our country.

[new document]

REPORT

Of the Governmental delegation visiting Argentina and Cuba

[...]

From Mexico we left for Cuba. While we were still in Argentina, when asking for visas, we told Cuba's ambassador that our delegation would like to make a goodwill visit to Cuba and to discuss our state relationships. The ambassador told us that we were expected guests who were absolutely confirmed when we arrived in Cuba. The delegation was met at the airport by the Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs and important people from the protocol department. At the first meeting, the deputy-minister Chevari explicitly declared that Cuba wanted to establish regular diplomatic and cultural relations with the People's Republic of Bulgaria. Later on, we only specified the details in the further meetings that we had. Finally, the text for a joint message was coordinated. After being approved by the competent organs in the two countries, the message would be published simultaneously in Havana and Sofia. The date of publication will be agreed upon by

the two countries' representatives to the United Nations in New York.

[...]

The greatest interest was directed towards the trade relationships. The interest was so great, that the question concerning the signing of a trade agreement was posed by the Cuban delegation at the first meeting. They informed us that they had already signed agreements with the USSR and Czechoslovakia. Cuba was receiving a long-term credit amounting to 20 million dollars from Czechoslovakia under the credit agreement. While we were there, a Czech trade delegation for signing a trade agreement arrived.

We did not only meet with important people from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and economic Institutions, but with important people from the government as well. During the whole time we were there, Fidel Castro was busy somewhere outside Havana (we saw him the last evening at a performance of some visiting Chinese artists at the theater). [Antonio Núñez] **Jiménez** was in Moscow at that time. That is why we met Ernesto Guevara, head of the National Bank and Raul Castro, Minister of Armed Forces, with whom we had long talks. They informed us about the development of the revolution and about the internal and foreign situation the country was in now. The situation in the country during Batista's time made the revolution necessary. All people's forces were united in a huge front in the beginning of the revolution. Yet they went into the revolution without a clear ideology. The strongest movement was "July 26th". The peasants were the revolution's major force. The working class was weak, small in number. After Batista's overthrow, the fight between the revolutionary forces began. For some, the aim was already achieved after overthrowing the dictator. Hence they had to stop [fighting]. Others gave their consent on a restricted agricultural reform. There were also disputes on the size of the land that should remain private property after the agricultural reform was carried out. The situation of the people necessitated radical changes. For a great part of the progressive forces it was clear that they should keep on going; if they stopped that would put an end to the revolution. It was also clear that there was no alternative. The ideas of the revolution had to be clarified. The rightist wing started to disintegrate [under pressure from internal struggles]. Thus 1959 was a period of intense disputes and we could say that the power struggle was ongoing. It is in this struggle that the ideas of the revolution were clarified. Perhaps, it is exactly this clarity of the ideas together with the economic difficulties that explain the revolutionary government's orientation towards the socialist countries.

During that time Cuba also had difficulties and threats from the imperialists, and more specifically from America, which also helped to overcome some illusions. Raul Castro told us - it wasn't easy for you as well, but your neighbor was a big friendly country like the Soviet Union, while our neighbor was a powerful unfriendly imperialist country. For quite some time fallacious opinions were imposed on the Cuban people - for instance, that the geographical situation of Cuba was such that it should necessarily go together with the USA, that Cuba will fail without the USA, that is, as the Cuban leaders said, a geographical fatalism that was implanted. One of the most serious complaints at all meetings was the lack of specialists. As we already mentioned, the revolution's major support were the peasants and they were almost totally illiterate. 80% of the soldiers of rural origin in the army were illiterate. The old intelligentsia - specialists and tutors at the universities and schools are brought up in a pro-American spirit. The Soviet comrades in Havana told us that an acute clash [of opinions] between the old and the young in the intelligentsia circles. The support was for the young. Young people between 20 and 25 years old are entrusted with the most responsible state and economic work. A program has been worked out to raise the people's general educational and cultural level. However, this program is only an attempt, as the leaders themselves admit.

Earlier the trade union leaders were in the imperialist slave's hands. It has been admitted that after seizing power they made a mistake by keeping these leaders for some time. People from the army were sent but they were inexperienced. Now measures are being taken to mend matters. The new leadership has already established contact with the World Federation of Trade Unions.

The most serious changes have taken place in villages. Now about two thirds of the land is in the hands of the state. Part of the land was acquired as a result of confiscation of [property owned by] American companies, while the other part was [acquired] through the agricultural reform. Cooperative farms are being formed on that land which should better be called state agricultural industries. There are about 600 cooperative farms in the country now. They intend to make them 1000 by the end of the year, with which about 40% of the land will be cooperated. The cooperative farmers are the ex-agricultural workers in the plantations. As cooperative farmers they get a fixed salary from INRA (Institute for agricultural reform) during the whole year. INRA also employs the administration. The cooperative farmers form a consultative body. INRA also supplies the basic tools of the cooperative farms; it helps them in the construction of houses for the peasants, in the construction of agricultural, social and cultural buildings. The major issue is how to distribute income. Now only 20% of the net profit earned is allotted among the cooperative farmers, each family

having an equal share. Only the head of the family is considered to be a cooperative farmer. The family members get wages for the time they work. The villages are now spread in a few cottages made of mud and leaves, which makes the work with the peasants difficult, and hinders the cultural development of the village. The funds, which are raised by INRA, are being used for building homes for the peasants in central sites, thus a [greater] concentration [of population] in larger towns and villages will be achieved. We visited one of the cooperative farms and some of the newly-built houses. We talked to the workers. What impresses [us] is the peasant's great joy, their devotion to the revolutionary government and their readiness to defend it.

As far as the country's industrialization is concerned, a general plan has been worked out, which marks only the major points. It suggests that metallurgy be developed on the basis of the mineral resources discovered so far – chrome, iron, nickel etc. The Americans have done research, but the whole documentation is in their hands. It is necessary to continue the research. The food industry should also be developed. Cuba's economy is still very much dependent on the USA. For example, three thirds of the petroleum comes from the USA, while only one third from the USSR. If one day the USA happens to refuse the supply of petroleum, Cuba's whole life will die, since the whole transport is based on petroleum, electrical energy is produced by a petroleum electric station etc. The sale of Cuba's goods, above all sugar, followed by coffee and tobacco is another question of vital importance. Thus the interest towards the trade issues is justified. The threats that if Cuba is detached from the USA it will fail have been refuted by the facts. For instance, the revolutionary government found 60 million pesos (one peso equals a dollar) foreign currency. What had been accumulated during the war was squandered by Batista's camarilla. Now the country's foreign currency is about 200 million pesos that comes to show that the country's economy is developing better than it was at the time when Cuba was bound up with the USA. The country is living in revolutionary conditions and the young people are particularly active. But this has not disturbed the normal pace of life.

USA's provocations against Cuba have not ceased but they have decreased considerably. This does not mean that the USA has put up with the loss of Cuba. Moreover Cuba's authority with the Latin-American countries is great. However the Cuban leaders exclude USA's direct intervention. They consider the latter to be prepared by the neighboring Latin-American countries above all the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Guatemala. They have collected many facts indicative of that. Yet the Cuban people rely a lot on the Latin-American countries' peoples, on their hatred toward the USA and love for Cuba. The reactionary forces are

also trying to infiltrate the revolutionary segments [of society] and to perform their contra revolutionary acts from there.

IN CONCLUSION WE SUGGEST:

The text of a joint message for establishing diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cuba should be endorsed as soon as possible, and, after being coordinated, should be published simultaneously in Havana and Sofia.

1. The text of a cultural convention should be prepared and our representative in the UN should be authorized to sign it in New York.
2. To quickly take up the question about the commercial relations, taking into consideration the necessity to help the Cuban revolutionary government.
3. To take up the question about signing a convention for scientific and technical cooperation, on the basis of which we could offer technical help to the revolutionary government of Cuba.
4. To invite one of the leaders of Cuba to our country. With view to that the Bulgarian Embassy in Prague should be entrusted with Raul Castro's invitation, if he happens to go to Prague, which is due by the end of the month. The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested this invitation.

Sofia, 16 June 1960

Members of the delegation:

Ekaterina Avramova, Chairman of the State Committee for friendship and cultural cooperation with foreign countries
Lubomir Angelov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 4203; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova, Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev]



Information on VIII Congress of National Socialist party of Cuba, 29 October 1960

Top secret!
FOR POLITBURO OF CC OF BCP

SUPPLEMENT

To the information about the VIII congress of the People's Socialist Party (PSP) of Cuba

During the congress Politburo of the CC of PSP received the delegates of the parties from the socialist countries. The occasion for this meeting was presented by our delegation, which posed a number of questions in written form to Comrade Blas Roca.¹⁴

In answer to our questions, Comrade Blas Roca told us that Fidel Castro was fully aware that the prospect of the Cuban revolution was socialism. However, they do not speak in public about this. The party had contacts with Fidel Castro before the landing was made. During all the time of the guerrilla struggle, members of the party have worked in the Castro headquarters and in other high-ranking posts. The attitude of Fidel Castro to the party constantly evolves and improves. The party criticized itself that it mobilized late in order to assist the movement of Fidel Castro. Practically, it was only at that congress that a fully positive assessment was given to the attack of the barracks. Initially Castro had certain doubts in the sincerity of the party. Those suspicions were used by the enemies of the revolution who exerted pressure on Castro and wanted to turn the "July 26th" movement into an anticommunist one. The party showed Fidel Castro that it has no intention to oust him and now he is convinced that without the support of the party the revolution cannot develop. Now Fidel Castro thinks that steps should be taken for creating a united party in Cuba but it is premature to proceed to practical implementation of this task. Such is the position of the People's Socialist party, as well.

All big measures of the government should be coordinated in advance with the leadership of the party. This refers to the agrarian reform, the nationalization, and the position of the government at the conference in San Jose and others. There are communists in the government as well. But nobody speaks about this.

The relations with Yugoslavia developed in a very interesting way. For tactical considerations, diplomatic relations were restored first with Yugoslavia. After its arrival in Cuba, the mission of Yugoslavia displayed intense activity, and made a big fuss. They acted as the most loyal and good friends of the Cuban revolution. However, when they openly and directly posed to them the question of selling weapons to Cuba, the Yugoslavs practically refused on the grounds that they were conducting important negotiations with the Americans and, in order not to get into trouble, they could give them weapons only in principle. In answer to this the Cubans declared: We saw what friends of the Cuban revolution

you are. Ernesto Guevara was on a visit in Yugoslavia. After his return he reported that no socialism was being built in Yugoslavia. It looks like that this opinion is shared by other leaders of the government. Through its party body the party conducted a big campaign against Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavs protested sharply before Castro and then before the Central Committee. Both answered them that the press was free to write whatever it wanted. However, the Central Committee made an assessment. They admitted that the comparison with Franco was wrong and gave orders for Yugoslavia not to be attacked so severely.

Fidel Castro received the delegates of the socialist countries together with the delegates of the French and the Italian Communist parties. The conversation with him continued the whole night - from 11 pm till 6 am.

The meeting with Fidel Castro made a great impression on us. The conversation was very sincere. He spoke and reasoned like a Marxist, like a man who appreciates very highly the Soviet assistance. He felt extremely grateful to the Soviet Union for this assistance. He explained to us the tactics of the Cuban government - to secure against every strike of the North-American imperialist the delivery of a methodical counterstrike. The question is not that we nationalize enterprises for 80, 100 and more million dollars, he said, but that a small country dares to reply with a counter-strike, to every strike of the "Northern Colossus". Namely because of this they have not nationalized at once all American enterprises, as well as big enterprises of Cuban capitalists. He said that in relation to this they should have a great deal of reserves about counter-strikes.

Focusing on the issue about the guerrilla movement, Fidel Castro told us that according to him, if the communists had started that movement, neither the Americans nor Batista would have let it exist and grow. At one time, he said, "there were only 12 of us left - one half under my command and the other half under the command of my brother Raul." Both Batista and the Americans thought that it referred to a few intellectuals, idealists and utopians who will grow desperate quickly and will give up the struggle. Later, when they [became aware of its extent], it was late - the movement had grown and consolidated.

Castro is well acquainted with problems of agriculture and speaks very competently about them.

Our impression is that the Cuban revolution is in strong hands and that there is no danger of what happened in Iraq¹⁵.

The party renders full support to the government and does its best not to allow any misunderstandings. The same is the attitude to the functionaries of the "July 26th" movement with whom it strives to establish closer and friendlier relations. The party maintains a low profile - there are no

red banners at rallies and meetings and representatives of the party do not deliver speeches. Everything is conducted under the sign of national unity and Fidel Castro is promoted as a leader of the country and the people.

Only the Politburo had been informed about the meeting in Bucharest.¹⁶ Everywhere in the country the Chinese delegation was received very warmly. At the ceremony on the occasion of the closing of the congress it was suggested that a Chinese delegate deliver a speech on behalf of all socialist countries. After objections by the representatives of the other socialist countries, the Politburo acceded to our suggestion, to have the GDR representative speak on our behalf and the Chinese delegate spoke only as a representative of China.

As it was already noted, now the army in Cuba is a completely new. The main body consists of former guerrillas. This constitutes both the strength and the weakness of this army. These are completely loyal and well-trained soldiers. However, a significant number of them, who come from villages, have the wrong attitude towards military discipline. A great majority of them, commanders of lower or higher rank, are not willing to study military science and display big complacency.

Together with consolidating the army, the party and the government keep to a course of quick expansion and consolidation of the working class and rural militia, which, at the suggestion of the party, is joined by communists, workers and peasants. The militia - these are the armed squads of the people. (Police exists separately.) They add up to the army. The party and the government rely very much on the militia, not only in the struggle against the enemies, the counter-revolution and the intervention forces, but also in the consolidation and the strengthening of the army and in training future commanders who can serve as an example to the military commanders.

29.10.1960. [29 October 1960]

SOFIA

R. Avramov

K. Tellalov¹⁷

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Bulgaria, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 354; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Bulgarian Embassy, Havana (Michev),
Information re: Reorganization of the
Cuban Government, 4 March 1961**

Confidential, by courier!

EMBAJADA DE LA REPUBLICA

Havana, 4 March 1961

POPULAR DE BULGARIA

LA HABANA

INFORMATION

About: The new reorganization in the Council of Ministers of the Cuban revolutionary government implemented on 23 February 1961.

Recently, one of the most characteristic political events was the reorganization of the Council of Ministers - the foundation of a Ministry of Industry, of the Central Planning Committee, of the Ministries of Foreign and Domestic trade and the resolutions adopted with regard to that and some other issues.
[...]

The goal of the reorganization is to catch up with and organizationally to integrate the deep economic, political and social transformations and to quickly push forward the development of Cuba on [a] socialist path, even though nobody talks directly about this socialist agenda.

The reorganization is considered very important. With it begins a vast and comprehensive reconstruction of the backward economy of Cuba and [in this way] its independence will be guaranteed. Everywhere, it has been emphasized that this is done with the generous assistance of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

1. The first important resolution of the Council of Ministers and of the Chairmanship of the republic on 23 February 1961 is the foundation of the Central planning committee (*Junta central de planificacion*). Because of its great significance, the Chairman is the Prime Minister, Fidel Castro himself, and deputy chairman is Raul Castro. The latter will be the chairman of the executive bureau of the committee, which will consist of three people, and practically he will be dealing with the planning.

[...]

2. Another important resolution is the foundation of the Ministry of Industry, which will be led by Ernesto Guevara and which is assigned the task to play an important and historical role in the industrialization of Cuba.

[...]

In relation to the plan for the industrialization Ernesto Guevara explained that for 5 years 1 billion pesos will be invested in the industry, from which 600 million [will be] for the shipment of whole plants, machines, and equipment from

the socialist countries, and for that purpose Cuba receives a credit of about 600 million pesos from the USSR and the other socialist countries. Guevara underscored the huge scale on which the industrialization will develop, as well as the enormous [amount of] aid which will be received from the socialist countries. He raised the slogan: "Building of factories for factories." "A year of the industrialization" is prepared. Up to now there was 1959 - "A year of the revolution", 1960 - "A year of the agrarian reform" and 1961 - "A year of education."

3. Another resolution is the foundation of the Ministry of Foreign Trade. It includes the hitherto existing Bank for foreign trade. As up to now it will be responsible for the whole import and export, which are mainly with the socialist countries (above 60%).

4. The newly created Ministry of Domestic Trade will rule the state trade enterprises, will take care of supplies, and will control the prices and the commercial sector, which at the moment makes up the greater part of trade.

5. The law for the length of service and the social insurance for the working class was also important.

The task of diversification and increase of the agricultural production is set together with the issue concerning industrialization. .

During a conversation with ministers and other political functionaries, they talked with enormous enthusiasm that the latest reorganization begins at a new stage in the development of the Cuban revolution and a new Cuba is being built, which until recently was under the political and economic oppression of the USA, who took everything cheaply, did not develop either industry, or agriculture, but imported in Cuba goods produced from Cuban raw materials at high prices. .

Everybody speaks confidently about the great prospects, which these resolutions open for Cuba.

In all those conversations with the Ministers, while talking about the great enthusiasm of the people for the implementation of these plans, it was emphasized that they are in store for a great struggle for the elimination of the domestic counter-revolution and against intervention against Cuba, organized by the USA.

Thus, the enthusiasm about the construction is associated with a constant readiness for action in defense of Cuba against the intervention, organized by the Americans
AMBASSADOR: K. Michev¹⁸

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Bulgaria, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 580; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Politburo CC BCP Resolution re: Invitation to Fidel Castro to visit Bulgaria,

2 June 1961

RESOLUTION "A" No. 127 OF POLITBURO OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY FROM 2 JUNE 1961¹⁹

TO Comrade Anton Yugov, Prime Minister of PR of Bulgaria

Comrade Yugov,

Our Ambassador in Havana has talked to Cuba's Minister of Foreign Affairs [Raul] Roa, who told him that, if the circumstances allow it, Fidel Castro will visit Moscow this year in order to receive the international Lenin award "For strengthening the peace among the peoples" for 1960 which has been conferred on him. If the visit takes place, he intends to visit the other socialist countries as well. Comrade [Konstantin] Michev suggests that Fidel Castro be officially invited to visit our country.

I consider our ambassador's suggestion adequate and suggest that Fidel Castro be officially invited on behalf of Bulgaria's Prime Minister to visit our country at a convenient time for him, in case his visit to the USSR takes place.

MINISTER
/K. Lukanov²⁰/

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 4477; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; edited by Dr. Jordan Baev.]



Information and correspondence with Cuba re: Visit to Bulgaria of Cuban Children (including Fidel Castro's child), August-September 1961

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
17 August 1961
TO CC BCP
"Foreign Policy and International Relations"

Department

Our Ambassador in Havana reports, that Fidel Castro's child will come to Bulgaria with the group of Cuban children.

The Ambassador has been informed that Fidel Castro personally insisted not to be given publicity for this visit.
Deputy Foreign Minister:

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

22 August 1961

TO CC BCP

"Foreign Policy and
International Relations"
Department

From our embassy in Havana [a] report that the group of Cuban children, in which Fidel Castro's son has been included, departs from Havana on 21 August. Initially the group will visit Moscow and Beijing, and it will arrive in Sofia through Bucharest. The group will travel with a common passport issued for Pedro Diaz, Luis Sanchez, Fidel Castro Diaz, Buenventura Rodriguez, and Rolando Soto.
Deputy Foreign Minister:

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

27 September 1961

TO CC BCP

"Foreign Policy and
International Relations"
Department

From our embassy in Moscow [a] report that the group with Cuban children is currently in China. Later on the group will visit North Korea and Vietnam, and will return again to Moscow.

Deputy Foreign Minister:

Note

From 16 to 22 November 1961 a group of Cuban children (pioneers) visited our country. On 21 November they had a meeting with comrade T. Zhivkov.

23 November 1961

Deputy Head of "Foreign Policy and
International Relations" CC BCP Department
/K. Tellalov/

No. 3748122 August 1961

TO: the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Comrade Lukanov,

According to an instruction by Comrade [Mitko] Grigorov,²¹ please inform our ambassador in Cuba, comrade Michev, that he could invite comrade [Anibal] Escalante to visit Bulgaria when it will be possible for him.

Head of "Foreign Policy and
International Relations" CC BCP Department
/Dimo Dichev/

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Bulgaria, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 580;
translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Top Secret BCP Politburo Resolution on Arms Delivery to Cuba,

2 December 1961

Top secret

Copy No...

DECISION "B" No 15
of CC BCP Politburo
2.12.1961

To: First Secretary of CC BCP

Comrade Todor Zhivkov

REPORT
of GEORGI KUMBILIEV

Minister of Foreign Trade

Re: Granting to the Republic of Cuba German model
weapons and credit free of charge.

COMRADE ZHIVKOV,

On 22 November, this year, comrade Manuel Lopez, a representative of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the Republic of Cuba visited our country and made additional clarifications on the following requests, put forward to us by the Cuban party:

1. The requested 50,000 Mauser carbines—German model, 7.92 caliber are not for their needs but for the needs of the revolutionary movements in the Latin American countries. He stated that Cuba relies on our help for the execution of this undertaking and the required quantity of carbines should be granted free of charge at a Cuban port.

2. Taking into consideration the country's enormous defense expenses and serious financial difficulties, comrade Lopes demanded that the loan be extended for a 5-year period in exchange for our purchase of special equipment.²² He clarified that there was a mistake made in their initial request for "deferred payment until 1963." He also informed us that the loan request does not refer to our signed contract from this September for the export of special equipment for 1962.

The Cuban request for Mauser carbines can be satisfied for up to 35,000, whose value amounts to about \$400,000 USD. They can be delivered from the 50,000 Mauser carbines that have been disposed by the Ministry of National Defense and were granted to the Ministry of Foreign Commerce for export in 1962 to the underdeveloped socialist countries.

As of 1 October of this year, a signed contract for the export of special equipment to the People's Republic of Cuba exists amounting to \$7,130,000 USD. As a result of the initial agreement with the Cubans, it is expected that an additional quantity of special equipment will be bought, valued at approximately \$2,000,000 USD. The credit shall represent about \$1,500,000 USD, from the stipulated amount —on condition of a 2/3 credit for a 5 year term, starting from 1 January 1963.

Keeping in mind the above-mentioned,

I PROPOSE:

1. 35,000 Mauser carbines free of charge from the surplus ones disposed of by the Ministry of National Defense and submitted for export to the Ministry of Foreign Commerce to be delivered to the Republic of Cuba.

2. To permit the government delegation to extend a loan amounting to \$1,500,000 USD for a 5-year term, starting on 1 January 1963 during the negotiations for the signing of a protocol for the export of special equipment to the Republic of Cuba in 1962.

I ask for your instructions.

MINISTER:
/G. Kumbiliev/

2.12.1961

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 64, a.e. 291; translated by Vanja Petkova, edited by Dr. Rositza Ishpekova.]



Bulgarian Defense Minister, Note to Zhivkov re Invitation to Raul Castro to visit Bulgaria, 1 June 1962

DECISION "A" No. 151 of the CC BCP POLITBURO

1 June 1962

2

Agree

T. Zhivkov

To Comrade Todor Zhivkov --

First Secretary CC BCP

MEMORANDUM

From the Minister of National Defense

Col.-Gen. Dobri Djurov

Re: Invitation to Raul Castro to visit Bulgaria on 9 September 1962

COMRADE ZHIVKOV,

In order to assure further strengthening and broadening of the relations between the nations and the Armed Forces of PR of Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba, I request approval on behalf of the leadership of the Ministry of Defense and on my personal behalf to invite comrade Raul Castro to visit the People's Republic of Bulgaria for the National Holiday on 9 September 1962.

MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE:

COLONEL-GENERAL DJUROV

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 4800; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Decision to send a group of Bulgarian experts to Cuba (n.d., apparently late September/early October 1962)

TO THE SECRETARIATE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY SOFIA

MEMORANDUM

From Ivan Prumov - Minister of Agriculture and Ivan Abadzhiev - First Secretary of the Central Committee of Dimitrov Communist Youth Union (DCYU)

REGARDING sending agriculture specialists to Republic of Cuba.

In March this year a secretary of the CC of DCYU took part in the work of the First Congress of the Union of the Young Cuban communists. In conversation with him, the President of the Union of the Young Cuban communists Joel Iglesias suggested that a group of about 50-100 young specialists in agriculture be sent to Cuba. The hosts would pay for the stay of our specialists in Cuba and we would pay the expenses for their travel.

With a letter 2107/22.09.1962 [22 September 1962] the Foreign Ministry advised us that Comrade Konstantin Michev, ambassador of People's Republic of Bulgaria [to Cuba], confirmed those talks. Comrade M'ichev had a meeting with [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez, the Minister of Agriculture of Cuba, and with the Soviet specialists Comrades Titov and Ustinov. It was decided that Bulgaria would send 15-25 specialists in vegetable-growing, 15-20 agronomists, 15-20 young technicians, 15-20 gardeners with more experience, 3 agronomists in vegetation protection, 2-3 engineers in mechanization of agriculture. The offer is for the specialists to go there for one year. They will live under the same conditions as the young Soviet specialists. They will live and work in a State Agrarian Cooperative (SAC) where they will receive lodging and food. Besides, for meeting other personal needs, they (the agronomists with university degree) will receive 120-150 pesos. They ask the specialists to leave [for Cuba] as soon as possible. A ship with the young Soviet specialists will leave in the end of October from Odessa.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Committee of DCYU discussed the offer and they consider sending Bulgarian agricultural specialists to Cuba expedient.

In connection with this we propose to the Secretariat of the CC of BCP to DECIDE:

It assigns to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Committee of DCYU the task to send to Cuba for one year for rendering assistance in the development of agriculture 76 young specialists in agriculture.

(...)

The necessary sum of 68,000 leva for travelling expenses to be provided by the Ministry of Finance.

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 4939; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Resolutions by Bulgarian CP organizations in Havana, 18 October 1962

PROTOCOL

Today 18.10.1962 [18 October 1962] the annual survey-election meeting of the party organization at the embassy and the trade representation of P R Bulgaria in Havana was held. [...]

The following agenda was voted unanimously.

1. Survey report and financial account of the primary party organization.
2. Election of committees according to the resolution and the motions.
3. Election of a new bureau.

On the first item of the agenda the floor was given to the party secretary comrade [ANTON] MECHKUEV.

After the delivery of the report and the financial account by comrade Mechkuev there were the following statements:

Comrade MICHEV:

[...]

We all know about the activities of the organization. The report gives a lucid picture about the activities of the organization, the office and the employees. The assessment in the report that the activities are big and extensive and the role of the organization has increased is correct. The year under review was strenuous, as it was last year. Each of us was assigned a lot of tasks and responsibilities. We have been working in an atmosphere of constant threat of aggression and we fulfilled our duties for the development of our multifaceted relations and for rendering assistance to Cuba. On the tasks of expanding our relations, we strove maximally to publicize the activities of our people, government and party, as well as the declarations of the Soviet government. If we

review the way the communists and the specialists worked, we will see that the conclusion in the report is correct.

[...]

HUBENOV:

[...]

Comrade Michev ignored the opinion of the collective body and found himself a captive of dogmatism. He substituted the specific scientific analysis of the processes and the phenomena in Cuba with ready, prepared schemes. The most eloquent example is the case with his information about the foundation of the United Revolutionary Organizations. In his information he claimed that this was the United Party of the Socialist Revolution. Comrade Nikolchev and the other comrades objected to the claim that it is a party, rather than a union of [movements and parties]: the “July 26th” movement, the People’s Socialist Party and the Revolutionary Directory “March 1.st” He did not accept this opinion, this truth. In a memorandum from 21 October 1961 he wrote: “The united revolutionary organizations, i.e. the United Party of the Socialist Revolution.”

[...]

In this way he wanted to submit the real process to the existing dogmatic schemes. This could mislead the Party and the Government if they accepted his information as true.

Another fact about not knowing the situation, which if posed for discussion in the collective body, could have been avoided, was the invitation of comrade Fidel Castro to Bulgaria by the Prime Minister comrade Anton Yugov. How was it done so that an invitation came about for a visit, is a secret to us until this day. To me, sending such an invitation, which happened at the recommendation of the ambassador, is a proof for his not knowing the situation..

Was it possible for Fidel Castro to go to Bulgaria? Absolutely not!

Remember what was the situation after the Playa Giron [Bay of Pigs]. Constant threats of direct aggression. The countries from Latin America broke diplomatic relations with Cuba. Proclaiming of the socialist character of the revolution threw the American imperialists into panic. The envoy of Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson, went about the countries in Latin America in order to exert pressure on the marionette governments. He was preparing the conference of the Organization of American States (OAS) whose most important goal was the expulsion of Cuba from this organization. The counter-revolution was raging. An attempt was made for the upsetting of the campaign for liquidation of illiteracy. The teachers were intimidated with the hanging of the young [volunteer] teacher Manuel Ascunce Domenech [in November 1961]. The newspapers constantly published schematic maps of the

camps abroad, where the counter-revolutionary elements were trained. The revolutionary government was taking prompt measures for rearming the army. Under the Revolutionary government there were so many problems with food supplies and provisions, a result of the big drought, and all sorts of complicated and pressing problems. In such an atmosphere could the leader of the revolution, who during those months delivered speeches incessantly at rallies in the country, mobilize the people and prepare them for a life-and-death struggle against possible direct aggression?

Long before that, Fidel Castro declared that until he consolidated the victory of the revolution, he would not go out of the boundaries of the country.

It would barely be necessary to quote other facts in order to prove the absurdity that Fidel would leave Cuba and would go on a visit, at that first to Bulgaria of all socialist countries. If Fidel goes on a visit, it will be first to the Soviet Union, a good opportunity to be decorated with the Lenin award.

[...]

I am inclined to think that the sending of such an invitation is a question of courtesy but from the letter of the ambassador from 2 October it is obvious that it was not a question of courtesy. He concludes his letter with the following sentence: “We will advise you in due time about the date of this visit.”

[..]

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 977; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Bulgarian Government decision for a long-term credit to Cuba, 9 April 1963

PROTOCOL “A” No. 90 OF THE CC BCP POLITBURO MEETING
Of 9 April 1963

ISSUES OF THE AGENDA:

[...]

VI. About issuing a long term credit to the Republic of Cuba.

RESOLUTIONS:

VI. Politburo agrees on the annual credit for foodstuffs for the Year 1962 amounting to 1, 5 million dollars to be arranged as a long term twelve years credit at 2% interest, counting from the year 1967.

[...]

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 5102; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



CC BCP Politburo Secret Resolution re: Arms supply to Cuba, 13 August 1963

TO: Gen. Ivan Mihailov, Member of Politburo
Comrade Ivan Budinov, Minister of Foreign Trade
Gen. Dobri Djurov, Minister of Defense

RESOLUTION "B" No 9
OF POLITBURO OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY FROM 13
AUGUST 1963

QUESTIONS ON THE AGENDA: regarding the negotiations for signing a protocol with the Republic of Cuba for the export of special equipment in 1964.

DECISIONS:

1. Gives one's consent to form a governmental delegation to negotiate with Cuba's governmental delegation and sign a protocol for the supply of special property in 1964 in Cuba.
2. Gives one's consent to grant the Republic of Cuba a credit amounting to 6 million clearing dollars, including 2 million from production and 4 million from the cash at hand of the Ministry of Defense, for a ten-year period, which is to be redeemed at regular annual installments at a 2% interest as of 1965.

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 64, a.e. 314; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev.]



Information of the Bulgarian Embassy in Havana re: The situation in Cuba in 1963, January 1964

INFORMATION

On the political, economic and cultural development of the Republic of Cuba in 1963

The Republic of Cuba, the first socialist country in [North] America, passed the fifth year of its existence in a more favorable international situation and in a more difficult economic situation.

The general détente exerted an influence on the Cuban people's life and struggle for the building of socialism. Having survived the Caribbean crisis, which showed the great strength of the Soviet Union, and of the whole socialist community, the Cuban people, united around its revolutionary government, continued more confidently along the path it had chosen.

I. Political situation in the country

1963 was a difficult year for the Cuban people. It was the year of the revolutionary government's and Cuban peoples' new efforts to further strengthen the economic development of the country, to overcome the new aggressions and economic difficulties, caused by the imperialists. After the end of the Caribbean crisis, the USA promised not to attack Cuba, yet its aggressive acts and provocations did not stop. In spite of the general alleviation of [the tension in] the international situation, they continued to transfer Intelligence Service agents and contra revolutionaries, to import arms in the country and thus to sustain tensions in Cuba. The USA undertook new measures for economic repression against Cuba and exerted influence on the capitalist countries to tighten the economic embargo.

In addition, we have to mention the serious internal economic difficulties that play a significant role in the country's deteriorating economic state.

The fierce Chinese propaganda against the Soviet Union and the international communist and worker's movement, which intensified extremely after the Caribbean crisis, exerted a negative influence on the country's political life.

[...]

II. The Cuban International Situation

After the Caribbean crisis, Cuba's international situation improved significantly. The USA was forced to promise, before the USSR and the whole world, not to attack Cuba. The USSR and the socialist countries backed up the Cuban revolution, ready to perform their international duty to defend, at any rate, the Cuban peoples' revolutionary achievements against the imperialists' aggression. These circumstances

es strengthened the Republic of Cuba's international position and increased its authority amongst the Latin American and other countries. It contributed to a lot of non-aligned nations' and some capitalist countries' improvement of their relations with Cuba by activating their political, economic and cultural relations with it.

We must note that the Cuban government leaders and Fidel Castro, above all, are especially sensitive toward the USA and are constantly dealing with it and its policy in their speeches. They do this more [often] than necessary, even at the expense of the more vital to the revolution questions and the construction of socialism. These circumstances have an impact on the attempts to normalize the relations between the two countries and to apply the principles of settling controversial issues among different countries by peaceful means. At the basis of this behavior is the Cuban leaders' will to emphasize their unyielding attitude towards the American imperialists and their attempt to assert themselves as the most ardent defenders of the peoples of Latin America, Africa, and even Asia.

A positive fact is that recently there have been certain signs of improvement of the situation in this respect, especially after Fidel Castro's second visit to Moscow, but it is still early to draw conclusions.

As a result of the Cuban government's policy and the USSR's and other socialist countries' fraternal help, the "walls" built by American imperialism around Cuba have been demolished.

[...]

What were the relations between Cuba, on the one hand, and the USSR and other socialist countries, on the other?

As in the preceding years, so in the year that has just ended, the USSR thoroughly backed the Cuban people's attempts to build a socialist society in the country and their heroic struggle against the American imperialists' aggressive acts.

The USSR would not allow the life of the country to be interrupted due to the lack of petrol, it would not allow Cuba's economic development to be at risk because of the canceling of the sugar quota by the USA. It helped Cuba to strengthen its defense. In October 1962 it stopped the campaign to overrun the country. The USSR paid great attention to and cared for the internal difficulties Cuba was experiencing when transforming its life, economy, and state organization. It helped with the training of personnel, and the education of the army. Thousands of young people went to the Soviet Union to study in its plants, collective farms, and universities. A great part of them came back in 1963 and were sent to work at different sites in the country.

This comprehensive assistance, which was self-evident in all spheres of life, shattered all attempts of the slanderous propaganda to create distrust and discord in the immediate aftermath of the Caribbean crisis, when the conditions were most favorable [for such propaganda]. Quite a lot of people were hoping that this discord will intensify, but they experienced a great disappointment when Fidel Castro went to Moscow in April 1963. The disappointment was still greater when, seven months later, in January 1964, he went to the Soviet Union again. Fidel Castro's double visit to the Soviet Union made the Cuban people extremely happy. It demonstrated the strong and indestructible friendship between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

[...]

We must note that during both visits a lot of political, economic and other issues were discussed; joint declarations of the two countries on the countries' attitudes towards the international situation and to issues concerning Cuba were signed. These are valuable political and state documents on the further activities of the two countries. These are documents with which the USSR has added to Cuba's international prestige as a country and Fidel Castro's personal authority as a state leader. Of considerable importance to the Cuban people is the signed long-term economic agreement for the sale of sugar to the Soviet Union that places the economic relations between the two countries on a new basis and marks a new stage in the economic cooperation between the two. This agreement will from now on exert a great political impact on the Latin American peoples and the other countries, economically dependent on imperialists.

Similar relations of fraternal solidarity are being established between Cuba and the other socialist countries. The latter saw the great economic difficulties that Cuba was faced with and offered economic and scientific help as far as they could afford it. In the current accounts of their balance sheets the result was positive balances. Because of its internal and external difficulties, Cuba was not able to make up for them. In spite of their own economic difficulties, the socialist countries helped Cuba in accordance with the fraternal relations and international solidarity that existed among them.

When the natural disaster, the cyclone "Flora," befell Cuba, the socialist countries were the first to offer not only symbolic, but effective help so that the damage incurred is promptly made up for.

[...]

It is necessary to concentrate on some of the most typical points in the revolutionary government of Cuba's foreign policy which distinguish Cuba's foreign policy from that of the other socialist countries. The most important among them is the revolutionary government's special attitude to the Moscow agreement for a partial ban on the nuclear weapons experiments, to the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Latin America, to the revolutionary struggle of the Latin American peoples, to the ideological differences between the international communist movement and the Chinese Communist Party etc.

Under the pretext of preserving the unity of the communist parties, Cuba's leaders undertook a centralist position in the ideological dispute between the CPSU and the other communist and workers' parties, on the one hand, and the Chinese CP, on the other. They created favorable conditions for Chinese propaganda. The United Party of the Socialist Revolution kept silent on the differences that had arisen. It published the letters between the CPSU and the ChCP without expressing a clear and definite opinion on them, without acquainting its party members and the people with its stand on this important question of the revolutionary struggle. The party members and the people were given the "freedom" to orient themselves alone.

The role of the Chinese embassy in Havana in this respect was very pernicious. It took advantage of the favorable conditions that were created in order to carry out the basest anti-Soviet campaign. The "Xinhua" [Chinese state news] agency bulletin which had been published in 25 000 copies till then, was spreading mean slanders against the USSR, the CPSU and against comrade Khrushchev personally. Thus an attempt was made at creating a public opinion against the Soviet Union, the latter having helped the Cuban revolution generously and gratuitously. The same bulletin also distorted the statements of important comrades from the fraternal countries, caused disputes on definite issues with the aim of blurring the working class's political ideas.

The Cuban leaders find the "theoretical" works of some Chinese theoreticians especially appealing and they rely on them in their practice. This refers above all to the so-called building of socialism on their own; to the ways the working class should seize power etc.

Quite interesting is Cuba's attitude to the Moscow agreement on a partial ban of the nuclear weapons experiments. On the very next day after the agreement had been signed in Moscow Fidel Castro declared in his speech that the agreement on stopping the nuclear weapons experiments is "a victory of the world conscience of peace, a victory of the Soviet Union's policy."

[...]

But after all that it was difficult to explain the situation in which the Cuban government found itself after the delay on their part to join the agreement, and later with its refusal to sign it.

[...]

It would have been more appropriate if the Cuban government had signed the agreement and together with it had made its objections and notes on the US aggressive policy. This would have corresponded to both Fidel Castro's stand on the agreement in the beginning and to the Cuban people's desires.

It didn't do that and practically doubted the correctness of the Soviet Union's and other socialist countries' peaceful mutual coexistence policy.

In terms of its foreign policy Cuba has a special understanding and attitude toward the Latin American countries and their revolutionary struggle. It takes for granted the existence of a revolutionary situation in all Latin American countries and the necessity of revolutionary actions. The Cuban leaders declare all Latin American communist parties, not adopting their line of behavior old, defeatist, unable to undertake a revolutionary struggle and seek other social forces to lead the struggle. Similar was their attitude to the Costa Rica, Honduras, Ecuador and Peru parties, inflicting considerable harm on their revolutionary struggle.

We must note that their actions coincide with those of the Chinese Communist Party in that respect.

Why is it so?

Because there is a non-Marxist view common among the Cuban leaders that a revolutionary situation in a country can always be created if there exists a group of brave people to become partisans /guerrillas/ and lead the people to a revolutionary struggle.

Moreover, another widespread view among them is that Cuba is entitled to lead the revolutionary struggle in Latin America and that is why they abruptly interfere with the other parties' deeds. There is also a tendency to lead the anti-imperialist struggle not only in [South] America but on other continents as well. So when we talk of Cuba's "own line of behavior," we have to take into consideration these peculiarities of its foreign policy.

In spite of all this we must note that there is a tendency to eliminate mistakes [and] to clarify the party's line and foreign policy to the [other] socialist countries. This was particularly evident after Fidel Castro's second visit to the Soviet Union.

[...]

IV. Political, economic and cultural relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cuba

Political relations

The relations between the two countries in the preceding period were constantly developing, expanding and strengthening.

In the first place, our political relations with Cuba developed under the conditions created after the Caribbean crisis. Our country, together with the other Warsaw Pact countries showed complete solidarity and support for the Cuban revolution. Some vague points in the events that took place during the crisis were gradually clarified, in spite of the propaganda of the Chinese Embassy here. The cold attitude towards the Soviet Union during the Caribbean crisis, due to the withdrawal of the missiles, was felt towards our country and our specialists here as well. But we must admit that this situation did not continue for long. Life proved the correctness of the way the crisis was resolved and the nuclear war avoided; and what was very important for Cuba – the salvation of the Cuban revolution. More and more people were becoming convinced that the socialist countries of the Warsaw Pact had defended Cuba and helped avoid the immediate threat for Cuba. The idea that Cuba's economic problems had to be addressed was coming to the fore.

Our Party, government and people did not miss a single opportunity to express their solidarity, help and support for the Cuban revolution. The solidarity and help was realized in different ways. First, we should mention our government's support for Cuba against the aggressive North American imperialist acts in front of the international organizations, the UN above all. We should also mention the manifested solidarity with the Cuban revolution in our country; the contribution of the press and radio in this respect, the delegations which were exchanged. And finally, we should mention the scientific and technical help and the help offered when the cyclone struck the eastern part of the country.

Mentioning these solidarity acts [in support of] the Cuban people and revolution, we should emphasize the positive role played by some of these [acts of solidarity] in bringing the two countries closer and in strengthening and improving the relations between them.

In the second place, we should mention the significant role played by the exchange of delegations in improving the political relations between the two countries. The exchange of delegations on different levels is extremely important. During

this year, unlike the preceding ones, our top-level delegations came here.

[...]

We should also mention here that the Soviet Union and our country were the only ones to send a youth specialist brigade to help the Cuban agriculture. This visit was important not only for the technical support for the Cuban agriculture but for the solidarity expressed by our Youth communist organization /Comsomol/ to the Cuban Union of young communists. A lot of friendship activities took place and the young people came to know each other better in their work activities. This is the only relationship of this kind between the two youth organizations, not taking into consideration the [cooperation with the] Soviet Union. The role of the youth brigade is extremely positive. These relations between the two youth communist organizations should, in one way or other, continue in the future.

[...]

2. Economic relations

The economic relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and Cuba improved a lot. The trade for 1963 amounted to 20,640,000 dollars in the two countries. Our country undertook the design and equipment of 12 Cuban industrial enterprises. Over 230 Bulgarian specialists helped the socialist construction in Cuba with their knowledge and experience. Bulgaria is second after the Soviet Union in the number of specialists sent to Cuba. The current year laid out the basis of a close scientific and technical cooperation, which, from now [on], will develop on a larger scale. Undoubtedly, this is a significant success, a result of the Embassy's and Commercial Representative's efforts to improve the economic relations between the two countries.

In spite of all that was mentioned above, the economic cooperation between the countries did not reach the [desired] level [based on] the opportunities [for cooperation] that existed between the two fraternal countries. Both the trade and the scientific and technical help to Cuba could be greater, could be realized on a larger scale.

[...]

The drawbacks of our practical economic cooperation with Cuba became most evident during the trade negotiations for 1964. We happened to be in a situation in which we couldn't gather goods to pay the 110,000 tons of sugar

supplies, although we received them at an old price; our active balance of trade, the repayment of our debt and other receivables were taken into consideration. Our country was obliged to assume additional duties to supply Cuba with other valuable goods, which it was short of in satisfying its own needs.

[...]

3. Cultural cooperation

As was already mentioned in the report in November and in different information and reports, the existing cooperation regarding the cultural agreement was not satisfactory. The main reason for that was that there were no budget funds in Cuba to cover the plan for applying the cultural agreement between Bulgaria and Cuba, signed in May 1963 in Bulgaria. Quite a lot of its good and useful initiatives simply remained hanging in the air.

[...]

1st Copy – CC BCP

2nd Copy – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

3rd Copy – to the Archive

[Source, TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 51, a.e. 6; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev.]



Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo Resolution on a visit of Cuban State delegation to Bulgaria, 6 February 1964

RESOLUTION "A" No 31

OF POLITBURO OF CC BCP 6.02.1964. [6 February 1964]

In view of the further widening and expansion of the all-embracing relations and links between People's Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba, it is considered expedient to:

1. The Central Committee of the Party and the Council of Ministers to invite on an official visit in our country a party-governmental delegation of the fraternal Republic of Cuba.
2. An exhibition of the People's Republic of Bulgaria on the development of our economics and culture to be organized in Havana in 1964 .

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 5380; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Foreign Ministry Report on Bulgarian-Cuban cultural relations, 25 February 1964

FOREIGN MINISTRY

SECOND DEPARTMENT

Top secret!

Sofia, 25.02.1964. [25 February 1964]

To the Central Committee of BCP

Department "Foreign policy and international relations"

Copy: To the Committee for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries

In relation to the motion of CFCRFC and our embassy for opening a cultural center in Havana, the Foreign Ministry is of the opinion that for the time being we should not take steps to open such [a center] in Cuba.

The conclusions, that there are suitable conditions in Cuba and more open and purposeful propaganda activities are required, are correct. However, establishing a cultural center [alone] could not [help] achieve our goal in this respect.

[...]

The general political situation in Cuba now and the country's attitude towards Bulgaria allow our country to develop better propaganda and cultural activities through our embassy in Havana, without opening a cultural center, , [but rather] by implementing various forms of work in this direction.

It will be right if next year the issue of the possible opening of a cultural center in Cuba is examined more thoroughly and decided then.

DEPUTY MINISTER: G[ero] Grozev

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 51, a.e. 298; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Bulgarian Embassy, Havana (Kulbov),
Information Re: The Latin American
Communist Parties' Conference, 8
February 1965 (enclosed with Bulgarian
Embassy to Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, 3
March 1965)**

No. 241
Embajada de la Republica
Popular de Bulgaria – La Habana

Havana, 3 March 1965

TO: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Second Department
CC BCP, Department "Foreign Policy & International
Relations"

We are sending you attached an Information re: The Latin
American Communist Parties' Conference
Ambassador: Atanas Kulbov²³

Information
Re: The Latin American Communist Parties' Conference

The conference of the Latin American communist parties was called upon the initiative of Uruguay's and Argentine's communist parties. The proposal to convene was made in July last year, when many representatives of these parties took part in the celebrations on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the attack against the Moncada barracks in Cuba.

The conference was held in Havana in the period 22 - 29 December last year under strict secrecy and with the participation of representatives of all the communist parties of the countries in Latin America, except that of Santo Domingo, whose representative was unable to take part for health reasons.

The whole Secretariat of the National leadership of the Cuban Communist Party was present - Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Osvaldo Dortikós, Blas Roca, Ernesto Che Guevara and Emilio Aragones. Comrade Carlos Rafael Rodriguez also took part in the conference.

There were two major issues on the agenda: the struggle against imperialism in different Latin American countries, sharing the revolutionary experience of the communist parties in these countries and the further expansion of the struggle for liberation in Latin America, on the one hand, and the unity and solidarity of the international workers' and communist movement, the danger of it being split up in factions and the measures necessary to preserve and consolidate its unity, on the other.

Detailed discussions and extensive speeches were made at the conference. Some of the delegates were not well prepared. The Brazilian delegation did not meet the high standards.

The Cuban Communist Party was exposed to severe criticism because of its attempt to impose its own revolutionary experience on some countries, without asking for these [countries'] parties' consent. They were criticized mainly for the fact that they had sent people to organize armed struggle not informing the respective parties of this and therefore doing them harm. They had established and maintained close contacts with organizations outside the communist parties.

On its part, the Cuban delegation criticized certain Latin American parties for the fact that they considered the opportunity to take the political power by peaceful means, a matter debated at the 20th Congress of the CPSU as a dogma; thus they had neglected and discarded all other means to achieve this political goal. This criticism was directed towards the Brazilian Communist Party above all, since it had not taken all measures to prepare an armed struggle within the country and had therefore found itself in a critical situation during last year's coup d'état.

Similar, though not absolutely the same comments were made by the representatives of Guatemala's and Venezuela's delegations.

Almost all delegates were unanimous on the second issue of the unity and solidarity of the international workers' and communist movement, the danger of it being split up as a result of the harmful impact of the activities of China's party leaders. The Cuban delegation did not comment on this matter; it suggested that a phrase be added to the final resolution on the activities [of the Chinese party leaders] saying "... whatever their source might be..."

The conference's resolutions have been published in a communiqué. These are based on the Declaration of the Communist and Workers' Parties' Conferences of 1957 and 1960.

To implement the resolution on putting an end to the open debates, a delegation was appointed to inform CPSU and the ChCP of the conference's work and resolutions; this delegation had to ask for stopping both the open discussions on debatable issues as well as the support provided to the organizations sowing discord. The same delegation was in charge of calling off the general meeting of the Communist and Workers' parties, scheduled for 15 December.

The delegate selected from the Cuban Communist Party was Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. According to the available information, this delegation was highly appreciated in the Soviet Union. The attitude towards it in China was just the opposite - it faced an attitude of reservation and formality, which is

indicative of China's party's leaders' apparent dissatisfaction with the conference's work and resolutions.

Representatives of other parties will pay a visit to the other socialist countries to inform of the conference's work.

The following exchange of views on the conference's work and results shows that its decisions are defined as positive. The Conference is viewed as an initial attempt to put the struggle against imperialism on a broader and more organized base using the experience of each party without interfering in its internal affairs. It is stated that the Latin American Revolution is a common deal, and has to be developed having in mind the concrete circumstances in each country. It is also confirmed that the Communist parties are the leading force of this Revolution.

The representatives of different delegations shared with us their satisfaction of the Cuban Party's hospitality during the Conference.

Havana, 8 February 1965

First Secretary, Bulgarian Embassy:
/A. Hubenov/

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 51, File 400; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; edited by Dr. Jordan Baev]

[Note: For the translated minutes of the Bulgarian record of conversation between Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov and Cuban Defense Minister Raúl Castro in Sofia on 26 March 1965, see the report elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin* on R. Castro's visit to Central and Eastern Europe in early 1965.]



**Politburo CC BCP Resolution re:
Expanding Relations between the
Bulgarian and the Cuban Communist parties,
11 February 1966**

TO POLITBURO OF CC OF BCP
MEMORANDUM

ABOUT: The expansion of the relations between the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Cuban Communist Party

In recent years the relations between Bulgaria and Cuba – economic and cultural – expanded and intensified and the prospect is [for them] to become broader. However, the relations between our parties are unsatisfactory.

Proceeding from the resolution of Politburo for bolstering of the relations with the fraternal countries, we consider that on our behalf we have to display an initiative for the expansion and consolidation of the relations between our two parties. Our ambassador in Havana made a suggestion in this spirit, as well. On behalf of Cuba, Raul Castro demonstrated willingness for such an expansion during his visit to Bulgaria last year. And once again now, during the meeting of Comrade Elena Gavrilova with Osmany Cienfuegos - a member of CC and Chairman of the Committee for international issues of CC of Cuban CP, which took place in January this year in Havana.

The department considers expedient to suggest to the CC of CCP for 1966 to:

1. Exchange delegations led by a member of Politburo or a secretary of CC for exchange of experience in the sphere of party construction and agriculture.
2. Exchange one or two teachers from the party schools.
3. Exchange journalists from "New Times" and "Party Life" magazines with "Socialist Cuba" magazine.

[...]

11.02.1966. [11 February 1966]

Head of department "Foreign Policy and International Relations" of CC of BCP: D[imo] Dichev

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 6164; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Politburo CC BCP Resolution re: expanding
relations between the Bulgarian
Communist Party and the Cuban
Communist Party, 21 February 1966**

TO CC BCP POLITBURO

MEMORANDUM

RE: Expanding the relations between the Bulgarian

Communist Party and the Cuban Communist Party

In recent years the economic and cultural relations between Bulgaria and Cuba have expanded and intensified and the perspective is for them to expand even more. Yet the relations between our parties are unsatisfactory.

Taking into account Politburo's decision for strengthening the relations with the fraternal parties, we think we should take the initiative for expanding and strengthening the relations between our two parties. In the same lines, a suggestion was made by our Ambassador in Havana. A readiness for such an expansion was demonstrated by Raul Castro during his visit last year in our country as well as by Osmani Sienfuegos, member of the Central Committee and Head of its Foreign Affairs commission, during his meeting with Elena Gavrilova²⁴ in January this year in Havana.

The department considers that it is reasonable to propose to the CC of the CCP the following measures for 1966:

1. To exchange delegations, lead by a Politburo member or a CC Secretary to share experience in the sphere of the Party construction and agriculture.
2. To exchange one or two lecturers between our Party schools.
3. To exchange journalists between the "Novo Vreme" / New Time/ and "Partien

Zhivot" /Party Life/ magazines with the "Socialist Cuba" magazine.

4. The "Rabotnichesko delo" newspaper, the "Novo Vreme" and "Partien Zhivot" magazines to establish relations and work out a plan for the exchange of articles with the "Granma" newspaper and "Socialist Cuba" magazine.

11 February 1966

Head of the "Foreign Policy and International Relations" department:
Dimo Dichev

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 6164; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev.]



Bulgarian Embassy, Havana, Report on the State of the Cuban Communist Party, 31 March 1966

Information
on the State of the Cuban Communist Party
Havana, 31 March, 1966²⁵

Cuba was the first Latin American country to free itself of the imperialist yoke and take up the road of socialism. The Cuban Revolution proved the irrelevance of the so called geographically determined fatalism that had been impressed upon the minds of the people for years; this dogma preached that the Socialist Revolution could never be brought to a victorious end in Latin America, because of its proximity to the USA. Apart from that, Cuba proved to be an example to follow by the masses of people in Latin America, and [it] accelerated the revolutionary processes there.

In 1964, the embassy sent a report on the progress of the Cuban Revolution, the driving forces of this revolution, and the stages and phases the Party has gone through. Hence, we shall only mention these issues in the current Information.

[...]

With the struggle against imperialism and the necessity to keep the revolutionary awareness of people, the Cuban party's policy has assumed a dynamic nature.

Yet together with the correct stance on certain issues regarding the building of socialism, there are some trends in the Cuban Communist Party's policy that cannot be neglected and overlooked, and cause our concern.

To explain these trends, certain aspects of the Cuban Revolution must be taken into consideration.

The revolution was carried out without the party's leadership [participating] in the armed struggle and in taking power. The leaders of the revolution are patriots, revolutionaries, loyal sons to the people, yet their ideology is based on Jose Marti's views, [on][Simon] Bolivar's example, [as well as] on [the example] of the other outstanding functionaries of the past, who had dedicated their lives to the liberation of Latin America.

Marti viewed Latin America as something consolidated and quite different from Europe and North America. In its evaluation of his personality, the Cuban Revolution regarded

him as the apostle and savior of this separate, consolidated Third World. Bolivar and his army had liberated a number of Latin American countries from the dominion of Spain. Marti's and Bolivar's political views have strongly impacted and imbued their spirit into Fidel Castro's revolutionary ideas. The Cuban leaders have often claimed that Cuba will feel completely free, when all the peoples of Latin America are liberated. Following Bolivar's and Marti's ideas, Cuba considers taking up the struggle for the liberation of Latin America as its calling. There are certain messiah-like qualities, typical of the present Cuban leaders, which have been inherited from Bolivar and Marti.

[...]

A Marxist outlook is still taking shape among the Cuban leaders. A large part of the present communist party's leadership, including members of the CC, adopted bourgeois views just a few years ago. Of course, for the last 7 years after the victory of the Cuban Revolution, many of them, including Fidel Castro, have become acquainted the Marxist and Leninist outlook and have adopted its postulates. However, the latter turned out a rather difficult process and has not been completed yet.

The ideological development of the relatively younger leaders of the Cuban Revolution has impacted the policies adopted by the Cuban Party. The Cuban leadership is ambitious enough to keep looking for new roads to follow and new theories to develop, and continue the building of the Party. This is a good ambition. However this is not all there is to be said. The Cuban comrades' conviction is that the "old" European revolutions have contributed all they could have, and that the new further development of the revolutionary theory and practice will be provided by the Cuban Revolution. The negative developments, [caused] by the Cuban Party's policy, stem from - the strong desire of the Cuban Party's comrades to rule the Third World and influence the development of the world revolutionary movement, by trying hard to make the Cuban revolutionary experience the guiding light and the major, even the only, objective law to determine the transition to socialism in Latin America.

What are the latest developments of the Cuban Communist Party's policy?

The new moment characterizing Cuba's policy is the deepening the conflict with China. As it is well known, Fidel Castro has exposed the Chinese policy towards Cuba to severe criticism in his latest speeches. In his last speech of 19 March his criticism was directed towards Mao Zedong personally for China's lagging behind under Mao's regime.

[...]

The truth is that, in its argument with the Chinese leaders, the Cuban party has not adopted the international communist movement's stance, since they share essentially common views on certain issues.

Why did Fidel Castro then start the argument with China?

One can assume several reasons for this to happen:

First, the preparation and holding of the Tricontinental Conference has aggravated the contradictions between the two countries, since there was a clash of ambitions to rule the Third World.

The expanding influence of the Chinese policy in Latin America was already threatening the Cuban Party's aspirations for hegemony in this part of the world.

The Chinese propaganda made great effort to discredit the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Latin America and undermine their prestige. The Cuban Party, out of its own considerations, did not oppose in any way China's anti-Soviet policy. However it has become quite apparent that China's influence prevents Castro from achieving his political aims, and, therefore, he wants to restrict this influence and eliminate it.

Second, after the political gaffes and failure of China's policy and the dead-end the Chinese leaders have found themselves in, the Cuban party thinks it is high time that it made a statement on China's policy. This statement was necessary to make a clear distinction between Cuba and China, especially in Latin America.

Third, the Chinese made serious mistakes in Cuba. Not only did they flood the country with a wealth of propaganda materials, manipulating public opinion in their well-known consistent and insolent manner; they even made an attempt to manipulate officers from the Cuban army and use them as their weapon, employing various means to achieve this end: sending them presents, granting them foreign currency, etc. There was an impending danger of a conspiracy against the Cuban leadership and an attempt to take power on the part of a pro-China military core.

There is an obvious reason to arrive at the conclusion that Cuba has been arguing from its own standpoint and has adopted its own policy in treating the issues of the international communist movement; one reason is that the heated argument between Cuba and China is not backed up by support for the Soviet Union, denying China's libeling and mudslinging against the latter while emphasizing their role and significance in our modern age.

There is a major issue that remains unsettled relating to the discord between China and Cuba. A number of Latin

American countries have set up pro-China factions. Under the present circumstances, the Cuban Party must take a stance on these factions. This, however, is a difficult task for the party, since it has maintained its relations with the pro-China factions so far, it has relied on their support and will most probably want to win their support. It is difficult to forecast how these relations will develop further.

The Cuban leaders' ambitions to assume the leading role in the world revolutionary process determine their attitude of overlooking and underestimating the Soviet Union's role and that of the CPSU.

[...]

As a matter of fact, the Cuban leaders have demonstrated their independent and non-aligned policy in a strange manner. Fidel Castro is regularly stating that nobody has taught the Cuban revolutionaries how to seize the political power; the party will therefore not let anyone tell them what course the revolution should take.

At the meeting of the Latin American delegations during the Tricontinental Conference Fidel Castro stated he was against the "ideological nationalism and segedism (a term condemning the support for and solidarity with the CPSS and the international communist movement); he also declared that no influence on Latin America was to be allowed, no matter where it came from.

The Cuban leaders have often stated their not being committed to satellitism.

No matter how hard we try to account for these statements on the nature of the Cuban Revolution, one cannot but realize that they essentially attack the Soviet Union and the communist parties. They are aimed at causing a disruption between the Latin American Revolution and the international communist movement.

These claims on the part of the Cuban leadership to be leading an independent and specific policy in the international communist movement can be detected in the theories developed recently.

The available data reveals that the French /Regis/ Debray, well-known for his theories of the nature of the Cuban revolution, has started a book that will provide the grounds to justify the political stance, adopted by the Cuban leaders concerning the Marxist ideology. After publishing his article in the "La Casa de las Americas" and "Bohemia", Havana University has published his book called: "Castroism - the Great March of Latin America." We have already informed you of his viewpoint that Castroism is the new Leninism of our modern age, and that the European type of Leninism is outdated. The book elaborates on these ideas further. The

author maintains that "Castroism is Leninism recovered and adapted to the needs of a continent Lenin had known nothing about... Castroism is nothing else than a renewal of Marxism and Leninism on the basis of the specific Latin American political environment and the historical development of each country. That is why Castroism will never be absolutely the same as Leninism."

In the same book the author writes about /Leonel/ Brizola as "the greatest revolutionary leader in Brazil."

The question that naturally arises is whether Debray is committed in any way to the Cuban leaders. Do they share his views? Cuba is a country where even a single word cannot be uttered publicly unless it has been approved by Fidel Castro; it is therefore impossible that such an article might be published without Castro's consent. It is highly unlikely that Debray published his articles without receiving any response by anyone since the Cuban leaders disagree with him. Fidel Castro himself has spent a lot of time with Debray. During his stay in Cuba he has been offered the accommodation and attention of a high and honoured guest. Of course one cannot claim, formally speaking, that the Cuban Communist Party has adopted Debray's views. We wouldn't devote so much of our time and attention to analyzing these views if they hadn't impacted the action and measures taken by the Cuban Party.

Thus the fears, relating to Cuba's firm insistence that the Tricontinental Conference be held in Havana, are reinforced. The Embassy has been sending a number of bulletins on Cuba's sending people to certain Latin American countries to do training and organize a guerrilla movement, disregarding the attitude of the brotherly parties. The Che Guevara case is being considered of mythological importance, an example to follow by every Cuban and Latin American. The propaganda, carried out in the military divisions to take part in the struggle against imperialism in any country, has intensified. Even the particular country, appropriate for certain cadres, has been specified. The information that the Latin American guerrilla groups include Cubans has been confirmed as well. There is a setback to the period before the Havana Conference of the communist parties. The Cuban press has not published even a single word about the resolutions of this conference, which laid the basis for the regulation of the relations between the Latin American communist parties. The Cuban leaders keep building up their relations with the Latin American communist parties depending on whether the latter have adopted Cuba's policy. The difference is in the fact that action is to be taken on behalf of and via the committees of the Tricontinental and Latin American organizations.

One of the major aims of the Cuban leaders is to carry out a revolution in Latin America. Despite the importance of economic matters, the latter are not the focus of attention

and not as much effort is made to solve them, as [is devoted to] the Latin American revolution. The issues, concerning the guerrilla activities and their simultaneous beginning in as many countries as possible, are considered the task of prime importance. Fidel Castro had interesting talks on these matters with Asdrubal Dominguez, member of the leadership of the Dominican Communist Party. Castro elaborated on his thesis that the establishment of a guerrilla movement in the Dominican Republic was to be immediately carried out, since there were American troops deployed on its territory. Dominguez replied that should the party, at that moment, call for an organized armed struggle and set up guerrilla units, then the consequences might be the following:

First, this would bring about a break-up of the united Democratic front;

Second, the party would isolate itself from the masses of people;

Third, such action would expose the communists to the risk of being wiped out.

Moreover the armed struggle in Santo Domingo is carried out mostly in the towns and this struggle is, therefore, closely dependent upon the traditions and experience of the workers' movement. Sending groups of people in the mountains would not solve any of the problems of the Dominican Revolution at this stage.

Dominguez explained that the revolution's major task was to consolidate the activities of all progressive forces in the country to achieve their common goal, and to organize the people neither hastily, nor too slowly. The Party should decide upon the appropriate time to call for armed struggle to take the political power. Fidel Castro did not approve of Dominguez's position.

The Cuban leaders were acting impatiently, neglecting the specific situation when taking revolutionary action, which was not the Cuban style. The Cuban leaders' attitude towards the Colombian Party at the Tricontinental Conference was not friendly, although the party had already organized an armed struggle; it however disagrees with the Cuban leaders' methods of guidance.

In brief, what are the arguments in favor of the fact that it was high time the peoples of all Latin American countries took up armed struggle as the only means to achieve their political aim?

1. The example the Cuban revolution gave, was the major argument. A large part of Fidel Castro's introductory

speeches at the meetings of the Latin American delegations was devoted to the experience of the Cuban Revolution and, in particular, to the fact that a couple of people could start the armed struggle and achieve victory. The very fact that these countries are highly exploited by and dependent upon imperialism, and that the present situation does not provide for a peaceful action, expressing the people's will, suffices to consider that the objective conditions to start an armed struggle and take the political power are present. The starting of an armed struggle does not presuppose other factors, which will develop in the course of the revolution. The main task was to find an armed group to start the struggle.

This action and development of the revolution may be metaphorically compared to the following: the people's struggle is the bigger engine, whereas the guerrilla movement is the smaller one. The only way to trigger off the big engine was to start the small one. That was the road Latin America was to follow.

2. The second argument is to be found in imperialism's global strategy.

The revolution's global strategy must counteract the imperialist one. It is necessary that a simultaneous armed struggle be organized in all countries of the continent. There may be a need for exporting the revolution. Raul Castro's position in this respect is interesting. Major events are expected to take place in Latin America, he said. Soon similar events are likely to happen in Venezuela as well. The USA will never let Venezuela slip out of their control and will therefore deploy armed troops there. A heated struggle will follow. Such a situation is likely to be created not only in Venezuela, but in a number of other Latin American countries as well. We must never forget the potential might of a giant that is still sleeping, namely Brazil. And when imperialism deploys its armed forces throughout the continent, we will then be able to fight it and destroy it.

Such a strategy to provoke imperialism to deploy its troops and occupy a number of Latin American countries, so that the anti-imperialist struggle might be set off and imperialism may be eventually wiped out, is difficult to understand.

The issue of triggering off the armed struggle has many aspects. One of these is that Cuban policy turns Cuba into the potential target for direct military action on the part of imperialism. And the Cuban leaders are well aware of this impending danger. Not only do they realize this danger, the most responsible among these leaders feel Cuba is doomed to be the target of military intervention; they claim that Cuba

realizes what it's undertaking is and assumes the risks of its present policy.

[...]

The Cuban Party's policy, despite the fact that it's claimed to be revolutionary in nature (it is constantly being stated that the Cubans are ready to fight imperialism everywhere), actually hinders the revolutionary process and the establishment of powerful united fronts in the countries of Latin America, underestimates the role of the communist parties, and encourages terrorism in these countries.

The Latin American communist parties, or least most of them, are being blamed for the lack of a pro-active attitude as well as for being too theoretically-minded, unwilling to start a revolution. This criticism may be relevant for some leaders. Yet this does not give the Cuban leaders the right to organize a guerrilla movement in the countries of Latin America, disregarding the respective communist parties' opinion, and to establish close contacts with anti-party adventurous elements, willing to start an armed struggle without any delay.

[...]

We are not against an armed struggle. On the contrary, we will always support such a struggle, in case it is relevant and appropriate in the context of a country's particular revolutionary situation. However, we cannot adopt the view that armed struggle is the only means of struggle, and that the action taken by the guerrilla forces must start simultaneously in all Latin American countries, irrespective of the specific situation in each country. This assumption gives rise to a schematic and formalistic attitude, which results from the desire to turn the Cuban revolution into an example to follow and an objective law of the revolution in general. Even less acceptable is the policy adopted by the Cuban leaders to organize the armed struggle abroad, disregarding the communist parties' stance. The latter results in substituting the socialist revolution's objective laws with petty bourgeois views of the revolutionary process.

[...]

The positive developments in the Cuban Party and country are determined by the assistance and cooperation of the socialist countries. Specialists and experts from the socialist countries work in all industries of the national economy. They share their positive experience and help Cuba in its development. The contacts with these experts and their work contribute to bringing closer both the parties and the countries.

It might prove advisable that COMECON, the Soviet Union and some other socialist countries discuss the problems of providing assistance to Cuba and outlining the prospects of its economic development. The efforts to improve the economic situation in Cuba and the results of these efforts, may play a significant role in re-directing Cuba's policy.

The contacts between the Cuban Communist Party and these of the other Latin American countries, are of prime importance. Fidel Castro has made self-criticism several times before representatives of these parties; he claims that he has not been informed on separate issues and has, therefore, made wrong judgments and statements. The Latin American parties can best discuss Latin America's problems in depth, as well as the problems of the revolutionary movements in this part of the world.

Of course the other brotherly parties and the communist parties of the socialist countries must help the Cuban Party. Underestimating the existing differences between the Cuban Party and the international communist movement results in their deepening. It is necessary that the contacts and meetings with the Cuban comrades be more frequent, as well as the exchange visits of delegations. Our Party is considered an authority in Cuba, and its efforts, coordinated with the efforts on the part of the CPSU, can be of great help.

Reality remains the most significant factor. The Cuban comrades' ambitions and infatuation collide with reality; it is reality that will help them overcome these problems. Cuba is a small country and its economic resources are limited for its leaders to become leaders on a world scale.

It is obvious that whatever measures are decided upon to provide assistance to Cuba's party, it would take a long time to implement them. We cannot maintain that correcting certain wrong views will be an easy task. The Cuban comrades need more time to arrive at the right conclusions. The time, when information of this kind will be directed at analyzing Cuba's positive experience, will hopefully come.

Havana
31 March 1966
Counselor /Bulgarian Embassy/
S. Cohen

[Source: TsDA, Fond 1B, Opis 81, Unprocessed Collection, 1967-1990; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; edited by Dr. Jordan Baev.]



**CC BCP Secretariat Secret Resolution
re: Training Cuban security officers in
Bulgaria, 8 June 1966**

RESOLUTION "B" No 8
OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST
PARTY FROM 8 JUNE 1966

*The CC BCP Secretariat approves the proposal that Comrade Piñeiro visit our country. We can accept 30 people for training only on counterintelligence work. We have no conditions to train people on sabotage.*²⁶

Top Secret

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE CC BCP COMRADE
LUCHEZAR AVRAMOV²⁷

Comrade Avramov,

At a meeting with Comandante Sergio Del Valle – Politburo member of the Cuban Communist Party, captain Osmani Sienfuegos – head of the Foreign Affairs Commission at the CC of the CCP and Secretary General of the Tricontinental Committee and Comandante Manuel Piñeiro – member of the CC of the CCP and head of the State Security service, before my departure from Havana on 21 May there was a demand for accepting 30 Cuban comrades for training in sabotage and contra revolutionary activity. They consider the training period to be about a year and the training itself should be at our expense. They expect to receive an answer in principle not later than 5 or 6 June this year. They can send Comandante Piñeiro to our country to coordinate the details.

I answered I would report the issue to the respective people and they would be informed about the result.

I would like to ask you for your instructions.

4 June 1966
Sofia

[Gen. Angel Solakov, Chairman of the State Security Committee]

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 64, a.e. 352; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev.]



**Information on Latin America and Cuba:
delivery of weapons to Cuba and Latin
America, 2 November 1966**

To comrade Ivan Bashev
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sofia

Comrade Bashev,

Please, send the following coded telegram to the embassy in Berlin:

“Get in touch with CC of the German Unified Socialist Party (SED) and inform them about the following:

In November this year a Cuban delegation led by Comandante Pedro Luis Rodriguez visited our country. On behalf of the Cuban leaders, the delegation posed the issue [to] Bulgaria to supply Cuba with arms, medicines, transport and communication equipment, which [was] to be employed for assistance of the national-liberation movements in Latin America, Asia and Africa. According to the delegation, the Cuban leaders made or will make the same request to other European socialist countries as well. The Cuban party and state leaders are going to send the aid to those regions and countries, where according to him there was a revolutionary situation, and to those powers and groups, including the ones not affiliated with the communist parties, which read correctly this situation.

On behalf of the CC of the BCP the delegation received an answer that BCP has assisted and will continue to assist the national-liberation movements, but under the following conditions:

1. The assistance should be required directly from the leaders of the communist party in the respective country, through Cuba or any other socialist country.
2. The assistance rendered to the national-liberation movements in those countries should be coordinated among the socialist countries.

We have sent such information to the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.”

Head of department “Foreign policy and international relations” to CC of BCP: D. Dichev

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 51, a.e. 592; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Letter from Bulgarian Embassy, Havana, 26 January 1967

Secret!

To the ambassador of PRB in Cuba
COMRADE ATANAS KULBOV
MEMORANDUM

From Petar Marinkov, Third secretary at the Embassy of PR Bulgaria in Cuba.

Comrade Ambassador,

Last week, at my request, I met twice comrade Lazaro Mora, Secretary for the international relations of the National Committee of the Union of the Young Communists. At the first meeting we talked on topics connected with the conducting the Ninth World Youth Festival, and at the second - about the implementation of the treaty between our two youth organizations.

I requested the first meeting, so that he could explain to me in more detail the formulation of Jaime Crombet in his report at the Third Plenum of the National Leadership of the Union of the Young Communists about Cuba's not taking part in the meeting of the Organization Committee of the festival, called for at the end of this month in Vienna, and [to remind him] that the issue about the participation of Cuba in the festival should be discussed. In relation to this the counselor at the Polish embassy in Havana, comrade Curus, has informed our counselor, comrade Cohen, that the editor of the Polish youth newspaper, who was in Cuba on the occasion of the 8th anniversary of the revolution, has accidentally attended the first meeting of the plenum, and during the closed-door meeting a resolution was adopted by voting to the effect that Cuba should not participate in the festival and [should] possibly organize a counter-festival.

I also visited the man in charge for the work with the Soviet Comsomol in Cuba, comrade Shlyapnikov, who was accompanying the Soviet youth delegation led by the Secretary of the Soviet Comsomol CC Torsuev that also took part in the work of the plenum. He said that outside the official treatment of this issue in the report of Crombet, he

did not know anything about the closed-door meeting of the plenum, but he knew the position of Cuba about the festival, which was discussed with the Soviet youth delegation after its implementation.

During my meeting with comrade Mora I told him that I could not attend the first meeting of the plenum, where the issue about the festival was posed. I asked him to explain to me what exactly was their position and whether there was a change in it after the visit of our youth delegation led by comrade Georgi Atanassov in October last year. He answered that that issue was indeed posed at the plenum but a resolution was adopted not to participate in the organization committee. And the issue about the participation in the festival was to be resolved by the CC of the Party. He informed me that such a decision was already adopted. Its sense was that in case that a resolution was adopted the festival to be conducted in Europe, in Sofia, Cuba would not take part in it.

Elucidating the reasons which had provoked those Cuban resolutions on that issue, comrade Mora told me that the meeting of the organization committee would be only a facade and even a farce, because an already adopted resolution where the festival will be held would be sanctioned at it. Long ago WFDY stopped to be an independent international organization and the powerful countries, the ones that give the money, dictate its course, and [in this case] it is the USSR. Everything up to now shows that the USSR and the other socialist countries are against hosting the festival in Cuba and for the last time they got convinced in this during the recently concluded visit of the delegation of the Soviet Comsomol led by comrade Torsuev. In brackets I would like to note that at its departure no representative of the National leadership of the Union of the young communists was sent and only at noon did comrade Mora apologize on the phone that he could not go to the airport because he overslept.

Further comrade Mora told me that they would send a letter to the organization committee, in which they would state their position. He added that one of the reasons not to participate in this meeting is that they did not want to enter into bitter discussions with the delegations because by no means would they like to spoil their relations with some youth unions. He told me that Cuba wanted to conduct a festival of the young revolutionaries, who immediately after it would be ready to take to arms and to go to fight where the conditions require it. Once again they suggested the festival to be conducted in Vietnam and if this could not be carried out, that the only other place, where the festival should be conducted, given the current situation, was Cuba. And also, that this is the personal wish of Fidel Castro who is the only Prime Minister who made a public statement for Cuba to be the host of the festival.

I wanted to know whether the Cubans had some other intentions about the festival but Mora refused to say more about this issue and underlined that what was said up to now was their position. Obviously, however, they have not given up their attempts to act in this direction and this is the only explanation about the fact that a resolution was adopted for Jaime Crombet to go to Sofia in order to participate in the meeting of the persons in charge of the Cuban scholarship-supported students in the socialist countries, in which the Minister of education would take part and also one of the closest men to Fidel Castro - Jose Llanusa, who only a few months ago delivered a long speech at the plenum of the Cuban students who study in the socialist countries. Hardly during this short period had such big changes happened in the life of those students to require the trip of the Minister of Education and first secretary of the National Committee of the Union of the Young Communists. In his conversation with comrade Georgi Atanassov he announced that he would visit Bulgaria at the time of the congress of our Comsomol. There are reasons to suggest that at this meeting they will elucidate the Cuban position about the festival and WFDY in general and they will give instructions for exploring the opinion about this issue of the Latin American, the Asian, and the African students who study in the socialist countries with a view to provoke disagreement with the resolution of the organizing committee for the carrying out of the festival and to support the position of Cuba.

At my second meeting with comrade Mora we revised the fulfillment of the agreement between DCYU and the Union of the Young Communists. For more lucidity I am going to present his opinion about the fulfillment of the separate clauses in the agreement.

[...]

THIRD LEGATION SECRETARY:

/P. Marinkov^{28/}

Havana

26 January 1967

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1053, Opis 9, a.e. 48; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Memorandum from Bulgarian Communist Youth Union to BCP Politburo re: Competing Cuban and Bulgarian

Candidacies to Host the IX World Youth Festival in 1967²⁹

CENTRAL COMMITTEE
OF THE DIMITROV COMMUNIST YOUTH UNION
TO POLITBURO OF CC OF BCP
SOFIA

MEMORANDUM

From GEORGI ATANASSOV³⁰- First Secretary of the Central Committee of DCYU

ABOUT: Some issues of the preparation of the Ninth World Festival of Youth and Students

Comrades,

After the Ninth World Festival has been postponed twice because of the well-known events in Algeria and Ghana, on 26-27 January this year [1967], a meeting of the International Organizing Committee (IOC) is summoned again in Vienna. At that meeting the presented nominations for a host of the festival will be discussed and a resolution will be made about the time and the place for its carrying out. As members of IOC we are also preparing to send a delegation of ours.

What is the situation at the moment, immediately before the meeting of IOC?

As it is well known, the candidates for hosts of the festival are two countries - Bulgaria and Cuba.

The talks and the consultations up to date show that the overwhelming majority of the organizations - members of IOC made statements in favor of our nomination. From 42 organizations - members of IOC - up to now about 23 organizations have supported our nomination. These are: the youth unions from the brotherly socialist countries - USSR, Poland, GDR, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, a number of organizations from Africa - Sudan, Senegal, Guinea, UAR, from Latin America - Argentina, Brazil, Chile, from Asia - India, Lebanon, Iraq and the organizations from France, Australia, Canada and Cyprus.

Six or seven organizations support the nomination of Cuba - Guatemala, Venezuela, Congo (Brazzaville), Japan, Indonesia, in one or other form the youth unions of Finland and Italy give their preference to the nomination of Cuba.

Approximately the same number of organizations has not defined their position yet or has not announced it.

Besides, it is expected that delegations of China and Ghana will not take part in the meeting of the IOC (because

of the events there) and USA (they have not taken their place in IOC at all).

At such a configuration of the powers, the talks and the consultations between the different youth organizations are conducted at the moment.

We want to note that recently the Cuban comrades display immense activity, sending delegations to the different continents, manipulating youth leaders and are extremely anxious to stand up for their nomination.

They unambiguously emphasize that a resolution of the IOC in favor of another nomination will be interpreted by them not only as an attitude to the Union of the young communists, but also as a lack of understanding of the needs of the revolution and the situation in Cuba.

The basic arguments of the Cuban comrades in favor of their nomination are the following:

After all festivals up to now have been held in Europe, it is only proper for the Ninth Festival to be in a country in Asia, Africa, or Latin America.

Therefore, the festival must be staged in the country that needs the most international-support and solidarity. Such a country is Vietnam. However, as the Vietnamese comrades are not able to receive it, it is only fair for the festival to be conducted in Cuba, which is undergoing difficulties because of the embargo.

This festival should be a powerful stimulus in the struggle of the young people from Asia, Africa and Latin America and a challenge to the American imperialism. This will reflect to a great extent the spirit of the resolutions of the Tricontinental Conference.

Guided by the stated motives, the Cuban comrades declare that they are ready to: accept any suggestions of IOC about the character and the structure of the festival, to grant to IOC the right to issue visas to the participants, to give one million dollars in optional currency for maintenance of the festival, and to take on a significant part of the transportation expenses.

For many years Dimitrov's Comsomol (Young Communist League) and the Union of the young communists of Cuba have kept very good contacts. We are constantly making efforts for their further development. An expression of this was the recent visit of our delegation in Cuba and the friendly meetings and talks which we conducted.

Now the nominations of our two brotherly organizations as hosts of the festival will be discussed. Provided how fervently the Cuban comrades stand up for their nomination and [given] the fact that the majority prevails in favor of Sofia, it is not impossible for our nomination to be interpreted as opposing theirs, and for this to have an unfavorable effect

on the relations between our youth unions. For example, their representatives made statements that on the issue of the location of the festival they "will have to start an argument with the Bulgarian comrades." Moreover, as far as behind this explicit position stands the communist party of Cuba, as well, it is not impossible for this to affect the relations between our countries. The considerations of the majority of the youth organizations, including the most influential ones from Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, and Chile), about the rejection of the Cuban nomination have a principle basis.

This was emphasized at the meeting conducted in November 1966 in Moscow of the first secretaries of the Central Committees of the Soviet Union of the Communist Youth (SUCY) and DCYU, as well. At that meeting comrade Georgi Atanassov, after presenting the contents of the talks which he had with the Cuban comrades, he expressed the idea of withdrawing our nomination if this proves expedient. However, comrade S. P. Pavlov confirmed once again their position that the festival must not be carried out in Cuba and that they support firmly the nomination of Bulgaria. He declared unambiguously that such is the position of Politburo of CC of Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), as well.

The considerations for this are based on disagreement with the common political concepts from which the Cuban comrades proceed in the international youth movement. This includes the Cuban understanding about the resolutions of the Tricontinental Conference as a basis for the activities of the international youth organizations, their attempts at organizational differentiating of the youth powers from Latin America under their leadership, their wrong approach to the problems of the revolution and the forms of the struggle against imperialism and so on.

On the other hand, there are definite difficulties regarding the complexity of the political situation in Cuba. There is a real danger for it to limit the possibilities for a full display of the festival slogans for solidarity, peace, and friendship. A possible festival in Cuba unquestionably would become an expression of the solidarity with the struggle of the peoples of Cuba and Vietnam, but the other problems of the world democratic youth movement and particularly those of the African youth would remain in the background. The experience up to now does not give [us] ground to believe in the declarations of our Cuban comrades that the IOC will have the full opportunity to define the contents and the character of the festival.

There are technical difficulties referring to the remoteness, transport, financing and others, which inevitably will limit

the representative character of the festival in Cuba and on their behalf will turn into political ones.

What is our opinion about what should be done in this situation?

Sharing the above considerations, the Central Committee of Dimitrov's Communist Youth Union thinks that there should not be a festival in Cuba.

In order to avoid possible aggravation of our relations with the Union of the young communists of Cuba, from the viewpoint of the interests of our country, perhaps it is expedient to find a third nomination for conducting the festival. In this respect a while ago a number of researches were made which did not give a positive result.

That is why we think that we have to stand up for our nomination, launched, moreover, not because of accidental and opportunistic considerations, which we are going to present at the meeting of the IOC.

[...]

In our view, the Ninth festival, with its appeal and mobilizing power over the youth masses all over the world, based on the ideals for solidarity, peace, and friendship, must be a powerful, large-scale political demonstration of the activity and the unity of the world democratic youth.

Together with this, we are for a festival open to all powers that want to participate in it, a festival that gives a full opportunity for broad discussions and numerous meetings of different youth powers.

Therefore, from political point of view we are willing to ensure full success of the festival.

Besides, all material, cultural, geographic and other prerequisites needed for such a successful festival are available in our country.

There is a certain danger - due to the insistence of the Cuban comrades and to the fact that some youth unions support them - at the forthcoming meeting of the IOC for the decision in favor of our nomination not to be adopted unanimously and for some unions to make a statement that they do not support such a festival. It is not impossible [that] a resolution without an explicit majority [would] encourage the centrifugal forces in the youth movement and give grounds to the Cuban youth leaders to intensify the criticism and the attacks against the World Federation of the Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the International Students Union (ISU). Of course, we do not assume the possibility that the Union of the young communists in Cuba would sever its relations with the WFDY.

This depends to a large extent on the position of the youth organizations from Africa. In order to secure their support for

our nomination, two days ago the representative of SUCY in WFDY suggested to us to consider whether it is not expedient to send a delegation of ours to Africa. In our view, such a step on our behalf is unjustified. The other brotherly youth unions could do this. At the same time however, we consider it necessary for the Foreign Ministry, through the embassies of PRB in Algeria, Mali, Tanzania, Guinea, Sudan and Morocco, to explain to the leaders of the youth organizations in these countries our motives for the carrying out of the festival in Sofia.

On its behalf our delegation at the meeting of the IOC must do everything necessary and possible to preserve our good relations with the Union of the young communists in Cuba.

If there is no prospect for an explicit majority in favor of our nomination, it could be expedient to try to postpone the meeting of the International Organizing Committee as [a measure of] last resort. In our opinion only such a majority can influence the Cuban youth leaders.

We think that our nomination does not contradict the nomination of Cuba. We regard it as we do any other one, as an opportunity. We could welcome other nominations, which will present an opportunity for a better choice. We showed that this is so with our positive attitude to the previous two resolutions of the IOC about Algeria and Ghana. And now we are also ready, if the international youth movement decides that it will be more expedient for the festival to be conducted in another country, not to protest and to participate in such a festival.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF DCYU
SECRETARY: G. ATANASSOV

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 6526; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo
meeting Re: Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 5
October 1967**

TO the CC BCP Politburo

INFORMATION

by G[ero] Grozev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Re: Proposed measures for strengthening of the Bulgarian –

Cuban Relations

[...]

Although the other socialist countries' experience in building socialism is not denied publicly, this experience has recently not been given due attention and Cuba's own development has been consistently focused on.

The Cuban government has propagated the thesis that material stimuli and benefits of the workers will result in the re-establishment of capitalism and the weakening of the workers' sense for international revolutionary action. Such an approach will inevitably result in actual wage leveling, which will, in its turn, seriously affect production.

Yet another postulate has proved to be confusing: the one that Cuba has been establishing socialism and communism simultaneously, adding that the latter cannot be built without abolishing imperialism completely.

[...]

It is well known that the Cuban government has adopted a strange stance on the issues of party and state construction and organization in Cuba; similar positions relate to the international communist movement and its development in the contemporary international situation. The higher posts of the Cuban Communist Party have been taken by the proponents of the "July 26th" Movement. 70% of the Central Committee's staff are military officials. Out of the 8 member of Politburo, 6 are military officials; there is not a single member of the ex-People's Socialist Party elected to this central governing body.

For quite some time the Cuban Communist Party has made no official statements on the discord within the international communist movement. Up to the end of 1965 Fidel Castro openly opposed the Chinese leaders, for there was a conflict of interests between the Chinese and Cuban ambitions about playing a central political part in Latin America. Cuba's criticism of the Chinese government was based totally on its own positions and interests. The Chinese leaders' ideology and policies have not been condemned yet. Even though we cannot maintain, that the Cubans have actually adopted China's policies, they have adopted the same positions on certain issues, such as peaceful co-existence, material benefits and building up socialism.

A large part of the Cuban leaders' views of the world revolutionary movement's strategy and tactics, in general, and Latin America's, in particular, are contradictory to Marxism-Leninism's basic postulates and principles. Presuming the false postulate that the conditions for starting a revolution

in almost all Latin American countries have ripened, the Cuban leaders have adopted a policy of interference in Latin America's communist parties and their internal affairs.

Cuba's interference in Venezuela's communist party, providing assistance to Douglas Bravo's faction, an ex-member of Politburo who was expelled from the Communist Party. On the part of Cuba's leaders, Venezuela's Communist Party was libeled and was referred to as "rightist," "opportunistic," and "treacherous."

An act of brutal interference in Colombia's communist party by Cuba's leaders was the setting up of a guerilla movement separated from its communist party.

Such a mistaken policy was approved of at the recently held conference of the Organization for Latin American Solidarity.

The relations between the Cuban communist party and the European communist parties have grown colder for the last few years. No Cuban delegation attended the German Unified Socialist Party's congress.

Cuba's leadership does not share the views of the USSR and the other socialist countries of the peaceful co-existence policy that these countries have been conducting. Cuba refused to sign the Treaty on Nuclear Tests Ban; Cuba does not approve of establishing diplomatic and trade relations with the capitalist Latin American countries, pointing out that such relations support local oligarchies and hold the revolutionary process back. In this respect the resolution of OLAS (Organization for Latin American Solidarity) was adopted.

The Cuban leaders have been conducting an isolationist policy towards certain liberal and democratic parties and their functionaries in the other Latin American countries, thus isolating themselves from their natural allies and friends on the continent.

The Cuban leaders have manifested the adopted policy of actively assisting Latin America's revolutionary movement, thus facilitating the reactionary regime's activity aimed at enhancing terrorism and establishing the so called "American forces" to act against Cuba both in Latin America and the USA.

Despite all mistakes made, there is a general conviction that the core of Cuba's leadership consists of frank functionaries committed to their people's cause, unaware of their mistaken views and sincerely believing that they have adopted the right policy in the interest of the revolutionary process.



Political, economic and cultural relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cuba were established after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

Our government has been assisting Cuba actively and it has defended Cuba against the offence of the US imperialism.

Apart from the economic and cultural agreements at the government level, agreements for cooperation between public and political organizations and creative unions were concluded; these agreements play an important part in our getting to know each other and establishing closer relations. Useful and fruitful contacts were established between our Comsomol,³¹ the Bulgarian Union for Sports and the corresponding Cuban organizations. An important step towards expanding the economic, scientific and technological cooperation between Cuba and Bulgaria was the setting up of an inter-governmental commission for economic, scientific and technological cooperation.

The trade between the two countries has marked an increase by 38,633,000 USD in 1966 from 500,000 USD in 1960. The basic shares of our exports to Cuba are machines and technological equipment - about 45%, and food - about 40%. Our major import item from Cuba is sugar and molasses. Trade for the current year is expected to go beyond 50 mln. USD with a positive balance of trade for Bulgaria.

[...]

The People's Republic of Bulgaria has extended Cuba five loans amounting to a total of 15,800 000 USD, 9,300,000 of which are supplies of special equipment.

About 200 Bulgarian specialists are now working in Cuba, a Comsomol brigade of 100 people, mainly agricultural workers. 39 Bulgarian musicians are also working in Cuba at present. All these specialists' work has been highly appreciated by a number of high-level Cuban leaders, including Castro.

[...]

The development of the trade relations between the two countries has been beneficial and fruitful to both countries so far. Cuba turned out to be an interesting market for the articles of Bulgaria's machine-building industry, the tractors "Bolgar" in particular and other items, and at the same time Cuba proved to be an experimental basis for testing our products in tropical climate. There are the necessary conditions to supply Cuba with complex properties. The benefits and political importance of the cultural contacts are beyond any doubt. There arises the question what policy towards Cuba is to be adopted in the future, since the Cuban leaders have been conducting policies quite different from these of the [other] socialist countries. We consider that expanding and intensifying our cooperation in terms of party and political relations, cultural exchange, and public and creative organizations, is

the appropriate policy. Tolerant, calm and frank talks with the Cuban comrades on all levels so as to persuade them to give up the present harmful policies are necessary.

It is considered appropriate that the relations in the field of science and technology, as well as the economic relations be further developed. Such a policy will stimulate building socialism in Cuba, and will contribute to socialist Cuba's increasing role as a suit to follow by the other Latin American countries.

On the other hand, a deepening of the economic relations between Cuba and the socialist countries, and thus the higher dependence of Cuba's economy upon the socialist countries' [economies], will make the Cuban leaders refrain from making "weird" statements.

The following measures are considered appropriate to this effect:

I. In the sphere of political relations.

1. Ministries, agencies, institutions, public organizations and artistic unions must follow a policy of expanding and strengthening the relations and cooperation with the respective Cuban bodies and authorities.
 2. A Party and State delegation is to visit Cuba, headed by comrade Todor Zhivkov at the beginning of 1968. During the visit of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Fidel Castro's visit to Bulgaria is to be agreed upon and arranged.
 3. A Party delegation, headed by a member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party is to visit Cuba this autumn, or at the beginning of 1968 to get acquainted with the organizational and ideological work of the Cuban Communist Party. A delegation headed by a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party is to be invited to visit Bulgaria in 1968 to get acquainted with the organizational and ideological work of the Bulgarian Communist Party.
- The Higher Party School is to establish relations with the revolutionary education schools in Cuba, and invite a delegation to visit Bulgaria, so that it may share our Higher Party School's experience, as well our experience in the field of education and enlightenment in general.
4. The department of "Foreign Policy and International Relations" at the Central

Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party is to regularly provide an exchange of information and statements on different issues of mutual interest to both countries.

[...]

5. A proposal made to Cuba to have military attaches exchanged between the two countries.

II. In the sphere of economic relations.

1. The State Commission on Planning and Forecasting and the Ministry of Foreign Trade are to submit proposals about additional events on expanding the import and export product range to and from Cuba, so that the trade balance may be evened. These suggestions are to be submitted to the Commission of Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation at the Council of Ministers by 1 December 1967. The focus of our attention must be an increase in our exports of machines and plants.

[...]

Sofia, 22 September 1967,
Gero Grozev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 6879; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; Edited by Dr. Jordan Baev]



Report to BCP Politburo on Preparations for Todor Zhivkov's Proposed Visit to Cuba, 7 December 1967

TO CC BCP POLITBURO

In accordance with the Politburo resolution No. 1278, Protocol No. 379 of 5 October 1967, it was coordinated with the Cuban leadership that our party-governmental delegation will visit Cuba at the end of January and the beginning of February next year [1968]. I propose that the delegation has to be composed of the following comrades:

TODOR ZHIVKOV- First Secretary of the CC BCP, and Prime Minister of the PR of Bulgaria - Head of the delegation;

BORIS VELCHEV- Member of CC BCP Politburo and Secretary of CC BCP;

PEKO TAKOV - Alternate Member of CC BCP Politburo, Member of the Board of the Council of Ministers, and Minister of Trade, Chairman of the Bulgarian part of the Joint Bulgarian-Cuban committee for economic and scientific-technical cooperation;

Colonel-General SLAVCHO TRANSKI - Member of CC BCP, and Deputy Minister of National Defense;

KONSTANTIN TELLALOV- Alternate Member of CC BCP, Head of "Foreign Policy and International Relations" CC BCP Department;

GERO GROZEV- Alternate Member of CC BCP, and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs;

DOBRI ALEXIEV- Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade;

STEFAN PETROV- Alternate Member of CC BCP, Bulgarian Ambassador to Republic of Cuba;

MLADEN ISAEV-A writer, Honored Art Worker, and a Hero of Socialist Labor.

A number of experts and technical assistants will be included in the delegation .

Sofia, 7 December 1967
Ivan Bashev³²
Minister of Foreign Affairs

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 6979; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Information from Bulgarian Ambassador in Havana Stefan Petrov³³ to Bulgarian Leader Todor Zhivkov on the Domestic and Foreign Policy of Cuba, 15 August 1968

INFORMATION

RE: CUBA'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY

In our opinion the materials sent by our embassy provide a realistic picture of Cuba's internal situation and its international status; they realistically describe Cuba's domestic and foreign policies on the most topical contemporary issues.

Upon analyzing Cuba's leaders' policies, and seeking the reasons behind their approach towards solving various

problems, the following considerations must be taken into account:

First, for the last three or four years the Cuban government has conceived its own views and conceptions about the most essential problems of modern life, which are incompatible with Marxism-Leninism.

These views and conceptions diverge from our party's views and assessments.

Second, the Cuban Communist Party is basically a newly established party, set up along the principles of uniting the "July 26th" movement, the old communist party and the "13th March directorate." The "July 26th" movement has managed to gradually usurp all key party and government positions; it has managed to impose the global revolutionary process as a concept and its own model of building socialism on the present leadership of the Cuban Communist Party.

The present leadership of the Cuban Communist Party has actually taken over power. In the past, prior to the Cuban revolution, all members of the present leadership used to be revolutionaries with not well-established ideological views; many of them were anti-communists, or at least had adopted views, quite different from the communist ideology. These were mostly intelligentsia, participants in the students' movement, and followers of Marti's ideology, that had mixed views and conceptions. All this impacted the party's policy, which, though referred to as communist, is not a well-established communist party yet.

Step-by-step, within the 1962 to 1968 period, after the January plenary session, Castro managed to do away with the old communist party and establish, at his own discretion, a new one in its place.

Sectarian mistakes and blunders on the part of Escalante and other party leaders, who failed to get properly oriented, motivated Castro. Mistakes were made both during the revolutionary struggle and after it.

Third, without taking into account certain traits of Castro's personality, it will be difficult to analyze Cuba's domestic and foreign policy. It is Castro that has been shaping it so far.

In his activity Fidel Castro is an idealist, and, in many cases, an adventurer. He would like to establish a new social order, ignoring socialism's basic laws, and the CPSU's experience, and seeking an independent "peculiar" manner of solving both international and domestic problems.

Despite the fact that he calls himself a Marxist-Leninist, he is unable to make a Marxist analysis of all facts and events. His leadership obsession and self-confidence and self-conceit- edness, [as well as] the over-estimation of his own strengths

and merits, prevent him from being able to study the others; such features of his character determine the adventures he is likely to get involved in, especially under more complicated circumstances.

Castro's development as a revolutionary reveals his close relations with the intelligentsia, the students' movement, and his distance from the working class. His petty bourgeois background has strongly affected his personality.

The revolution's triumph and his leadership are the factors that enhance his negative features: narcissism, adventurism, and obsession with being the leader; therefore he tends to consider himself the leader of all Latin American peoples, along with being Cuba's leader. Being unable to carry out a Marxist analysis of the actual circumstances that pre- determined the successful end of Cuba's revolution, he readily generalizes his revolutionary experience, considering it as mandatory for Latin America in general; hence the mistakes he makes.

[...]

Fourth, Castro's anti-Soviet attitudes. He cannot appreciate the USSR's part in the winning of Cuban independence. He can neither understand, nor appreciate the USSR's part in the world revolutionary process. He has adopted a similar stance towards both American imperialism and the Soviet bloc.

Castro's attitude towards the Soviet Union is cold and distanced, often even hostile. For quite some time now the Cuban leaders have adopted a policy of denying and undermining the CPSU and the USSR's role and significance. The process of distancing from the USSR has become more significant.

Such a policy is hazardous, and therefore surprises are likely to take place.

Fifth, the manifestations of nationalism among Cuba's leaders. Although they are constantly talking about internationalism, their actions are essentially nationalistic.

All these circumstances affect our relations with Cuba, and set up obstacles to the further progress of political relations.

Notes on certain aspects of Cuba's foreign policy and its attitude towards the international communist movement

For the last five or six months there has been no visible change in Cuba's foreign policy.

[...]

1. The different opinions relate to almost all basic issues of the communist movement.

A) On the international communist movement issues.

For the last two years the Cuban conceptions about their “own” way of development and the international communist movement have been clearly shaped. Within a short period of time the gap between Cuba and the international communist movement has seriously widened, affecting a number of core present-day issues; this gap actually set a new trend in their relations and was a result of the peculiarities of the Cuban revolution.

These trends are the following:

- Cuba claims to have a leadership role in guiding the world revolutionary process;
- Cuba wants to enforce its own policies and conceptions upon Latin America’s communist parties, employing [various means] from exporting [its own] revolution to supporting factions within [other communist] parties;
- Cuba underestimates and denies the CPSU’s role;
- it declares that the international communist movement’s methods and strategy are outdated and useless;
- it is an opponent of the socialist countries’ policies, especially in moments of acute collisions in the international arena;

These trends have become the basic points in the policy adopted by the Cuban leaders. The attempts made to apply these views in real life have resulted in economic difficulties and have hindered relations between Cuba and the brotherly parties.

These trends determined certain activity of Cuba’s leaders.

The OLAS conference of July 1967 did not yield the expected results. It actually turned out to be a failure. The conference’s bodies have been dissolved. The conference granted to Cuba the position of secretary general of the elected commission at OLAS. However no person has yet been appointed. OLAS’s commission has neither been set up, nor has it convened. The only practical result has been the growing tension between Cuba’s leaders and the brotherly parties.

Guevara’s death was a terrible blow to Cuba’s policy. Until his group’s defeat, Cuba tried to stimulate revolution on the continent; it actually organized about 40 small guerilla groups within different Latin American countries. Yet all these attempts failed. Other failures followed in 1967: Regis Debray, the famous proponent of the Cuban conceptions, was captured by the enemy and was forced to disclose many things.

Three Cubans were captured as they were trying to unload a group of guerillas along Venezuela’s coast.

A group of Cuban comrades died in Bolivia.

Douglas Bravo made efforts to split the party, and these were attempts to make the party give in. On the other hand, there were unscrupulous/ruthless attacks coming from Cuba. All these attacks against the party—organized by people outside Cuba and people within Cuba completely failed. These attempts proved to be futile. His guerilla group’s action showed no development or success.

The Guevara plan, according to which a powerful guerilla base was to be established in Bolivia, and serve as a point from which military and armed groups were to be sent to all countries on the continent proved to be a complete failure as well. Guevara’s name is related to Cuba’s most mass-scale attempt to implement its policy on the continent. Yet Guevara’s death proved the futility and wrong course of the Cuban Communist Party’s policy.

For quite a long time the Cuban comrades have not tried to conceal the growing gap [between them and the leaders of other] communist parties. On the contrary—they have been emphasizing [the deteriorating relations with] these parties and point to that as the ground for carrying out certain activities.

They refused to send a delegation to the German Unified Socialist Party’s congress, justifying their decision by stating, that they had conflicting stances on definite issues of our contemporary development, and that they were therefore unwilling to cause problems to Cuba’s relations with the socialist countries. Cienfuegos maintained that the communist parties turn their congresses into tribunals of the international communist movement; these forums are used as places from which attacks against Cuba’s ideological conceptions are triggered (the Bulgarian Communist Party’s ninth congress was provided as an example in this respect; another example was the visit of [Mario] Monge [Molina], until recently First Secretary of the Bolivian Communist Party, to Cuba in January 1967; he was informed of Castro’s disapproval of the ninth congress of the Bolivian Communist Party, and the fact that Jesus Faria has been given the floor, for he attacked Cuba’s leaders). Cuba’s unwillingness to spark such a debate gave rise to its leaders’ decision not to send any delegations to such congresses in the future.

The Cuban leadership makes no effort to seek ways of overcoming its ideological differences with the international communist movement. On the contrary, Castro has made it clear, that Cuba has taken its own road of development, and that it is determined to follow it, despite all risks that it might be exposed to.

Top-level Soviet comrades, such as Gromyko, Masheroov, Rashidov, and others have visited Cuba; during their talks

Cuba's leaders have manifested their unwillingness to have a frank discussion and to seek by Cuba the appropriate ways to overcome the differences. That attitude was demonstrated by Cuba during the talks with Kosygin. For months on end, the Cuban comrades have been putting off answering comrade Andropov's request to visit, thus actually canceling it.

There have been cases of representatives of the other fraternal parties, secretaries of the Central Committees of the Mexican, Columbian or Venezuelan parties, coming to Cuba to have talks on debatable issues; Castro would keep them waiting for 10 or 15 days in Havana and finally would not have any meetings with them.

[...]

There follows a brief account of the ideological differences between the Cuban leadership and the international communist movement:

- on the nature of the major antagonism of the contemporary age. Cuba is of the opinion that it is the antagonism between imperialism and the national liberation movements rather than between socialism and capitalism;
- the world can be divided into two types of countries: poor and rich, irrespective of their social order;
- on the nature of peaceful co-existence. The latter is considered by Cuba's leaders as a conciliation with imperialism; therefore they favor the idea of having "the first, second, third...many Vietnams..."
- the driving forces of Latin America's revolution. The role of political parties is rejected. Debray's theory is essentially aimed at establishing the petty bourgeoisie's leading part in the revolutionary process. Hence the practical conclusion arrived at: the revolution is viewed as the fruitful result of a couple of convinced people's courage and bravery rather than the logical result of class struggle;
- The USSR's and the socialist countries' experience in building socialism is denied; thus the USSR is underestimated and undermined.
- Lenin's theory can not be further developed;
- The international communist movement's significance is refuted, for its strategy and means of struggle are considered outdated.

B) Here are some facts that attest to these differences. Cuba is known to have taken part in the Budapest Conference of the fraternal parties; however its press gave no releases on this conference. Yet the Cuban CP CC's bulletin published all of the telegrams revealing

the conference's weaknesses, as well as the comments of the western press. Materials on the statements made by Romania's delegation were published. Upon the conference's closure, there was a special edition of the same bulletin, which published all of the Romanian delegation's materials and documents, [as well as] the conference's resolutions and comments in favor of the behavior of the Romanian delegation.

For the last several years Cuba's policy has increasingly distanced [itself] from the international communist movement, and has even openly opposed it at times.

[...]

Cuba's leaders are not choosy in selecting their friends – among them are pro-China, Trotsky's proponents, bourgeois revolutionaries, anti-communists, etc. What matters only is that these friends support Cuba and make official statements in favor of the Cuban Revolution; they must openly state that the latter provides the correct solutions to all contemporary problems, the revolution and the building of a new society; they must maintain that the communist movement has been experiencing a deep crisis and is outdated and has no significance and thus is unable to guide and govern the struggle; a new theory and [new] ideological weapons are necessary.

Cuba's leaders consider themselves the modern Leninists and they are determined to struggle to attract parties and communists to their cause. They hope that our parties, including the CPSU, will undergo ideological changes.

[...]

Cuba's leaders are looking forward to establishing new contacts with the fraternal parties, and will therefore be working actively in the places, where success may be anticipated. Its relations with [North] Korea, Vietnam, a specific attitude to the German Democratic Republic, and Romania, show Cuba's orientation towards smaller countries, and countries situated in strategically important spots. Cuba's policy is targeted at setting up such a political bloc, comprising of smaller socialist countries and of those that tend to distance themselves from the standard ideological postulates.

There is evidence that shows that such a policy is adopted to distract our attention from the USSR, and this bloc is established to oppose the USSR; thus Cuba wants to show that it is getting along well with all other countries, except the USSR.

C) Cuba's relations with the communist parties in

Latin America.

It is well known that the Cuban leaders have undertaken a mass-scale attack against Latin America's communist parties during the preparation of the OLAS conference. Since then, the attacks in the press or in the leaders' speeches are not so frequent. Yet their relations and attitudes have not changed much. Whenever Venezuela is talked about, a remark is always made about the Venezuelan communist party. The relations with Guatemala's Labor Party and the Dominican Communist Party have become complicated to some extent.

On its relations with Guatemala's labor party. We recently informed you that under pressure from Cuba, a group of guerrilla chiefs, under the leadership of Cesar Montez, opposed the party, denouncing its leaders as unreliable, and as accomplices to the opposition in committing much wrongdoing; they have set up a commandment for a unified political and military command of the guerrilla groups. Venezuela's example was followed. Then the groups united with Ion Sosa's squad, when Sosa was elected first officer-commander, and Montez—second officer-commander. These attacks against the party brought about a crisis in their relations with the Cuban leaders.

On its relations with the Dominican communist party. The Kaamaño case undermined relations of mutual trust. After unity was reached within the party, and they adopted a common program for action with democratic Dominican leaders and leftist organizations, the Cuban leaders organized Kaamaño's transfer to Cuba, against the party's will; he was then trained to act independently with Cuba's help, thus following the manner of the operation [carried out] in Bolivia.

Fabio Vazquez's efforts were aimed at imposing Cuba's policy on Colombia's revolutionary movement; his guerrillas are now painstakingly trying to separate Marulanda from the party and make him follow Fabio Vazquez's behavior or actions.

Cuba keeps training Latin American military groups, so that they may be transferred to their respective countries. We have information about the training of groups from Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. The latter are members of the pro-China group in Nicaragua.

These facts are indicative of the fact that there has been no significant change in Cuba's policy, nor in the political means [by which it attempts] to implement its strategy in Latin America, although it has become less influential.

Latin America's communist parties share a negative attitude towards Cuba. The criticism of certain communist parties about their lagging far behind the events, the lack of an active leadership and the outdated methods used is based on facts. However, denying these parties' role in the struggle,

Cuba's brutal intervention in their internal affairs and stimulating adventurism, has nothing to do with the brotherly concern about their position and attempts to assist them in their work.

Therefore, as a result of the pressure they have been exposed to by Cuba, and their objective development, these parties face the necessity of having to reconsider their ideology and make a serious analysis, on the one hand, and having to restructure their work, on the other; they will therefore be able to strengthen their avant-garde role and increase their active participation in the revolutionary struggle.

At present Latin America's communist parties face two major threats:

There is a threat of being pressed by Cuba to adopt its adventurous policies; this course may be brought to pass them by the younger generation of the parties, or by a separate member of the party leadership; another factor that may provoke adopting such a political course may be the guerrilla groups that have been established within the countries, despite the disapproval of the communist party.

This threat is more than probable. Many communist parties such as Venezuela's, Guatemala's, Honduras's, Nicaragua's have actually been affected by such a policy. After the conference of OLAS and Guevara's death, parties have been strengthened and are likely to resist such adventurism. However, should Cuba's leaders keep organizing guerrilla squads in the countries of Latin America and [keep] attacking the communist parties there, then more problems will arise, and these countries may yield to the pressure they are subject to. Hence the danger and threat of undertaking adventurous actions and thus weakening the parties' unity and the revolutionary movement.

Another threat is their underestimating the changing environment on the continent. Unless the party leaders respond to these changes adequately, showing their activity, flexibility and skill in uniting and consolidating the democratic and revolutionary forces, the problems within the parties are likely to be aggravated. An example of this is the situation in some of the parties in the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Brazil, and some others. There is a tendency towards a renewal that unfortunately is beyond the party leaders' control; this renewal does not always comply with the party norms. It is often accompanied by extremism both in terms of action and ideas.

1. On the Cuban leaders' attitude to the USSR

Even with the new Soviet Ambassador to Havana, [Alexander Alexeyevich] Soldatov, taking office, the situation has not

changed much. The Cuban CP's plenary session struck a terrible blow at relations between Cuba and the USSR. Insinuations about the USSR's exerting pressure on Cuba have been maintained in a hidden form. Insinuations about the USSR's exerting pressure on Cuba can still be assumed.

Some Cuban leaders still argue that Cuba does not conduct an anti-Soviet policy, and that the present situation is transitional and a result of a micro-faction's action. However that is not so. There is evidence that the distancing from the Soviet Union is becoming a well-considered policy of the Cuban leaders.

At a recent meeting between the new Soviet ambassador to Havana and Fidel Castro, the latter maintained that the Soviet Union is unwilling to help Cuba and that it has adopted an incorrect policy towards Cuba. He [Castro] was very distanced and did not show any willingness to seek ways to improve contacts and normalize relations. There was no press release about this meeting.

The lack of tribute paid to the USSR's role and the disgracing of the Soviet Union has lasted for years. This negative attitude was enhanced with the Caribbean crisis.

Tension has artificially been built up along the following lines:

a) The strategy and tactics of Latin America. The Cuban leaders insist that the parties adopt their [Cuban] assessments, methods and forms of struggle. According to the Cuban perspective, the Cuban Revolution will be exposed to the risk of being invaded by imperialism, unless the revolution is triumphant on the whole continent. Even when there are no prospects for a successful end to the armed struggle, the latter still deprives the USA of its opportunities to attack and invade Cuba.

The policy of intensifying the trade relations and economic cooperation between the Latin American countries and the socialist countries is considered a blow behind Cuba's back. This policy totally contradicts Cuba's policy in Latin America. We have been blamed not only for helping people that kill the partisans, but for the regimes that are boycotting Cuba as well.

b) Cuba opposes the policy of peaceful co-existence, considering it a form of reconciliation with imperialism.

The draft of the Treaty on Nuclear Arms Proliferation, that was tabled for discussion before the UN, was yet another reason for Cuba to attack the Soviet Union's policy and consider it analogous with the USA's.

c) It must be noted that recently there has been a marked difference in Cuba's attitude towards the European

socialist countries and the USSR.

Cuba keeps maintaining that it is much easier to achieve understanding with the smaller socialist countries; that we have many things in common, and that our experience might well be the guiding light for Cuba building socialism.

Or as Castro pointed out in his speech of 30th May, the countries that are exposed to the danger of imperialism, such as Cuba and the German Democratic Republic, have to work in close cooperation.

[...]

III. On our work in Cuba and the further development of our relations.

The development of relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union will determine Cuba's future relations with the socialist countries. Moreover, these relations will determine the future policy adopted by Cuba's leaders.

The problems in the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union arose during the Caribbean crisis. It is a well-known fact that Cuba has not yet come to terms with the missiles being moved from its territory; therefore the Caribbean crisis brought about the distrust of Cuba's leaders towards the Soviet Union. The negative attitudes were supposed to fade away and be overcome with time.

In 1964 Fidel Castro visited the Soviet Union for a second time. The documents signed gave rise to confidence that problems resulting from the Caribbean crisis were being overcome.

At the end of 1964 the conference of the Latin American communist parties was held; this conference was positively regarded as an important step forward to further improving the relations between the CCP and the communist parties of the other countries on the continent.

[...]

On the further development of our relations in the present situation

All circumstances, outlined so far, will obviously determine the further development of our relations.

As we have already pointed out, Cuba's leaders have manifested a positive attitude towards our country and party. They are looking forward to Todor Zhivkov's visit. The Cuban leaders take an interest in this visit. This visit will strengthen its authority and prestige both within the country and abroad. Our party is popular in Cuba. Georgi Dimitrov's name is well known.

Another factor that determines Cuba's positive attitude is the high-quality work of our specialists there.

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 378-B, Opis 1, a.e. 1079;
translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; edited by Dr.
Jordan Baev.]



**BCP Politburo Member Boris Velchev,
Report to Boris N. Ponomarev, Secretary,
Central Committee, Communist Party of
the Soviet Union (CPSU), re: Relations
with Latin America, n.d. [March 1970]³⁵**

To: the Secretary of the Central Committee of
the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Comrade Ponomarev, B. N.

Moscow

Dear comrade Ponomarev,

Recently the Politburo of CC of the BCP discussed the report of the delegation of our party, which in the end of 1969 visited Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil and adopted resolution for activating of the economic, political and cultural relations of PR Bulgaria with the countries from Latin America.

We would like to share with you some considerations of Politburo of BCP CC about the situation in Latin America and about the attitude of the brotherly socialist countries to this continent.

It is well known that the USA is making big efforts to keep and consolidate its dominance in Latin America, which they have turned into a raw-material appendage to their economics, in a sphere of utilization of capital, and a source of immense profits, generally in their strategic rear.

However, the policy of the USA and the local reactionary regimes meets bigger and bigger resistance on behalf of the peoples of Latin America. They are fighting for true sovereignty, for economic independence and social liberation, which [Nelson A.] Rockefeller, too, was forced to admit after his tour in Latin America.³⁶ The struggles of the working class, the peasants and the students are growing. They are more and more characterized by mass participation, organized character and political purposefulness. The social basis of the anti-imperialist struggle is broadening and new layers and forces join it - including certain circles from the army and the Catholic Church, and in separate cases, from the ruling circles. The communist parties, with all their weaknesses

and faults, as the most staunch and organized revolutionary powers, are aspiring more and more consciously to extend their influence among the working class, they are looking for contacts and common grounds with other democratic and patriotic powers, they are fighting for the building of broad anti-imperialistic, anti-oligarchic and anti-dictators' fronts.

There is no doubt that the upsurge of the struggle for liberation of the peoples of Latin America against the imperialism, the latifundists and the big capitalists, the growth of the anti-American feelings and the flow of new social powers in the anti-imperialistic movement, the increase of the influence of the communist parties create favorable conditions for further development of the process for liberation of the countries of Latin America from the economic and political dominance of the USA and the local oligarchy. Obviously, this process will develop more successfully the more numerous positions and the greater influence the socialist countries gain in different spheres of life in Latin America.

However, the facts show that the penetration and the influence of the socialist countries are falling behind the development of the progressive tendencies in this region of the world. The economic, political, and cultural relations with the countries of Latin America are limited and do not meet the constantly increasing opportunities.

In our view, the most essential weakness is that the socialist countries do not implement common and coordinated policy in relation to Latin America, in order to concentrate their efforts where there are most favorable conditions, to be used most fully. This refers particularly to the implementing of collective construction works, complete deliveries, granting of credits for technologies, industrial cooperation, long-term binding of some sectors of the economic activities on the basis of partial division of labor among the brotherly socialist countries (in the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) or bilaterally) and the interested countries in Latin America.

The communist parties, the trade unions, the youth, the women's and the other public and state organizations and institutes from the socialist countries do not coordinate sufficiently their efforts in Latin America.

From all this we arrive at the conclusion that the fraternal socialist countries should discuss coordinated actions for ensuring a constantly increasing participation and influence in the economics, the politics and the culture of the Latin-American countries depending on the interest which they present for us and for the common struggle against imperialism, to develop and to implement a common strategy and tactics in relation to Latin America so that these countries and their peoples can gradually be won as our friends.

Naturally, the center of the coordinated efforts of the socialist countries should be the Soviet Union. Above all, its decisive advance can very soon be felt in the economic, political and cultural life of Latin America. All the rest of the brotherly socialist countries could cooperate, each of them giving its contribution in conformity with its national interests and its international obligations.

Obviously, the change of the attitude of the socialist countries to Latin America should not be measured with the attaining at all costs of a big relative share in the economic relations with the separate countries. At the moment it is not realistic to consider the task of ousting economically the USA from this continent. But the opportunities with which the brotherly socialist countries, and first of all the USSR, dispose of, are such that even at relatively no big share in the economic sphere, the coordination and the increase of our participation in all spheres of life in Latin America inevitably will yield the results that we wish. On one hand, the USA will feel that the time of its monopoly in that continent is ending, and, on the other hand, the patriotic and the progressive powers will have a powerful stimulus and support in their struggle against imperialism, the monopolies and the oligarchy in the respective countries.

In this respect we can give as an example the Peruvian case. From the talks of the delegation with some Peruvian Ministers it can be seen that they are looking for the cooperation of socialist countries because they understand that only this cooperation can be lucrative for them and [can] aid their policy for wringing themselves out of the paws of imperialism and for independent development of the country. The Peruvian leaders feel best that if the new regime is not aided by the socialist countries, then the American imperialists quickly will find a way to submit Peru to their will.

The economic difficulties and the strife for the weakening the dependence on the USA force the Latin-American bourgeoisie to seek cooperation with the countries from Europe and Asia, including the socialist countries. By expanding our economic relations we can cooperate in intensifying of the nationalistic and anti-imperialistic feelings on the continent, to win new allies in the struggle against imperialism.

Comrades Rodney Arismendi, Hilberto Vieira, Jorge del Prado, Orestes Ghioldi, and other representatives of fraternal parties and progressive forces there make more and more explicit statements about the necessity of expanding our all-embracing relations and cooperation with the countries of Latin America.³⁷ Comrade Luis Corvalan³⁸ declared before the delegation that indeed there was a danger of direct or indirect American intervention in order to prevent a possible victory of the left wing forces in Chile. But, he also empha-

sized that it would not happen so easy because the imperialists realized that there was a socialist community, that the Soviet Union existed in the world, as well as a powerful communist and working-class movement.

With small exceptions, the communist parties in Latin America stand on correct Marxist-Leninist positions, the working-class movement is organized and the revolutionary process is at a higher stage of development. We can be convinced that the common efforts of the socialist countries inevitably will render good results.

On account of all this we suggest that a high level meeting among the brotherly parties of countries members of COMECON be summoned, at which the possibilities for coordinating and implementing our policy and [strengthening] our comprehensive relations with the countries of Latin America will be discussed. If you think that it is necessary, we are willing to go to Moscow in order to inform the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in more detail, to exchange thoughts and after that this issue could be posed before the other parties from the brotherly socialist countries.

I seize the opportunity to convey to you our heart-felt greetings and best wishes.

BORIS VELCHEV

Member of Politburo and Secretary of the CC BCP

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 35, a.e. 1458; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Reports re Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov's visit to Cuba, July-August 1970, at BCP Politburo Session, 4 August 1970 (including excerpts from Zhivkov-Fidel Castro memorandum of conversation, 30 July 1970)

PROTOCOL "A" No. 468
OF THE MEETING OF POLITBURO OF CC OF BCP
ON 4 AUGUST 1970

ISSUES ON THE AGENDA:

1. About the visit of our party-governmental delegation in the Republic of Cuba.

RESOLUTIONS:

I. The information of comrade Boris Velchev about the visit of the party-governmental delegation led by comrade Todor Zhivkov in the Republic of Cuba from 25 July till 1 August this year is accepted. The activities of the delegation and the results of the conducted talks and negotiations are approved and highly valued.

2. Comrade Todor Zhivkov is assigned the following: to give a talk on the Bulgarian radio and television about the visit of our party-governmental delegation in Cuba; to talk with comrade Leonid Brezhnev and to inform him personally about our impressions, conclusions and assessments about the situation in the Republic of Cuba, and also about some pressing issues of the cooperation of the countries members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance with Cuba.

3. The leaders of the fraternal parties in the socialist countries, besides the Socialist Republic of Romania, [are] to be informed about the visit of our party-governmental delegation in Republic of Cuba.

4. The "Foreign policy and international relations" Department of the CC of the BCP and the Foreign Ministry, coordinated with the respective ministries, institutes and departments, [are] to develop and put forward for approval in Politburo an overall program for consolidation and expansion of the relations and the cooperation of our country with the Republic of Cuba in the economic, political, and cultural spheres.

5. To take immediate measures for the consolidation of the diplomatic and the trade representation of PRB in Havana with personnel that is capable of solving the issues connected with the further expansion of the economic, the political, and the cultural relations and cooperation of our country with the Republic of Cuba. First of all the ambassador of PRB Diko Dikov³⁹ and the commercial representative Fidan Avramov will be replaced by suitable people.

[...]

NOTES

From the statements [made] during the meeting of Politburo about the information regarding the visit of our party-governmental delegation in the Republic of Cuba

TODOR ZHIVKOV:

We can consider as unanimous the positive assessment about the work of the delegation and about the results of its visit to Cuba.

The motion for drafting a special resolution in relation to the visit of the delegation and the further expansion of the relations and the cooperation of our country with the Republic of Cuba is correct. Next we have to consider what the contents of this resolution will be and what actions it will encompass.

Obviously, we have to make a reassessment of lot of things, a political reassessment, first of all. Where do our mistakes and delusions in relation to Cuba come from?

- From underestimating the main, the most essential [fact] about Cuba, namely, that the leaders there, including Castro, do not stand on consistent Marxist-Leninist positions, those of scientific socialism, and that we were not sufficiently aware of this circumstance in developing our approach to Cuba.

[...]

- About the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. We have to convince the Cuban comrades to begin to coordinate their prospective plans with the plans of the member countries of COMECON gradually, so that the cooperation and the aid for Cuba will become more expedient and more effective.

About the ration system. COMECON has to spare a few milliards in order to eliminate this system. This situation cannot be tolerated any more. This is a crime for which one day history will condemn us.

- [According to] our impressions, assessments and conclusions, it is appropriate to inform the leaders of the fraternal parties in the socialist countries, with the exception of Romania, [about the findings of our visit].

Notwithstanding the talks with comrade Brezhnev, possibly with comrade Kosygin, it will be expedient to prepare written information and to send it to the leaders of the brotherly parties in the socialist countries.

- About our representations in Cuba. Comrade Diko Dikov is not acquainted with the situation there. At the meeting that we had in the embassy he informed us at great length, but he could not reveal the true picture. It is necessary that he be immediately replaced and given another assignment.

[...]

PEKO TAKOV

- The situation in Cuba is complicated and the difficulties there are great. However, it is most important that there they strive decisively to construct a new socialist society.

[...]

That is why their hesitation and obscure concepts on a number of basic issues of the revolution and of the construction of socialism are not a coincidence. For example, let's take the money issue. Castro declared that he was convinced that money was not necessary and they could do without it. In this respect he even makes attempts to quote Marx (what he wrote about the Gothic Program). However, on the following day he told us about the production of their state factory for shoes. He boasted that their shoes were very cheap. However, they sell them three times more expensively and in this way they collect revenue from the population and effect accumulation. In other words, practically, he admits the need for money and its role (and the population there has a lot of money).

Like the other Cuban leaders, Castro thinks that covering money with goods in general is impossible and that this problem can be resolved only with rations, [and only] partially at that.

In this respect, too, the Cuban friends need assistance in order to gradually adopt the scientific understanding of this matter and to convince themselves that this can be done gradually by the creation of industrial and commodity funds and by the development of the industrial powers and the construction of modern socialist economics.

[...]

What else can I note? These are very honest people (for example, the price of sugar. I ask Castro why we have to receive Cuban sugar at a lower price than the Soviet Union. And he answers - because Bulgaria is not a rich country to pay a higher price.) However, these comrades are sensitive and, therefore, we have to work very carefully and sincerely and to apply a special approach. However, it turned out that we were not working in this way. Let's take for example the issue with our specialists in Cuba. Each receives 150 dollars monthly. Let it be 100-120, but why 150? The same applies to payment of the leaves of these people and their families. And this is a big colony.

About our aid and the Soviet aid for Cuba and the developing countries. The aid is enormous but it is scattered in dozens of countries and in a lot of cases it turns into consumers' aid, without playing the role of a factor for the development of the productive forces of these countries and [without] being a constructive factor in their economies. In many cases the effect of this aid is diminished and sometimes it is even lost. In this respect it is necessary to resort to concentration, to a better gradation of the needs and the objects, to assess where to concentrate the efforts at a certain time, in order

to attain the maximum economic and political effect from our aid.

[...]

Top secret!
INFORMATION

About the visit of our party-governmental delegation in Cuba from 25 July to 1 August 1970 disclosed at a meeting of Politburo in August 4th this year by comrade Boris Velchev

Comrades,

In order to assess correctly the results from the visit of our delegation in Cuba we should be reminded at what moment it took place.

We can definitely say that we visited Cuba at a favorable moment. Lately, a positive process is taking place there. It is expressed in the aspirations of the Cuban party and state leaders on a number of basic issues of the development of Cuba and its international activities to be founded upon Marxist-Leninist principles and to cooperate more closely with the Soviet Union and the other brotherly socialist countries.

What precisely do I have in mind?

From the research conducted before the departure of the delegation the following was ascertained:

1. The main problem for the Cuban leaders now is not the implementation of revolution in Latin America but the development of the economics of Cuba and the solving of the tasks of the socialist construction.
2. The Cuban leaders adopt a course of rapprochement and all-embracing cooperation with the USSR and the other brotherly socialist countries in which it seems they see one of the main prerequisites for the success of socialism in Cuba.
3. The leaders more and more definitely make statements for unity of the socialist community and of the international communist movement, while supporting the claim that this should happen on a bilateral basis. There is still a reservation towards the documents [presented] at the meeting in Moscow and towards the importance and the role of our common organizations, for example COMECON.
4. They take more and more realistic positions on the issues of the struggle against imperialism and so on.

At the same time it must be emphasized that the good state of Bulgarian-Cuban relations and the special attitude of

Cuba towards Bulgaria, manifested on numerous occasions, along with Cuba's willingness to cooperate with our country, [created] favorable circumstances for our visit.

[...]

In this chain of ideas I would like to say that we displayed willingness to understand their positions, and while composing the Communiqué, we agreed to drop some passages and to transform others in order to [make the text] more acceptable for them.

Thus, for example, we agreed not to mention anywhere the CPSU and the Soviet Union. Their motive was that the world was well aware of the relations of Cuba and Bulgaria with the USSR and that it referred to bilateral relations and it was not necessary to speak about a third party.

Also they made it clear that they will not cede.

Everyone understands that if on this and on some other issues we had not displayed the necessary flexibility, it could have only harmed our efforts to attain the major goal, which we sought after.

We agreed not to mention the communist parties of Latin America, but as it is said in the Communiqué the Marxist-Leninist ideas and the communists.

Something else, [we agreed] not to speak about the international meeting of the communist parties, since they were not actual participants in it. But in the Communiqué were included passages that both parties would fight for the unity of the world socialist system and of the international movement, as well as for intensifying the anti-imperialistic struggle.

Practically they consented to record the essence of the resolution of the UN Security Council for the Middle East, but they did not agree that such a resolution should be mentioned, since they had not voted for it.

What was the second peculiarity of our tactics?

They were convinced that we had a sincere wish to cooperate with them and to assist them. They thanked us for the aid, which we had rendered them up to now. From our behavior and from the offers we made them, they saw that we have come with an open heart. During the talks comrade T. Zhivkov gave them an opportunity to get a better sense of our intentions.

[...]

And something very important - comrade Todor Zhivkov posed the question for assistance on a broader basis. He recommended to the Cuban comrades to think about partial or complete participation and membership of Cuba in COMECON.

The third peculiarity of our tactics was in an appropriate form to show better than ever that Bulgaria was a partner, from which they could benefit. This happened with the statement comrade Todor Zhivkov made at the meeting with Politburo and also during his talks with comrade Castro about the issues, which we were solving, about our experience now and in the past, and about the prospects for our country.

I would only like to note that they were strongly surprised when comrade T. Zhivkov spoke about the tasks ensuing from the resolutions of the September Plenum of the CC BCP. It was obvious that they had not seen the problems of the scientific and technical progress in such a way. We had the impression that the words of comrade Todor Zhivkov sounded to them as if in an unknown language. Comrade Fidel Castro displayed keen interest and a few times asked how and when we had discovered all this and whether it was the same in the other socialist countries. He took detailed notes. The other comrades did the same.

We could not implement fully this scheme in our tactics - not to argue with them and not to moralize, but to tell them more about our experience (how we overcame the difficulties, how we resolved the problems, and so on) - because the time was not enough. And obviously, it was necessary to talk with them more about some other very important problems of the construction of socialism.

Such are the specifics, which first of all, comrade T. Zhivkov suggested. And in these circumstances, we could not but attain good results.

[...]

Top secret!

PROTOCOL

about the talk between the delegation of CC of BCP and Politburo of the Cuban Socialist Party, which took place on 30 July 1970

From the Bulgarian delegation, comrades Todor Zhivkov, Boris Velchev, and Peko Takov took part at the meeting

.

From the Cuban side the meeting attended comrades Fidel Castro, Osvaldo Dorticos, Raul Castro, Sergio del Valle, Ramiro Valdez, and Armando Hart.

FIDEL CASTRO: Our meeting has no agenda.

TODOR ZHIVKOV: In Bulgaria they say- a meeting without a speaker.

BORIS VELCHEV: There is an agenda. This is the Bulgarian-Cuban friendship.

FIDEL CASTRO: The question is that there are no big problems between us.

TODOR ZHIVKOV: So it seems to us, too.

FIDEL CASTRO: This saves us time. There are big problems but we are small countries and they do not fall in our radius of action.

TODOR ZHIVKOV: It is the small pebbles that overturn the cart.

OSVALDO DORTICOS: Maybe comrade Zhivkov would like to take the floor before the talks begin.

FIDEL CASTRO: We are interested in your plans during the next five year period. You told me about the trade, the trusts, and the agrarian industrial complexes. Comrade Zhivkov is more informed than we are. We are isolated and we know less. We are interested in everything about Bulgaria, about what we talked about and the prospects of COMECON. About COMECON we know only about the issues, which are affecting us directly. For example, we know that the GDR will stop producing busses, that Poland will stop producing airplanes, and so on. We hear about COMECON when we meet difficulties with the import of some goods. We do not hear about COMECON anything that could favor us. When we tried to coordinate the issue about sugar at the political level, we came to an agreement, but after that things did not go well. The administrative apparatus hinders the implementations of the resolutions of the political leadership.

However, we have to say that we are not complaining of anything in our relations with Bulgaria. We only want comrade Todor Zhivkov to act as our representative where it is necessary and to represent a friendly voice for us. However, this is already a reality and I want something which I know is true, since comrade Zhivkov is already a friend of ours in COMECON.

As comrade Zhivkov said, the coordination of our efforts is difficult and there are problems. What he said about the trusts is very important. Bulgaria and Cuba are small countries and they have not many natural resources. That is why, as comrade Zhivkov said, you are supporters of coordination

and cooperation. The numbers, which comrade Zhivkov announced about the role of the foreign trade in the formation of the national revenue of Bulgaria, are very interesting. The same refers to us, as well. The other thing, which interests us, is the foundation of trust among the socialist countries. I told comrade Zhivkov that we are ready for bilateral cooperation. This is attainable at the moment. There are small problems, which can be resolved at the annual meetings of the Committee for economic and scientific-technical cooperation.

I would like to emphasize our goal and willingness to attain maximum cooperation with Bulgaria. Nevertheless, we are improving our relations with the Soviet Union, with which our connections have been developing very well recently, and we would like to develop our relations with Bulgaria. Generally, our relations with the USSR and the other socialist countries are developing very well. We have good will in this respect. The admiration of our people for the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Bulgarian people was expressed these days in various ways.

We would like to make our relations closer and to exchange experience. This does not require many expenses and we benefit more from such cooperation. Of course, it is not what motivates us. In the end, the benefit will be for the cause of socialism. I proceed from the real state of affairs. We do not wish to resolve our problems by creating difficulties for others, since all socialist countries have their own problems. Bulgaria has no natural resources and you should work a lot in order to overcome these difficulties. We would like to cooperate on issues of mutual interest.

[...]

Comrade TODOR ZHIVKOV focused on the problems of COMECON. He gave an assessment that COMECON played a big role for the development of the socialist countries. He concentrated on the role of COMECON for the victory of socialism in Bulgaria. After that comrade Zhivkov spoke about the new tasks, which confronted us. He told us about some difficulties and problems of COMECON. In this connection Fidel Castro expressed the position that it would be better if there were common economics for all socialist countries and he asked where the crack, which Cuba could squeeze in COMECON through, was.

Comrade Zhivkov answered that Cuba could cooperate with the countries from COMECON. For example, he pointed out that Cuba could participate in the building of a big metallurgic enterprise in the Soviet Union, in the plant for caustic soda in Bulgaria and in the development of the manganese ore in Bulgaria. He expressed the idea that with

the efforts of all socialist countries a common enterprise for exploitation of nickel ore, and so on could be built in Cuba . [...]

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 35, a.e. 1575; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Memorandum Re: Bulgarian-Cuban relations, 15 December 1970

MEMORANDUM

About: putting forward a draft resolution in Politburo about the all-embracing relations between People's Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba

The visit of our party-governmental delegation, led by comrade Todor Zhivkov in Cuba in July 1970, marked a new and higher stage in the development of the all-embracing relations between Bulgaria and Cuba. The delegation determined that the positive process of rapprochement with the USSR and the socialist community, which was being observed in recent years, continued to develop and to intensify. [...] The main problem of the Cuban leaders is the economic development of Cuba, along with resolving the issues [related to] building socialism in the country. [...]

The economic development of the Republic of Cuba after the revolution in 1959 marks constant advance. The socialist sector strengthened its basic position in the economy of the country and the collective state property became leading in almost all branches in the national economy. [...]

However, the unresolved problems are many. The difficulties are still big and they additionally complicate the severe conditions in Cuba, resulting mostly from the highly underdeveloped economics, the economic embargo, the provocations, the diversions and the sabotages of the North American imperialists. The problem with supplying the population [with goods] is not resolved and there is no close prospect for abolishing rationing [in Cuba]. The problem with housing is acute; there is a lack of qualified personnel and so on.

Resolving Cuba's problems is impeded first of all by the circumstance that the leaders still have not fully mastered

Marxism-Leninism, and because of this they make a lot of mistakes:

- They do not do everything necessary to prominently display the role of the party [in order to] resolve all problems of development.

- They have not completed the construction of all bodies of the dictatorship of the proletariat and more precisely, of the local bodies of state power.

- A real scientific planning is lacking.

- The role of the economic factors is seriously belittled - there is no distinct position in relation to the material interest.

- There are still reservations towards the documents from the Moscow meeting and towards the significance and the role of organizations, such as COMECON.

Despite these weaknesses, it should be acknowledged that the Cuban leaders have walked quite a long revolutionary road, they are loyal to the cause of the revolution, and they are staunch opponents of imperialism. They enjoy the confidence of the people and have set to build a socialist society with great energy, and strive to develop comprehensive cooperation with our countries.

The bilateral Bulgarian-Cuban relations are developing successfully. The economic and the scientific-technical cooperation mark a constant advance. Cuba occupies fifth place in the foreign trade exchange of PRB with the socialist countries. The Cuban leaders especially appreciate the work of the Bulgarian specialists and the assistance, which our country renders in the training of personnel for the different sectors of the people's economics. During the last years the relations along the party and the state line also expanded. The relations between the public organizations of the two countries expanded, as well. The relations and the cooperation along the culture line are constantly developing, too.

However, the opportunities for the further expansion and intensification of our bilateral relations at the current success [level] are not fully utilized, [a fact] which was determined by the party-governmental delegation, led by comrade Todor Zhivkov.

One of the reasons about this is that the information about the situation in Cuba was incomplete and one-sided. The Cuban reality was assessed purely from our [own] position. It was approached from our viewpoint and experience for the construction of a socialist society and the specific peculiarities of the conditions in Cuba were almost not taken into account. The positive things, which were done there, were not assessed sufficiently. An important factor was neglected, namely that the adoption of Marxism-Leninism is a continuous and difficult process, which requires time, and a more special approach

and substantial assistance on behalf of each of the brotherly parties of the socialist countries is required.

Nevertheless, the economic relations of PRB with Republic of Cuba expanded considerably in the past few years and the commodity circulation for the period 1966-1970 is expected to amount to about 240 million dollars against 136 million dollars during the last five-year period, the [level that was] attained is not sufficient in comparison with the true capacities. Besides, a lot of mistakes have been made and are being made on behalf of our economic units and enterprises, while fulfilling their obligations towards Cuba with respect to the mutual commodity circulation. The agreed upon deadlines are not observed in the shipment of commodities and in [the completion of] comprehensive projects, a great deal of our products are sent with lower quality indices than the negotiated ones, the spare parts for the machines which we have sold are not delivered on time and so on. All this creates difficulties for the Cuban comrades and there is a danger that our country may lose the positions already won on the Cuban market, especially for agricultural machines.

A particularly important problem in the economic relations between Bulgaria and Cuba is that we still have not come to an agreement with the Cuban party on its request for the continuation and observation of the clause, agreed upon with the signing of the long-term trade treaty between PR Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba for 1965-1970, for veto of export and re-export of sugar from Bulgaria. Our interpretation of that clause has exerted and will exert restricting influence on the development of the relations between Bulgaria and Cuba.

The contacts at the government level are unsatisfactory. Not enough initiative is exhibited for establishing lasting relations between the Bulgarian and the Cuban ministries and departments and for the quicker drawing in of Cuba in the coordination of the positions of the socialist countries in the international organizations.

Weaknesses are also encountered in the implementation of cultural relations. Sometimes in the musical and artistic exchange, the respective institutions are guided mainly by commercial interest and thus create difficulties for the normal development of the cultural relations between the two countries.

All this requires a radical turning point in our relations with Cuba. It is our international duty to assist the consolidation of the first socialist country in America with all possible means, which has a historical significance mostly for the development of the revolutionary process in Latin America.

In the future, the relations between our country and Cuba should be built and bolstered on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism and on mutual

respect and trust as well. Our goal should be to turn them into an example of relations between two fraternal socialist countries, making efforts for further expansion and intensification of the political, economic and cultural relations with the Republic of Cuba, for its full incorporation in the socialist community.

With a view of attaining this goal and implementing the assessments and conclusions of the delegation unanimously approved by Politburo, the "Foreign policy and international relations" Department of CC of BCP and the Foreign Ministry suggests to Politburo to approve the enacted measures for the expansion of the all-embracing relations between PR Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba. The measures are prepared in accord with the motions and the recommendations of the ministries, the departments, the institutions, and the organizations concerned with the expansion and the intensification of the relations between the two countries.

15 December 1970

Head of department "Foreign policy and international relations" of CC of BCP: K. Tellalov

Foreign Minister: Ivan Bashev

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 35, a.e. 1927; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Report on Fidel Castro's visit to Bulgaria, May 1972, and Bulgarian-Cuban relations

Top secret!

INFORMATION

About the visit of the Cuban party-governmental delegation led by comrade Fidel Castro in Bulgaria

A Cuban party-governmental delegation led by comrade F. Castro was on a visit in our country in the period 17-26 May 1972. It returned the visit of our party-governmental delegation led by comrade T. Zhivkov that visited Cuba in July 1970.

The Politburo and personally comrade Zhivkov attached great importance to that first visit of a delegation of such a high rank led by comrade F. Castro.

The visit took place in a very favorable atmosphere, on one hand, because of the positive process which has been taking place in Cuba in the recent years, and because of the aspiration of the Cuban party and state leaders more and more definitely to stand on Marxist-Leninist positions and to cooperate more closely with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, and, on the other hand, because of the existing sympathies and the established good relations between the two countries, and especially because of the friendly relations between comrade T. Zhivkov and comrade F. Castro.

Our main goal was to reinforce and to quicken this positive process, which is taking place in Cuba now. That is why we took to the imminent task very seriously and responsibly. What made us do that?

First of all, the situation in Cuba, which Politburo and especially comrade T. Zhivkov know very well. Since comrade T. Zhivkov's visit to Cuba the positive process continues but the problems remain the same. The tempos of the economic development on the main indices and in the basic branches are very low- about 2-3% growth. And it seems that there is no real planning. It is said that it would be done but it is carried out slowly and it is not felt like something very important in the construction of socialism. Similar things can be pointed out about the leading role of the party, about the bodies of the proletarian dictatorship, about the material interest and others.

Before the visit of the delegation, we got hold of the information that some leading comrades in Cuba were hoping that we would exert influence on comrade F. Castro and that the visit would turn into a lesson to show him the positive experience of PR Bulgaria in the construction of socialism. Some Cubans who have been to Bulgaria told our specialists in Cuba – “show comrade F. Castro how you built socialism, we want such socialism in our country as well.”

In view of all this we set the following particular tasks:

1. The Cuban comrades and especially comrade F. Castro [were] to be introduced to the methods of ruling the party and the state, to the role and the place of the party in the social system and, first of all, in the sphere of economics, and to the role of planning in the overall life of the country.

2. The leading role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the international communist and working-class movement [was] to be strengthened and reservations in this respect [were] to be overcome.

3. Our economic and scientific-technical cooperation to be improved and made more effective.

In defining the ways and the means for attaining the goals and the tasks which we have set before us we proceeded from the following additional considerations as well:

1. Not to insult their self-confidence and national dignity, to take into consideration comrade F. Castro's character and not to leave the impression that we are edifying them.

2. To let them understand that we acknowledge their big merits, their heroic deed, to let them feel our warmth, respect, and love personally towards comrade F. Castro as a leader of the Cuban revolution.

3. With the correct approach, to create an atmosphere of full confidence and brotherhood.

Proceeding from the presented considerations, the particular sites for the visit were carefully chosen. The program for the negotiations itself and the work of the two delegations was personally developed by comrade T. Zhivkov.

How did the visit of the Cuban delegation led by comrade F. Castro begin and go off?

On the very first day after the reception – 17 May, by request of comrade F. Castro, outside the approved program, there was a visit to the exhibition of new food products.

After the presentation in the exhibition, an animated discussion among the Cuban comrades, with the participation of comrade T. Zhivkov and especially comrade F. Castro, took place. Despite our efforts to explain to him that the commodities are available and are sold in the shops, he [comrade F. Castro] continued to ask who was distributing the candies, for example. We explained to him that from the industry, the commodities were directed to the network of shops and were available and sold to the people. The Cuban comrades displayed a great interest [in knowing] how much sugar and sugar products cost. It felt as if they wanted to clarify how much we gained from their sugar and [to find out] if its price was realistic. We gave them very thorough explanations. After that they apologized and said that they had no intention to discuss the price of sugar but they had asked simply for their own information. It was obvious that they came with some prejudices, and also that the mechanism of price-formation in a trade without rations was not clear for them. On the way back to the residence comrade Castro was interested in the structure of our export for the Soviet Union and the import and asked a lot of questions. It was evident that he would display a great interest, at that, on a broad range of issues, which was good.

Those were the feelings and the mood when the work of the two delegations began. At the meeting between the two delegations, at suggestion made by comrade F. Castro, comrade T. Zhivkov was the first to speak. An agreement was reached that the issues of the international situation be discussed at the meeting with Politburo. The statement of comrade T. Zhivkov evoked great interest. It was accompanied with a great deal of questions and it turned into a friendly talk.

[...]

In his statement comrade T. Zhivkov explained how the Central Committee ruled the party and the state, how the leading role of the party was implemented, and pointed out the difficulties and the weaknesses, which we had, quite openly and [in a] straightforward [manner]. Because of comrade F. Castro's questions, the statement of comrade T. Zhivkov was prolonged from one hour to two hours and a half.

Comrade Castro related in great detail about the hard [burden of the] capitalist legacy left to Cuba, about the country's poor natural resources, and about the difficulties provoked by the sabotage activities of the American imperialists, who forced them to keep a large army. Still, they have [achieved] success and they take measures for the further development of their economy.

Comrade Castro pointed out that the main production in Cuba's economy is the turnout of sugar. [...] He announced that they had set before themselves the task to obtain 10 millions tons of sugar because they have no other resources in order to repay their debts but they had not reached that production [level]. Although nobody insisted on repayment, they think that it is not proper to go on in this way. "Comrade Zhivkov, I regret to meet you without fulfilling our obligation for the delivery of sugar which we promised you." In answer to that, comrade Zhivkov declared that the problem was clarified and that it was not us that posed it (later comrade Castro told comrade Zhivkov that the undelivered sugar would be compensated with 300 tons of nickel, which according to the Ministry of foreign trade, satisfies us).

[...]

As in the statement at the first meeting, at other occasions, too, comrade F. Castro emphasized that the development of their economy had to be assisted, so that the country would be saved from poverty. "Cuba receives economic assistance - declared comrade Castro, - but we cannot live on aid until the end of our lives."

[...]

After that comrade T. Zhivkov declared that he fully understood the economic difficulties and that he was willing to look for a common solution. Perhaps a special meeting of COMECON or something else is required - said he, - about which it is good to ask the Soviet comrades for advice. As far as Bulgaria is concerned, we will take on our part of the common task, no matter whether on multilateral or bilateral basis. At the moment we are discussing and resolving a number of issues about our economic and scientific-technical cooperation and we are willing to expand it and to search new forms and spheres which can reveal additional resources for the economies of the two countries.

The visits to the separate sites and the meetings were dedicated to specific topics, which in our assessment showed the positive experience of Bulgaria and were of interest for the Cuban delegation and most of all to comrade Castro. Comrade Zhivkov guided all this directly and practically led those talks, or more precisely, seminars.

[...]

Comrade F. Castro accepted with great interest everything that was said, especially by comrade T. Zhivkov. However, it felt that these things were relatively new and to a certain extent foreign to him, and made a strong impression on him. It must be said that he took notes the entire time. After that we were asked on his behalf to give him the shorthand records, so that he can study the statement of comrade T. Zhivkov better.

[...]

At the meeting in the district committee of Russe, the topic of discussion was "The application of modern systems for comprehensive mechanization and automation of the production, the construction of automated systems for management of the production, and the introduction of electronic-calculating equipment in industry and agriculture."

[...]

Everything was accompanied with a lot of questions and great admiration on behalf of the Cuban comrades.

[...]

Comrade Castro was obviously extremely satisfied. At that time comrade [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez told me that comrade Castro wanted to be allowed to send a Cuban group to

Rousse unofficially, so that they could study our experience, planning, development of models, management of production and so on.

The extent of the effect [these meetings had] on comrade F. Castro can be determined by the fact that [after] summarizing everything learned and seen, and [having] analyzed the results attained, he began to praise our achievements more and more persistently, emphasizing that no other [country] but Bulgaria would show best the advantages of the socialist agricultural system, [and] that the country would reach the top in this respect and it was very useful in the discussions and in the propaganda against the capitalist [model of] agriculture. As it is known from the press, comrade F. Castro regards the agrarian-industrial complexes as a big contribution in the development of the Marxist-Leninist theory for the socialist agriculture. In private conversations with us he spoke even more enthusiastically and fervently about our agricultural system and about the creative, Leninist approach of comrade T. Zhivkov.

Unquestionably, his views were getting broader and richer. The agrarian issues and the ways for developing socialist agriculture were becoming clearer to him.

[...]

Thus [we achieved] the goal of acquainting comrade F. Castro with PR Bulgaria's experience in building socialism, as well as with the life of our people and the country, along with its accomplishments in the spheres of culture, tourism, [and the military] including the training of our armed forces. Those were 10 days of continuous hard work, first and foremost, on behalf of comrade T. Zhivkov.

Comrade Zhivkov seized every opportunity - in the airplane, in the car, at lunch or at dinner - to talk and to explain one problem or another. In informal atmosphere comrade Zhivkov explained to him [comrade F. Castro] that we regard Maoism as a teaching hostile to Leninism. Comrade F. Castro declared: "Yes, the ideas of Mao Zedong are [a] delusion for the masses." In the airplane from Russe to Pleven comrade Zhivkov joked that soon he would go to Romania and probably would listen to a great deal of speeches for independence, noninterference, sovereignty and so on, "but I do not want to interfere in your domestic affairs" - concluded comrade Zhivkov. Comrade F. Castro was silent for a while and then answered: "Comrade Zhivkov, we are against the interference of the imperialists in our domestic affairs, but we support the idea that the socialist countries can and must interfere in the affairs of other socialist countries."

At the meeting with the Politburo comrade Zhivkov and comrade Castro made statements on international issues.

Besides, comrade Castro considered some problems of the economic development and of the situation in Cuba, as well. I will not dwell on the statement because everybody heard it.

I will dwell only on the issue about the [May 1972] visit of [US President Richard M.] Nixon to Moscow. Comrade Castro expressed very clearly their critical attitude and their confusion. During the visit to our country, they expressed, in one way or another, their dissatisfaction with [Nixon's] visit [to Moscow], and [explained that] they could not understand it correctly. They were informed when Nixon was going to arrive in Moscow and [knew] how he would be welcomed. When comrade F. Castro learned that there were no people in the streets to welcome Nixon, but there were the minimum most necessary by protocol courtesies, he started to clap his hands and to repeat: "This is good, this is good."

[...]

The work on the communiqué went off in a calm and business friendly atmosphere and in a spirit of frankness and willingness for concessions. Practically, our views on most of the issues were identical or similar. [...] There were differences of a more serious character only on some items.

The Cuban comrades suggested texts in which the role and the significance of the national-liberation movements were exaggerated. They held back from judgments about the difficulties in the international communist and working-class movement, they did not approve our text about the struggle against the deviations from Marxism-Leninism and they did not agree that the role of the communist parties in Latin America be emphasized. They strongly insisted that the war in Vietnam and the American government, and personally Nixon, be condemned with convincing phrases.

This required long discussions of some formulations until we adopted a mutually acceptable version. Our group had to explain, at length and patiently, the positions of our country, from a principled standpoint, and [in the end] succeeded in convincing the Cuban comrades to adopt our views. Of course, we had to be aware of and to take into consideration their positions, as well. Essentially, the disputed texts were prepared on the basis of mutually acceptable formulations.

[...]

Our joint work on the communiqué once more confirms the conclusion that the Cuban comrades had indeed reassessed in a positive way a number of their former concepts, and now they stand much closer to our views. At the same time, it was evident that they had not yet shaken off completely some of their wrong positions. [...]

About the economic and scientific-technical cooperation

During comrade T. Zhivkov's visit to Cuba these issues were discussed in detail on a large scale with a view of creating a model for cooperation between the two socialist countries, employing all possibilities. At the moment, on this basis, a program for the directions and the prospects of this cooperation is being developed.

[...]

It was decided to study the possibilities for cooperation in the production of electric trucks and for the construction of a plant in Cuba for the production of starter and traction batteries on the basis of Cuban lead. In the future, the emerging joint markets for electrical trucks, motor trucks and batteries in some Latin American and other countries can be discussed, as well. An agreement was attained about the building of a repair plant for tractors and attached farm equipment in Cuba. And it was decided that the Bulgarian-Cuban scientific research project-constructor bureau for agricultural machines develop a plan about the production of system machines for comprehensive mechanization for basic agricultural crops in Cuba in order to render more effective assistance to Cuban agriculture.

[...]

It is deemed expedient to explore the possibility for assembling electronic calculators and electronic calculating machines in Cuba. We accepted the motion to share our experience in the application of the electronic-calculating equipment in the organization and the management of agricultural-industrial complexes. We pointed out the big experience of our country in the sphere of non-ferrous metallurgy and we offered to develop our cooperation in the sphere of geological mining and in the delivery of equipment for mines, ore-dressing factories and metallurgic works for extraction of lead, zinc and copper. (In this sphere Cuba is engaged with Romania, from which it had received 20 million dollars credit.) We suggested also receiving a group of Cuban specialists, so that they can study our experience in the sphere of the planning of the national economy and of the development of the machine-building industry.

[...]

About the atmosphere, which contributed to achieving good results

The visit of comrade T. Zhivkov in Cuba in 1970 has left deep and lasting sentiments of confidence and friendship. The Cuban comrades highly appreciate the fact that the first visit of a leader of such a rank is from Bulgaria. And what is more important, it has had an extremely favorable effect on them in a number of ways. At the meeting with Politburo, they emphasized once again that it was not a coincidence that their first visit for now in a socialist country was in Bulgaria.

The visit in Sofia and everywhere else in the country was accompanied with great respect and love towards the Cuban revolution, towards the delegation and personally towards comrade F. Castro.

[...]

The meeting with former partisans from the "Chavdar" brigade,⁴⁰ which continued until after midnight, was also very well designed and organized. When comrade Zhivkov spoke about his wonderful impressions from Cuba, comrade Castro said: "Comrade Zhivkov, why are you speaking all the time about the visit in past tense. You have to speak about the future visits, as well. I would like to invite you to Cuba again."

[...]

On leaving Bulgaria, comrade [Flavio] Bravo (deputy Prime Minister) and comrade Naranjo (Minister of Food Industry) declared that they were very pleased with the visit and that they were convinced that it was the best one, which had left most wonderful impressions on them.

About some conclusions and suggestions

The bulk of work completed gave and will give its positive results. The set goal was achieved completely. Extremely useful work was done for our bilateral relations and for our common cause. We created very favorable preconditions for the meetings of the other brotherly socialist countries with the Cuban comrades and comrade F. Castro.

The basic thought that guided comrade T. Zhivkov in all this incessant work, efforts and labor, was our great desire to be useful to the Cuban Revolution, to the Cuban Communist Party and personally to comrade F. Castro in the building of a new society, [set] on a Leninist path. They [the Cuban comrades] perceived these intentions, in the most noble sense.

[...]

It is obvious that comrade Fidel Castro and the other comrades have walked a long revolutionary road. They are building a socialist society, they are guided by Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, to cooperate with our countries and first of all, with the USSR, and they are strongly opposed to imperialism.

Also, during their visit in our country they tried to make the most of it and to enrich and to strengthen their Marxist-Leninist views. Their attitude towards our country and our party shows an absolute approval of our policy and admiration for our successes, which comrade F. Castro expressed repeatedly.

[...]

In order to attain greater and more effective results on this stage, it is very important that our countries assist decisively the economic development of Cuba, which will play a positive role for its still closer rapprochement with the socialist community. In this respect, the suggestion of comrade T. Zhivkov for discussion of the problems of the economic development of Cuba at a special meeting of COMECON is very appropriate.

After the visit of comrade T. Zhivkov in Cuba, at his suggestion, a special program for the development of economic and scientific-technical cooperation between the two countries was developed and some measures are being implemented. It is necessary to start working comprehensively for the implementation of the program, and to this end, to look for and to reveal new resources.

[...]

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 35, a.e. 3182; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



Todor Zhivkov, Reports to BCP Politburo on his Visit to Cuba, 31 December 1975 and 5 January 1976

INFORMATION

of comrade TODOR ZHIVKOV about his visit to the Republic of Cuba delivered at the meeting of Politburo of CC of BCP on 31 December 1975

If we are to give an assessment of the congress of the Cuban Communist Party, it has to be the following: a historical event in the life of Cuba and the Cuban revolution. An important stage in the singular development of the revolutionary and communist movement in Cuba is completed.

What does this uniqueness consist of?

The period since 1959 is a difficult period, during which three objective and mutually linked processes developed.

1. Deep qualitative changes in the economy (industry and agriculture), culture, ideological life, which determine the socialist character of the Cuban revolution.

2. Strengthening and consolidating of the hegemonic role of the working class and of its union with the rural masses and the progressive intelligence.

3. Consolidation of the subjective factor and formation and stabilization of the Cuban Communist Party as a militant vanguard, successor, and follower of the revolutionary traditions of the first Marxist-Leninist party in Cuba, of the “July 26th” movement and of the other revolutionary forces.

The congress adopted basic documents in which this revolutionary development is reflected and fixed normatively and the main directions in the development of the party, the state, the economy, as well as the political line are outlined.

[...]

In the development of these materials the documents of our party are utilized creatively.

About the report of CC, about the documents and about the Congress in general.

- Thorough and comprehensive analysis of the basic domestic and foreign problems, analysis in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism;

- Distinct, definite and open brotherly attitude to CPSU and the USSR, to their role in the Cuban revolution and the international life;

It was emphasized that:

- “They infinitely believe in Lenin’s motherland.”

- “Without the USSR the fighters of Cuba could have died heroically like the fighters of the Paris Commune but they would not have won;”

- "The USSR is a world mainstay of socialism."

About China:

In his report Fidel Castro indirectly criticized the Chinese leaders and their policy. The passage in our greeting, in which the Maoists were openly condemned, was loudly applauded by the congress. Comrade [Soviet politburo member Mikhail] Suslov did not speak about the Chinese. We were the first to speak about them in our greeting and we were loudly applauded not only by the congress but also by Fidel Castro and the other Cuban leaders.

About self-criticism:

- About the October crises and the withdrawal of the Soviet nuclear weapons from Cuba;
- About underestimating the experience of the USSR and the other socialist countries, especially with regard to economics;
- Against Utopianism and for the necessity to use economic categories: cost price, price, profit, stimulus, and so on;
- Abandoning of the wrong views about the guerrilla movement in Latin America, [and] for proceeding straight to communism and so on;
- Correct attitude to the first Marxist-Leninist party in Cuba, founded in 1925, to the working class and its role;
- "The old communists - spiritual fathers of the young revolutionaries." Three distinguished men were elected in the new Politburo, including Blas Roca.

The Congress turned onto a singular international forum: 87 delegations of communist parties, of other revolutionary and democratic movements and a great number of representatives from Latin America and Africa.

[...]

About the attitude of CPSU towards the Congress:

- Official greeting of CPSU to the Congress, published in the press.
- Greeting of comrade Suslov.
- Personal message from comrade Leonid Brezhnev.
- Leonid Brezhnev personally met and saw off the delegation in Moscow.

About Fidel Castro:

- Honest revolutionary, clever, mass leader with charisma and critical of himself.

- Lack of the necessary statesman experience. He got carried away, especially in the closing speech, about Angola and the USA. He says things against America and against [US President Gerald R.] Ford which one must not speak about. We are representatives not only of communist parties but also of states.

General conclusion:

The First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party laid the beginnings of a new historical stage in the life of the party and the country. Now there is clarity in the line and the basic directions in the development of the socialist revolution in Cuba. There is an experienced political vanguard, [as well as] fraternal relations with the socialist community and especially with the USSR.

About the attitude towards our delegation and generally about the relations between Bulgaria and Cuba:

- Extraordinary attention. Pronouncedly warm brotherly attitude from the first till the last day. It was displayed:
 - On behalf of the Congress;
 - On behalf of the working people;
 - On behalf of the Cuban leaders;
 - Personally on behalf of Fidel Castro.
- [...]

All this is a new and impressive proof for lasting and positive development of the Bulgarian-Cuban relations, of the friendly sentiments of the communists and the working people in Cuba to Bulgaria, to the Bulgarian communist party, to our party and state leaders and for the huge authority of Bulgaria and the BCP in Cuba.

Reasons:

- Common socialist road of development;
- Consolidation of the socialist character of the Cuban revolution, clarifying the ideological and political views of the Cuban leaders and personally of Fidel Castro;
- Analogical historical development in Cuba and Bulgaria, approximately identical size of territory and population;
- The positive experience of Bulgaria;
- The work of the Bulgarian specialists in Cuba and the mutual visits of delegations;
- The particular significance of the correct line of our leaders to the Cuban revolution and to Fidel Castro; the visit in Cuba in 1970;

- Considerate attitude to the Cuban requests;
- The personal friendship between Fidel Castro and Todor Zhivkov also plays a certain role;
- It can be said that now we are picking the fruit that we planted in due time.

About the prospects of Bulgarian-Cuban relations.

- The necessary objective and subjective prerequisites for strengthening and deepening of these relations exist.
- About the activities of the Bulgarian-Cuban committee for economic cooperation. We have to take measures to consolidate it.
- About some unresolved economic issues (the price of sugar, our late deliveries of equipment and so on).
- Problems in the sphere of culture.
- There is a requirement on behalf of Cuba for new specialists - fitters. We have to discuss this issue and improve the work of our specialists. [...] The Cubans have no food. Our specialists use the shop for diplomats, buy food [products] and sell them. Some Cubans possess old valuables -- gold, silver (rings and necklaces). A great majority of our specialists are engaged in the "black market." Besides, we send them individually, not in groups. For each of them it has to be determined what post he is going to occupy, because when they go there, they begin to fight [over] who the leader will be. There is no political leadership. Regardless of who the comrades that intercede are, we have to make a check to give them confidentially a note -- so that we concern ourselves very seriously with these intrusions. We send there people who discredit our country. This is everywhere, in all countries.

About some new forms of cooperation between Bulgaria and Cuba.

- We can think about that.
- Fidel Castro promised to come to Bulgaria before or after the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] Congress. It would be difficult for him to come to our congress.
- The expansion and the intensifying of the comprehensive relations with Cuba - this is our international and patriotic duty.

This is the most important. Now I am ready to answer your questions regarding our visit.

SUPPLEMENT

to the information of comrade TODOR ZHIVKOV about his visit in Republic of Cuba, delivered at the meeting of Politburo on

5 January 1976.

TODOR ZHIVKOV:

I have to say that on the documents - the Program platform, the project for Constitution, the directives and the Statutes - which were sanctioned by the Congress and about which we gave positive assessment, have been developed by a group of Soviet comrades. This is very interesting, too. It shows that Fidel Castro and the leaders of the Cuban communist party do not only make a turn towards us and first of all, to the Soviet Union, but also that they coordinate most closely their foreign and domestic affairs with the Soviet comrades. This is very pleasing. Why? Because it is good that they treat us well, but if they do not treat well the Soviet Union -- this would be bad.

In conversation with Fidel Castro I asked him to give the floor first not to me, but to Janos Kadar. But they did not comply and I had to speak first. Fidel Castro declared the following: "Comrade Zhivkov, bear in mind that not only do I love Bulgaria but also everybody, elected in Politburo, has no reservations towards Bulgaria. We are studying your experience - the Program, the Statutes and so on. Second, if there is something in our economic cooperation, in our trade, just say, and we will arrange it. We are ready to do everything for Bulgaria, but without declaring it [in public], so that the others will not press us. And third, I want to come to Bulgaria, but not in order to receive a generous welcome, but to talk with you."

Those were the talks that I had with him on different occasions.

We talked with comrade Stanko Todorov⁴¹ and comrade Tano Tzolov⁴² and we think that we must not dramatize the disruption that took place in our trade. [...] Let's act tactically and wisely. [...] At the end, we can give 100 million leva, because this is Cuba. The Soviet Union gives everything. They provide for the whole army. They pay 500 rubles for a ton of sugar.

Now, let's come to an agreement and when Fidel Castro comes, we will move forward to a broader cooperation and we will find a way to make up for the losses. There is no need to dramatize this event. [...] Our party has earned exceptional trust in Cuba. We must not lose it because of the trade relations. Besides, they are on the right path, they have [established] ties with the Soviet Union and they remain true to the Soviet Union. This is a great achievement.

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 35, a.e. 5581; translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]

Notes

1 Author's interviews with Cuban Ambassador to the USSR Severo Aguirre (Moscow, 14 May 1978) and with Blas Roca (Sofia, 21 September 1978). For more information about Dimitrov's contacts with Latin American leftist political leaders see: Baev, Yordan, *Por la Unidad Democrática. Jorge Dimitrov y el movimiento revolucionario en América Latina*, (Sofia Press, 1989), 5-61.

2 *Informatsionen bulletin VPMV*, Sofia, 1959, No. 3-4, 28-35; 1960, No. 7, 34.

3 *TsDA*, Fond 1053, Opis 6, a.e. 91, 92, 237, 388.

4 *Dokumenti I materiali za sutrudnichestvoto mezhdu BCP I PCC 1960-1981* [Documents on the cooperation between BCP and PCC], (Sofia: Partizdat, 1982), 17-22.

5 *TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 1172, 1324; Fond 28, Opis 23, a.e. 10; Fond 1053, Opis 8, a.e. 270; Opis 11, a.e. 258.

6 [See the translation of the Bulgarian record of conversation between Raul Castro and Zhivkov in Sofia in March 1965 elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.]

7 *TsDA*, Fond 1053, Opis 8, a.e. 80, 270; Opis 9, a.e. 40, 48; Opis 11, a.e. 75.

8 *TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis 60, a.e. 194—published in cooperation with CWIHP at: Baev, Jordan (Editor-in-Chief), *Bulgaria in the Cold War. Documents from Todor Zhivkov Personal Records, 1956-1989, A Documentary CD Volume*, (Sofia: IK96plus, 2002).

9 In 1960 the commercial exchange started with only 500 000 USD, while in 1970 it was increased to 63 mln. USD, and in 1975 to 172 mln. USD.

10 *AMVR*, Fond 1, Opis 10, a.e. 1667, 1214; Opis 12, a.e. 108, 356, 437 - published in cooperation with CWIHP at: Baev, Jordan (Editor-in-Chief), *Bulgarian Intelligence & Security Services in the Cold War years. A Documentary CD Volume*, (Sofia: IK96plus, 2005).

11 The correspondent of Bulgarian Telegraph Agency (BTA) in Havana Andrei Apostolov even tried later on to suggest a definition for the specific model of "tropical bureaucratic socialism" in Cuba.

12 *Rabotnicheskoto delo*, (Sofia), 9 March 1990; *Voz* (Bogota), 15 March 1990.

13 CC BCP Politburo member since 1938, Minister of Internal Affairs (1944-1949), Deputy Prime Minister (1949-1956), Prime Minister (1956-1962).

14 Francisco Calderio (Blas Roka) – General Secretary of Cuban Communist Party, renamed in 1944 to Partido Socialista Popular (1934-1962).

15 After Iraqi nationalist revolution on 14 July 1958 there was armed split among the new military junta and an attempt on life of its leader Gen. Abdul Karim Kassem in March 1959.

16 During the congress of Romanian Worker's party in Bucharest there was carried out an international Communist discussion on 23-24 June 1960 regarding the Sino-Soviet political split.

17 Ruben Avramov – a CC BCP member and head of a CC BCP department; Konstantin Tellalov – Deputy head of "Foreign Policy and International Relations" CC BCP department.

18 Konstantin Michev – a former participant in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1963).

19 On the Proposal, made by the Bulgarian Foreign Minister there are signs of approval of Todor Zhivkov, First Secretary of the CC BCP, Anton Yugov, Prime Minister, and other Politburo members.

20 Karlo Lukanov – Minister of Foreign Affairs (1958-1962).

21 A member of Politburo and a Secretary of CC BCP (1958-1966). After his removal from Politburo was sent Ambassador to London (1969-1971), but in July 1971 was elected a member of the State Council (i.e. Presidency), and from 1974 until his death in 1987 served as Vice Chairman of State Council.

22 "Special equipment" was a term used in the official documentation for "arms delivery".

23 Ambassador to Cuba (1963-1967) and Brazil (1972-1975).

24 CC BCP member and head of a Communist Party Department.

25 Entered at CC BCP "Foreign Policy & International Relations" Department's register with incoming No. 16941 of 28 April 1966.

26 Handwritten resolution by Todor Zhivkov, First Secretary CC BCP and Prime Minister of PR of Bulgaria.

27 CC BCP Secretary (1962-1866), Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Trade (1966-1971), Bulgarian Ambassador to UN office in Vienna (1974-1980) and to the Netherland (1980-1982).

28 Petar Marinkov – a career diplomat, Ambassador to Colombia and Ecuador (1979-1982), and to Cuba (1983-1986).

29 Presented at CC BCP Politburo session of 17 January 1967.

30 First Secretary of Dimitrov's Communist Youth Union (1965-1968), head of a CC BCP department (1968-1977), CC BCP Secretary (1977-1984), Prime Minister (1986-1989).

31 Dimitrov's Communist Youth Union.

32 Minister of Foreign Affairs (1962-1971).

33 Ambassador to Cuba (1967-1969) and to Algeria (1976-1981).

* This confidential report was delivered directly to the Head of Zhivkov's Office Milko Balev in connection with Zhivkov's visit to Cuba, postponed for 1970.

35 In November-December 1969 a CC BCP delegation, led by Boris Velchev, visited Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and Chile. After returning back home Velchev delivered a broader report to CC BCP Secretariat, which in a shorter version was sent in March 1970 to Ponomarev. On 10 June 1970 CC BCP Politburo approved Boris Velchev's final proposal "On activation of the BCP and PRB relations with Latin America."

36 The New York Governor went on a series of "fact-finding" trips to Latin America in the spring and summer of 1969 at the request of President Richard M. Nixon.

37 [Rodney Arismendi was Secretary-General of the Uruguayan Communist Party (PCU); Hilberto Vieira White was the founder and general secretary of the Columbia Communist Party; Jorge Del Prado was the general secretary of the Communist Party of

Peru; Orestes Ghioldi was a leader of the Communist Party of Argentina.—ed.]

38 Luis Corvalan was secretary general of the Communist Party of Chile (PCCh).

39 Minister of Internal Affairs (1962-1969), Ambassador to Cuba (1969-1971).

40 In April 1944 the partisan detachment “Chavdar” was reorganized into brigade. Todor Zhivkov was a CC BCP political representative at the brigade. During Zhivkov’s rule, several of the

brigade commanders received influential positions – Gen. Dobri Djurov became minister of defense (1962-1990), Dimitar Stanishev – CC BCP Secretary for International Relations (1977-1990), and Yordan Yotov – a Politburo member and CC BCP Secretary for Ideology (1984-1989).

41 Bulgarian Prime Minister (1971-1981) and Chairman of National Assembly (1981-1990).

42 Deputy Prime Minister and a Politburo member.

Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 1963—A Hungarian Perspective

Hungarian Embassy in Sofia, Report on Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 29 August 1963¹

The Embassy of the Hungarian people's Republic
TOP SECRET!

No. 408/t.s./ 1963. Sofia, 29 August 1963

Official: Gy. Horn, secretary of III dep.

Subject: Bulgarian-Cuban relations

Written: in six copies Ref. No. 001254/1/1963

five copies to the Ministry

one copy to the Embassy

In connection with the instruction of the Center of the above number of reference, we have proceeded [to meet with officials] in the [Bulgarian] Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, we had a meeting with the first employee of the Cuban Embassy to Sofia, and on the basis of the conversations and our experiences, we would like to report the following on the Bulgarian-Cuban relations and the Bulgarian comrades' opinion of Cuba:

There has not been an essential change in the relations between Bulgaria and Cuba since the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile] crisis of last year. The Bulgarian comrades emphasized that the political, economic, and cultural relations between the two countries have been developing steadily and continuously for the past two years. At the time of the mentioned crisis Bulgaria's sympathy toward Cuba only grew stronger, at that time in Sofia violent anti-American demonstrations took place, declaring solidarity with Cuba. On two or three occasions the demonstrations were of such size that the competent Bulgarian party and government officials had to interfere to prevent the [tension] from escalating. This must be mentioned because later, through the Bulgarian specialists traveling to Cuba, quite a large number of the population was informed about the economic difficulties that caused problems in the supply of the [Cuban] population with goods and asked the competent Bulgarian officials - in letters and at meetings - to alleviate the mentioned problems by sending food.

Concerning relations between the two countries, the economic relations, which are expanding year by year, are most important.

In the past two years, trade relations have increased to a large extent, and according to the latest agreement, signed on 3 July 1963, in 1963 each party will have a 2.3 million dollar trade. Bulgaria's basic import articles are: sugar, molasses, canned fruit, iron, and copper concentrates, the country's exports are: agricultural machines, machine tools, electric running blocks, transformers, medicine, canned food, deep-frozen poultry, and seeds. During the last talks, the main problems were the price of the sugar and the supply of some important Bulgarian articles on credit. According to the agreement signed in July, Bulgaria will give a 1.5 million dollar loan to Cuba at 2% interest, the amortization of which will take place through Cuban goods between 1967 and 1978. According to the previous loans and the agreements just signed, Bulgaria has undertaken to supply complete plants and to build factories for Cuba, so in 1962 they started to build two cold-stores, a transformer factory, a cog-wheel factory, seven ice plants, and a carbide factory. In connection with the building work and the transfer of technical-scientific experience, there are now 172 Bulgarian specialists in Cuba. Apart from this, the Bulgarian Komsomol has sent 70 young plant cultivators to Cuba to convey their experience in vegetable growing. Bulgaria contributes to the training of Cuban experts too, within the framework of which 132 Cuban skilled workers are trained now in Bulgaria and 18 Cuban students study at Bulgarian universities.

It is a problem in the economic relations between the two countries that the quality of the supplied Bulgarian goods does not always correspond to the [agreed upon] requirements, and the Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade R. Leon, visiting Bulgaria recently, also complained about it. The minister told the Bulgarian leaders that the Cuban workers had gotten used to high quality [goods] and he considered it a question of politics that no poor quality goods should come from socialist Bulgaria to Cuba, because this would undermine the prestige of socialist countries. The minister and the Cuban Embassy have asked the competent Bulgarian officials several times to discuss the question of supplying some articles of food and important machines on credit. Here they mentioned that they

badly needed accumulators, various agricultural machines, but they could not pay for them at present. They asked the Bulgarian foreign trade officials to do more intensive market research in Cuba to find such new articles that could be supplied to Bulgaria in exchange for the requested products.

Evaluating the present Cuban economic situation, the Bulgarian comrades said that they did not think the Cuban economic leaders were completely right in seeing the causes of the economic difficulties only in the earlier dependence on America and the present blockade. They do not want to realize that they have made mistakes in [their] economic policy, and because of the lack of well-trained experts, they have an idealistic approach concerning a lot of questions. They think that the countries of the socialist camp should help Cuba more as there is a danger of increase in Western, but mainly Chinese influence concerning the difficulties. Their foreign mission in Havana received such a task as to study the Cuban internal economic situation in greater depth, to look for possibilities of helping Cuba's national economy in correspondence with Bulgaria's potential.

Concerning the Cuban internal political situation, the Bulgarian comrades said they thought Fidel Castro's visit to the Soviet Union had been a crucial event after the crisis. During Fidel Castro's visit, it was most important that he emphasized the need for unity in the international communist and workers' movement. According to the Bulgarian comrades' evaluation, as a result of the visit the Soviet-Cuban alliance has become consolidated to a large extent, and they think that it was the first time that Fidel Castro had talked so clearly about the rightness of the Soviet Union's approach to solving the crisis. They think the Cuban leaders greatly appreciate the declaration of the Soviet leaders, mainly Khrushchev[s] [statement], that the Soviet Union would provide armed support for Cuba in case of any danger of aggression. Finally, they consider the visit successful because it greatly contributed to the Cuban leaders' forming a correct opinion in the argument with the Chinese Communist Party.

The Bulgarian comrades said that, although they did not doubt that the great majority of the Cuban leaders represented the correct position in the argument with the Chinese,

they found it curious that the Chinese embassy to Havana spread anti-Soviet propaganda freely and the Cubans did not protest against it at all. Furthermore, in their opinion, the Cuban middle and low cadres have not decided about these questions and [were] mainly influenced by the opinions about how to solve the crisis and by Chinese propaganda; these people are strongly attracted to Chinese views.

Cultural relations between Cuba and Bulgaria follow the cultural work plan signed by the two countries on 15 June 1963; the relations between the different organizations are significant too. In the coming period, they are not planning any relevant changes in the relations between the two countries or exchanges of delegations. It is worth mentioning that the new Bulgarian ambassador, Atanas Kalbov, was assigned the task to try to establish the widest mass relations in Cuba. As a special task he was instructed to watch the activity of the Chinese in Cuba. For him in his work Comrade János Beck, the Hungarian ambassador to Havana, was set as an example, whom the Bulgarian comrades considered one of the most popular diplomats in Cuba, with whom the Cuban leaders had a closer and more friendly relationship than with the Soviet ambassador to Havana [Aleksandr Alekseyev].

Ambassador

[Károly PRÁTH]

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Budapest

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]

Notes

1 Ed. note: For additional translations of Hungarian documents on Cuba and the missile crisis, see the compilation of such materials elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.



Yugoslavia and the Cuban Missile Crisis:

Documents from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Belgrade

Introduced by Svetozar Rajak and translated by Radina Vucetic-Mladenovic and Svetozar Rajak¹

The Yugoslav documents presented below represent a selection from the “Highly Confidential” and “Confidential” collections in the Diplomatic Archives of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Serbia in Belgrade. The primary criteria guiding the selectors was to show a less well known aspect of the Cuban Missile Crisis—the activities of the non-aligned countries or those, like Brazil, who were sympathetic to the cause of non-engagement, during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The documents chronicle communications between Belgrade and its embassies in Rio de Janeiro and Havana between 26 October and 8 November 1962. The provenance of the documents determined their focus: Yugoslav diplomats’ assessments and actions taken by Belgrade at the apex of the crisis and during the first days following its denouement. Notably, the Yugoslav ambassador’s reports of his frequent contacts with some of the highest figures in the Cuban leadership provide unique insight into their behavior during the apex of the crisis. The documents reveal a surprisingly active role of the non-engaged or non-aligned countries, notably Brazil and Yugoslavia, away from the limelight of the Kennedy-Khrushchev showdown. It is, of course, true that the impact of actions undertaken by the two countries did not determine the outcome of the crisis; however, they played a constructive role in its resolution.

To understand fully the activities of Yugoslavia and its president, Josip Broz Tito, and the motives behind them, several aspects are of importance. First and foremost, there was genuine fear among the Yugoslavs, as was the case around the world, general public or politicians alike, including the main protagonists, that the escalation may lead to a nuclear Armageddon. In addition, the correlation between the timing of the crisis and the consolidation of the new Non-Aligned Movement explains the political calculations that guided the Yugoslav leadership’s actions and their determination not to be left on the sidelines, a seemingly paradoxical endeavor for a country affiliated with the Third World at the time of the nuclear stand-off between the two leading superpowers. As the crisis itself and its chronology are being deliberated and documented in great detail elsewhere in this *Bulletin*, it is appropriate to award attention to this particular aspect. The Cuban Missile Crisis happened a little more than a year after the founding conference of the Non-aligned Countries held in Belgrade in September 1961. The gathering of the heads of state or governments of twenty-three Third World countries laid the foundation for the establishment of the Non-Aligned

Movement (NAM). Their goal was to create a tool that would enable neutral or non-committed countries to safeguard their independence and sovereignty and their right to choose their own model of development through active participation in global affairs. An essential prerequisite for achieving this goal, in their eyes, was the dismantling of Cold War structures. The Cuban Missile Crisis came both as a threat and an opportunity. On the one hand, it represented everything these countries feared and had warned against. Ideological polarization and division of the world into two antagonistic military alliances perpetuated a threat of nuclear confrontation and annihilation. On the other hand, the Cuban Missile Crisis represented one of the first opportunities for the NAM countries to demonstrate the positive effect their active engagement could have on global affairs and for the peaceful resolution of crises. It was a chance for the nascent movement to promote itself. The initiatives born out of the Conference in Belgrade, in particular those related to nuclear non-proliferation and those promoting the dialogue between two superpowers, provided legitimacy for the engagement of Yugoslavia and Brazil, the latter only being a mere observer at the Belgrade Conference.² Beside the two, other non-engaged countries, notably India and Egypt, took active part in various initiatives and were particularly active at the United Nations. Understandably, their role is not visible in the presented documents. In addition to the above, the non-engaged were interested in helping Cuba uphold its right to choose its own political system and model of development, one of NAM’s basic tenets. Within this aspect, one cannot disregard an additional concern guiding the Yugoslavs. As committed communists, they were keenly interested in the survival of the first socialist country in the Western hemisphere.

The documents presented here (together with translated Brazilian documents appearing elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*) confirm very close coordination and collaboration between Belgrade and Rio throughout the crisis. This cooperation was founded on symmetry of their political outlooks in general and on the crisis, in particular. Telling of this closeness is Brazilian President João Goulart’s message to Tito, in response to the Yugoslav President’s message of 26 October, at the height of the crisis. In this, an unusually short message, Tito even apologizing for its curtness and justifying it with the urgency of the moment, the Yugoslav President makes several points. First, he underlines that the crisis cannot be defused without two actions being taken

simultaneously—the lifting of the “quarantine” (the blockade) and the removal of all shipments of offensive weapons to Cuba. By equating the two actions, Tito fully identified with the non-aligned standing, in collision with the Soviet and Cuban position. Secondly, Tito emphasized that the UN was the only legitimate forum for the resolution of this and similar crises. Again, this reflects the Non-aligned precept—to wrestle global issues away from the exclusive prerogative of the superpowers to the UN where the Third World has a voice. Within this point, however, Tito makes an additional demand that, if the Security Council of the UN proves to be impotent “as has often been the case in the past,” the issue must be put before the UN General Assembly. Last, the Yugoslav President insisted that the crisis demands that the Heads of the non-committed countries “must” exert pressure through personal messages to the (acting) Secretary General of the UN, U Thant, and the President of the UN General Assembly.³ The response from President Goulart shows remarkable congruence of views between the two statesmen. It also confirms that securing the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to Latin America and immediate removal of Soviet rockets, together with real guarantees for Cuba, were the main motives behind Brazilian President’s important involvement and mediation during the crisis.⁴ The Yugoslav Ambassador’s insights also confirm that Brazilian support for Kennedy’s resolution in the Council of OAS, was a genuine political decision and not a result of the loss of direction within the Brazilian leadership. Radical rhetoric in support of Cuba, coming from those close to the Government, was clearly dismissed by the Yugoslav Ambassador as resulting from the “pressure from the masses.”

Tito was keen to associate himself with Goulart and sought his partnership during the crisis for several reasons. Firstly, Tito viewed Brazil as the biggest and most prominent country of Latin America, the most influential voice of the continent. Secondly, the Yugoslav President felt strong sympathy towards Goulart, who was perceived as “progressive” and left-leaning but not a communist. Yugoslavs were convinced that Brazil would have participated at the Belgrade Conference had it not been for very strong American pressure. Thirdly, Rio as a partner was a natural choice for Tito because of the importance the Kennedy administration awarded Brazil, whether with regard to mobilizing support throughout the continent for the Alliance for Progress, for the US Resolution at the Council of OAS to endorse the blockade (“quarantine”) when the Cuban crisis broke out, or to act as an intermediary with Castro. As the presented documents confirm, Tito was informed of Goulart’s unique access and continuous communication with Kennedy or his closest advisors throughout the crisis. Tito’s Ambassador in Rio, Barišić, as evident from his reports, had intimate access (perhaps

only exceeded by Kennedy’s ambassador, Lincoln Gordon) to Goulart’s closest advisers, which confirms Brazilian President’s sympathies towards the Yugoslav President. Coupled with his own access to top Cuban leaders through his Ambassador in Havana, an association with Goulart offered Tito an opportunity to exert more influence on events, albeit indirect, than he would otherwise have had.

The documents presented here confirm the Yugoslav Ambassador’s unique access to top Cuban leadership throughout the crisis, surpassed only by that of the Soviet Ambassador. Cuban President Dr. Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado and Foreign Minister Raúl Roa repeatedly asked Ambassador Boško Vidaković to remain in continuous contact, implying communication with Belgrade, as well. The Cuban leadership was obviously keen to maintain a line of contact with Tito. A Vidaković telegram on Friday, 26 October, following a meeting with Dorticós, reveals that the Cubans were convinced that an American invasion was imminent. Following a request from Dorticós, the Ambassador was in permanent contact with his office and kept an open line with Belgrade throughout the night of 26-27 October. According to the Ambassador, the Cubans were at this point more than ready to compromise, as long as they received international guarantees for their own security. In a remarkable insight, he also provides an account of the Cuban leaders’ state of mind during these critical hours, describing them as “deflated and dejected,” far from being belligerent.⁵ The Ambassador’s astute observations provide a rare witness account of the mood, often fluctuating, among the top Cuban leaders during the crisis, from dejection to belligerence. Particularly telling are the telegrams of 27 and 28 October and his account of gloom among Cuban leaders after learning of Khrushchev’s decision, without alerting or consulting Havana in advance, to withdraw the missiles under US pressure. The Ambassador’s reports also suggest that Cuban decision-making during the crisis was a result of long discussions and evaluations within a wider collective, rather than a very small circle around Castro. Illustrative of the irritability and mood swings among the Cubans was Ambassador’s warning to Belgrade on 29 October that the Cuban “disappointment with the Russians may lead them to make hysterical moves...”

The exceptional communication that existed between the Yugoslavs and the Cubans throughout the crisis, as well as the level of trust felt towards Tito, remained largely unrecorded by the historiography of the Cuban Missile Crisis. It also owes much to the later constant rivalry between the Cubans and the Yugoslavs for the soul of the Non-Aligned Movement. Ambassador Vidaković was, for example kept informed of Cuban leadership’s deliberations when drafting a response to U Thant’s message. The influence Tito enjoyed among leaders

in Havana during the critical days reflected the respect and trust they felt in his impartiality and political acumen, rather than belief in his power to cardinally influence the outcome of the crisis. As Ambassador's Telegram No. 235 of 29 October divulges, the Cubans altered their draft response to U Thant's message to include Tito's suggestion to invite the Secretary General to Havana. The Cuban leadership also heeded Tito's proposal to come up with an appeal or declaration. In contrast, as Roa confided in the Ambassador, the leadership did not even "have time to think about the Chinese and their stupidities" nor did they bother to reply to Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's message.⁶ In his two telegrams of 29 October, Vidaković conveyed that during two conversations he had during that day with Raúl Roa, the latter spoke of Fidel's frustration with unilateral Soviet decision to remove the rockets and the accommodation with Kennedy. Cuban pride truly suffered and Roa kept emphasizing that Castro's declaration (i.e., his "Five Points" statement of 28 October) was really more aimed at the Soviets than at the Americans. At one point, according to the Ambassador, Roa exclaimed, "We exist. They have to know that – this side [the Soviets], as well as the other side [the Americans]." He then kept returning to the theme of how "hard it is for the small ones when the big ones are bargaining."

The Yugoslav Ambassador received regular updates on the atmosphere and progress of talks held between Fidel and the Brazilian envoy, General Albino Da Silva, who arrived in Havana on 29 October (and whom Goulart had sent at secret US prompting⁷). He revealed in his report to Belgrade (Telegram No. 239 of 30 October) that, during his first meeting with Da Silva, Fidel was antagonized by Goulart's proposals. He rejected suggestions for neutralization and UN inspections, visibly infuriated by the fact that "the Russians and the Americans" have reached an accommodation without him. According to Ambassador's account, Fidel was equally stubborn and uncooperative during his first meeting with U Thant, who had also travelled to Havana in the days immediately following Khrushchev's climb-down. In his subsequent meetings with Da Silva, however, as reported by the Ambassador, Castro accepted Brazilian proposals for denuclearization of the whole of Latin America and the embargo on atomic weapons deliveries, and had "committed not to export revolution or carry out subversive activities" throughout the continent in exchange for "guarantees for [Cuba] keeping its sovereignty and independence." According to the same report, Fidel sealed his accord with a bitter remark that Russians "couldn't think of anything better." As Da Silva later confided in Ambassador Vidaković during a long late-night conversation, "Castro could not conceal his outrage with the Russians." He attributed Castro's rejection of the UN

inspections to the latter's intention to show both sides that they should have consulted him before they agreed on anything. The Brazilian emissary further revealed to the Yugoslav Ambassador that Fidel behaved "liked a haunted wild animal that was afraid of all sorts of things," not fully understanding that if no understanding with Kennedy were reached before the forthcoming US mid-term Congressional elections, the situation could still turn fatal for Cuba. Nonetheless, Da Silva remained optimistic in the final success of his mission, which the Ambassador followed up in his report of the conversation with a caustic comment in parentheses, "(This general is very naïve)." The Yugoslav Ambassador's cynicism derived from his understanding of Cuban options. In the closing paragraph of the same report, he offered a "few hints"—that Cuba had oil supplies for only 15-20 days and that this crisis will result in a further drop in living standards of up to 20 percent. He then concluded that only the Soviet aid and assistance could help Cuba escape the catastrophe and that Castro better bear this hard fact in mind.

Buoyed by the extent to which Cubans heeded their advice during the crisis, the Yugoslavs sensed an opportunity to exert decisive influence on Havana's future "behavior," namely its foreign policy orientation. Immediately after the peak of the crisis had passed, the Yugoslavs seized the momentum to communicate to the Cubans "proposals" for their "change of behavior," in light of the "lessons learned from the crisis." The "proposals" were sent to the Ambassador in form of an 29 October directive from the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Koča Popović. Popović's signature suggested that the instructions were cleared with Tito. Popović repeatedly underlined a change in style and tone to be of greatest significance for the future Cuban behavior. This was Belgrade's appeal for the Cubans to tone down their "revolutionary" rhetoric. According to the Yugoslavs, as a result of the favorable outcome of the crisis the Cubans had won their place in the sun—they secured their rights to independence and to pursue socialism. This, in turn, required from Havana a more mature approach to relations with countries of different ideological orientation. Yugoslavs advised against antagonizing others, in particular the countries of Latin America. Belgrade recommended a stable and constructive foreign policy, based on genuine non-alignment. Furthermore, according to Popović, the way for the Cubans to truly remove the threat to their independence was not to serve as a Soviet stooge, antagonizing the US and fueling dangerous escalation of confrontations between the superpowers. Instead, they should pursue active and constructive engagement in the international system securing in the process the support of a great number of countries. On the one hand, this was a true reflection of the very heart of Yugoslavia's foreign policy strategy and its

pursuit of non-alignment. However, the “proposals” for the change of “behavior” were certainly also aimed at eliminating consistent Cuban radicalism that, in the name of “progressiveness” and “socialism,” was undermining Yugoslav efforts to strengthen the Non-Aligned Movement by increasing its membership. This, they believed, was possible only through the broadest inclusivity, regardless of countries’ ideological bent. The Yugoslav “proposals” also supplemented the gist of Brazilian President Goulart’s initiative (secretly instigated by Washington) for a longer term resolution of the crisis that were conveyed to Fidel Castro by his Private Secretary and special envoy, General Da Silva, on 30 October. Given close cooperation and communication between Goulart and Tito throughout the crisis, it is highly probable that Yugoslav motives for advising Cubans to change their behavior were, indeed not only part of an effort to obtain a constructive Cuba in the Non-Aligned Movement but to support Goulart’s initiative.

The Cubans, however, must have perceived these “proposals” as an intrusion. In my opinion, this would certainly be an aspect that would plague Yugoslav-Cuban relations for the rest of Tito’s life. Although, as underlined several times in the directive, the Ambassador was instructed to communicate these “proposals” as his “personal opinion,” they were certainly seen by his hosts as paternalistic and coming from the highest authority in Belgrade. Ambassador Vidaković, in turn, was highly skeptical of a change in Cuban “behavior.” This is particularly evident in his Telegram No. 249 of 31 October. The Ambassador reminded Belgrade that the Cuban press took note only of Tito’s first message at the beginning of the crisis and that there was only a very brief mention of the Tito-Goulart exchange of messages on 26 October. Equally, the activities of the Non-aligned countries were hardly noted, while the visit and mission of General Da Silva was not even mentioned in the Cuban press. In contrast to the Cubans’ utter lack of recognition of Yugoslavia’s support during the crisis, as was vainly hoped for by the Yugoslav leadership, the Belgrade’s Ambassador in Rio was able to report the sincerest appreciation from the Brazilian side. He also underlined a feeling of unanimous pride among the Brazilian political and military elite for the role Goulart and Brazil played in the resolution of the crisis.⁸

The documents presented here suggest several conclusions. On the sidelines of the big Kennedy-Khrushchev show, smaller, non-aligned countries, namely Yugoslavia and Brazil, made a substantive effort to contribute towards the resolution of the most dangerous crisis of the Cold War. Immediate inspiration for an active engagement was the new awareness created in the wake of the September 1961 Belgrade Conference of the Non-Aligned. The attractiveness of this

new global initiative of the Third World was evident in the congruence of views held between Yugoslavia, and active member of the Movement, and Brazil, whose government was sympathetic to the non-aligned principles but outside the Movement itself. As the documents show, this congruence of views enabled the two countries to work in synchrony and play a constructive role during the crisis. The documents also provide ample evidence of unknown closeness between the Cuban leadership and the Yugoslavs during the crisis, in particular its critical days. To many, it will be a surprise to learn how eager the Cubans were to take very seriously Tito’s suggestions during these fateful hours. Here, however, also lay seeds of future rivalry between Havana and Belgrade for the leadership of NAM. Finally, the documents bear rare witness to the human face of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Yugoslav Ambassador Vidaković’s unique access to high-level Cuban leaders throughout the crisis enabled him to observe and report on the personal drama, insecurities, and doubts that these people went through as the crisis evolved. The Yugoslav Ambassador’s accounts, as recorded in the documents presented, offer an insightful, albeit very limited peak into the dilemmas, frustration, disappointment, and even errors of judgment the Cuban leaders underwent in the face of possible imminent annihilation.

Perhaps the most illustrative account of the extraordinary atmosphere, fear and mind-set of Cuban leaders during the time of crisis is Vidakovic’s chilling record of a long conversation with Che Guevara during the night of 8 November. It tells us so much about the dichotomy and co-existence of, on the one hand, a multi-layered dimensionality and, on the other hand, an inexplicable tunnel vision of an ideological mind. Che boasted to have been ready to cause millions of deaths in the US in the name of “defending” the working men and women of Cuba, forgetting that the act would sacrifice millions of also working men and women in the US. At the same time, his loathsome bravado could have simply been evidence of an immature adrenalin-driven cockiness of a self-perceived revolutionary and evidence of boundless fear. Most disturbing, however, is the fact that at one point in human history, during the Cold War, there were people on both sides who spent their days and nights making war calculations aimed at causing millions of deaths or a thousand-year long environmental and cultural Dark Age on Earth. Their minds were pacified by the “justification” of a higher cause.

The documents constitute, in sum, a fitting contribution to the memory and commemoration of the most dangerous crisis of the Cold War when, for far too long, humanity stood on the verge of self-destruction.



DOCUMENT No. 1

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 24 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FNRJ [FPRY: Federated People's Republic of Yugoslavia]

Sending: Rio
Received: 25.X 62. at 07.30
No. 398
Taken into process: teletypewriter
Date: 24.X 1962
Completed: 25.X 62. at 08.10

Telegram
16
D D D

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The talk with [Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs] Under Secretary [Carlos A.] Bernardes on the 24th of October.

The last information from the MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] received here from the Ambassador in Washington [Roberto de Oliveira Campos] says that the USA is getting ready for military intervention in Cuba. The approximate plan is that US planes will start bombing Cuba in the places where there are alleged bases with nuclear weapons and that will be as soon as Cuba refuses to accept the UN Commission for disarmament. The Brazilian Government advised Cuba to invite the Commission itself so as to clear the charges about the existence of nuclear weapons. However, Cuba rejected it. The Government is of opinion that the USA is responsible for the instantaneous intensifying of the conflict and they are very worried about the unyielding attitude of the USA towards Fidel's Government. Kennedy sent a letter to [Brazilian President João] Goulart from which it can be concluded that the USA is getting ready not only for disarmament of Cuba but for the military liquidation of Fidel's Government as well. [Brazilian UN Ambassador Afonso] Arinos suggested that Brazil address the General Assembly with the proposal of deatomization [denuclearization] of LA [Latin America] including Cuba.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 2

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 24 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio
Received: 26.X 62. at 08.00
No. 397
Taken into process: teletypewriter
Date: 24.X 1962
Completed: 26.X 62. at 08.30

Telegram
16
D D D

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

There is a general feeling in Brazil that the military blockade of Cuba, for the first time in the history of the Cold War, has brought the USA and the USSR to the very verge of the war because of one LA country, making in that way LA and Brazil the center of the Cold War. The feeling of immediate danger mobilized all circles in order to find a way out. They concluded [that the] values of their former independent policy, especially towards Cuba, enable them to influence more freely and with more authority in seeking peaceful solutions. However, there are differences within Government circles regarding the real intentions of the USA as well as the ways and means for solving the crisis over Cuba. The Ambassador of the US here [Lincoln Gordon] managed quite well to convince that the US option was not the invasion. On Tuesday Kennedy phoned [Brazilian President João] Goulart explaining the reasons for the blockade. He pointed out his intentions and asked for support in which he partly succeeded. American arguments are: firstly, they have solid proof that Cuba will get atomic weapons; secondly, Kennedy must take more severe measures because of the internal pressure, that's

why his option is blockade, although he is trying to transfer this issue to the UNO [United Nations Organization] in order to alleviate the pressure on himself; thirdly, transferring Cuba's issue to the UNO he is creating a precedent against unilateral USSR actions in Berlin. Therefore Kennedy is asking the support for their plan of keeping the blockade as long as the UNO Commission disarms Cuba. These arguments had an impact on Brazil to give a support to the US resolution in the Council of the OAS [Organization of American States] maintaining reservations about the employment of belligerent powers. Brazil accepts the UNO engagement, sending a Control Commission consisted of neutral people, and expects certain guarantees by the USA about the demilitarization of Cuba. They are of the opinion that through these actions a real guarantee for Cuba could be achieved and at the same time the role of non-aligned countries and Brazil could be affirmed. Although against intervention, Brazil supports American intentions, expecting alleviating of the war dangers and shows the wish to help Kennedy, so only moderate pressure is exerted on him in the UNO without any condemnation or neglecting American interests. They also expect that there is a way out from this crisis, especially about negotiations on Cuba and Berlin and they also believe that the USSR will avoid crossing swords at seas and that it will make Cuba accept the UNO inspection. Because of the pressure of the masses Government representatives make more severe statements against the USA, that is, confrontation with the support to the USA in OAS. Prime Minister [Hermes] Lima made a statement to the unions and students that Cuba had the right to its own socialist regime. Reactionary forces exert pressure asking Lima's resignation and demand a Parliament session to deal with foreign policy.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 3

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 25 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio
Received: 26.X 62. at 07.00
No. 400
Taken into process: teletypewriter
Date: 25.X 1962
Completed: 26.X 62. at 08.40

Telegram

16

D D D

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

I provided to [Brazilian foreign ministry official Carlos A.] Bernardes (connection your 434418) an extract from Tito's appeal and talked about the active role of the UNO [United Nations Organization]. He is expecting directives from the Government and President. The 25th of October news about the USA preparing a military invasion [of Cuba] appears to have helped the Government realize the issue and come over more firmly to the further measures. Governor [Leonel] Brizola [of Rio Grande do Sul province] attacked severely the US imperialism on TV at night on the 24th of October asking people to stand by the President and Government who are acting for peace and the preservation of the independence of Cuba. He accused the representative of Brazil in the Council of OAS of voting for the blockade which was against the Government's directives that authorized him to vote against the whole American resolution. It seems that overburdening of both the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hermes Lima⁹ led to the situation in which the Government lost control over the whole situation, letting Americans influence [Brazil] through the MFA [into] supporting their line. There are rumors that Santiago Dantas will take over foreign affairs again. They are expecting further complications, because the USA is demanding from all LA countries that voted for the blockade resolution to take part symbolically in the blockade of Cuba with their own ships. That is the reason why the voting of the Brazilian representative at the Council of OAS is being half-officially denied.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 4

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 25 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 26.X 62. at 07.00 (?)

No. 226

Taken into process: 25.X 62 at 23.45

Date: 25.X 1962

Completed: 26.X 62. at 07.30

Telegram

16

D

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From the talks with the Ambassador to Brazil, [Luis Bastian] Pinto.

Yesterday [Brazilian President João] Goulart personally phoned him asking him to suggest to those here to choose a couple of neutral people to [send to] Cuba of their own choice for the sake of assurance that they [i.e., the Cubans] didn't possess any offensive weapons. P. thinks that Brazil and some other LA countries needed that because of the easier resistance to American pressure to which all LA countries were uncompromisingly exposed. He says that they have phoned Brasília to warn at least twice a day and all that in the prime of elections.

He was a representative of Brazil to OAS. He says that the USA used unauthorized means in its pressure. Forged the resolution and published it and only at his explicit demand they corrected it 12 hours later.

They point out the unconvincing side of the stated reasons by Kennedy for such an act. He doesn't believe in installing the rocket launch sites. He pays attention to the lack of any logic in Kennedy's attitude and that of the Administration in the last ten days in comparison to the earlier period. The USA is neither naïve nor is advancing to Cuba without solid information. Personally, he thinks that this was provoked by Kennedy's need to improve his sheltered image before elections. If it weren't like that it could have been timed earlier and not twenty days before elections.

He keeps telling me the same what [Brazilian UN Ambassador] A. Arinos told to [Yugoslav diplomat Ivo] Vejvoda: [Polish Foreign Minister Adam] Rapacki used to tell them about all conditions under which Cuba started its own independent way like Yugoslavia; that there was confusion in the heads of Cuban leaders.

[Boško] Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 5

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 26 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio

Received: 27.X 62. at 08.40

No. 401

Taken into process: 27.X 62. at 08.40

Date: 26.X 1962

Completed: 27.X 62. at 09.00

Telegram

15

very urgent

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Comrade [Yugoslav Foreign Minister] Koča [Popović]. Talks with [Brazilian Foreign Ministry official Carlos A.] Bernardes on the 26th of October.

They were informed by the US embassy that the work on the missile launching pads was being carried on day and night and that if the work didn't stop in the next 24 to 48 hours, bombardment of these sites could be expected. B. thinks that these works are against invasion and not for nuclear missiles launching pads. They have information that there is euphoria in the US after sending back some of the Russian ships, which he considers equal to the war victory and that Kennedy has reached the top of his popularity. They are afraid

that euphoria could make the US intensify a conflict that could lead to invasion, because the US ambassador [Lincoln Gordon] claims constantly that the solution to this crisis is not only disarmament of Cuba, but also liquidation of Fidel's regime. The Soviet charge d' affaires told on 26th of October to President Goulart that in case of the invasion of Cuba the USSR would attack some of the neighboring counties, e.g. Turkey. Your liaison officer 434660 delivered him the need of permanent initiative and of activation of the UN. They are proposing [Brazilian UN Ambassador Afonso] Arinos to suggest deatomization [denuclearization] of LA and Africa through one of the nonaligned members of the SC [Security Council] (Chile, Ghana and UAR [United Arab Republic; Egypt]). They have the impression that the USA won't be against and that Cuba also accepts the idea. In coordination with his government Santiago Dantas gave an interview to the NY Times in which he developed his thesis on neutralization of Cuba, which he had already given as the Brazilian foreign minister in P[unta]. Del Este [at the OAS meeting in January 1962]. They are waiting to see if the NY Times will publish the interview and what the reaction will be; then both governments would make official steps to[ward] neutralization giving guarantees to Cuba.

The American Embassy is exerting pressure, using its military circles, to bind Brazil stronger to American plans as well as putting pressure on the government. Military dispositive gave resistance to various intrigues, so the government reacts more freely to the situation. [Brazilian President João] Goulart is preparing his response to Kennedy for today or tomorrow, in which he will stress his beliefs in the principles of self-determination and non-intervention. Santiago [Dantas] is absolutely convinced that there will be no invasion, while Goulart is a pessimist.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 6

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 27.X 62. at 00.30

No. 229

Taken into process: 27.X 62. at 00.30

Date: 27.X 1962

Completed: 27.XI 62. at 08.00

Telegram

15

Very urgent

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

For the President [Tito], [Foreign Minister] Koča [Popović].

Visited [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos at 3 PM. At 2 PM they received information that they would be attacked by the US. Expect the attack during that night. Very convinced that [the] Pentagon prevailed and the attack was inevitable. He said there would be a great surprise if the attack could be avoided tonight.

American planes fly over many sites ruthlessly photographing again the whole territory. Consider the attack to begin with classical weapons focusing at first only on bases.

Informed him about the statement and the message of our President [Tito].¹⁰ Extremely grateful and wants me to convey that. They were ready for everything without any restrictions under one condition: to get international guarantees for their own security. Couldn't accept disarmament without guarantees, not to become the victims of aggression in future. Any action, no matter the form, and initial steps from our side is looked forward to.

My comment. They are absolutely sure that the attack would be tonight. They are very upset and soft. I have an impression, according to Dorticos, that they were ready to accept many things that were out of discussion in the near past. If they overestimated, it's difficult for me to judge because of the lack of the outside information, but it is the right moment to hold them to their word. I will be in permanent contact during the night with Dorticos's office.

Asking for possible suggestions. Asking for keeping the connection open in the next 24 hours.

Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and

translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 7

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio
Received: 28.X 62. at 01.00
No. 403
Taken into process: teletypewriter
Date: 27.X 1962
Completed:
Telegram
15
Very urgent

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Comrade Koca. [Brazilian] President [João] Goulart is very satisfied that comrade President [Tito] sent him a message sharing his worries because the Americans are poisoned by the war propaganda and preparing the attack on Cuba. He considers that everything must be done to prevent the beginning of war, because war would bring unpredictable catastrophe and it would be hard to extinguish it if war operations start. The suggestion to address to the presidents of the SC [Security Council] and GA [General Assembly] he finds reasonable and he will do it. He sent a message to Kennedy appealing for common sense and avoiding war. His opinion is that negotiations are necessary, and that Cuba must be prevented from becoming an atomic base for it could be the constant cause of war dangers. He thinks that the UNO [United Nations Organization] could take over the blockade of Cuba during negotiations, and that the UNO should stand for deatomization [denuclearization] of LA including Cuba what he insisted on as on vital question for peace keeping in LA.

He said that he would reply to the comrade President this very day whose action he considers very useful and of current interest; he also considers that the initiatives of all countries, both aligned and non-aligned, should be further developed in order to prevent and avoid the beginning of the war. He said that he would reply to comrade President Tito this very day and that he sent him his regards.¹¹

In the end he mentioned the wish of his government to expand economic relationships with all countries and especially with us, i.e. with the country with which Brazil has already had old and traditionally friendly and economic relations.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 8

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FNRJ (FPRY)

Sending: Havana
Received: 28.X 62. at 07.00
No. 230
Taken into process: 28.X 62. at 10.20
Date: 27.X 1962
Completed: 28.X 62. at 10.45

Telegram
15
Very urgent

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Koča. Yours 434844.

Visited [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos at 1 P.M. Just today received U Thant's message. The answer is being edited. It will be completed in an hour and I will be given it. Their intention is to address public opinion throughout that answer. According to what he stated I conclude that there is no necessary flexibility at all. They don't have full texts either of the last message to Kennedy from Khrushchev or Kennedy's answer, so they are still not completing the final version of the answer.

Your suggestions were passed. He states that a great deal of them will be in the above answer. Commitments will be taken

during the negotiations, but not unilaterally. The condition is that they are taken by the USA too, as well as the stoppage of the blockade during them.

The idea of U Thant's arrival to Cuba is very useful. Will be discussed immediately. Asked if it was U Thant's suggestion. Answered that it was our opinion. Of course, they will have to invite him. Will be answered.

They are not able to allow inspection.

The idea of a special declaration of the Cuban Government can also be taken into account. They will consult immediately. I stated that it would miss the target if it lacks new flexible elements and proofs of their readiness to warm the situation; thus there must be understood what can maximally be done.

American planes continued overflights during the day. In the west part of the island there was fire at them, but without hitting the targets. He stated that there was information from Brazil that the possible attack could be in next 48 hours.

I have an impression that they are struggling between reality and Castro's persistence. There are up against limits made up by Fidel's speech. Today there is a certain deterioration in regard to our talks from yesterday. I couldn't possibly find out more precisely how far they can go. I have an impression that D. was a protagonist of accepting our ideas. However, it seems that each issue is being discussed for too long. From the way and speed he has received me, in contrast to the other ambassadors except the Russian one, I can conclude that they care to be in constant touch with us.

In half an hour there will be a contact with D. A telegram will be sent immediately.

Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 9

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 28 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio de Janeiro
Received: 29.X 62 at 07.00
No. 405

Taken into process:

Date: 28.X 1962

Completed: 29.X 62. at 08.15

Telegram

VERY URGENT

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

This evening we received [Brazilian] President [João] Goulart's reply:

To Comrade Koca.

The text of this reply translated into Serbo-Croat:

“Dear President [Tito],

I have received with great pleasure your message of the 26th of this month concerning the ‘critical situation which has been developing about Cuba.’

I was already acquainted with the statement of your Government in which you have invited the ‘countries in conflict to access direct negotiations in conformity with the principles of the UN.’

Your sublime intentions, that through direct talks and diplomatic means with their appropriate instruments in the UN, you search for solutions to the crisis that worries us so much, are in full consent with the intentions of my Government and with the peaceful traditions of the Brazilian people.

Like [Your] Excellency, we, in Brazil too, receive with encouragement and hope the first results of the already made efforts in the UN and the constructive support of the acting Secretary-General U Thant with the aims to reduce tensions in direct talks.

The possibility to find an adequate solution would increase to the extent to which formulas of the guarantees were found leading to the immediate suspension of the quarantine, followed by the corresponding suspension of the weapons delivery to Cuba and stipulations of the commitments for preventing the spreading of nuclear weapons and installation of the bases for their deployment.

My opinion is that the danger of a destructive war, the threat which was always opposed by the feelings of Brazilian people, would significantly increase. Worries of Brazil about its own future would grow with the installation of such bases in Cuba or any other part of Latin America, no matter [whether] their use could be put in the service of other powers.

As it has been well emphasized by [Your] Excellency, such a useful and opportune effort for peace will not be considered complete if it is paralyzed or not continued with the appropriate actions of the Security Council. In that case I have no doubts that everything should be done in order to ask the General Assembly to make the decision.

Following these suggestions that could be the matter of understanding and consideration in the UN, at this moment I want to draw your attention to the proposal brought by Brazil and other countries in 1961 and renewed now about the “deatomization” [denuclearization] of Latin America and Africa. Apart from its help to the solution of the particular crisis which worries us, generalizing the right of inspection, it represents a great step to the reduction of the world tension.

At the same time I want to confirm [to Your] Excellency that my Government is ready to participate in taking steps at the Governments in Washington, Havana, and Moscow with the aim of finding a constructive solution that could provide keeping the right and self-determination of the Cuban people and the reduction of armament to the defensive level excluding the possibility of repeating any military threat. In that case, Brazil had the opportunity in earlier times to propose measures which would implement a special status for Cuba through negotiations, so these proposals could be renewed.

Having this in mind, [Your] Excellency may be convinced that cooperation of Brazil in the limits of possibility will not be left out.

I repeat assurances of my personal satisfaction because our mutual aims on peace-keeping are the same and I hope that the ideals of agreement and peace-loving co-existence among nations will be strengthened so as to prevent humanity from suffering from the catastrophe of nuclear war.

Accept, [Your] Excellency, the assurances of my highest considerations.

Joao Goulart”

[Brazilian foreign ministry official Carlos A.] Bernardes delivered [Goulart’s reply and said] that he accepted publishing of these messages if we are interested in that. He wants to be informed previously so that he could ask for the formal authorization from Goulart.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 10

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 28 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 29.X 62. at 07.00

No. 234

Taken into process: 29.X 62. at 07.30

Date: 28.X 1962

Completed: 29.X 62. at 07.38

Telegram

14

Very urgent

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Our 233. [Raúl] Roa the foreign minister said that Fidel’s last declaration¹² was forwarded more to [i.e., directed at—ed.] Khrushchev than to Kennedy. “We have to say something when our skin is at stake” and something like that following the same line. So, it occurred to them, or at least it seems so, that they became part of the game.

Brazilian ambassador L.B. Pinto told me that the head of the military department of [Brazilian President João] Goulart, Albino Silva, was coming tomorrow, on the 29th with a special message for Fidel [Castro].

To be continued.

Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 11

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 29 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 29.XI 62. at 08.10

No. 235

Taken into process: 29.XI 62. at 09.15 Date: 29.X 1962

Completed: 29.XI 62. at 10.00

Telegram

14

To the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs

Koča.

Tonight talked to [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa at 20.00.

“We exist.” “They have to know that – this side, as well as the other side.” That’s why there is Fidel’s declaration. Our number 233. Khrushchev hasn’t informed us about his last message to Kennedy. We had been informed about the previous ones. That’s why we were late with this declaration. Your both suggestions were accepted immediately.

He says that they had finished with the editing of the response to U Thant when I talked to [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos. To our suggestion they immediately included the invitation. They are grateful, considering that wise. They are satisfied that U Thant accepted it at once. Our suggestion for the necessity of coming up with one declaration, appeal, etc. was understood and immediately discussed, but they were anticipated by the events. He read me U Thant’s letter in which he announces his arrival with his assistants on Tuesday. He stays two days. The letter was written in very moderate way. Nothing concrete was mentioned. It is underlined that sovereignty of Cuba was undisputable, etc.

Roa has already prepared to go to the UNO [United Nations Organization]. His trip was put off until U Thant’s arrival.

They don’t know what the special envoy to the Brazilian president Goulart will bring.

In further talks he confirms that they didn’t have time to think about the Chinese and their stupidities. They

received Nehru’s message concerning the conflict. They didn’t answer it.

Much talks on the topic “it’s hard to the small ones when the big ones are bargaining.” Nothing much.

He is asking us for permanent contact.

In my opinion, they are overestimating again. It seems to me that they believe that the worst has gone away. There is a fear for them not to be disappointed with the Russians and once again make sort of a hysterical move like it had been already done with this declaration. On your behalf, I have suggested to Roa the necessity of calm and cool reactions.

Tonight Raul Castro is giving a speech. We will report.

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović and Svetozar Rajak.]



DOCUMENT No. 12

Telegram from Yugoslav Foreign Ministry to Yugoslav Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, 29 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Cabinet of Josip Djordja

Received:

No. 435139

Taken into process:

Date: 29.X 1962

Completed:

Telegram

VERY URGENT

Embassy of FPRY – Rio

Yours 405.

Consented and interested in an announcing the messages. If they agree, they could be announced today, if impossible – tomorrow morning. It is not necessary to pinpoint the hour. Contact immediately.

Koča

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 13

Telegram from Yugoslav Foreign Ministry to Yugoslav Embassies in Havana and Washington and Yugoslav Mission to the United Nations, 29 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY
Sending: IV department
Received:
No. 435139
Taken into process:
Date: 29.X 1962
Completed:

Coded Letter

Embassy
To Havana, Washington and the Permanent Mission of the FPRY at the UNO in New York

[Brazilian President João] Goulart answered the President's message considering it in full accordance with the intentions of his Government. He emphasized that the possibility of an adequate solution could be increased if there were [measures] to suspend the quarantine immediately, followed by corresponding and effective stoppage of weapons shipment to Cuba as well as determining obligations to prevent the spreading of nuclear weapons and the installation of bases. In his opinion the danger of war could increase significantly and worries of Brazil would grow as far as its own security was concerned, if such bases were installed in Cuba or any other part of LA.

He brought to the attention the proposal of Brazil [at the UN] about the deatomization [denuclearization] of LA and Africa.

He expressed his readiness to take steps in actions toward the Governments of the USA, Cuba, and the USSR which could lead to providing the Cuban people with the right to self-determination and the reduction of its armament to a defensive level so as to prevent the repetition of the military threat. In connection with this, he reminded of the earlier

Brazilian suggestion on adopting a special Status for Cuba, which could be renewed (neutralization).

For your information.

Lekić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 14

Telegram from Yugoslav Foreign Ministry (Koca Popovic) to Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković), 29 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Cabinet of Koca Popovic
Received:
No. confidentially 435141
Taken into process:
Date: 29.X 1962
Completed:

Telegram
D D D

Embassy of FPRY – Havana
Vidakovic,
Yours 232, 233, 234, 236

Our assessments and suggestions have proved realistic, which can be seen from the fact the agreement was reached on approximately that basis.

We are being informed from New York that U Thant is leaving on Tuesday, what you have surely been informed about in the meantime.

As far as future behavior and actions of the Cubans are concerned we seemed to find best as follows, that you should express your statement as your personal opinion.

Independence, security, sovereignty and integrity of Cuba are fundamental. The only reliable guarantee for that is international—the UN. In that framework the suspension of Guantanamo is legitimate.

In setting out these proposals two things are extremely important: the way and the tone. In setting out these demands, resolutely but calmly, they should highlight the necessity and readiness for negotiations and settling all contentious issues. Nobody has doubts about their readiness to defend themselves at any cost, which they showed fully. At this moment, they should show common sense and constructiveness.

Secondly, the relations among LA countries shouldn't be antagonized unnecessarily, because they are their [i.e., the Cubans'] safest and the most important support in the long run.

They should show greater respect for difficulties of some of the most well-intentioned LA governments which tend to resist, as much as they can, the powerful pressure of the USA.

Going through all the troubles and the outcome of the recent crisis, they have achieved, or they can achieve and consolidate, a number of issues with the right policy. They have consolidated their existence as an independent country. Possibilities of the aggression, blockade and interference by the USA could be significantly reduced or eliminated. The importance of their country remains, but with new contents: not as a means of struggling among the big ones, but as an independent political factor of special importance to LA. Therefore, it is more important to work out and convey a suitable and constructive policy. The content of this policy shouldn't be otherwise than consistent non-alignment with equal and very developed connections with a very wide range of countries, that by no means isn't or shouldn't be in opposition with the irrefutable right to its socialistic direction of development. In that context, the internal consolidation, both economic and political, is of utmost importance.

We insist on the style and tone, which they might find especially difficult. Until recently they have enjoyed the "privilege" of being very loud as a part of being directly involved in the dispute among big ones [i.e., powers—ed.]. The price is very high.

The matter of armament. It will depend on negotiations. It's quite normal they keep the full right on all defensive weapons. Anyway they can't deal with the USA on their own. They could have been offensively armed only as a USSR base, i.e. as a means of struggling among the big ones. That proved fictions in the world division and the balance of power. So, the main point is that they, without their own weapons "equal to American ones," should be protected by international mechanisms as well as by their own policy which would attract active support of a great number of nations, what the highest guarantee is against and the means of repulsing a possible repeat of American aggression.

This is the line of your action. We are quite aware that this neither can be nor should be stated in full of each partner, nor it can bring quick results. Following this line of our action we are offering the greatest help to them. They should also help themselves with their own attitude, making our support easier.

P.S. Of course, we are not asking their recognition for our great engagement in recent hard days. We have been fully engaged in the most useful and realistic way. Doing that we have shown again our great friendship towards them. The fact that our activity was in the service of the general cause of peace keeping doesn't change anything. From their side we are expecting better understanding of our positive and constructive policy as a whole and especially towards them

Koča

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 15

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 30.X 62. at 09.00

No. 238

Taken into process: 30.X 62. at 10.30

Date: 30.X 1962

Completed: 30.X 62. at 11.20

Telegram

14

DDD

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Yours 435141.

On the bases of my and [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa's agreement to keep in touch on everyday basis, I saw him again today.

They were having conferences all morning in the presidential palace.

During the conversation it was emphasized in the proper form that the further development [of the situation] greatly depended on the form and tone of their actions. The whole world is convinced of their decisiveness to defend their independence. It's not necessary to underline that, but to act wisely and skillfully. He fully agrees personally and presents collective opinion. Their attitude is to wait and be absolutely quiet until U Thant's arrival. He will be welcomed warmly and attentively. U Thant asked that his visit should have only working character (journalists, diplomats, manifestations, etc. excluded).

I underlined our engagement and maximum activity since the beginning of the crisis, because of the friendly attitude towards Cuba, based on principles. It is useful to draw conclusions from that. Apart from his personal satisfaction and gratitude, he wants it to be known that this belief was widely spread among the whole leadership. Long before the crisis, in one of the talks with [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos, he informed him about our talks and discussed the relationships with us and need to get free of everything that was poisoning them. I remarked that the whole situation was instructive for the little ones who let them be objects in the games played by the big ones. His immediate response was that they had never been nor would ever be the object in someone's game and that they had had and would have their own policy. I did not wish to insist any further, in particular since what he has said barely hid his intimate conviction that it is [indeed] so.

Great support given in the whole world should be appreciated and kept. It is especially important for the LA countries. He fully agrees with that, underlining the role of Brazil. [Brazilian President João] Goulart's special envoy [Gen. Albino Silva] with the message for Fidel has just arrived. Doesn't know the content yet.

The above conversation was held in the familiar atmosphere as among friends, with some pranks on the account of their "great friends" the Chinese and the others.

I will slowly try to broaden the circle of the executives for contacting.

All the work done wasn't intrusive and having the spirit of your instructions. It would be necessary to keep us informed especially about the turning and changes in the UNO [UN Organization].

Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 16

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 31.X 62. at 7.30

No. 239

Taken into process: 31.X 62. at 12.45

Date: 30.X 1962

Completed: 31.X 62. at 13.30

Telegram

-DDD-

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

From the talks with the Brazilian ambassador [Luis] Bastian Pinto.

Fidel came to the residence. Talked to [Brazilian President João] Goulart's special envoy, Private Secretary [Gen. Albino] Da Silva for a couple of hours. Informal talks. Da Silva expressed the standpoint of Brazil on all current problems and especially on the running crisis. The essence of Goulart's position defined in P[unta]. Del Este. Fidel must consider the course towards neutralization gradually if he takes into account the possibility of final relations with the US being resolved. Suggested accepting control [e.g., inspection] as a necessary measure, under the condition of lifting the blockade.

Fidel antagonized. Said that he couldn't accept the controls, stating all kinds of reasons (sovereignty, prestige). Besides, the agreement between Russians and Americans without him was a matter he couldn't either understand or accept. Da Silva explained to him the necessity of accepting the principles of the control of the UN, provided it could be done later and over the opposite side: control and monitoring of the sovereignty and independence of Cuba, possible control of the Caribbean countries, avoiding setting up bases against Cuba and similar. This was accepted by Fidel, but

only as an idea. There were no concrete results of the talk. It's in progress. Goulart calls on the phone 2-3 times every day wishing to know the course of the talk.

Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 17

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 31.XI 62 at 08.20

No. 245

Taken into process: 31.X 62 at 09.30

Date: 30.X 1962

Completed: 31.X 62 at 10.05

Telegram

14

Very urgent

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. Tonight had talks with General [Albino] Da Silva, Goulart's special envoy. He is enthusiastic advocate of Fidel [Castro]. F. neither offered, nor accepted any of suggestions. Until now, only empty phrases. Further details continued.
2. If [one is] to believe to Brazilian and [UN aide Maj.-Gen. Indar Jit] Rikhye, the first talks of U Thant were disappointing. Fidel is very stubborn. Doesn't accept anything.
3. Tomorrow they will continue talks. Further details continued.

Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 18

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio

Received: 1.XI 62 at 11.10

No. 412

Taken into process: teletypewriter

Date: 30.X 1962

Completed: 1.XI 62 at 14.10

Telegram

14

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Today, in the talks with the Almuli [not further identified—ed.], said that Fidel Castro, in his first contacts with [Brazilian President João] Goulart's special envoy gen. [Albino] Silva, accepted well the Brazilian thesis which contains following:

1. Deatomization [denuclearization] of the whole of LA [Latin America] and the embargo on atomic weapons delivery. Inspection of the fulfillment of this decision will be performed by the UNO, which would make a precedent for the overall problem of inspection.
2. Cuba would commit neither to export revolution nor to carry out any subversive activities.
3. Cuba would be given guarantees for keeping its sovereignty and independence.

The USA will accept the plan after negotiations. Russians "couldn't think of anything better."

The USA succeeded to expel Russians in the military sense from the continent but this doesn't mean any new issue of the Monroe doctrine, because all the decisions and inspections will depend on the UNO [United Nations Organization], and not on the USA.

Bonding to the bloc proved unfeasible but the small NATO in LA will not be made either. A somewhat more flexible policy is expected from Kennedy, which Brazil will try to make use of, but there will be no big changes in the Alliance for Progress.

There was a crisis because the USSR tried to violate the balance which was the basis of the Cold War. The USA came out with strengthened prestige and the possibility of strengthening the Pentagon policy.

The influence of Brazil as well as the position of Goulart became stronger. Bonds with the UN actions brought great international recognition to Brazil. Observation: Goulart attaches great importance to the exchange of messages with Tito. He connects it with his increased activity. They are spreading interpretations that non-aligned countries, and especially Tito, want Brazil to take over the initiative.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 19

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Mexico (Vlahov) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Mexico

Received: 1.XI 62. at 07.30

No. 816

Taken into process: 1.XI 62. at 10.55

Date: 31.X 1962

Completed: 2.XI 62. at 11.20

Telegram

14

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Significant publicity and acknowledgment was given: to Tito's message and initiative; [Brazilian President João] Goulart's messages, and our activity in the UNO [United Nations Organization]. Our reputation as well as that of the nonaligned was significantly strengthened. See our 814.

Vlahov

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 20

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 1.XI 62. at 10.00

No. 246

Taken into process: 1.XI 62. at 12.30

Date: 31.X 1962

Completed: 2.XI 62. at 13.40

Telegram

14

-DDD-

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

This night had the discussion with [Gen. Albino] Da Silva, a special envoy of [Brazilian] President [João] Goulart.

He said that he came due to the permanent contact with Castro. The aim of that was to convince them to draw out real conclusions from the recent events. They were supposed to make concepts for their own policy on that basis. They had been acquainted earlier with standpoints of Brazil, but they either couldn't or didn't want to understand them. They should bond again somehow with LA [Latin America]. Internal regime is not an obstacle. Let them do what they

want inside Cuba, but outside they must stick to the frameworks dictated by real circumstances which couldn't be changed either by Cuba or Castro, nor would they be able to do so in future. The only way out of unpleasant crisis is the case of Yugoslavia.

Talks with Castro were open and fully sincere. Had talked about all sorts of things. C. didn't conceal his outrage about Russians. Thus, he stubbornly refused any control [inspection] showing both sides that he must have been consulted as well. Holding his ground about the evacuation of Guantanamo base. Following his impression Da Silva concluded that F. would be very tough and persistent in his talk with U Thant. He tried to convince Castro that he couldn't let U Thant to return without anything. This situation could deteriorate terribly and even be fatal for Cuba if everything moved down before the [US Congressional mid-term] elections i.e. before 5 November. He is not sure if F. fully understood that. He said that F. behaved like a haunted wild animal that was afraid of all sorts of things. Steps must be taken gradually and in stages because both internal and external situations are extremely complicated. He was of the opinion that Fidel was very honest to him and grateful that Brazil had taken such an initiative. Expressed optimism. Was of the opinion that he would succeed in main features. (This general is very naive).

(See telegram co-ordinating no. 57)

Therefore, aspirations of Brazil are too ambitious for this moment. Cuba should be drawn into the circle of LA. Should be neutralized following the formula of Yugoslavia. Tactically, it should be based on negotiations Kennedy-Khrushchev excluding Fidel from them.

I suggest some hints: Cuba has oil supplies for 15-20 days; food supplies probably for a month; production brought to a halt; state of readiness must be prolonged due to internal political reasons. All this world fuss, even if it ends for the best, will cost Cuba in cutting down its living standards by another 10-20 percent. The only factor that could solve all these problems now as well as in the near future could be the USSR. Castro as well as all the others should bear in mind this fact and should bear it further, no matter what they said on TV and similarly. At this moment, this fact is unchangeable and obstinate.

Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 21

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio

Received: 5.XI 62. at 18.45

No. 415

Taken into process: teletypewriter

Date: 31.X 1962

Completed: 5.XI 62 at 18.55

Telegram

14

Very urgent

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The talks with [Brazilian foreign ministry official Carlos A.] Bernardes on 31 October.

Fidel met with Goulart's envoy [Gen. Albino Silva] in the Brazilian Embassy [in Havana]. Expressed his satisfaction with the Brazilian attitude and actions. Accepted thesis on disarmament inspection and guarantees in the UNO [United Nations Organization], although not only for Cuba itself but for the larger area.

Brazil finds it acceptable and possible to be carried out in the framework of their proposal to the UNO about the deatomization [denuclearization] of LA and Africa. F. must promise not to interfere in the political life of the neighbors.

F. demands the evacuation of Guantanamo for what, according to B., Americans stop their ears. They have evidence that the USA would accept disarmament and guarantees through the UNO and the nonintervention of Cuba. The USA had some minor comments to their proposal about the deatomization for which they are expecting unanimous support. They know that the US press praises Brazil following directives, while Kennedy has personally made some tiny friendly gestures towards Brazil, which implies that the USA will try a kind of agreement with Cuba. However, they don't expect any stronger engagements of the USA before the 7th [6th] of November [mid-term Congressional] elections. They

estimate that Kennedy has assured his victory on the elections because of the popularity he had gained with this crisis, making it possible to negotiate more seriously later. He considers that the USSR has lost its prestige and confidence although at the last moment it did much to secure peace. He believes that Khrushchev's hesitation was due to the internal antagonisms and that resignations are to be expected in the USSR. I stated my opinion that the basic matter now was to make the USA negotiate and achieve guarantees about K. Their envoy is coming back on the 1st of November, and after his report he will work out the further action.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 22

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio

Received: 2.XI 62 at 09.30

No. 416

Taken into process: teletypewriter

Date: 31.X 1962

Completed: 2.XI 62 at 10.00

Telegram

Coded Letter

14

Very urgent

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Army extraordinary satisfied with Tito's message. They say that he hit Brazilian vanity, especially he gave them significance which they themselves didn't believe in. Tito's stimulus contributed to [Brazilian President João] Goulart's

determination, and now when everything is running smoothly, everybody is grateful.

Russians counted [i.e., calculated—ed.] wrongly, but they withdrew on time. Nevertheless they are responsible for this crisis. The USA and particularly Kennedy strengthened their authority, and despite their decoy operations, they showed that they wanted peace and that they were generally right. Anyway, the real victors weren't Americans, but the "third side," i.e., Brazil and the others who insisted and proved that a peaceful solution was the only possible one.

The Army is proud of the success of Brazil and Goulart.

The Army is more united than ever before and is with Goulart. A handful of reactionaries tried to use [Gen. Emilio] Maurel Filho who couldn't cope with the situation, but the matter was quickly determined because he didn't have any support in the Army.

We would appreciate that, sometime after the solution to the crisis on Cuba has been found, Tito sends a message to Goulart and even more to the Brazilian people congratulating them on their success.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 23

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 1.XI 62. at 15.00

No. 249

Taken into process: 1.XI 62. at 15.00

Date: 31.X 1962

Completed: 1.XI 62. at 16.50

Telegram

14

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

There has been only the first Tito message after the blockade in the Cuban press in the first days since the beginning of the crisis, concerning Yugoslavia, as the indicator of the political reaction and understanding of particular events. It was short information, but placed very well. "Revolución" gave captions on the first page – "Tito asks for urgent [UN General] Assembly Session" and "Hoy" had a headline "Tito urges for lifting the blockade." Then news on Tito-Goulart messages [on] 26 [October] were mentioned in the moment of the culmination of the crisis. Besides the meeting of U Thant with the ambassadors of the sides involved in the dispute, he was only visited by the "Yugoslav delegate V. Popovic." Among a number of telegrams, there was one from our Unions and that was all.

The role of the nonaligned countries during the crisis was presented only through individual cases of the countries, and not as a coordinated action. UAR [United Arab Republic; Egypt] and Brazil were only mentioned. The visit of [Brazilian emissary Gen. Albino] Da Silva wasn't mentioned at all in the press, [nor was] the letter from [Mexican President Alfonso López] Mateos.

The action of U Thant had one of the central places concerning the publicity in all that time. His coming and talks were defined as "he is coming to talk and not to make an inspection." The greatest attention to mass manifestations of solidarity with Cuba all over the world, "people with Cuba."

-- USSR had the most prominent place [in the Cuban press] until its acceptance of disassembling of the bases. With bombastic headlines [such as] "USSR will respond", editorials about the "great leader", press full of pictures of C[astro]. Among troops, there is pompous preparation ahead of his [i.e., Castro's] speech tomorrow.

-- With regard to Sino-Indian clashes, nothing [in the Cuban press]. About Chinese declarations and manifestations of solidarity [with Cuba], [in the Cuban press there is] a lot. Today, the entire editorial from "Renmin Ribao" ["People's Daily"] related to the Soviet decision to withdraw "offensive weapons" and [expressing] whole-hearted support for Castro's 5 points.

Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović and Svetozar Rajak.]



DOCUMENT No. 24

Telegram from Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, Belgrade, to Yugoslav Embassies in Havana and Washington and the Yugoslav Mission to the United Nations, New York, 2 November 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: IV department

Received:

No. 435662

Taken into process:

Date: 2.XI 1962

Completed:

Coded telegram

DDD

To the Embassy of the FPRY

Havana, Washington

To the Permanent Mission of FPRY at the UNO-New York

According to the report of our Embassy in Rio the Brazilian concept, which Castro was informed by [Brazilian emissary Gen. Albino] Da Silva, mainly includes:

1. deatomization [denuclearization] of the whole of LA [Latin America] with the inspection of the UNO [United Nations Organization], which would make a precedent for the general problem of inspection.
2. Cuba's commitment that it will not "export" revolution and make any subversive operations.
3. guarantees to Cuba for its sovereignty and independence.

Allegedly Castro welcomed the idea of the above plan.

Brazilians think that the USA could accept it after negotiations.

Lekić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 25

Telegram from Yugoslav Foreign Ministry to Yugoslav Embassies in Washington, Havana, Mexico, Caracas, and LaPaz, and Missions in Santiago de Chile, Montevideo, and New York City (United Nations), 3 November 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: IV department

Received:

No. 435762

Taken into process:

Date: 3.XI 1962

Completed:

Coded letter

Telegram

To Yugoslav Embassy

Washington, Havana, Mexico, Caracas, La Paz, Santiago de Chile

Legation of FPRY – Montevideo

Permanent Mission of the FPRY in UNO – New York

Embassy in Rio on Army's reaction:

Extremely satisfied with Tito's message which contributed to [Brazilian President João] Goulart's decisiveness on Cuban crisis.

Russians withdrew in time, although responsible for the crisis. Kennedy consolidated his reputation. The USA proved that they wanted peace, besides demonstrating its power.

However, Brazil and the others proved that the peaceful solution was the only way.

They would like that comrade President [Tito] sends his message to Goulart and even more to the Brazilian people, as soon as the Cuban crisis approached the solution.

The embassy states that the Army is more united than ever and is with Goulart.

Lekić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić-Mladenović.]



DOCUMENT No. 26

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 8 November 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 8.XI 62. at 09.30

No. 260

Taken into process: 8.XI 62. at 09.30

Date: 8.XI 1962

Completed: 9.XI 62. at 09.40

Telegram

14

-Very urgent-

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On [the] conversation with Mikoyan.

USSR guarantees independence of Cuba and because of this the American imperialism cannot deprive the Cuban people of independence.

Talks are not yet finished. With substantial patience and gradually the Cuban leadership will nonetheless understand the basic reasons of Soviet tactics. He [Mikoyan] thinks that he will have to stay a few more days. USSR unconditionally gives Cuba all necessary material help, without which the Cuban revolution could not exist. They started talks about economy while political talks are still ongoing. He says he is an optimist, still.

Vidakovic

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Rajak.]



DOCUMENT No. 27

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 8 November 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 9.XI 62

No. 63

Taken into process: 9.XI 62

Date: 8.XI 1962

Completed: 9.XI 62. at 14.00

Telegram

14

- Very urgent -

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

[Yugoslav Foreign Minister] Koca [Popovic].

I talked with [Ernesto “Che”] Guevara this night.

Their strategic and tactical conceptions are very clear and very simple. Inspection in Cuba they will not allow to anyone. Khrushchev believes Kennedy’s guarantee, [but] “we never do.” The question of rocket weapons is a Russian matter. If they [i.e., the Cubans] had them, they would install them in every centimeter of Cuba and if necessary would fire them without a second thought into the heart of the aggressor—New York. Since they don’t have them, they don’t have to declare themselves.

The [US] blockade is also practically the matter of the USSR. Cuba has four small vessels, thus her [i.e., Cuba’s] opinion has no practical meaning. Things that are within their sovereignty, this is where they are firm. On their territory or in their territorial waters—there are no inspections. Every [US] vessel in their waters they will sink, they will down every plane; they still have enough arms.

If there is a direct attack they will defend with all their might, whether they are alone or are being helped. On the critical night of the 27 October he gave instructions to his own staff: since rocket bases could be destroyed in the first attack, and many leaders could be killed, the fight has to be continued, without prisoners, until death. (All this with the intonation of sorrow that they were denied the opportunity for “honorable suicide”).

He noted that their fighting determination is known to everyone and asks what are their [i.e., the Cubans’] conceptions on the political plane; what and how do they think to use and nourish the factors of moral political support which Cuba received during the crisis. [He] says that these factors have no practical meaning. No morale exists. Where have those factors ever played any sort of role[?] He never saw it. They said so to U Thant as well. The main factor is struggle

and their determination to fight to the death. “Homeland or death” [“Patria o muerte”] is not an accidental slogan. It has been thought through very deeply. There is no compromise with imperialism. Those are basic factors, the rest are trifles and nonsense [*trice i kučina*]. (Non-engagement [i.e., non-alignment].)

Towards imperialism one should have a policy of a hard fist and not compromising. It is true that the American imperialism is not a paper tiger but a real one. If the socialist elephant turns its back this one [i.e., the tiger] would jump on its neck and defeat it. The concrete struggle around Cuba represents a loss for the socialist world because of the USSR’s policy of retreat. The decision by the Pentagon and the rest of the military in the USA to attack Cuba on the critical 27 October is an immediate result of previous Soviet steps that showed weakness. They came to a clear conviction that the USSR will not enter a war because of Cuba. If the USSR had responded firmly and clearly to the blockade: “if you open fire at our vessel...we will [fire] rockets at New York,” the situation would be completely different, imperialism would be scared off.

With regard to Latin America and the support of [its] governments, the position has not changed an inch, on the contrary, the traditional position of the Second Declaration [of Havana], [is] even accentuated. There is no support there [that they can depend on]. When they [i.e., the Americans] push [Brazilian leader João] Goulart against the wall to declare himself he will show himself the same as [his predecessor Janio] Quadros. The path for Latin America is revolution, the same way as they are doing in Venezuela. This does not mean the imminent victory of socialism, it is a question of years of struggle with which imperialism could not come to terms. A road within the confines of legality, alliance with different bourgeois groups as is promoted by the communist parties of Latin America, does not lead anywhere. A road of elections towards peaceful changes is absurd.

In many specific cases they do not agree. With uprisings in P[uerto]. Cabello and Carupano the same as in this last one.¹³ They openly said [this] to Venezuelans. They gave them very clear instructions to stay clear of cities and to go into guerrilla [war] and then after this with the ripening of conditions the cities fall as ripe pears. No power can control villages in huge areas. The villager is the basic revolutionary force. The industrial worker in Latin America is in an advantageous position compared to the villager. He participates in the division of plunder and exploitation. This is the explanation of the opportunistic character of the communist parties of L[atin] A[merica]. Their main base is the working class of the cities, etc., etc. In the last few years in Columbia the guerrilla is gradually acquiring this form. Thus, armed and continuous,

consistent struggle will tire out imperialism and lead to victory. Although they [i.e., the Cubans] do not manage [these armed struggles] directly, they encourage [them] with all available means.

Everything said above he says that it is his own opinion. “Well this is how we Marxists are and everyone can have his own opinion.” (Observation). Beside the three of them [i.e., Guevara, Fidel Castro, and Raul Castro—ed.], the rest either do not have them [i.e., their own opinions] or if they had their own opinions they are worth nothing.)

Talks with [Anastas] Mikoyan are still ongoing and he cannot say anything more specific about the results. They do not agree with Khrushchev’s tactics. They do not agree with his conception of the struggle for peace. Nikita—appeasement; they—fist. Certain compromises, even shabby [ones], they must find. M insists on a common communiqué. How to do it they still don’t know. What to say in it? [They are] putting it off.

They started economic negotiations as well. They [i.e., Cubans] without Russians couldn’t even move. M promises everything. Only this year they are 200 million dollars in deficit to the Russians. Next year it could easily be double. The Russians are obliged to help the revolution. They will certainly do it.

They said their positions to U Thant. In the closed meeting between Fidel and U Thant, the latter expressed sympathies for their struggle and said that he’s on their side, the rest is known.

Yugoslavia, as he says, has fully identical positions with the Russians on all current issues. He wanted to say, here you see we are the only ones fighting for the purity of Marxism-Leninism, for revolutionary-ness.

On the Chinese theme he beat around the bush [*vrdukaao*]. He didn’t want to say anything openly. They do not know what is the essence of the Sino-Indian conflict and this is the reason they do not declare their position. They are considering it currently.

This and the manner in which he interpreted things in conversation with me represents the basis of their preoccupations. The interpretations are almost identical to what we have already heard at different levels. Previously, we could not take these positions too seriously. However, after this test [i.e., after this talk with Guevara—ed.], yes. This should not be taken as demagoguery. They firmly believe that the people follow them and will follow them even into suicide. (It is possible that Castro and his brother think the same.)

This dose of courage and tenacity, now that the main danger has passed, points towards something that should be opposite to this. However, in every case, the drunkenness of courage and self-criticism is great, who knows what kind of

imprudence can be done[?] Definitely, they can’t do without big everyday excitement. Very little or nothing is being done.

Vidakovic

[Source: *Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Rajak.*]

Notes

1 Lecturer in International History, Academic Director of LSE IDEAS Center, London School of Economics and Political Science.

2 Brazil’s status at Belgrade was somewhat awkward and unclear, owing to a simultaneous, unrelated government shake-up at home, and came amidst some criticism by US officials for Brazil to attend a “non-aligned” conference when in fact it was already “aligned” (through the 1947 Rio Treaty and the Organization of American States) with Washington. See James G. Hershberg, “‘High-spirited Confusion’: Brazil, the 1961 Belgrade Non-Aligned Conference, and the Limits of an ‘Independent’ Foreign Policy during the High Cold War,” *Cold War History* 7:3 (August 2007), pp. 373-88—ed.

3 Message from President Tito to the President of Brazil, Goulart, 26 October 1962; AJ (Archives of Yugoslavia), KPR (Cabinet of the President of the Republic), I-1/114. See the translation from a copy in the foreign ministry archives in Mexico City, included in the collection of Mexican documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

4 In fact, although some outside observers (including many Brazilians) attributed Goulart’s mediation efforts at the height of the Cuban missile crisis—including the sending of a special emissary to Havana—to his collaboration with Tito, it had in fact been secretly solicited by the United States. On this, and Brazil’s efforts to mediate between Havana and Washington in 1960-62, including Yugoslav-Brazilian contacts regarding Cuba, see James G. Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962,” pts. 1 and 2, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and 6:3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67—ed.

5 The Yugoslav ambassador in Havana consulted closely on October 26 and succeeding days with his Brazilian colleague, Luis Bastian Pinto; see Bastian Pinto’s cables in the collection of translated Brazilian documents on the missile crisis published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

6 Regarding the Chinese, and Cuban attitudes toward them, see the translated Chinese documents and commentary elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

7 See Hershberg, “The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962,” cited above—ed.

8 Not all foreign diplomats in Brazil reported such pride regarding Goulart’s mediation attempt—see the disdainful reports

of Chile's ambassador, citing Brazilian newspaper commentaries, published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

9 Premier Hermes Lima was then also serving as foreign minister due to the illness of Santiago Dantas.

10 Possibly a reference to Tito's message to leaders of neutral (or neutral-leaning) countries, e.g., Tito to Brazilian President João Goulart, 26 October 1962, translation in the collection of Mexican documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

11 Goulart here refers to Tito's message to him the previous day, October 26, included in the selection of translated Mexican

documents on the missile crisis elsewhere in this issue of the *Bulletin*—ed.

12 A reference to Fidel Castro's 5 Points statement of 28 October, issuing conditions for a settlement of the conflict that included US evacuation of Guantanamo—ed.

13 A reference to mid-1962 military uprisings in Venezuela, in the port of Puerto Cabello and the northeastern city of Carupano, both of which were crushed by loyalist pro-government forces—ed.

East German Reactions to the Cuban Missile Crisis

Introduced by Mark Kramer

These two documents from the archive of the former Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED – the East German Communist party) give some sense of the measures being taken by the East German authorities and other Warsaw Pact governments during the initial days of the Cuban missile crisis. The first item, a protocol and annex from the SED Politbüro meeting of 23 October 1962, only hours after President John F. Kennedy’s speech announcing the discovery of Soviet missile bases on Cuba, outlines a wide-ranging campaign of “peace” propaganda to be undertaken by SED officials at all levels. Similar campaigns denouncing the United States and expressing staunch solidarity with Cuba were pursued by all the Warsaw Pact countries throughout the crisis. Such campaigns were not new — peace propaganda efforts had been a staple of the Soviet bloc since the late 1940s — but these latest efforts took on special urgency as the crisis unfolded.

The second document, a telegram from East German Ambassador Rudolf Dölling, who had been representing the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the Soviet Union since 1959, was sent to GDR Deputy Foreign Minister Otto Winzer on 26 October 1962. The telegram offers snippets from a briefing that Dölling and other ambassadors from the Warsaw Pact countries had received that same day from Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasilii Kuznetsov. During the meeting, Kuznetsov laid out basic information about the standoff and expressed satisfaction that the United States was “under pressure from neutral states,” such as Ghana, Egypt, and Brazil. The most interesting part of the telegram comes toward the end, where Dölling notes that the Czechoslovak and Polish ambassadors were able to provide Kuznetsov with up-to-date information about the status of their countries’ ships that were near or within the perimeter of the US naval blockade against Cuba. Dölling notes, in a mild rebuke, that he himself had been unable to provide comparable information about East German ships in the area when asked by Kuznetsov. He writes that “because Kuznetsov has asked for [this] information, I think it of utmost importance that I be kept informed about the position of the GDR’s ships and the orders they have received.” Whether he subsequently received this information from the GDR government is unclear.

The highest East German authorities, like all the other East European Warsaw Pact leaders, had not been consulted or informed about “Operation Anadyr” (the secret deployment of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba) by Nikita

Khrushchev at any point before Kennedy delivered his speech on the evening of 22 October, US east coast time (1:00 a.m. East German time). Even though the East-West showdown over Berlin in October 1961 was still fresh on everyone’s minds, and even though tensions resulting from the US government’s discovery of the missiles in Cuba nearly sparked a renewed confrontation over Berlin in the fall of 1962, East German officials had been left in the dark about the secret deployments. By coincidence, a leading Cuban official, Blas Roca, was in the GDR when the Cuban missile crisis erupted (see my translation below of an East German memorandum recounting a conversation with Blas Roca in Havana later in the year). Blas Roca spoke at a “Hands Off Cuba!” rally staged in East Berlin on 26 October, a rally that stemmed directly from the program adopted by the SED Politbüro on 23 October.

SED First Secretary Walter Ulbricht traveled to Moscow on 1 November for consultations regarding Cuba and the security of Berlin and the GDR, two issues that Ulbricht (and his Cuban counterparts) hoped to keep separate. The leaders of other East European Warsaw Pact countries also came to Moscow for consultations at this time. Some of the discussions were multilateral; others were bilateral. (For an example of such meetings, see the Czech record of Khrushchev’s comments on the missile crisis on 30 October 1962 to the visiting Czechoslovak Communist Party leader, Antonín Novotný, printed elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.) Ulbricht returned to East Berlin on 5 November, but during his four days in Moscow he held intensive consultations with Soviet officials, including one-on-one discussions with Khrushchev on the evening of 1 November and again on 2 November. The East German records from these talks, which I obtained by chance in the late 1990s from the former SED archive (SAPMO), got misplaced when dozens of file cabinets of Cold War Studies documents were moved to a new building at Harvard in September 2005. I will continue to search for these notes and will translate and present them in a future issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*. Efforts to find records at SAPMO from East German leaders’ conversations with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko when he visited the GDR on 23 October 1962 have proven unavailing thus far, but if the records turn up either at SAPMO or at the Russian Foreign Ministry archive or Russian Presidential Archive, they, too, will be made available by the Cold War International History Project.



DOCUMENTS

Record of Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) Central Committee Politbüro meeting, 23 October 1962

Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party
Internal party-archives
Records of the extraordinary meeting of the politburo of the Central Committee

Tuesday October 23rd, 1962 in the conference hall of the politburo

Agenda: 1) Visit of comrade Gromyko, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union

Rapporteur: comrade Ulbricht

2) US aggression against Cuba
present members: Ulbricht, Matern, Stoph, Ebert, Leuschner, Honnecker, Warnke, Norden
present candidates: Mewis, Verner, Hager, Kurella Grüneberg, Apel
others present: Mittag, Axen, Kiefert
absent (excused): Grotewohl, Neumann, Mückenberger, Fröhlich, Pismanik, Baumann, Ermisch Reimann

called in:

ad 2): Florin, Stibi

chair : Ulbricht

keeper of the minutes: Mittag

beginning: 10 am

end 11.15 am

Items

1) Visit of the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union comrade Gromyko Rapporteur : Ulbricht

The information about the arrival and the visit of comrade Gromyko is noted.

2) US-aggression against Cuba:

Comrades Norden, Florin and Stibi will work out the general lines for our mass-propaganda dealing with the US-aggression against free Cuba.

(annex nr. 1)

Area administrations and district committees are to be

informed about the decisions.

[signed] Ulbricht



Annex number 1 for record 46 of October 23rd 1962

Socialist Unity Party of Germany
Berlin October 24th, 1962
Central Committee

To the First Secretaries of area administrations and district committees

Comrades!

On October 23rd, 1962, the politburo decided on the following directive:

Concerning the provocation of US-imperialism against Cuba

In the night of October 22nd to 23rd, the US-Administration imposed a blockade on Cuba which President Kennedy had announced in a speech full of anti-Soviet invective.¹ This is to be considered a crass violation of international law, a blow against freedom of the seas, and against free trade, it is impudent interference with the very national affairs of Cuba and with all nations entertaining normal relations with Cuba.

In its note of October 23rd, 1962 the Government of the USSR protested against the aggressive intentions of the US. This note is to be read and commented on in all firms and LPGs [Cooperatives of Agricultural Production]. A large protest movement against the flagrant violation of International Law, the Charter of the United Nations and against the threat to peace must be organized. The arguments against American imperialism acting as international policeman against the freedom of nations is to be linked with concrete arguments against revisionists and militarists in Western Germany.

Imperialist circles in the US mean to dictate to Cuba its political course, the establishment of its political system, and which arms it may own for its defense. In the note of the Soviet Union special emphasis is put on the right of all nations, be they big or small, to self-determination, to decide on their way of life and to take the necessary steps to safeguard their security.

Imperialists in the US are not willing to accept the fact that the Cuban people have cast off the dominance of US monopolists and big land-owners. They intend to force Cuba

again under the imperialist yoke although Cuba has made use of its right to self-determination.

The United States of America, the most powerful State of the capitalist world, many times bigger than little Cuba and with thirty times more inhabitants, is pretending to feel threatened by the Cuban people! This State of all States, having military bases in Japan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Western Germany and many other countries, even in Cuba, that constitute a permanent threat to peace, this State means to dictate Cuba which steps to take or not to take to safeguard national security and security of its citizens! This is definitely an attempt at violating the sovereign rights of free and independent Cuba. Not only are the US-imperialists illegally keeping their powerful military base in Guantanamo, Cuba, which dates back to colonial times, not only are they staging armed attacks against Cuban villages, they are now trying to strangle little courageous Cuba with an outrageous blockade.

After attempts of economic blackmail by imposing a trade embargo, and after the attempts of bandits, paid and trained by the US, to land in the Bay of Pigs had failed, and after threats and pressure to halt navigation to Cuba had been of no avail, the US are now resorting to a blockade, exerting direct aggression.

The US-imperialists have taken steps against free Cuba. This is an obvious blow against the program of general and complete disarmament as initiated by the Soviet Government and supported by most nations in the world.

The very US-Government that so often is speaking of "self-determination" is now imposing a blockade on free Cuba; Cuba that has fought for its right to self-determination and national independence! But the Cuban people have taken security measures to safeguard Cuba's independence. Repeatedly Cuba had declared itself willing to settle all differences of opinion between the US and Cuba by way of peaceful negotiations. The US all of a sudden has now imposed a blockade!

It is typical of the aggressive and violent character of US-imperialism that it does not think it necessary to consult with its own allies. On the contrary, its allies had simply been presented with a *fait accompli* to drag them into the military adventure-policy of US-imperialism against Cuba.

The US-Administration does not approve of the Cuban Government taking the necessary safety measures against continuing American threats and provocations and against recurring attacks of military bandits. Acting in the national interest of its people the Cuban Government asked the Soviet Government for delivery of arms for defensive purposes only. The request of the US that the Cuban Government should remove military defensive arms from Cuban soil can only be considered as an invitation to the Cuban people to expose

itself unarmed to the imperialist sharks. In its note the USSR was quite right to emphasize the fact that it had several times suggested to withdraw all foreign troops from foreign regions. But so far, the US administration has opposed these suggestions. There will be nobody so gullible as to believe that it is in the interest of peace for Cuba to renounce its defensive weapons.

Once again Bonn imperialists are the first to side with the aggressors and enemies of peace. The Bonn Government as well as the West-Berlin Mayor [Willy] Brandt hastened to applaud the American US-imperialists and promised them support for their dangerous enterprise. Their political intention is disturbance of peace. Numerous neutral countries responded with indignant outrage to Washington's new attack against world peace. The protest includes some of its own allies, as it is reflected in comments of quite a few bourgeois [news]papers and public personalities. Clearly the peoples of the world oppose neo-colonial arrogance and disturbance of peace. They are against the American imperialists' wish to act as world-policeman.

All freedom-loving people are disgusted at the methods the US-oligarchy is using to establish its tyranny in free Cuba. The first reactions of many countries in the world show that the new aggressive acts of the US result in its further isolation.

Forty-four years ago the attempt of imperialists, in particular of the Americans, failed to defeat the young Soviet Union by blockade and military intervention. They also failed in their imperialistic aggressions against Egypt, Algeria, etc. The peace-loving world will succeed in defeating this new provocation, too.

A broad campaign has to be set up with slogans like "hands off Cuba", "stop US-Aggression against free Cuba", "protect the Cubans' right to self-determination", "break the Yankee-blockade of free Cuba." Peace-loving people all over the world side with Cuba. Cuba is fighting for a just cause, that's why it will be victorious in the end. The peoples must be more vigilant to preempt the aggressors.

In connection with the campaign against the American aggressor it is important to explain the existing balance of power. There is a power as strong as the US. This is the Soviet Union. It assists nations fighting for their freedom and allows them to determine how to lead their lives. The Soviet Union is conducting a far-sighted policy. It is necessary to demonstrate that in the current international climate powerful weapons, for instance missiles and nuclear arms in the hands of the Soviet Union, are the decisive means to prevent aggressive imperialistic forces from unleashing an apocalyptic world-war.

Making use of the above-mentioned key-words the National Front must organize solidarity-rallies in coopera-

tives, institutions, universities and schools and send a solidarity-message to the Cuban Mission in Berlin.

Workers, scholars, and other intellectuals, artists, women, young people, pastors should speak out in public. On Thursday there will be a big central demonstration on August-Bebel-Platz.

This campaign is to be linked with the mass-competition concerning preparations for the 6th [SED] party-conference. Competition will strengthen our Republic, our socialist fatherland and free Cuba in every working-place. Industrial and agricultural productivity will increase the power of the socialist camp, and hence the power of peace. The GDR will be made stronger by mass-competition and aggressors will be defeated.

Anything that could increase the war-psychosis incited by the United States should be avoided. Our tone has to be firm and prudent. Our security and strength depend on the unity of the socialist camp, on peace-policy, and continuous growth.

With calm and with nerves of steel we in the GDR will continue our peace-politics of socialist progress.

With socialist regards

Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany
Politburo

[Source: DY 30/J IV 2/2/853, Die Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (SAPMO), Berlin; obtained by Hans-Hermann Hertle, translated for CWHHP by Regina Schmidt-Ott.]



Telegram from East German Ambassador, Moscow, to East German Secretary of State (First Deputy Foreign Minister) Otto Winzer, 26 October 1962

COPY

Telegram nr.172/62 Comrade [Rudolf] Dölling, Moscow to Secretary of State Winzer 26.10.1962

On October 26th, comrade [Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily] Kuznetsov asked the ambassadors of the People's Republic of Poland, CSSR [Czechoslovakia], People's Republic of Bulgaria, Romanian People's Republic, and GDR to attend a meeting. He informed them about the situation and the measures taken in the last 24 hours regarding the

aggressive acts committed by the US. Emphasized that U Thant's letter and Khrushchev's response had been made public in the press, [and] Kennedy responded, published in TASS. The US insists on a halt to arms-delivery and removal of existing missiles. Resolutions of US, SU, and Cuba dealt with session of Security Council. The neutral States, Ghana, and United Arab Republic [UAR; Egypt], submitted their well-known resolution, missing fundamental issues. Security Council: no vote on the resolutions, meeting adjourned with regard to talks U Thant is having at the moment. Today, U Thant is having individual talks with [Soviet UN Ambassador Valerian] Zorin, [US UN Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson and the Cuban representative. After receipt of Khrushchev's letter U Thant has again resumed talks with Khrushchev. Draws again attention to dangerous situation, concerned about potential clash of ships, hopes to avoid it. Submits proposal suggesting that SU instruct its ships to avoid the ring-blockade ["*Rayon des Auffangens*"] of US ships to allow for the possibility of a peaceful settlement. The Soviet Government will give such an instruction to captains of Soviet ships. U Thant has handed a similar letter to Kennedy proposing not to engage Soviet ships in order to avoid conflict and play for time. This is to allow for discussions to settle the problem according to UNO-regulations. Zorin received orders to accept U Thant's proposal: Comrade Khrushchev appreciates U Thant's efforts, is ready to do everything in his power to liquidate the crisis, and to come to a peaceful settlement. Captains were ordered to avoid the American ring-blockade for a certain time.

The Soviet Government deems development of situation unfavorable for the US, as it is under pressure of neutral States. Nevertheless [it] will emphasize that danger of open conflict has not been warded off nor the possibility of further provocative acts by the US. The Soviet Government instructed its captains accordingly to fully explore the possibilities of a peaceful settlement.

Comrade Kuznetsov asks the ambassadors to inform their governments. The Ambassador of the CSSR asks whether such directives applied to all ships notwithstanding their freight. Comrade Kuznetsov replied in the affirmative. Emphasized that the ring-blockade of American warships was to be avoided for a certain time as clashes were possible. Comrade Kuznetsov did not comment on the remark that the US was preparing an armed invasion of Cuba. He, however, stressed that talks between U Thant, [Valerian] Zorin, [Adlai] Stevenson, and the Cuban representative were ongoing.

Robert Kennedy had met with [Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly F.] Dobrynin yesterday. Comrade Kuznetsov then asked whether there were any news from our ships, told us that according to the latest information

the GDR-ship “Völkerfreundschaft” was within the ring-blockade. On October 25th at 5 pm, it is being escorted by an American war-ship en route to Cuba. CSSR-Ambassador says that three of their ships are concerned, two en route to Cuba, one in Havana. Polish Ambassador indicates one ship involved. Both ambassadors informed Kuznetsov about the orders the ships had received from governments. I was unable to give information as I had not received any. As Kuznetsov has asked for information I think it of utmost importance that I am informed about the position of GDR-ships and the orders they received.

Dölling [signed]

[Source: DY 30/J IV 2/2/853, Die Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (SAPMO), Berlin. Obtained by Hans-Hermann Hertle, translated for CWIHP by Regina Schmidt-Ott.]

Notes

1 Ed note: US President Kennedy actually announced the blockade (“quarantine”) of Cuba in a televised speech beginning at 7 pm, Washington time (after midnight in Germany), on Monday evening, 22 October, but it did not actually go into effect until 10 am Wednesday, 24 October.

Cuba's Irritation over the Missile Inspection Issue

Notes from a High-Level Cuban-East German Conversation

Document translated and introduced by Mark Kramer

This memorandum was compiled by the head of the East German legation in Cuba, Karl Lösch, recounting a conversation he had with a leading figure in the Cuban Communist regime, Blas Roca Calderio. The date of the conversation is not specified in the memorandum, but the content (referring to events that occurred in November and early December 1962) suggests that it was in late 1962. The document is dated 8 January 1963, four days before Cuba and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) formally established diplomatic relations. The memorandum was apparently submitted to the East German Foreign Ministry by Lösch during a trip back to East Berlin as the GDR prepared to elevate its ties with Cuba. Fritz Johne became the first full East German ambassador to Cuba in July 1963, and Lösch went on to become the GDR ambassador to Algeria.

Blas Roca, who was a member of all the highest organs of the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution (renamed the Cuban Communist Party in 1965) until his death in 1987, had visited East Germany in October 1962 for celebrations marking the 13th anniversary of the founding of the GDR. He had arrived in the East German capital on 5 October and was still there seventeen days later when the Cuban missile crisis unexpectedly began. Blas Roca was among the speakers at a "Hands Off Cuba!" rally held in East Berlin on 26 October, at the height of the crisis. Both he and the head of the East Berlin party committee, Paul Vermer, sought to avoid any links between Cuba and Berlin when they spoke at the rally. Although Blas Roca declared that Cuba "already has Russian armaments and intends to obtain more," he added that "like the USSR, we want to have all controversial issues settled in negotiations." Both he and Vermer eschewed any threats against Berlin and sought to portray the two issues as entirely separate.

Lösch's memorandum touches only briefly on Blas Roca's trip to the GDR and instead focuses mostly on the contentious aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis. Observers at the time were well aware that Cuban leader Fidel Castro had been angered by Nikita Khrushchev's willingness to agree to international inspections of the removal of Soviet SS-4 missiles from Cuba. Documents that have been released over the past twenty years from Russia, Cuba, and other countries have underscored just how deep the rift between Cuba and the Soviet Union was over this matter. Echoing Castro's view, Blas Roca expresses concern that "this infringement of Cuban sovereignty" could endanger Cuba's role in all of Latin

America and "potentially deal a blow to the revolutionary process in Latin America." He accuses Soviet leaders of being "evasive" and of repeatedly failing to offer an explanation for the "damage [they had] done to Cuba's sovereignty." Lösch claims that Blas Roca appreciates the Soviet Union's role in having "preserved the peace" (presumably a reference to avoiding a US invasion of Cuba) "during those critical days" in October 1962, but he acknowledges that Blas Roca and the other Cuban leaders will not be satisfied until they receive a detailed explanation from Moscow about the inspection issue.



Record of Conversation with Comrade Blas Roca in the Building of the National Committee on ____¹

I got together with Cde. Blas Roca at the building of the National Committee to pick up from him materials not yet delivered from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to use the opportunity to have a conversation with him. Cde. Blas Roca was very enthusiastic about his stay in the GDR and about the attention that had been paid to him and his wife, and he expressed thanks for the great help that the GDR had given him personally, and explained that he would convey his thanks personally in a letter to the Central Committee for the hospitality and assistance extended to them.

During our conversation he asked about our state relations, and after I recounted everything that had happened since his departure [from East Berlin to Prague] on the 3rd [of November 1962], he said it had been very impulsive and promised to take care of the matter immediately to settle it.

We then spoke about the Cuban [missile] crisis. Cde. Blas Roca told me that the main problem lies in the as yet unresolved question of why the Soviet Union in the letters from Cde. Khrushchev to Kennedy had offered international inspections, even though Cde. Fidel Castro had previously expressly rejected any international inspections on Cuban territory. This infringement of Cuban sovereignty is a source of concern for all the comrades. If this fact is not taken into account in all [future] actions, it could have a significant adverse impact on Cuba's role for developments in Latin America and potentially deal a blow to the revolutionary process in Latin America.

Cde. Blas Roca said that the [Anastas] Mikoyan visit [to Cuba in November 1962] had produced no satisfactory results for the Cuban National Committee and the Cuban government because he offered no explanation for the problem of why Khrushchev had offered inspections in his letters to Kennedy.² Cde. Blas Roca described how when he attended the party congresses in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Italy he had tried to receive such an explanation from the Soviet comrades who were present there, [Otto] Kuusinen and [Leonid] Brezhnev.³ These comrades had replied evasively, offering no explanation for Soviet behavior and implying that the Cuban friends overestimated the [revolutionary] process in Latin America.

Cde. Blas Roca said that the National Committee must no longer spend time on discussions of secondary problems, and he repeatedly came back to what he himself believed (and the other comrades even more so) was the main question to be clarified, namely, why the Soviet Union had offered no explanation for the procedure it had agreed to. Whether it was because of an error in diplomatic practice or because of time pressure or some other motives, they had a right to be informed by the Soviet comrades about it.

I had the impression that Cde. Blas Roca properly understands and evaluates the role of the Soviet Union in preserving the peace during those critical days. He did not criticize the removal of the missiles and [Il-28] bombers or link it to the question still outstanding. The damage that in his view has been done by the Soviet Union to [Cuba's] sovereignty is — both for him and for the other comrades — the one problem that must be satisfactorily explained by the Soviet Union to the Cuban side.

Berlin, 8 January 1963

Lösch [signed]

Notes

1 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: No date was filled in here, but the conversation seems to have taken place in mid- to late December 1962.

2 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This is referring to the visit by Anastas Mikoyan, a member of the Soviet Presidium and one of Nikita Khrushchev's closest aides, to Cuba on 3-26 November 1962 in an unsuccessful bid to mend relations between the two countries. Serious tension in the Soviet-Cuban alliance had emerged after the Soviet Union affirmed its willingness to permit international inspections of the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba. For translations of Soviet transcripts and reports from Mikoyan's visit, along with a perceptive introduction by Vladislav M. Zubok, see *CWIHP Bulletin*, No. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 59, 89-109, 159. For a full Soviet record of Mikoyan's mission to Cuba, including exchanges both with the Cubans (and others in Havana) and with Khrushchev in Moscow, see Sergio Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Wilson Center Press, Stanford University Press, 2012).

3 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The 8th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party was held on 8-14 November 1962; the 8th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party took place on 20-25 November 1962; and the 10th Congress of the Italian Communist Party was held on 2-8 December 1962.

Konrad Adenauer and the Cuban Missile Crisis West German Documents

Ed. Note: Much like the other NATO allies of the United States, West Germany was not involved in either the origins or the resolution of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.¹ But, of course, nowhere in Europe was the immediate impact of Khrushchev's nuclear missile gamble felt more acutely than in Berlin. Ever since the Soviet premier's November 1958 ultimatum, designed to dislodge Western allied forces from the western sectors of the former German Reich's capital, Berlin had been the focus of heightened East-West tensions. Following the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 and the October stand-off between Soviet and American tanks at the Checkpoint Charlie crossing, a deceptive lull had settled over the city.²

Yet the Berlin question (centering around Western rights and presence in the divided city as well as Western recognition of the GDR regime and the Soviet threat of a separate peace treaty with East Germany) remained unresolved and the survival of the city's western sectors hung in the balance. It was here where future aggressive moves on the part of the Soviet Union were expected, possibly later in the year. Not surprisingly, upon discovering the Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, the Kennedy administration immediately suspected that the deployment aimed at providing Moscow with new levers of pressure on Berlin, even that the Cuban action might be a precursor to another move to evict Western forces from the divided city.

The Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in the aftermath of the deepest crisis in relations between the United States and the Federal Republic in the Adenauer years: The aging chancellor (the FRG's only leader since its inception in 1949) was having difficulties connecting with the young American president. He abhorred the idea of starting a nuclear war over Berlin and had been skeptical about hardline American contingency plans to respond to a Soviet blockade of access routes between West Berlin and West Germany or an outright take-over of the city. At the same time, he grew critical of the Kennedy administration's search for a Berlin solution as part of a larger effort at détente. Negotiations led by the US ambassador to Moscow, Llewellyn E. Thompson, for an international access agency for Berlin that could settle the thorny Allied access problem conjured up old fears of a US-Soviet deal over German heads. An international agency that included German Democratic Republic representatives would only further legitimize the regime of East Berlin's Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) and threaten West Berlin's longer-term viability as a free city.³

In April 1962, Washington had informed Bonn on short notice that it planned to propose to Moscow the creation of an

access agency, the exchange of mutual non-aggression declarations and the establishment of FRG-GDR technical commissions. Somehow the proposals leaked to the German press, leading Secretary of State Dean Rusk to protest the serious breach of confidence. Hurt by the accusation, Adenauer withdrew his longstanding confidante and ambassador to Washington, Wilhelm Grewe. Relations went from cool to icy when the chancellor publicly distanced himself from Washington's negotiation package at a press conference in May. By time the missile crisis erupted in October, Adenauer's trust in the United States had been severely shaken.⁴

The missile crisis spurred a momentary warming in the uneasy Adenauer-Kennedy relationship. Unlike other European allies, Adenauer backed Kennedy's staunch attitude during the crisis wholeheartedly, a fact that did not go unnoticed in Washington. If anything he advocated an even harder line vis-à-vis Castro—repeatedly advocating aerial attacks, invasion, and the fostering of unrest inside Cuba. Having looked the other way for years as amity blossomed between the East German communists and Castro, Bonn demonstrated its hardline attitude towards Castro when Cuba formally recognized the GDR in January 1963. Applying the so-called Hallstein non-recognition doctrine, Bonn broke off all relations with the Castro regime, even rejecting Havana's appeals to retain some limited trade or consular mission in Hamburg.⁵

But worries about the United States soon resurfaced in Adenauer's thinking. Press reports had suggested that Adenauer doubted the American assertions that all the missiles had in fact been removed, and in January 1963 the chancellor confided in French President Charles de Gaulle his incredulity at the fact that the Russians had managed to move the missiles to Cuba without being discovered. "The Americans had neither realized the danger in time nor managed to implement on-the-ground inspections." The once reliable protective power could no longer be fully trusted.—C.O.



Cable from Federal Republic of Germany Embassy, Washington (Knapstein), 22 October 1962

Ambassador [Karl-Heinrich] Knapstein, Washington, to the
Foreign Office

114-8546/62 secret

Telex Nr. 3152
Citissime

Sent: 22 October 1962, 24:00 hours
Received: 23 October 1962, 08:20 hours

The current situation is characterized by the Cuba blockade imposed by the American government. For now, I want to provide the following assessment of the situation:

I. According to American opinion, a first exchange of analyses conducted in the military sub-committee (chaired by [Paul H.] Nitze) about Soviet intentions in deploying offensive strategic arms on Cuba brought about these results:

1) Expanding Cuba to a base with offensive potential is a “quantum leap” in crisis development of East-West relations. This way the United States is supposed to be forced into either accepting the deployment of these weapons next to the coast of the American continent, or into giving in to Soviet demands concerning disarmament and Berlin. The dangerousness of this “big gamble” and “extreme move” is taken extremely seriously.

2) Far-reaching Soviet intentions aim at:
- implementing Soviet disarmament demands concerning American bases overseas;
- the withdrawal of American forces from Europe;
the retreat of Western troops from Berlin.

3) Short-term intentions according to Nitze:
- pressure on “Western” alliances, especially on NATO;
- dividing the Western world (“fissures”).

Lord [Viscount Samuel] Hood [Minister, British Embassy in Washington] thought the Soviets want to test American resolve. In case the first offensive expansion of the Cuban base is accepted, Moscow will step up further. If America reacts [firmly], Moscow will retreat. In any case, the Soviets want to figure out how far they can go. They will possibly try to trade in the giving up of the Cuban base for “something different.”

II. In the same meeting [of the Nitze group] there existed agreement that a Soviet reaction could also affect Berlin. None of the participants present indulged into speculations which Soviet measures might be considered likely with regard to Berlin.

Nitze negated the question whether the Soviets might have intentions to push the Berlin problem to the backburner.

Nitze almost categorically rejected another question from the German side whether the new situation might limit freedom of action with regard to implementing Western plans for countermeasures in case of a conflict over Berlin. He stated that the finalization of these plans, decisiveness, and unity are more important than ever.

III. According to first impressions, the American decision must be viewed in this context:

1) In the National Security Council, the news about Soviet shipments of offensive weapons (reaching the North American continent) led a week ago to the military’s demand to act. Especially the facilities in Cape Canaveral are considered potentially vulnerable.

2) In light of its nuclear superiority to last for some more years (reliably confirmed by U 2 [reconnaissance planes] and satellites, of which the Soviets are said to be aware), the [American] government believes to [be able or willing to] run an increased risk. Yet the window for freedom of action is said to be not unlimited.

3) An aggravation of the Berlin crisis in late November this year would also have provided Kennedy with the desired opportunity to act against the build-up of Cuba as a base for Soviet offensive weapons.

Khrushchev’s talk with [US Ambassador] Kohler [in Moscow on 16 October 1962] and Gromyko’s talks in Washington [with President John F. Kennedy and Secretary of State Dean Rusk on 18 October], however, have raised doubts whether the Soviets are actually eager to stage a Berlin crisis at the end of the year (new indications for expanding the time factor, emphasis on ongoing readiness to talk). This renders moot the prospect that Soviet action on a separate [peace] treaty [with the GDR], or on Berlin, might soon provide a “pretext” to act against Cuba.

4) Since on one hand the government no longer wants to passively watch the offensive threat, and on the other hand Soviet policy on Berlin does not seem to provoke an immediate aggravation of the Berlin crisis, the question about the timing of the Cuba action poses itself in a different way.

a) In addition, the current timing is certainly influenced by the upcoming elections where significant losses for the Democrats are predicted. The Republican party leadership recently decided to turn the Cuba question into the main election issue. I

have no doubts, however, that domestic consideration merely influenced decisions on timing. The actual political reasons are the Cuban threat and Soviet policy on Berlin.

b) Maybe the timing also seemed favorable in context of problems Moscow is facing with the Sino-Indian [border] conflict.

5) In retrospect, those developments throw a limelight on the so far unconvincingly explained over-dramatization of the Berlin crisis by the American political leadership, and the increasing number of public hints according to which the United States is ready to go it alone if it has to do so.

[signed]
Knapstein

[Source: Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), Document 408. Translated for CWHIP by Bernd Schaefer.]



Memorandum of Conversation, Federal Republic of Germany Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Dean Acheson, Special Envoy of US President Kennedy, Bonn, West Germany, 23 October 1962⁶

Conversation of Federal Chancellor Adenauer with the Special Adviser of the American President, Acheson

115-105.A/62 highly secret

23 October 1962

On 23 October 1962 at 1745 hours the Chancellor received Mr. Dean Acheson accompanied by [US] Ambassador [Walter] Dowling.

At the beginning, Mr. Acheson reported how he participated in the course of recent weeks in many consultations in State Department and Pentagon. There recommendations were worked out for submission to the President.

The Chancellor asked whether it was also considered whether to shake the Cuban regime through triggering domestic unrest in Cuba.

Mr. Acheson admitted it was a big mistake not to conduct the Bay of Pigs landing operation with all the consequences it would have needed. Back then a revolution could have been launched. Since then, there exists iron communist discipline in the country. Castro has about 50,000 well trained and equipped soldiers and a militia of 150,000. Experiences so far have demonstrated that guerillas deployed from the sea cannot sustain themselves for long [on Cuba].

The Chancellor criticized the Chairman of the Belgian Senate. The latter had provided a legal expertise according to which the American blockade [of Cuba] is incompatible with international law. It would be more important instead, if world opinion will get the impression that Cuba's population does not. The Chancellor himself voiced the opinion it will not come to a conflict as long one remains firm. He reiterated again it should not cause any insurmountable problems to stir up domestic unrest within Cuba.

Mr. Acheson referred again to practical difficulties crippling such an approach. He then explained the deliberations discussed in Washington. Overall they fall into two major categories. The first one features an immediate use of military force, the second one just a blockade without any direct use of force.

According to the first scenario, the missile bases in Cuba would be destroyed by conventional air attacks. This would have resulted in 3,000 to 4,000 casualties among Russian personnel. This approach would hardly have caused casualties among the Cuban population.

As a next stage, airfields where Soviet MIG planes and IL 28 jets are deployed would have to be eliminated. At the same time, surface to air missile launching pads (of which there are 24 on the island) have to be taken out. This would have caused casualties among the Cuban population in the range of 10,000 to 15,000 people.

The third option would have been a combination of the first two actions described above, followed by a landing operation of about 75,000 to 100,000 soldiers on Cuba.

The President did not opt for any of these scenarios. Instead he preferred a blockade targeting in the first place offensive weapons and oil shipments. If the other side would resort to the use of force, one will not hesitate to intensify its own actions. The President believes, however, the blockade has prevented an emotional and irrational immediate action from Khrushchev, such as action in Berlin or a nuclear strike. Furthermore, the President wanted to prevent the European allies of the United States from becoming exposed to unexpected danger by an irrational action from Khrushchev's side.

The Chancellor called the President's considerations noble, but he reiterated that the other side is ruthless if it comes to choosing its options. In this context he referred to

the trial of [Soviet KGB operative] Stashynsky at the [West German] Federal Court [between 8 and 19 October 1962]. He asked the [US] ambassador to provide Mr. Acheson with material about this trial for the President. During his last visit, Gromyko also had lied to the President. Thus one has to resort to different means, what the Chancellor considers morally justified in such a case.

According to Mr. Acheson's statements, the President is aware that the Soviets want to achieve three objectives with their Cuba policy. They want to build up nuclear capacities ready to be used against the United States. If an operational readiness of such weapons in Cuba will occur, this will result in a very large threat to the United States. Furthermore, the Soviets want to undermine the position of the United States in the Western hemisphere. Finally, they hope to move into better terms of negotiations in order to force concessions from the US, for instance through an exchange deal Cuba-Berlin. In light of all this, the President is completely aware that these weapons cannot remain on Cuba, and that one cannot afford a loss of prestige in the Western hemisphere. Moreover, the President does not feel the slightest inclination to make concessions on other issues for the removal of these weapons.

The Chancellor said, according to what he was told yesterday [by Ambassador Dowling] there are about 8,000 Russians in Cuba. Also one has to take into account that there are nuclear warheads on the island already. As a consequence, you have to assume that those 8,000 Russians can prepare those missiles to the extent that they are operationally ready, and that a use of those weapons cannot be excluded despite the blockade.

Mr. Acheson concurred with those thoughts. However, he added that through the blockade the President intends to give Khrushchev a certain time to think things over. If Khrushchev does not seize this opportunity, the United States will be in a better position to destroy the missiles deployed on Cuba, than they would have been in case of a first strike from the US. This deliberation [i.e., consideration or argument—ed.] was made to the President not by himself (Acheson), but by other people who he rates very highly. This deliberation as such is not dumb at all, since one thought the allies and world opinion will support the United States if it has sent a warning to Khrushchev first. Currently we are in a stage of mounting danger. Right now only maybe two, three, or four missiles are actually ready, and their target accuracy is still not very high. Yet the number of operationally ready missiles increases from week to week. Within two months all those missiles would be ready for a launch. So we run a certain risk here. They more time is passing by, the more the danger is growing. On the other hand, support is also increasing for the American position with the [US] population, the allies, and in world

opinion. If it comes to an armed conflict, the US does not want to be accused of having launched a Pearl Harbor type of attack in reverse.

The Chancellor doubted anything will come about if you give Khrushchev time for thinking over. He does not believe Khrushchev will pack his missiles and planes in boxes and takes them back. The current threat is terrible for the United States. Unfortunately, the Russian action will also have a negative impact on other parts of the world. He also does not expect any positive result from steps taken at the United Nations as Khrushchev is not impressed by U.N. Resolutions. This is why he [Adenauer] sees the only hope in a blockade as tight as possible, and in domestic unrest [in Cuba].

Mr. Acheson stated the Chancellor is making it difficult for him to contradict these arguments. Those were exactly the arguments he [Acheson] himself had made during preliminary deliberations. Hasty military action by the United States could have triggered a nuclear counterstrike or Soviet actions in Berlin. Then the allies might have said those crazy Americans should have approached things more carefully. President Kennedy is ready to use force. He thinks, however, it is better not to do such right away in order not to block the option of escalating his measures. If we currently talk about a quarantine, then it means to gain enough freedom of action to escalate measures at a later stage.

The Chancellor referred to the possibility of clashes on Guantanamo base between conventional American forces and Cuban forces.

Mr. Acheson responded the American garrison there is getting reinforced. Due to the geographical location of the base, however, it is very difficult to launch an attack from there.

In conclusion, the Chancellor expressed its hope it will not come to a war on paper ["Papierkrieg"].

The meeting ended at around 1900 hours.

[Source: Foundation Chancellor Adenauer House, Records III/87, Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31 Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), document 409. Translated for CWIHP by Bernd Schaefer.]



**Cable from Federal Republic of Germany
Embassy, Washington (Knappstein), 24
October 1962**

Ambassador [Karl-Heinrich] Knappstein, Washington to
Federal Minister Schröder

114-312/62 top secret
Sent 24 October 1962 6.35 pm
Telex nr. 3178
Arrived 25 October 1962 4.00 am with priority citissime

For Federal Minister and Foreign Secretary only:

Today, at 3.00 pm (8.00 pm local time), [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk has asked [French Ambassador to the United States Herve] Alphand, [UK Ambassador to the United States David] Ormsby-Gore and me to attend a meeting where he passed on the following information which was to be considered top secret and to be passed on to cabinet members only:

I. Military

1. The first six Soviet ships had been withdrawn before reaching the quarantine zone. However, this should not lead to premature conclusions; the ships might come back with escorts, perhaps submarine protection. If possible this incident should be kept secret, a message would be issued that quarantine was in full force and that there had been no special incidents. (In the meantime, however, there has been a news-agency report that the ships had changed course).

2. Submarine protection was but a vague possibility. According to very precise intelligence of the American Navy there were only few Soviet submarines within range to provide cover.

3. For the first time that day, six low-flying American aircraft had flown over and explored the launching installations in Cuba. They had not come under fire from the Cubans, although the 14 anti-aircraft batteries around the island were operational.

4. The principal aim of quarantine operations, to keep further nuclear weapons out of the island, should be attained with a minimum of force. Therefore, in case of hostile conflict, there would be only one "wounding shot" after the usual "warning shot" to affect the ships' maneuverability but not to sink them if possible.

5. According to recent intelligence none of the missile sites were yet operational. However, this could be made possible within hours as they were mobile batteries.

6. So far, no nuclear warheads had been identified, but it was assumed that there were some in place in Cuba.

7. Up to now, about eight to ten missile launch sites had definitely been identified plus at least 30 missiles.

8. There used to be at least 5000 Russians in Cuba. Very likely, at the moment, there are three missile-equipped regiments counting about 8000 servicemen (Russians).

9. Cubans did not play an important role at all in the deployment of the missile system. According to Intelligence information Cubans were not even involved in deploying the emplacements but were kept at a distance by big barriers.

10. If any of the high flying reconnaissance aircraft were hit by ground-defense one of the existing 24 anti-aircraft batteries would be destroyed without any further hostilities.

11. Up to then Soviet aircraft en route to Cuba had been refueled in Dakar and Conakry. Provisions have been made in those places to detect nuclear warheads aboard those aircraft.

II. Political

1. There were further signs that Khrushchev had been mistaken in his timetable and that the missile sites had been discovered too early. For his [planned] visit [to the United States to attend the UN General Assembly—ed.] in November he had obviously planned to surprise the President by telling him that in the meantime there were 60 operational missiles stationed in Cuba and that the President consequently had to make the desired concessions in Berlin.

2. On his last visit to the President, [on 18 October, Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko had not only made a general statement that there would be no deployment of "offensive weapons," but had definitely assured the President that there would be no emplacement of missiles capable of reaching the United States. This assertion had been an obvious lie.

3. For the near future certain changes were expected in Cuba. Castro's influence seemed already on the wane: He had been ready to release the prisoners of the recent

invasion [i.e., in April 1961 at the Bay of Pigs], however, this had been prevented by the communist ([that is, to] say Russian) party apparatus.

4. As for current affairs, Rusk did not seem to attach much importance to the debate in the United Nations. For instance he had pointed out that it had been of utmost importance for the US to have the quarantine in full force before any decisions had been made by the United Nations. Returning to the status quo of October 22nd was definitely out of question, instead there should be a return to the status quo ante (no bases in Cuba, no quarantine).

In conclusion Rusk emphasized that an unavoidable clash was by no means imminent. Since the Soviets had realized the seriousness of the situation they had become very careful. He could imagine that their miscalculation [in having sent the missiles to Cuba?—ed.] might also lead them to proceed more carefully in the Berlin question. However, all this was not to be taken as final assessment.

[signed] Knapstein
VS-Vol. 8418 (Minister's Office)

[Source: Foundation Chancellor Adenauer House, Records III/87, Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), document 412. Translated for CWIHP by Regina Schmidt-Ott.]



Memorandum of Conversation, West German Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder and Soviet Ambassador Andrei Smirnov, Bonn, 26 October 1962

Discussion between Federal Minister Schröder and Soviet Ambassador Smirnov [Smirnov]

Notes of a conversation between Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Schröder and Soviet Ambassador Smirnov on 26 October 1962 at 3.00 pm in the Minister's office.
Present: Dr. Reinkemeyer for the German party
26 October 1962

Ambassador Smirnov said he had come to present to the minister a statement of the Soviet Government concerning the aggressive acts the United States had committed

against the Republic of Cuba. In this statement the Soviet Government was explaining its view on the blockade the United States had imposed on Cuba. It also commented on the other aggressive steps President Kennedy intended to take against Cuba as announced on 22 October. In that statement the Soviet Government called upon all governments in the world to condemn the aggressive acts of the United States against Cuba. The Soviet Government was hopeful that the German Government would also react favorably to this appeal, it being clear that approval of such actions would mean entire responsibility for all resulting consequences.

Ambassador Smirnov then presented the text of the statement the Soviet Government had made on 24 October. The declaration had already been available in the world press.

The Minister replied:

The Federal Government would examine the statement of the Soviet Government in detail and consider it carefully. On the assumption that the Ambassador's introductory remarks were meant as a sort of summary of contents, he would limit himself at the moment to a provisional comment only:

The Soviet Government had mentioned American aggressive acts. However, the Ambassador was well aware that the United States held a completely different view on this matter. The Ambassador also knew that Soviet Foreign Minister [Andrei] Gromyko in his last talk with President Kennedy [on October 18] had presented the situation in Cuba in an entirely different light, in contrast to unambiguous evidence that was now available. On account of that evidence it was obvious that Cuba was being expanded into an offensive base. Consequently the present Soviet viewpoint on this matter was completely untenable. So much for the Federal Government's opinion concerning the problems themselves. Further, it went without saying that the Federal Government wished for a peaceful solution of the present situation. Unfortunately the Federal Republic, being not even a member of the United Nations, had no influence in that matter, and very likely, attempts to settle the problem would mainly be made within the framework of the UN. According to the Federal Government peace would at any rate be preferable to an armed conflict for all those involved. However, peace meant bringing about a situation that would guarantee a peaceful life for all people. Not intending to establish a direct link with the Cuba problem, the present state of affairs also applied to the situation in Berlin where the Soviet Union was unquestionably departing from the fundamental terms of the contractual basis the Four Powers had agreed upon for Berlin. It was the German view that that agreement should be respected. The example made clear that world peace was threatened in several places of the world, not only in Cuba. With Germany being one of those places, the German interest in a peaceful settle-

ment was particularly strong. In its memorandum of February 1962 in reply to the Soviet memorandum of December 1961 the Federal Government had clearly pointed out the important terms for such a settlement. Incidentally, the response to the German memorandum remained outstanding. For all responsible authorities in the Federal Republic maintenance of peace was paramount. The Ambassador could also learn that from recent debates in the Bundestag [Federal Lower House of Parliament] and from the statement made there which he was surely aware of.

Ambassador Smirnov replied: It was not surprising that the US was now turning the tables accusing Cuba of aggression. However, there was no doubt possible about the actual aggressor, as the United States owned a military base in Cuba where—against all legal norms of International Law—it had accumulated gigantic quantities of troops and all kinds of weapons to expand it into an offensive base against the Republic of Cuba. This was a fact, no matter how hard the Americans were trying to talk their way out of it. On the other hand the Soviet Government was making every effort to avoid atomic and ballistic warfare. The purpose of his, the Ambassador's, present visit was to call upon the Federal Government asking it on behalf of the Soviet Government to exert its influence on its allies accordingly, in order to maintain peace.

Although the Minister had rejected the existence of a direct link between Cuba and Berlin, yet there still was a connection between the two problems as there was no peace settlement with Germany, which explained the tense situation in Berlin and further complication of world politics in general.

The Minister had pointed out that, so far, there had been no reply to the German Memorandum of last February. The explanation was that, after receipt of the German memorandum, the Soviet Government had become doubtful whether the German Government was serious in its demand for negotiations: first, the contents of the German memorandum had consisted of pure propaganda and second, there had been a propaganda campaign in Germany against the Soviet document of December, notwithstanding the serious and useful suggestions the Soviet Government had put forward to solve the problems of Germany and Berlin.

The Minister replied that the USA-Cuba conflict was about Soviet installations on the island. Although a precise definition of the aggressor in case of conflict had always been a tricky problem since International Law had come into existence, there could yet be no doubt that those installations were no defensive weapons, not even surface-to air-missiles, but medium-range ballistic missile-sites with a range of 1800 to 3700 km; their deployment had definitely to be regarded as an aggressive act against the United States.

The Ambassador had put forward the American base in Cuba as an argument. However, the base had existed for a long time and been leased by contract for 99 years [*sic*; the February 1903 Cuban-American treaty actually granted the United States a perpetual lease on the Guantánamo Bay area while recognizing Cuba's ultimate sovereignty—ed.]. That American base had been understaffed, [and] only very recently and due to the aggressive projects in Cuba had the American garrison been reinforced to a certain degree. It was out of question that the Americans intended to make use of this base for an aggression against Cuba. Besides, the Americans had never imposed a [total] blockade on Cuba. They were only trying to prevent delivery of special offensive weapons the emplacement of which in Cuba would seriously threaten world peace. In no way did they intend to block delivery of food items and other commodities, nor did they mean to stop delivery of purely defensive weapons. Internationally there was no disputing that the Soviet deliveries consisted of offensive weapons bound to seriously jeopardize world peace. The problem should be dealt with by the United Nations, after relevant evidence had been submitted to them.

Concerning the Ambassador's appeal he wanted to make clear that the Federal Government would always use all its strength to maintain peace. He had only mentioned Berlin to emphasize that peace was endangered in other places, too. As to Berlin the danger consisted in the Soviets' departing or rather having already departed from a settlement which the four Powers had agreed upon at that time. It was of course possible to consider departing from certain positions of the agreement. The Federal Government would certainly support any request that was intended to put a new and better agreement in place of the old one. In no way could changes be made unilaterally without the other partners' consent, let alone against their will.

Concerning the German memorandum of last February he had already in March told the Foreign Minister Gromyko that the [Federal] German Republic meant what it said in that document. He had also told Minister Gromyko that a new German Ambassador to Moscow would be appointed soon. Like his predecessor he would consider it his first duty to work for a good relationship between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic. He was taking the opportunity of the Ambassador's visit to emphasize that, by appointing Ambassador [Horst] Groepper, the Federal Government had sent a highly qualified diplomat to the Soviet Union. Ambassador Groepper was fully aware of his task and willing to do everything in his power to achieve it. Not only was he qualified for this mission but he would also set to work with a will and an eager interest. That might go without saying, but

he, the Minister, meant to stress once again how highly the Federal Government rated Ambassador Groepper.

The Ambassador had felt it necessary to refer to the character of the German memorandum. This point had already been raised in a similar way in his, the Minister's, discussion with Mr. Gromyko. Without directly referring to the memorandum, Foreign Minister Gromyko had remarked that anti-Soviet propaganda was widespread in the Federal Republic. Replying to Mr. Gromyko he, the Minister, had suggested that independent experts over a period of three months should evaluate the frequency of negative press comments on the other in their respective countries. At the time he had been sure that such expert opinion would find favor with the Federal Republic.

He had made that remark to Mr. Gromyko half in jest and half in earnest, however, he had strictly to reject the Ambassador's dismissing the German memorandum as propaganda. On the contrary, it underlined the firm intention of the German Government to come to an arrangement with the Soviet Union. He assumed that this was also the intention of the Soviet Government. However, both their governments had a different conceptual starting point hence their difference of opinion. He was sure that the day was not far off when the Soviet Union would realize that the German solution to the pending problems was also in the interest of the Soviet Union.

Ambassador Smirnow replied: He was not disappointed [i.e., not surprised—trans.] at all at the Minister's view on the American-Cuban conflict: the Minister had stuck to his former interpretation, namely to consider all American weapons and sites of defensive purposes only and weapons and bases of non-allied powers as offensive in any case. Could missiles with a range of 5000 to even 10000 km, stationed in the United States, the Federal Republic, even in Norway on the Soviet borders, in Turkey and Greece, be qualified as purely "defensive"? On the other hand, when Cuba bought defensive weapons to be ready for fending off an American aggression it had taken "offensive" steps! The Foreign Minister might have a problem to prove that the American sites the United States had installed all over the world after the end of the [Second World] War, among others especially in Germany, the most powerful American base, were for defensive purposes only. How different the Soviet Union! It had of its own free will liquidated the base it had owned in Finland and was now living with Finland on the best of terms. In their suggestions to clarify the situation, the Cubans had never even asked for removal of the American base from the island. On the other hand the American measures were definitely aimed at doing away with the revolutionary achievements of the Cuban People. This was the very essence of the situation!

Considering German-Soviet relations, the Minister had pointed out that the Soviet Union was trying to depart from the terms of the Four Power Agreement they had decided upon with their former allies after the War. In reality it was the other way round. Since 1945 their former allies had step by step disregarded the terms of the agreement and thus eroded the foundations to which the Soviet Union had been committed. The NATO-allies of the Federal Government were the only ones to be held responsible for the present state of affairs in Germany and Berlin.

The Minister replied: With respect to Cuba, one should realize that there was a clear difference between defensive and offensive weapons. The weapons being brought to Cuba at the moment clearly belonged in the second category, and the American steps were definitely to be considered as an attempt to stop further delivery. The Ambassador had been trying to compare the American steps with the defensive measures taken by an alliance-system like NATO. This was inadmissible. NATO was but a defensive alliance and at the time [1949—ed.] had been created as such. This was without the collaboration of the Federal Government which had joined the alliance only later [in 1955—ed.]. The motives of NATO were well-known, whereas the motives of the Soviet Union were less clear. It is to be hoped that the imminent talks might result in further information as the Soviet Government was sure to comment on this issue in the Security Council. To reproach the United States with counter-revolutionary intentions in Cuba was unfounded as President Kennedy had explicitly recognized the Cubans' and every other nation's right to determine their own social systems. This was also the position of the Federal Republic. In this respect he, the Minister, had to protest vigorously against the Ambassador's insinuation that the Federal Republic was a military base of the United States. The Federal Republic was a sovereign State and an ally of the United States. Besides, without turning tables, it should be noted that there were far more Soviet divisions than American divisions on German soil.

Concerning the Berlin question the Ambassador's assessment of the Four Power Statute did not agree with the German view. The Ambassador said that according to the Soviet Union's viewpoint the foundations of the Four Power Agreement had been changed. But in the opinion of the Federal Government the Soviet Union had installed itself in Germany against the will of the German people. It observed with concern the continuous dismantling of the original agreement such as the recall of the Soviet City-Commandant and other measures. Finding a common denominator for future negotiations would certainly be difficult. However, according to the Federal Government, attempts should be continued to find a solution the entire German people could

approve of. The Federal Government would persevere with the search for possible solutions.

Ambassador Smirnov declared himself hopeful to continue the exchange of views on this topic in the near future.

The discussion ended at 4.00 pm.

[Source: Foundation Chancellor Adenauer House, Records III/87, Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), document 415. Translated for CWIHP by Regina Schmidt-Ott.]



Cable from Federal Republic of Germany Embassy, Washington (Knappstein), 27 October 1962

Ambassador Knappstein, Washington, to the Foreign Office

114-8739/62 secret

Telex Nr. 3226

Citissime

Sent: 27 October 1962, 01:10 hours

Received: 27 October 1962, 08:55 hours

I. Threat to American Security Through a Soviet Base on Cuba

Information we receive here about deployment of Soviet nuclear missiles and aircraft on Cuba are dispelling any potential misunderstandings about type, scope, and dangerousness of the threat.

1. In the context of Soviet intentions capabilities of the Cuban bases are correctly described as “offensive”. This follows from:

- confirmed information regarding type and range of weapons: mobile MRBMs (1,100 miles), stationary IRBMs (2,200 miles, only “first-strike capability” [English in original—trans.]), and IL-28 aircraft;

- the scope of Soviet engagement: about 10 percent of their MRBM potential;

- the way the Soviets acted when building and equipping their base: swiftly, secretly, and deviously (see United Nations)

- the state of readiness: 23 launching pads “operational” with 33 MRBMs, “firing readiness” in five to eight hours.

2. The scope of the threat is “significant,” since it is directed against the “soft underbelly” of the United States.

- The short flying time between launch and target does not allow for an effective warning.

- After the launch of a missile, there is no more defense available.

The Strategic Air Command (SAC) is within range of the missiles.

3. However, there is no exact proof that nuclear war-heads were brought onto the island. For good reasons, though, it is considered as likely with regard to the “operational” missiles.

4. The deployment of Soviet missiles and nuclear weapons in Cuba is a new factor affecting the nuclear balance and Soviet strategy in a way which until now was viewed as unlikely.

- For the first time, Soviet nuclear missiles are stationed overseas and at considerable distance from the Soviet heartland.

- For the first time, the United States is vulnerable not only from Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), but also from medium-range missiles.

- A completion of Cuba’s expansion into a Soviet nuclear base would mean a decisive move of the nuclear balance in direction of the Soviet Union. For the first time, the latter would acquire capabilities to launch a nuclear surprise attack simultaneously against Europe and the North American continent.

Until now, the strategic potential of the United States provided a nuclear umbrella for Europe, since the Soviet Union was incapable to launch such a simultaneous attack due to the time difference (distance, length of [missile] flight).

II. Most Recent Intelligence Insights

At the ambassadorial meeting on 26 October, [Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs William R.] Tyler, [Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Paul H.] Nitze, and [Roger N.] Hilsman (Director of Intelligence and Research in the State Department) informed about the most recent intelligence on the state of expansion of the Soviet base in Cuba.

1. Ongoing aerial surveillance, in part from low heights, is proving an accelerated and continuous expansion of (stationary) ICBM positions. More deployment sites for nuclear warheads were completed. Large camouflage operations are going on at the missile sites (and the anti-aircraft defense sites). Construction of additional sites has not been discovered. IRBM missiles have not been located in the positions, though they are expected at a later stage of construction.

It is assumed that the Soviet ship "Poltava," which reversed course, had IRBMs on board; or that such missiles are already deployed on Cuba.

2. Mobile MRBMs were deployed "in an astonishingly short time" ("mushrooming from the ground"). The MRBMs are "operational." Additional MRBM sites have not been discovered.

3. The [American] public was informed that eight to ten missile sites were identified. The exact number is as follows: two IRBM and seven MRBM sites.

4. There exists certainty that nuclear warheads are already deployed on the island for those MRBMs that have been made operational already. Otherwise it would have made no sense to make those sites "operational."

5. Transition time from "operational readiness" to "firing readiness" is between five and eight hours. This time is needed to transport the warhead to the missile, to mount it, to move the missile into a launching position, fuel it, and launch it. Nuclear warheads are not mounted before the "countdown" starts. In other words: During the transition from "operational readiness" to "firing readiness," there is a certainty that the missile will actually be fired.

6. Camouflage will somewhat increase the time needed to achieve the missiles' firing readiness. This is viewed as an indication for caution on the Soviet side.

7. None of the American surveillance aircraft were fired at. Even an attempt of firing was not noticed. Soviet MIG aircraft also remained on the ground.

8. [French ambassador Herve] Alphand suggested to present convincing evidence for the threat emanating from the Soviet base on Cuba especially to the neutral and non-aligned countries. Respective understanding is still lacking on this side.

III. Purpose and Current Impacts of the Cuba Blockade

1. At the same meeting, Nitze provided the following information about implementation and success of the blockade:

All ships suspected of carrying offensive weapons material have reversed course and are on the way back to their ports of departure.

Simple tankers continue their course towards Cuba and probably do not contain any banned load. Recently about 30 ships per month arrived in Cuba, this is 1 to 2 per day. Some ships turned around; so overall the number of objects affected by the blockade operation is very small. For instance, a Lebanese charter ship was searched and subsequently cleared for passage. The Soviet tanker ultimately allowed to pass was asked to identify its name, port of destination, and country. It was granted passage without further search, as there were additional reasons for assuming it carried just a load of fuel.

2. (As we heard from other sources: The first Cuba-bound Soviet ships most suspected to be affected by the blockade reversed course and returned already six hours before the President's speech on 22 October, this is following just the pre-announcement of the speech. It is considered likely that those ships carried nuclear warheads.)

3. (Nitze again:) Aircraft are not yet subject to the blockade operation, as it is evident from the 23 October proclamation. The main reason behind this: One does not want to arrive at a situation where you are forced, for instance, to shoot down a passenger plane over high seas.

One must assume that nuclear warheads can arrive in Cuba by aircraft. Searches of planes flying to Cuba from Canada and Dakar did not yield any results. It is preferable, however, that no flights are coming in to Cuba at all, as it was promised to Canada and Conakry. Only in this way will severe incidents, undesired by anybody, be avoided.

Soviet planes can reach Cuba in direct flights only if they re-fuel in mid-air.

4. The purpose of the blockade has been achieved: Additional shipments of offensive materials to Cuba were stopped. Time has been won to provide the world public with evidence about Cuba's offensive threat.

The other main objective still stands out, namely the "removal" of offensive objects already on the island.

Negotiations about a deal on removal of the Cuban base in exchange for the removal of an American overseas missile base are not the path to be chosen by the [US] government to reach its objective.

IV. Situation of Negotiations in the United Nations

1. American information to the ambassadors' group and during meeting breaks revealed the following on this issue:

Currently [US Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson and [U.N. Secretary General] U Thant are negotiating about a two-stage approach. After the first stage of 48 hours, the following is supposed to happen:

- a) complete cessation of Soviet maritime imports,
- b) end of construction work at the missile sites on Cuba,
- c) "diffusion" of everything already installed.

During the second stage of about two to three weeks, negotiations will have to be held about how to remove the material from Cuba.

U Thant's idea, according to which the first stage should result in a "standstill," is unsatisfactory. There exists only a five-to-eight-hour timeframe to get the missiles ready for a "countdown," i.e. for firing. An actual "standstill" would only exist, if the "operational" missiles are dismantled and its parts dislocated (in particular separating the missile from the launching pads). Furthermore, according to American opinion, on-site controls and inspections are needed in order to verify the "standstill."

2. The blockade would remain in force until the second main objective is achieved, this is, the removal of offensive potential already there. Blockade forces would remain on alert, without enforcing blockade measures ("standby order"), until effective control mechanisms of U.N. inspections are established to monitor the complete removal of offensive potential from Cuba.

Without on-site inspection and control, there is no guarantee that weapons would not become "operational" again.

3. Concerning further developments, there are currently two open questions (according to Nitze):

- a) whether the procedural process with U Thant, as mentioned above, will produce results in due time;
- b) whether Castro will tolerate inspections.

Ad a): Official information from inside the administration, and official press information since yesterday and especially over the last hours, bolster the impression that the time factor is of utmost importance.

Ad b): There is no indication for Castro being willing to accept on-site inspections. He has stated: "Only over my dead body." Tyler sarcastically called this remark prophetic.

The French side informed that the Canadian and Brazilian governments tried diplomacy to move Cuba towards an acceptance of inspections. However, they were rejected.

Alphand reiterated explicitly Nitze's statement that "another course of action will be chosen," if developments on a) and b) remain unsatisfactory.

V. Discussion of Soviet intentions

1. None of the attendees at the meeting had any information according to which the Soviets are undertaking any special military preparations at any place in their global area of influence.

2. The Soviets deny the existence of medium- and long-range missiles in Cuba, its installation, and its further expansion ([Soviet ambassador Valerian] Zorin in the U.N. Security Council). The Soviet press defines the crisis as an American-Cuban, not an American-Soviet problem. By acting this way, Nitze thought, the Soviets want to maintain their flexibility. It cannot be excluded they will continue their denials, as they did before 22 October, in order to leave an exit door open and portray the United States as the one who acted aggressively. This way also the ridicule Zorin was subjected to in the [UN] Security Council [on 25 October] when he denied the evidence from aerial surveillance pictures could pay off. Though it also could be that the Soviets want to keep the nuclear warheads up their sleeves.

[Martin J.] Hillenbrand [director, State Department Office of German Affairs and Berlin Task Force] thought another explanation likely for Zorin's behavior: Moscow has still not yet recovered from the surprising implementation of the blockade. It is telling that statements by Soviet diplomats in other places are characterized by insecurity and inconsistencies. You might surmise from this that Soviet embassies did not yet receive instructions from Moscow. Zorin might have been in a similar situation.

3. The French side reported, according to information from Paris, that Soviet diplomats there spread the rumor that a political trade-off between the Cuban base and [US] bases in Turkey is imminent. Nitze replied this is perhaps the solution the Soviets envisage. He again reiterated that there are negotiations only about the elimination of the threat from Cuba. Nitze emphasized this American position was made unmistakably clear.

VI. Cuban Crisis and Berlin Problem

In an information [report] directed to the NATO Council (see our telex 3208 from 25 October 1962 secret II.2), the Americans assessed today in another four-party meeting Soviet intentions as follows: The secret build-up of Cuba into a Soviet nuclear base serves as a preparation for another Soviet move against Berlin to be expected at the end of the year. The French and the British are waiting with their assessments of Soviet intentions until tomorrow's four-party meeting. There an instruction to [US Ambassador to NATO Thomas K.] Finletter will be discussed. Based on this instruction, he will have to inform the [North Atlantic] Council about "political contingency planning" and "reactions to a separate peace treaty." For now, I will hold back until after tomorrow's meeting with further reporting on American assessments of a linkage between the Cuban crisis and the Berlin problem.

[signed] Knappstein

[Source: Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), Document 418. Translated for CWIHP by Bernd Schaefer.]



Memorandum of Conversation, Federal Republic of Germany Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and US Ambassador Walter Dowling, Rhöndorf, West Germany, 28 October 1962

Highly secret

28 October 1962

On 28 October 1962 the Chancellor received Ambassador Dowling in his house in Rhöndorf together with State

Secretary [in the Chancellor's Office] Dr. Hans Globke and the undersigned [notetaker Horst Osterheld].

Ambassador Dowling had asked for the meeting. First he handed to the Chancellor Kennedy's response to Khrushchev's second letter of 26 [sic; actually 27] October 1962. Furthermore, Ambassador Dowling brought President Kennedy's press statement of 27 October and an instruction by [US Secretary of Defense Robert] McNamara to the State Secretary of the Air Force regarding the drafting of reservists for airborne forces.

Then Mr. Dowling informed that the American government will today ask to convene the NATO Council in order to brief it on the situation. [US Ambassador to NATO Thomas K.] Finletter will probably inform about the following issues:

1. Developments in build-up of Soviet missile bases in Cuba so far.

2. Talks held in New York [at the United Nations], as well as messages between the American and the Soviet government transmitted through the Secretary General of the United Nations [U Thant].

3. A message from Khrushchev to U Thant, indicating the Soviet Union might be willing to dismantle its missile base provided the US makes a binding commitment not to launch an invasion against Cuba.

4. ctually 27] October), where Khrushchev, contradicting his previous statements, suddenly raised conditions again, namely the dismantling of American bases in Turkey.

5. The fact that missile bases in Cuba were finished at an accelerated pace after results from surveillance flights were presented.

6. The fact that yesterday American surveillance planes were fired at for the first time.

7. The fact that Soviet ships are again approaching the blockade line. There might be an incident happening still during the course of today.

Giving these circumstances, the United States will perhaps feel compelled to resort to military action shortly. This might either occur in form of bombing the missile bases with conventional arms, or through an invasion where the missiles will be destroyed by American ground forces.

So far the US Government was eager to treat the Cuban affair as a purely American issue and keep it within the Western hemisphere. With Khrushchev referring to bases in Turkey, and through involvement of other Soviet troops and facilities, there is now a chance that Europe and NATO might be dragged into the conflict. Therefore the United States wants to sound out opinions of its NATO allies. The situation becomes increasing-

ly more serious; and the time left for discussion about the scope of military action gets shorter. Since NATO might be affected the Europeans are asked what they think about military action; probably they will still be able to stop the latter at this point.

The Chancellor stated he does not want to stop anything. He is in favor of both measures; the bases must go. However, he wishes, and here he wants to repeat what he already told [Dean] Acheson, he wishes that the Americans focus more on [Fidel] Castro as the one mainly responsible and guilty here. Certainly Khrushchev is behind the entire affair, but Castro is in the forefront. He offered his country to the missiles and thus facilitated the threat against the United States. We always must refer to Castro before the global public; it is easier to find in the United Nations a majority against Castro than a majority against the Soviet Union; in particular, it must become absolutely clear to the Cubans who is responsible for their situation and misfortune.

Ambassador Dowling did not really address the Chancellor's argumentation for quite a while; one got the impression he actually did not correctly understand the Chancellor. Dowling asserted that the United States had outlined for weeks Castro's responsibility to the world and the Cubans. Actually, Castro is just a small fry. He himself might not even have known which missiles the Russian unloaded. Cargo ports were closed to all Cubans, even to Castro.

The Chancellor rejected those and other remarks by the ambassador (for instance those about the use of unarmed surveillance planes) as in part inconsistent and missing the point. He explained the Cuban situation by giving an example: If I [Adenauer] provide my property to allow Mr. Dowling to fire a missile to the house of [Soviet Ambassador to West Germany Andrei] Smirnov on the other bank of the Rhine. However, Mr. Dowling still did not understand.

State Secretary Dr. Globke explained it will be more face-saving for Khrushchev if Castro is accused. One cannot deprive Khrushchev personally of the option to put all blame on Castro, or at least give orders to Castro to remove the missile bases (so Khrushchev does not have to do the dismantling himself).

Even then, it looked like Ambassador Dowling did not properly understand the argumentation. It was Khrushchev[, said Dowling,] who delivered and built the missiles. Until today they are under his exclusive authority. It is Khrushchev who wanted to exert pressure on the United States. The only point may be, perhaps, to make Khrushchev and Castro equally responsible.

Apparently, Dowling did not succeed in understanding the Chancellor (maybe because Mr. Dowling did not ask for a translation of the Chancellor's remarks; fully mired in his own thoughts, Dowling also did not seem to really lis-

ten). Since, on the other hand, Dowling had to get material to report back to Washington, he then began to summarize his previous statements. He asked the Chancellor whether he now is in favor of bombing the missile bases in Cuba, or in favor of an invasion, or against any kind of military action.

Here the Chancellor repeated again that he is in favor of eliminating the Soviet missile bases. Therefore he agrees to both kinds of military intervention, to the bombing as well as to the invasion. Following a remark by State Secretary Dr. Globke, the Chancellor got more precise: He is also in favor of an invasion, not the least in order to enable the Americans to offer something as a concession later, namely their withdrawal from the island. Then the Chancellor stated in addition to these military actions one should raise political pressure against Castro. Answering a question by Mr. Dowling, the Chancellor provided as an example a 24-hour ultimatum to Castro containing demands very difficult to comply with.

The note-taker [Osterheld] got the impression that from now on Ambassador Dowling understood the Chancellor, also with regard to his position on Castro. Mr. Dowling thanked for the Chancellor's clear position. President Kennedy will certainly be very happy that the Chancellor, like during previous days, is siding so unequivocally with the United States in this difficult hour and declares its solidarity with the US. The Chancellor has been much clearer than many other allies.

Then Mr. Dowling said he is expecting military action within the next 24 hours. There already had been the incident with the surveillance plane; another one will occur with the Soviet ship; that completely suffices.

He then gave another letter to the Chancellor stating that General [Lauris] Norstad will remain SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander Europe, NATO] until 31 December 1962. Until then General [Lyman] Lemnitzer, who will already take command over the American forces in Europe, will prepare for his assignment working under Mr. Norstad. The Chancellor welcomed this arrangement very much.

Finally, the Chancellor promised to Mr. Dowling he will take care that our [FRG] representative at NATO will be instructed according to the results of this meeting.

[Source: Foundation Chancellor Adenauer House, Records III/61, in Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1 September bis 31 Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), Document 419. Translated for CWIHP by Bernd Schaefer.]



West German Record of One-on-One Conversation between FRG Chancellor Adenauer and US President Kennedy, Washington, 14 November 1962⁷

Secret

14 November 1962

At the beginning of their talks at the White House on 14 November 1962, the Chancellor and President Kennedy had a one-on-one conversation [*unter vier Augen*].

The Chancellor congratulated the President on his success in the last weeks. Developments are into a new phase now. He assured the President that the FRG would always stand on the American side.

The President thanked the Chancellor for speaking with Ambassador Dowling right after the first announcement. This immediate support for American measures was valued all the higher for it still being clear what the effects of the American measures would be on Berlin and the FRG.

The Chancellor explained that he understood that the President must keep an eye on the global situation in making his decisions, not only Germany and Berlin...He suggested that later on in the talks, he would like to discuss his thoughts on Berlin in as small a circle as possible.

The President asked if the Chancellor considers that the present situation is worse or better for improving the situation in Berlin.

The Chancellor answered that one must be careful on this matter and he can't really say if the Cuba issue is definitively finished. The decision whether to try to make up with the Soviets, also in regards to Germany, depends on the [US] President. If the President believes that the Soviets have correctly carried out the American demands, then maybe we could undertake this. But if the President thinks that the demands are unfulfilled, then it is better to wait.

President Kennedy, making reference to press reports that the Chancellor believes that the missiles were not removed [from Cuba], asks why? According to the American interpretation based on the most recent airphotos, the missiles have been removed [*weggeschafft*]. We also don't think it would be an advantage for the Soviets to keep any missiles in Cuba. We don't think it likely that the Soviets would try the thing with the missiles again, because they know that next time, there'll be an American invasion. But even if the Americans say that the missiles are no longer there, we are still fully conscious that Khrushchev has not yet fully fulfilled his promises. The issue of the bombers and ground inspections is still open. We think in any case that air inspections are more reliable than ground inspections by UN personnel. We're also clearer

now that we won't get rid of Castro so quickly [*man Castro nicht so schnell loswerde*]. As for Khrushchev, we know he lies and there is no reason to believe his statements. For all these reasons, the President is not interested in a new Western initiative. Far better to let the Soviets come to us and see what they propose.

The Chancellor agreed fully with these thoughts and underlined that the Soviets had lied shamefully and had planned a criminal attack on the US, as never before. If we offered negotiations now, Khrushchev must assume that the West is ready to forget and forgive the matter [Cuba]. Then maybe, he will feel tempted to try to cause trouble somewhere else.

The German experience under National Socialism shows that dictatorships change people, their thinking and morality. This is also true for Khrushchev. We cannot expect him to change suddenly.

The President says that now as before we must assume that Khrushchev has the same goals as the Red Chinese, although possibly somewhat different methods. The setback in Cuba – and this was only a setback, not a defeat – will cause Khrushchev some problems. He's also got problems with the Chinese and the fighting with India doesn't work for his plans either. The situation has changed substantially in the last weeks and one must think clearly how the various factors will affect Khrushchev.

The Chancellor thought this was absolutely correct and said the Soviet Union was going through a slow evolution, but it remains to be seen how far it goes. He is convinced that Khrushchev did not want to run the risk of a war, but will try his intrigues again, so we must pay attention. On the side of the West, we should not give the impression that nothing happened and that all is forgotten. The President succeeded in turning aside the greatest danger the US has ever experienced, a great success for himself and the American people. On the other side is this criminal – and as such he should be handled, not as [merely] misguided—we have to keep an eye on him...

The President indicates that one never knows what's going on in the Soviets' heads. The Americans never thought that the Soviets would dare bring missiles to Cuba and the Soviets never thought that the Americans would react so decisively. Both sides had false ideas about each other...

The Chancellor notes that one should not judge Khrushchev based on what he has failed to get so far, but rather on how much he has succeeded already. For example, in 1953, the Soviet Union did not even have atomic weapons [*sic*; the Soviets actually achieved their first atomic detonation in 1949—ed.], and now, nine years later, they are taking missiles to Cuba. The developments of the last nine years have been good to Khrushchev. He is a smart, reckless man with-

out conscience, who certainly doesn't want to lose all he has gained up to now. He is a convinced Soviet patriot.

Khrushchev has now learned in Cuba that the US is stronger and more decisive than he had thought. He'll think this over now and reorient himself. The Chancellor agrees with the President that the solution of the bomber issue should show us what Khrushchev has learned. Until then, one should not offer negotiations...

The conversation was then continued with a larger group present.

[Source: Stiftung Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus, Bestand III/61, Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), document 445. Translated for CWHIP by David Wolff.]



Memorandum of Large-Group Meeting of FRG Chancellor Adenauer and US President Kennedy, Washington, 14 November 1962 (excerpt on Cuba)

St. S. 2787/62

14 November 1962

Record of the large group meeting on 14 November 1962 in the morning between President Kennedy and the Chancellor.

President Kennedy opened the talk by indicating that the Cuban crisis is not yet over. According to American intelligence, the Soviets have probably removed all their missiles from Cuba. The Americans had confirmed 32 or 33 missiles in Cuba, but under the assumption that there could have been as many as 48 there. From the Soviet point of view, it is certainly better to transport the missiles back to the USSR on boats than to leave them in caves in Cuba which would lead to problems with the Cubans.

Another problem, continued the President, is the bombers and Soviet personnel. By the end of the week, we'd like to learn a bit more about the bombers.

The Chancellor asked if all Soviet technicians had left Cuba.

The President answered that we don't know exactly about the rocket experts. They could still be there.

The Chancellor said that the presence of the technicians would be a big issue, since they would want to have something to do.

The President joked that we unfortunately can't tell from the air, if someone is a missile expert or not.

Mr. Smith⁸ answered "yes" when the Chancellor asked if all the missile-launchers had been removed. He added that the American experts had no doubts that the missiles have been removed. Eight ships took them. We photographed these ships from low altitudes and confirmed the rockets on deck.

The Chancellor asked how they got the rockets to Cuba.

Mr. Smith said they were below deck. On the return trip they were placed in haste on the deck. This is certainly not the best way to handle missiles. The Americans photographed every ship and counted 42 rockets...

President Kennedy concluded that as far as one could verify, the missiles have left Cuba...

President Kennedy stated that the US had succeeded in having its way on Cuba, because it had superior conventional and nuclear forces. The situation in Berlin is not the same. One must have the same possibilities in Europe. In Cuba the US was in a position to play the whole gamut of conventional and nuclear forces. It must be our goal to strengthen both Western conventional and nuclear forces, both in general and particularly in regard to Berlin.

The Chancellor said that he shared this interpretation fully.

The Chancellor then asked the President if he knew anything about Khrushchev's present state of health. He had heard that that recently Khrushchev had been drinking diligently [*fleissig*].

The President answered that people say bad things about all heads of government. Sir Frank Roberts [the British ambassador in Moscow] had even reported during their short talk that Khrushchev looked tired, but then perked up.

The Chancellor asked again if Khrushchev was drinking again.

Ambassador [Llewellyn E.] Thompson, asked by President Kennedy for information, stated that Khrushchev does drink a little sometimes. In general, he is in good condition.

The Chancellor points out that Khrushchev was a drunk [*Säufer*]. He stopped drinking, but started again. We should put his health and psychological state under observation.

The Chancellor continued that he shares the President's wish to see the free peoples stronger, both in nuclear and conventional weapons. This matter lies close to his heart [*am Herzen liegen*].

Then, turning to NATO...

[Source: VS-Bd.310 (Buro Staatssekretar), Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich:

R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), document 446. Translated for CWIHP by David Wolff.]

Notes

1 Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev apparently believed, based on Soviet intelligence sources, that West Germany had learned about the Soviet missiles on Cuba and had tipped off the Kennedy administration. “Another possibility (as we have now been told by our intelligence) is that the presence of our missiles in Cuba was discovered by West German intelligence and then communicated to the U.S.,” Khrushchev told Czechoslovak leader Antonin Novotny on 30 October 1962 (see the translated Czechoslovak record elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*). In a 4 November 1962 conversation with Fidel Castro, Soviet envoy Anastas Mikoyan explicitly credited West German intelligence with informing the US about the missiles: “By mid-September [1962] the Americans apparently received data regarding the transport to Cuba of Soviet troops and strategic missiles. I have already spoken about this fact with comrade Fidel Castro. The American intelligence was not the first in obtaining that information, it was West German intelligence who gave that information to the Americans.” (See the Soviet record of this conversation in *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 5 (Spring 1995), p. 97.) No evidence has surfaced to support this Soviet claim. To the extent that the Soviets believed that FRG Foreign Minister Gerhard Schroeder relayed West German intelligence on Moscow’s missile deployment to Cuba when he met with JFK in the Oval Office on the morning of 17 October 1962, they were clearly mistaken. Both the secret White House tape recording and the West German record of the meeting have surfaced, and both confirm that the Cuba did not even come up in

the conversation, which mostly dwelled on the situation in Berlin; Schroeder did not pass any intelligence about Soviet missiles in Cuba, and Kennedy did not confide that the US had discovered them, or even raise the Cuban issue as a matter of renewed concern. For the German record, see *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), Document 399 (pp. 1717-1728); and Timothy Naftali and Philip Zelikow, eds., *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy: The Great Crises, Vol. II: September-October 21, 1962* (New York: Norton & Co., 2001), pp. 469-99.

2 On the building of the Berlin Wall, see Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

3 Henning Koehler, *Adenauer. A Political Biography* (Berlin: Propylaen, 1994), pp.1130-1157.

4 Koehler, *Adenauer*, pp. 1154-56.

5 William Glenn Gray, *Germany’s Cold War. The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), p. 138.

6 Ed. note: The former secretary of state flew to Bonn to see Adenauer after having briefed French President Charles De Gaulle in Paris the previous afternoon.

7 Ed. note: For the U.S. record of this conversation, see U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1961-1963, Vol. XV: Berlin Crisis, 1962-1963* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1994), doc. 153; for brief additional discussion of Cuba between JFK and Adenauer, also see doc. 154.

8 Ed. note: Not further identified; possibly Abbott E. Smith of the Board of National Estimates of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The Italian Communists and Cuba, 1959-1963— Documents from the PCI Archives

Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow, and introduced by Silvio Pons¹

The relations between the Italian Communist Party (the *Partito Comunista Italiano*, or PCI)—the main Western Communist party—and the Cuban revolution before and after the missile crisis of October 1962 should be understood in two related contexts: the rediscovery of the Third World by the Soviets and the European Communists in the late 1950s; and the Sino-Soviet conflict and its threat to jeopardize the unity of the international Communist movement.

When the Cuban revolutionaries came to power in 1959, despite their doubtful Marxist affiliation, they provided a strong impulse to the idea that Communism could achieve decisive global influence by building alliances with the nationalist post-colonial élites. Such idea was developed by the Soviets and surfaced among the European Communists.² At the same time, conflict between the Soviet Union and China emerged. In June 1960, the Soviet Union withdrew its technical personnel from China and attacked the Chinese for violating the principles established at the Moscow Conference of world Communism of 1957. In the second world Conference held in November 1960, Khrushchev and Deng Xiaoping exchanged harsh criticism, and the formal unity of the movement was preserved only thanks to the mediation of Ho Chi Minh. That was, however, a fragile truce. By 1962, the Soviets and the Chinese were accusing each other of threatening the unity of International Communism. Like all other European Communists—the Albanians excluded—the Italians sided with Moscow, while seeking diplomatically to avoid the split.³

The roots of the conflict were obviously complex and multi-dimensional.⁴ Nevertheless, quite clearly the strategy of “peaceful coexistence” could be hardly acceptable to Third World revolutionaries and increasingly distanced them from the European Communists, who for the most part remained basically loyal to the Soviet approach. Hopes for an expansion of International Communism in the Global South had to be squared with such division. The Cuban crisis of October 1962 thus became a crucial event not only for the Cold War, as also for International Communism.⁵

The documents here presented show, first of all, how in an early phase (1959-60) the PCI had poor contacts with Cuba. Admiration for the “national and social” revolution was balanced by some skepticism, which involved even the personality of Fidel Castro, though the PCI seemed eager to play a role in terms of propaganda and economic support. The tone changes in subsequent documentation. The note by Vidali of June 1961 records a shift towards the representation of Cuba as a

revolutionary hub in Latin America, in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs counter-revolutionary attempt. The very presence of Vidali should not be overlooked—as he had a long-standing experience of Latin America as a Comintern official in the inter-war years. However, under the impact of the missile crisis, the mainstream preoccupation of the Italian Communists was typically about “peaceful coexistence.” As can be seen from the records of the party’s *Direzione* [Directorate; leadership] of 31 October 1962 (when the worst-case scenario had been prevented by the agreement between Kennedy and Khrushchev), PCI leader Palmiro Togliatti argued that what happened in Cuba should not undermine “peaceful coexistence.” He was worried about the angry reaction of the Cuban leaders against the negotiation between the superpowers and rejected Chinese criticism of the Soviet conduct. All the main PCI leaders shared such an orientation, showing concern about the diffusion in the party of radical and apocalyptic views influenced either by the Chinese or by the Cuban romantic myth.

In late July 1963, a delegation led for the first time by a member of the PCI *Direzione*, Ugo Pecchioli, was sent to Cuba with the aim to establish more solid relations and to exercise some influence. Pecchioli’s report is an important source on Castro’s position after his trip to the USSR in the spring of 1963—when he realigned Cuba with Moscow. Castro accepted “peaceful coexistence” and took openly sides with the Soviet Union against the Chinese—who had meantime publicly attacked Togliatti and Yugoslav leader Tito as “revisionists.” The Cuban leader declared that “the liberation of the people cannot ride on the use of thermonuclear arms”—a statement even more significant as he was speaking while the great powers negotiated the treaty banning nuclear tests (except below ground), disapproved by Beijing. He displayed restraint on the export of revolution, acknowledging national differences among Latin American countries. That surely sounded reassuring to the PCI. Nevertheless, Castro’s autonomous stance was hardly in tune with the PCI on the relationship between “peaceful coexistence,” anti-imperialism, and revolutionary violence. As Pecchioli had to admit, “considerations for a democratic route to socialism” seemed “still like a very foreign political idea to the Cuban leaders.” Regardless of Chinese influence and despite Cuba’s realignment with the Soviet Union, the political views and strategies of the Cubans and the PCI would diverge in the times to come—an aspect of the fragmentation of International Communism in the 1960s.



DOCUMENTS

Cuban communist party official Lazaro Pena, Report to the Italian Communist Party (PCI), "Information on the Political Situation in Cuba," 3 December 1958

INFORMATION ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN CUBA

Supplied from the Foreign Section, 3 December 1958 from Cuban comrade Lazaro Peña, Director of the Latin American syndicate

Political Situation of the Country

The political situation in Cuba continues to be extremely serious. The popular opposition to the bloody dictatorship of Batista is such that, after a certain time, the government may only manage to stand on its own feet with the assistance of the United States.

Batista now only rests on the support of a few restricted social classes: Cuban executives of monopolistic North American concessions [businesses], elements of the police and repression apparatus, industrialists financially connected to the United States monopolies, etc.

The opposition to the Batista regime clearly manifested itself during the political elections of 3 November, that were backed above all by the Americans with the intent to give an appearance of legitimacy to the political regime in Cuba. What resulted from these rigged elections, the victory of government candidate General Andres Rivero Aguero, was that not more than 40% of the electorate participated and in Havana not more than 25%.

In the country reigns the most savage terror of the work of a powerful police and military apparatus. Every day they commit assassinations, torture, arbitrary arrests. American FBI agents frequently participate in the interrogations of political dissidents. The police hammer away at, in a special way, the communists and their sympathizers.

The "July 26" Movement of Fidel Castro and the Developments of the Partisan Guerillas

The movement of Fidel Castro, that in its rise has had a spontaneous characteristic of anarchy and was supported essentially by the elements of the *petite bourgeoisie*, has today, especially in the regions where the operations of the partisans

are more extensive (Oriente, Camaguey, Santa Clara etc.), a solid following of peasants⁶ and the general popular masses. The support of the peasants⁷ was due also to the fact that the Fidel Castro movement adopted as a rallying cry the need to implement agrarian reforms. Armed partisans numbered around 10,000.

Position of the United States

The United States played, for a certain period, a double game with Fidel Castro and with the dictator Batista. Today the United States seeks to intensify the help to the government in the political sphere by supporting the rigged elections of November 3rd and in the economic sphere with the provision of arms for the government troops. The risk is ever more likely that in the case that Fidel Castro's troops are pushed into the North American nickel mining concessions, the United States would take advantage of this by provoking military intervention.

The Cuban Popular Socialist Party

The Cuban Popular Socialist Party (Communist Party), even though illegal and terrorized, actively participates in the country's political life. For the most part the comrades of the Directorate [Politburo] of the party still reside in Cuba. Periodicals such as "*Carta seminal*," "*Prensa continental*" and others are published.

Concerning its political line, it is of note that the Cuban Popular Socialist Party does not officially participate in the Fidel Castro movement even if they support it in practice.

Political Prospects

The central objective that the party is pursuing is that of organizing itself and the support for the unified anti-imperialist front, whose job it will be to overthrow the Batista dictatorship and form a national and democratic government.

Actually, though the opposition to Batista is rising in every [political] party, there has not yet been an organization that will be the heart of the anti-imperialist front. The two attempts of the opposition parties to create a unified front without the communists (Miami Pact, Caracas Pact) were fruitless.

Even if a formal agreement between the opposition parties was still not reached, nevertheless in the localities, unit committees [*Comitati unitary*] were formed during the preparations for the political strike of 9 April (promoted by Fidel Castro and conducted prematurely) and afterward during the course of the fight in defense of the workers' pressing wage claims.

In conclusion, Comrade Lazaro Peña noted the great help that the Communist Party of Italy can give to the Cuban communists by denouncing in the media the terror of the Batista

regime and the danger of American-led military aggression and he made a formal request that such help will be intensified.

[Source: 1958 Cuba Estero 457, 2271-2273, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Instituto Gramsci, Rome. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated for CWIHP by Alex Barrow.]



**Italian Communist Angelo Franza,
Memorandum of Conversation with Cuban
Communist Antonio Nunez Jimenez, n.d.
[early 1960?], and note by PCI Official
Giuliano Pajetta**

NOTES FROM A CONVERSATION WITH ANTONIO
NUNEZ JIMENEZ

Director of the Cuban National Institute for Agrarian Reform [INRA]; member of the Cuban PC (Popular Socialist Party [PSP]).

In the conversation we talked about the various problems relating to the internal and external politics in Cuba and the solidarity that the PCI can provide to the Cuban liberation movement.

Regarding the Cuban situation, Captain Antonio Nunez Jimenez illustrated some problems underlining how the revolution that led to the overthrow of Batista was essentially a peasant revolution and how he naturally correlated the agrarian reforms currently in progress. Landed estates [*Latifondo*] have been abolished and there is a fixed limit on property. Expropriated land does not generally become assigned to the peasants, but is organized as state farms or as cooperatives. Because of the low level of mechanization, he does not advise the excessive fragmentation of property. The state is creating special mechanization centers that will assist and lend help to the cooperatives. The machinery is bought almost exclusively from the United States and belongs to the State.

The Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA) is the center of the revolution and of the government activities; they themselves have branches in every agricultural zone of the country; one of their representatives presides over all of the land redistribution operations and over the reorganization of cultivation, proceeding in a gradual way to suppress monocultivation [of sugar]. A section of the INRA is called "Section of Industrialization of Cuba" and it is responsible for state investments in national industries in accordance with the national sector of private industry. This section is directed by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, originally Argentine,

already an agricultural consultant of Arbenz in Guatemala and clearly oriented toward communist ideals. Now "Che" is also the director of the National Bank of Cuba.

With the hardening of the United States opposition the government developed a plan to provide arms to the peasants, which is now underway. For the rest, control of the Cuban countryside is in the hands of partisan forces and armed peasants, that have taken the place of the army and the police of the previous regime, which have been completely dissolved with the revolution. The army, as it existed before the revolution, no longer exists; it has arisen as a new organization, "the people's army" [*Popolo in Armi*], commanded by the brother of Fidel Castro, Raul, of clearly communist sentiment.

At the heart⁸ of the government there no longer exists a real and true anti-communist tendency, even if the exponents of the State, as such, call themselves "non communists." Fidel Castro does not adopt any decision of a certain importance anymore without hearing first the opinion of the communists. He and his youth group (Raul Castro, [Juan] Almeida [Bosque], Guevara, etc.) have gradually positioned themselves to the left and today have an outlook that is decidedly anti-imperialist and favorable to the reorganization of the national economy on the basis of socialism.

To help the peasants, the State, other than the machine centers, has instituted in rural zones also the "tiendas del pueblo" ["markets of the people"] a type of store where the merchandise is sold at cost or very close to it. In fact this was possible because one did not have to strike down any type of "middle class," such as merchants, which did not exist; commerce was only carried out occasionally by speculators at a high price and almost only American products.⁹ Today the State sells almost exclusively national products and consequently has the support of the national sector of the bourgeoisie, which is in a developing phase.

Landowning peasants, after all, were a miniscule minority, when they weren't American citizens. For that, the agrarian reform practically struck a very meager social class, meanwhile it helped the peasants and it opened up to national industry a market that now is protected from the invasion of foreign commerce. The Government, with the support of the PC, is conducting a campaign to "buy Cuban products" that has been a great success.

Politically, there exists a unique situation in Cuba: there is only one party that exists legitimately, the Popular Socialist Party (communists that have their daily, magazines, and a special radio and television broadcast.) The "anti-Batista revolution," as such was deployed behind Fidel Castro, whose name has become from now on a legend. He is even an object of religious veneration and the vast majority of the masses follow him without even reflecting on whether his actions are good or bad. Never

has a “cult of personality” reached a pinnacle as high as that of Fidel Castro in Cuba. Because of this he was able to gradually eliminate the winds of the right in the bosom of his government without causing crises in his “July 26th” movement.

Now the situation is this: Fidel Castro does not support the development of political parties (meanwhile he does not impede the PC), above all for not bringing, in his words, division in the country. He would like to maintain unity around his persona. It is notable, however, that there are already signs of the rebirth of the “right [wing],” but these have not been able to find a sufficient bite. The Church is certainly conservative and worried about the innovative and revolutionary measures of the government, but they don’t have a good way on their own to defend themselves in Cuba. They are not involved in a certain sense in the current economic battles, confined to an ideological opposition of principle, which is not always an insurmountable obstacle to collaboration. Above all, an important fact is that the Spanish clergy, in the last decades, has been spontaneously replaced with local elements who are closer to the people and their problems. Because of this the Church had also assumed hostile positions toward Batista. For their part, they do not seem very inclined to accept the fanatic anti-communist approach coming from the United States. And of note is that today there is a progressive differentiation between Catholics and the regime¹⁰, even if day-to-day such differences are still vague. A huge positive repercussion is the expected message from the Pope in favor of the rural reforms underway in Cuba and of the fondness that John XXIII had expressed to Antonio Nunez for the courage with which he combated poverty in the Cuban countryside.

The trade unions are unitary [i.e., on board—trans.], even if there is the presence of anti-communist agitation which the government hopes to overcome by promoting unity as an instrument of anti-imperialist resistance.

The Cuban leaders, and Fidel Castro, feel they have the power to resist pressure from the United States. The United States of America would have to land a considerable armed force to impose its will. The Cuban leaders think that if they were able to overthrow the Batista army and his police forces with few men, it is now even easier to resist pressure from abroad with a “People’s Army” and with the support of the peasants. Relations with South American governments are mostly cold, when they are not outright bad. From the people towards popular organizations there exists instead great warmth for Cuba whose revolution is considered a first step toward the liberation of Latin America.

To this end, the Cuban government has also developed a plan to join in relations with neutral countries in Asia and Africa (and Yugoslavia in Europe) in order to open an avenue towards a new orientation in foreign affairs to the continent’s Latin American countries. Regarding relations with the USSR, a Soviet mission, which recently visited Cuba, held

that it is not opportune to re-establish diplomatic relations because such a step would not serve any practical purpose but rather would only alienate and lead to American accusations of “pro-communism.” Cuba has however stabilized economic relations, having already sold 180 million metric tons of sugar to the USSR at international prices.

Regarding the the specific relations between the PCI and the Cuban comrades and the help that would be beneficial to them, these following requests were advanced:

1. That the PCI and the Italian democratic movement (regarding this Nunez had a meeting with PSI [Partito Socialista Italiano; Italian Socialist Party] leaders and to this end will also bring in French comrades) will be able to develop more solidarity with Cuba, above all in regards to the media; they don’t request any specific operations of solidarity;
2. It was asked that the PCI help with the formation of a Roman office of the “Latin American media agency” which will be financed by Cuba;
3. It was asked to agree to an exchange of materials between the agricultural section of the PCI and INRA to know their respective positions and objectives: INRA will transfer to comrade An[g]elo Franza, the PCI will send it — for now— to the INRA through Franza; then there will come other private recipients. The important thing is to establish an exchange that is regular and constant;
4. The request was advanced to the PCI (analogous to that which will be made to the French PC) to send to Cuba a technician capable of helping the Cubans give life to a grand monthly magazine “Agrarian Reform,” that is proposed to be distributed in all of Latin America, where land issues are particularly acute; the magazine must be able to hold up, in terms of presentation and how it’s made, to publications printed in the United States;
5. Marginally it was also hinted that support from the PCI could contribute to Cuba’s economic relations with Europe (specifically the East); it was also aired out was the eventual nomination of an ambassador to Rome so we can easily understand each other, saying assurances that this would bring a positive result.

Comrade Nunez was in Rome on the occasion of the FAO congress mid-November [1959] - he was not officially noted as a communist (he was also received by the Pope!) aside from the meeting he had with Franza (drafter of the preceding note and who has had his address in Cuba) he had a conversation with Arturo Colombi and Giuliano Pajetta.

The impression that we got from this conversation is that he spoke enthusiastically and honestly when it came to techni-

cal knowledge and organizational capability, but maybe a little disingenuous on the political side. This last observation comes from the hurried way with which he responded to questions about relations with the national bourgeoisie, the danger of a class conflict capable of impeding the revolution, etc.

It appears evident that this cadre made miracles during the war against Batista and the intense popular and peasant support, above all considering the value brought forth by numerous economic and political reforms, is very energizing. In every way a good impression and the reflection of a country full of national and social revolution — highly esteemed and very friendly to our party.

Giuliano Pajetta

[Source: 1959 Cuba Estero 464, 2993-2997, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome. Obtained by James Hershberg, translation by Alex Barrow.]



**Vittorio Vidali (senior Italian communist),
Notes on a Trip to Cuba, Spring 1961
(excerpt)**

Rome, 14 June 1961

NOTES OF COMRADE VIDALI'S TRIP TO CUBA

After the May 1st demonstrations [in Havana], in the following days there was a meeting of all the Communist Party delegates in Latin America. Present were the members of the Cuban P.S.P. leadership, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and others.

The discussion unfolded on the basis of a detailed document from the B.P. [Poliburo] of the P.S.P. and this lasted, I think, five lively days. The daily agenda was "The Cuban revolution and the countries of Latin America." At the end of the debate the document presented by B.P. was collected and the B.P. of the P.S.P. was charged with publishing an editorial in "Fundamentos" for the May issue, on the basis of the discussion.

The discussion fundamentally revolved around the problem of the pacifism and violence of socialism and of the tangible efficacy of guerrilla warfare. There were differing opinions, particularly from the Argentine delegations (Ghioldi) and on the part of the Brazilian delegation.

The editorial-document contained the following concepts:

The Cuban revolution represents progress for revolution in every country in Latin America.

For that, the first duty of every anti-imperialist revolutionary, socialist or Latin American democrat is that of defending the Cuban revolution. One can not be anti-imperialist, patriots, progressives, revolutionary, socialists, communists, without defending, supporting Cuba.

Defending Cuba means defending national independence, independence of politics and economics, national sovereignty, unity of Latin American and the rights and demands of the workers and poor peasants. From when the Cuban revolution triumphed, every country in Latin America is more free. Yankee imperialism can not use the same past methods of appeal through discount offers, coaxing and blackmail.

Cuba is interested in especially interested in the development of the national and social liberation movement and vice versa.

This solidarity has at its core the fact that the people of Latin America are geographically close, for their [shared] history and for the struggle against a common enemy: American imperialism.

The United States of America wants to use the countries of Latin America in the battle against Cuba. A victory over Cuba would mean reinforcing imperialism; a victory for the Cuban revolution facilitates revolution in every country of Latin America.

In accordance with the Declaration of the Moscow Conference of 81 communist and workers' parties, one must be against the exportation of revolution and at the same time struggle with maximum energy against the exportation of counterrevolution.

The North American aggressions against Cuba, the preparations for military intervention in Cuba and in every Latin American country, the proclamation of the right to "intervene" invoking the Monroe doctrine, the fight against communism for the "security" of the West, etc. are all done and thought up only to protect, and defend the interests of the yankee monopolies.

In Latin America there exists a strong movement against intervention. The principle of "non-intervention" is defended also by conservative elements. For that, the defense of national sovereignty and of the right of self-determination of every Latin American population must be undertaken with vigor, energetically denouncing every effort of imperialist intervention, unilateral or "collective." Cuba, defeating the mercenaries, contributed to saving the peace.

In spite of the recent aggression, the Cuban government is in favor of a method of direct negotiations for peacefully resolving every problem and is prepared to re-establish diplomatic and friendly relations between the two countries.

Peace is defended by defending Cuba, fighting for the principle of "non-intervention" and respecting the right to self-determination of the people. Solidarity between the Latin American countries and between these countries and Cuba, the solidarity between socialist countries, continued and unselfish, and the solidarity of the whole world with Cuba, is that which makes for a solid base for the struggle for peace.

Friends of the Cuban revolution are the people, patriots, revolutionaries, anti-imperialists, and partisans for peace.

Enemies of the Cuban revolution are the exploiters [also translated as “pimps”—trans.], millionaires, imperialists, reactionary militarists, and mercenaries.

Imperialism, and its agents, the media and press, subsidized trade unions, conduct an intense campaign against Cuba, to falsify the truth of the revolution, to isolate the Cuban people, to justify aggression.

It is necessary to fight back against these works; systematically propagandizing the truth about Cuba, intensifying the solidarity with the Cuban people as a means to elevate the knowledge of the necessity of economic-social changes in the in the Latin American masses.

As it stands currently, between the Latin American countries there are many differences in regards to the economic, political, [and] social development.

However, there is a common ground between the Latin American people, other than Cuba, all are victims of exploitation and of political oppression by the United States; all, more or less, are missing their own industrial development; in all exists semi feudal land ownership [*latifondismo semifeudale*] and imperialism; foreign monopolies have dominion over the fonts of raw materials, services and industries; in these countries there is hunger, chronic unemployment, illiteracy, a lack of hygiene; they export their raw materials and partially made products and import industrial articles and even basic foodstuffs.

[Source: 1961 Cuba Estero 483, 2756-2771, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translation by Alex Barrow.]



Message from the PCI to the Cuban Leadership, 2 February 1962

2 February 1962

To the Leadership of the Integrated Revolutionary Organization

HAVANA

While our worry about the dangers of military aggression against the Republic of Cuba lingers on, it is our desire to explain to the Cuban people and its government the fraternal and active solidarity of the communists and all of the Italian democrats, together with the condemnation of the anti-democratic decisions made by the Conference of Punta del Este.

Even if the final vote gives a fictitious majority to the United States, reducing the Organization of American States from a regional organization analogous to the United Nations to a bloc with orders from Washington, we highly value the fact that the major countries of Latin America — such as Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador — where the resistance to the penetration of North American imperialism is the strongest, where the political and social life is more rich - they did not cede to the pressures and they did not accept the open intervention and foreign interference against a revolution that is proceeding rapidly, that reveals itself able to collect always the largest consensus and is able to split the imperialist front.

The decisions of the OAS cannot suspend the Cuban truth from the American continent, the truth of a population that fights for its right to a peaceful and independent life and with the knowledge that this happened as a choice, lining up on the side of forces of the world that are for peaceful coexistence, disarmament and negotiations, for progress by way of popular socialism on every continent.

To you, to your leader Fidel Castro, to all of your citizens [that] gather together in a great protest, we renew our full solidarity, our encouragement, our best wishes for new successes, that they are successes for all of the people who love liberty and peace.

The Secretary of the PCI

[Source: 1962 Cuba Estero 0502, 2446-2447, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow.]



Italian Communist Journalist Carmine De Lepsis, Interview with Ernesto “Che” Guevara, Havana, 29 September 1962

(portions in bold-face published in the Italian communist newspaper *Paese Sera* on 26-27 October 1962 under the headline, “GUEVARA: The economic blockade of Cuba has failed”)

FULL TEXT (RECONSTRUCTED FROM NOTES)
OF THE INTERVIEW HELD BY COMRADE
CARMINE DE LEPSIS WITH MINISTER ERNESTO
“CHE” GUEVARA FOR “PAESE SERA” IN HAVANA,
SEPTEMBER 29, 1962

The interview with Ché Guevara was part of a group of interviews with Cuban leaders (Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Raul Roa, and the Ché Guevara) for which I made a request to the Press Office of the

Cuban Foreign Ministry just after my arrival (the first attachment is a copy of my working plan presented to the Foreign Ministry). The interviews should be structured to cover the whole situation: the defense of Cuba from the possibility of an aggression (Raul Castro); the international situation related to Cuba; the problem of Catholics (Fidel Castro); economic development (Ché Guevara); and international relations of Cuba, especially with Latin America (Raul Roa). As is clear, I exaggerated with my requests because I knew I would have got just some. And that's what happened: I had only the interview with Che Guevara, in which I inquired about almost all the other topics for the interviews I didn't get. A written request (second attachment) preceded this interview, with all the questions and some notes - written by me - for the newspaper I work for and for a biography. The request was made on the 21st of September; the interview was given, more or less, one week later. It seems to me that, before giving the interview the Ché asked some information about me from the Cuban Institute of friendship with people and to the Foreign Ministry. The conversation took place, as i said in the published text, at the behest of the interviewee from 1.30 to 4.00 in the morning (so in conditions, at least for me, not ideal). There was, other than me and the interviewee, a young escort of the Institute of Friendship that didn't want to leave the office, I believe to show off in front off a Cuban leader. I made a weak attempt to make him go away, then he remained. It seemed to me that the presence of the young boy was damaging for the course of the interview, because Guevara was giving, sometimes, laconic answers, not thorough and motivated. After some pleasantries the conversation started with a personal note. I told to Guevara that I was particularly attached to him because two years before during a rally at which he spoke, I met a Cuban girl that now is my wife. That note helped to make the conversation more familiar.

DE LIPSIS: I present to you a list of written questions. Then I am going to ask you some questions that come from the impressions I had during my stay in Cuba. We are going to split it up into what can be published and what can't.

GUEVARA: (He is a little upset with the written questions) These are all questions on economic matters, so I will try to answer to them all together. **The fundamental successes achieved in the four years since our revolution have been preserved despite the freeze. The most serious problem with which Fidel, me and the all the other men of the Sierra, had to face right after the victory was the complete dependence of our economy on the United States. Cuba, when we took it, wasn't a underdeveloped country but a badly developed county: the monoculture of sugar, as it's known, and of a few other products was the distinguishing mark of our economy, where backwardness of some sectors and high technical standards in others were coexisting. Other than the monoculture, everything else was for local market only. Cuba**

was forced to sell at international prices but forced, instead, to buy at the prices imposed by the United States. Everything here was controlled by the USA, mainly the banks, the means of transport, etc..., the biggest purchaser of our sugar.

The US brought in their enterprises with advanced technology. We found ourselves, upon nationalizing the means of production, facing the problem of guaranteeing their continued operation and, so, of having a base of spare parts that usually socialist countries don't have. The same is true for raw materials: from the socialist countries we can import only similar products. Despite these difficulties we managed to guarantee the yearly growth of industrial production, if you don't consider the sugar sector, of 7%.

We can now lay the foundation for the spread of industrialization and not limit ourselves to develop what already exists.

At the end of the next four-year-period we'll gain a big metallurgic basis and i believe that we'll be able to maintain the rate of growth at the [rate of] 7%. On the other hand we must consider that now our economy is, for sure, opened while previously the American domination was barring the development of other sectors.

With agriculture the situation is more difficult: we suffered damages because of the drought that hit our country in the strongest measure ever registered in the last 40 years. I have to say that some mistakes in the organization of the agricultural production have been made. But, today we can be sure that even in this sector there is now constant growth.

DE LIPSIS: At your conference, in which I participated in two years ago, I remember you saying that Cuba shouldn't be considered an underdeveloped country but a badly developed country due to monoculture. Were you able to change this situation?

GUEVARA: No, the monoculture aspect of our economy has still not changed, but it's changing: we need the sugar, the coffee, and tobacco to provide us the currency fund.

Let's get to the second question: what will be the future development of the Cuban economy etc...[?] One of our main aims is the **self-sufficiency for our semi-tropical products and to develop some specialization that would allow us to export all over the world. This development of the industrial sector, will be realized on the basis of a technology equal to the some of the most advanced countries. We'll have a steel industry for the processing of a special steel, we'll develop the chemistry related to the production of sugar, and electronics (that is for us a fundamental issue), that is what we consider we consider on of our main goals; we'll increase**

the mining, the engineering industry (to strengthen the other industries) **and, also, the maritime industry.**

We need to keep in mind that our economy is linked to the big international markets; Cuba is an import-export country, we cannot be limited to the local market.

Let's pass to the third question: what kind of influence did the [US economic] blockade have on the economic projects of the government... It had a double effect of deterrent for the economy I) **troubles supplying foodstuff II) deficiencies in the development of the economy.** It forced us to make some sacrifices for the basis of rational development. Our duty now is fast development of the engineering sector and the creation of new products of good quality. But **the same difficulties created by the blockade have been motivation for the popular masses, whose enthusiasm has allowed us to ensure a constant growth of our production. In its main goal, therefore, the blockade failed: with the help of the popular masses and from the socialist countries, we can keep push forward, even far forward.**

Let's get to the other questions (Guevara skips the question about the governmental measures for overcoming the difficulties in the supplying of food items and approaches the one about the changes to the economic plans of the government – ed)

D.L.: Some weeks ago the weekly journal of our party Rinascita published one of your speeches on the matter. Is there something new compared to what you said on that occasion?

G.: No, there's not. On the other hand it wasn't much time ago. So we can pass to the question on the meaning of the three part rallying cry: Produce, save, organize. These issues are related. An increase of production is necessary to supply the population. Now we need to save as much as possible because of the lack we have of a supply shortage. The saving goes hand in hand with the organization. Even if [unreadable] we need to improve the growth of productivity, trying to modify the absurd salary system that there was before in Cuba.

D.L.: On the improvement in productivity and the establishment of new labor laws, are you trying to lean on moral factors (as the minister of the labor Augusto Martinez Sanchez ed.) or focus on the material gains?

G.: The moral factors are still important, but let's **not forget the material gains that are implicit in the socialist system.** The basis of this system is the same as the one found in other socialist countries with a few differences. Now we are on more solid ground. At the heart of the new society that we're building is the working man. That's why productivity is of a fundamental

importance. We prefer to close the factories that can't achieve a high level of productivity and send the workers to work somewhere else or to study, than to let them be unproductive. We observed that with what you can save on one side you can cover the expenses for the other workers that are not working anymore or who are studying to specialize. These young workers sent to study are attending courses in two phases 1) until the 6th year 2) toward a specialization. We concentrated the production and with the same vigor we are preparing new "cadre". There is going to be a successively more elevated phase, more elevated to get them to be more specialized.

D.L.: So you're working toward a concentration, a centralization of the economy? That is going to cause an elimination, in the short term, of the small private production, of the small commerce, etc.?

G.: Yes. We need to produce with high-level technological processes

D.L.: Of course, it's socialism in America, there's a need for strong productivity! It's a matter of making Socialism in America, not as it was done in the Soviet Union.

G.: (Nods) I'm going to say something about that but it must not be published....

D.L.: (Nods)

G.: We have disagreement with the Soviets about that ... They insist that we should introduce collective economic management and financial autonomy in the factories. There is a debate on this matter. We insist, on the contrary, on the centralization of the economy, the way we chose is the concentration of the production. A *pesar que nos llaman* from the Spanish text one could translate in Italian as "no matter what or in spite of it we are called it revisionist

D.L.: *Rivisionista* in Italian.

G.: Looks at me a little surprised and stays silent.

D.L.: But what's going to happen to the 150,000 small artisans?

G.: He doesn't answer and goes back to the written questions. We'll do all that we can to ensure the growth of the technological progress. We want to reach the top level of technology. I can't tell when it's going to happen. We have, already, one third or one fourth of the sugar cane production mechanized and **in two or three years the collection of sugar cane will be mechanized, with machinery created in Cuba, and constructed in Cuba.**

All this industrial installation will be used to rapidly mechanize agriculture. (And he passes to the question about the trip to USSR.) We signed some agreements for the installation of a small steel factory in Havana, and for the construction, on the eastern part of the Cuban island, of a big steel plant that will produce 1 million 3 hundred thousand tons of steel per year.

D.L.: Will it be a Kombinat?

G.: Yes, it will be a complete Kombinat and it will utilize nickel and a special kind of cobalt, that is found on the island: laterite. (About his trip to USSR, he doesn't say any more and he passes to the last question about relations with Italy.) **The relations between Cuba and Italy could be much improved. All the more because your country, having an advanced industrial system, could replace, for some items, the United States. Italy has many products that for us are really interesting, and already some Italian enterprises came forward, like the Oronzio di Nora company from whom we bought completely equipped factories. We are ready to buy whatever we need, it's up to Italy having a similar interest.**

D.L.: I had the chance to talk with some diplomats from the Italian Embassy in Cuba. I'm going to tell you about some of their opinions, but before [that] I have to warn you that the old staff of the Embassy is of a clear Fascist nature, and so I don't know how much their opinions can be considered valid. Concerning our new Ambassador my opinion is different, he's a reasonable person (I was referring to the fact that Ambassador [Gian Luigi Milesi?] Ferretti mentioned to me to a few criticisms about the US policy toward Cuba, sustaining a line similar to the one kept by England in the crisis in the Caribbean--ed. note) but these are our businesses, of the media and of us, Italian democrats. We'll see what is possible to do unblock the situation (the old staff of the Embassy praised the Batista regime to me and had negative things to say about the one of Fidel Castro--ed.). At the Italian Embassy they say that one of reasons that the commerce between Italy and Cuba is not increasing, could be the missing payment by the latter of almost one million dollars, which Italian enterprises have had on their books since prior to the revolution.

G.: I remember perfectly this situation, because at the time I was the director of the National Bank. But all that is about the interest of Italy in trading with us. You cannot trade just from one side. These credits can be repaid when we'll be able to, anyway with new relations, when you have a mutual interest, anything can be cleared up (the answers to the written questions have ended, now we start an extemporaneous dialogue)

D.L.: The difficulties you are finding are due only to the blockade ore also to, let's say, subjective problems?

G.: The blockade caused us some distortions, and forced some structural changes, but the difficulties we have to deal also due to some subjective problems, first of all **the poor organization of the revolutionary party that must be the ideological engine of the production, it has to ensure the ideological control. There were episodes of hoarding in the Party** (in Cuba, when they talk about the party they refer to old P.S.P. – the Socialist Popular Party, (communist)—ed.), and **centralization.**

D.L.: Bureaucratization?

G.: Yes, bureaucratization. **We entrusted to the old party with so much power because we were in need, right away, of experts and of solid system. But things didn't go as we expected, they were accumulating offices, centralizing the power, and bureaucratizing the relations with the masses. At one point we realized that even the statistics that were given to us about the production in the different provinces were wrong, and we ended up losing control of the situation: mistakes both in agriculture and industry were accumulating. So, when we realized that things were not working right, we looked at ourselves and faced a problem: Comrade X summons the workers so that at 6 in the morning they go to volunteer work. At six in the morning, all the workers are there but not comrade X. He shows up at ten in a government car; he checks the number of those present, and leaves. Someone protests, an inquiry is opened and is found out that comrade X lives in a luxury apartment, property of a rich Cuban exiled to the US. The Committee of the Party approves his expropriation request, because his home is unsafe.**

D.L.: That's unbelievable in a revolution, like this one, so full of strength in the ideals.

G.: **And then there's the story about people expelled from the old communist party that revealed themselves, instead, to be good revolutionaries... there are people that just want to boast of thirty years in the party. Ok, but then there's also the years, '31, '32 , '33...**

D.L.: They are the ones that in Italy we call Stalinist "trombones."

G.: Anyway we all agree, what would do the job is a party that would be the engine of the revolution and we are building it on a new basis, since the experiment with the old PSP didn't go well. There are going to be also aspirations for a new period of change.

D.L.: There's not a risk of building an "elitist" party divorced from the masses?

G: We'll try to create an operative party, controlled by the workers. Let's try this new method and let's see where it leads.

D.L.: Even if we grant for the sake of argument that the sectarianism issue can be eliminated just with the criticism of the old communists, don't you think that more gradual progress of the revolution toward the some part of the population, as the middle and lower middle class would have been more appropriate? I'm referring to what happened in the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (the neighborhood organisms of the revolution installed home by home ed.). The one that I saw was working well, but they told me that in other places the volunteer work, in a word, that they are pushing toward a sharp proletarianization also of the culture.

G: The volunteer work is, voluntary... (talking to the young escort that didn't say a word for the whole conversation) . But we have also allowed for example, a center for doctors where these professionals could meet, even talk negatively about the government... (then he takes up the conversation with an irritated tone, upset with my question) we **can coexist with the lower middle class, but not on the basis of mutual concessions on principles...**

D.L.: You mean accepting the proletarian hegemony.

G: (Changing the tone, to be more incisive)... **coexistence, but accepting the ways of development of the revolution.** On this question there's need to be intransigent. **Of course, on this basis, many from the lower middle class, do not march and decide to leave Cuba.**

D.L.: I'm not discussing the line followed by the leaders of the revolution, but are you sure that that is well applied?

G.: Of course the problem depends, also, from the way in which this policy is applied. The petite bourgeois wants the car, the trip to Miami for the week-end the refrigerator ...

D.L.: All things that the revolution can't give to them.

G: Nods, the petit bourgeois was living in a North American way, which in has in many ways different characteristics than that of the petite bourgeois in Europe. It is a certain practical (utilitarian) sense of life (I did not quite understand what he mean by this during our discussion – ed.) There is a racial component that is

important here too. Anyway we should look at the relationship with that we have had with our clergy and priests (he stands up and makes a gesture of contempt with his hand as if to say "go to hell" –ed.) Now, the priests come to us asking if we can't live together. Now to the Nunziatura Apostolica they have sent a nice young man who is quite active.

D.L.: And what about the artisans, how are they dealing with the socialization?

G: The Cuban artisans are not like the Europeans. I don't know Europe, but I know it well in Argentina because of the immigrants. And i can say how things are in the middle classes... **Instead the Cuban artisans wouldn't have any trouble adjusting and going to work in a factory, because they are not so attached to the work of their workshop.**

D.L.: What percent of industry is already socialized?

G. 95%

D.L.: Do you think about how the socialization will proceed?

G.: Nods

D.L.: I did some personal research around the shops of Galiano and San Rafael (the commercial streets of Havana ed.) and I found out that they sell many items. For what concerns the food, I had the impression that in Havana one can eat pretty well, that the essential items, in the end, are not missing, but in the province of Pinar del Rio (I look at the young man) where we have been, things for the farmers are much different, they are missing also the rationed food (in this area the farmers were getting 300 gr[ams] of meat every month, instead in Havana 1 kg and a half)... there is a huge gap (I was talking about the fact that in some areas many things were missing that in other areas were available, among them vital things like salt and matches ed.

G: In the countryside one has to make do... we have made a particular effort in Havana, where the counter-revolution is stronger. And you have to keep in mind that in Havana we have to feed almost 100.000 "becados" (students holding a scholarship) and, gosh, they eat, and they eat every day!

D.L.: The impression that I had during my stay about the three main internal factors of the revolution, the military one, the political one and the economic one is the following: the military one is going well; from the marching units you can see a

real army; the political one too, the revolution keeps having the popular support; but the economic one ... that's where you can see some discontent, "en la calle" ["on the street"] - I'm sorry if I'm being rude but I'm communist too and we're serving a common interest - is missing because it get lost during the way or because it just not there.

G: Just not there.

D.L.: "How do you think to deal with the exodus of technicians, and in general part of the lower middle class?"

G: Some of our Polish and Hungarian friends, warned us to be prudent with the lower middle class (here he was talking with a tone that seemed to me pretty upset -- ed.) **Some friends from socialist countries** (I think that here he was talking about the Soviets ed.) asked us why we let them go away. **We don't force anyone to stay.** There was the case of some technicians who clearly told us that they didn't want to stay any more. And we told them: Ok, but before you have to finish your job. And they finished their job (and he makes a gesture with the hand like that of a well-oiled machinery and they went.

D.L.: Did you do that for ethical reasons ... practicality?

G.: Both for ethical and a practical reasons: we prefer the old counter-revolutionary technician to go, so he won't have a bad influence on young people that we are grooming by the tens of thousands.

D.L.: Don't you think that there is a unrealistic expectation for the foreign technician? Do you think that the technician can stand for the organization? The technician can be a technician; but how can the foreign technician be the one that organizes people in a country with a different mentality, so different from them, who, on their side too, have a different way of looking at things?

G: I agree with you, the technician without a structure is nothing; the structure without the technician can, slowly, go on; the best thing, obviously, is having both. Apart form that we have Soviet technicians who are working wonderfully.

D.L.: Marxism is entering the heart of the Cuban people. But sometimes one has the impression that it has taken a religious form instead of [a] rationalist [form]. A few days ago I saw a militant wearing an needlepoint badge: it was the face of a cherub surrounded by an aura of gold. I asked her what was it about, thinking it was a religious thing, and she answered me: "it's Lenin when he was a kid"

G: (Smiles and doesn't say anything.)

D.L.: ... I've been to the "festival de los aficionados" (festival of the lovers of folk music and dance founded by the workers from Havana) and the majority of the bands I saw were imitations of Russian or Czechoslovakian song and dance: can it be a manifestation of affection for the socialist countries, but does that not all that effect the patriotic sentiment of Cubans?

G: We had Soviet bands, Hungarian, and Polish that had a great success. Not to speak of the Polish dancers (he smiles mischievously)

D.L.: I'm not talking about the bands coming from the Eastern countries; they came also in Italy and had a great success, I'm talking about the Cuban bands, made of Cubans, but dressed like Cossacks and talking like Russians from Kharkov [in Soviet Ukraine.

G: (He smiles again, like to agree with what I was saying) Here we had the Spartakiadi (a sporting event in the stadiums like the one that are organized in Czechoslovakia--ed.) with the girls moving the hoops here and there (making gesture as to mime something unpleasant).

D.L.: To get back to the topic of a certain kind of "religious" manifestations, i have some journalistic impressions that may be superficial: at the Congress of the Federation of the Cuban Women, on the stage there was a big board with the slogans of the congress and the image of a woman with a baby, that looked exactly like the Virgin Mary...

G: (He doesn't talk)

D.L.: Let's move to the situation of Cuba projected onto Latin America: it's impossible to deny that in this context Cuba is isolated. Even Fidel noticed it. **I'm not talking about an ideological isolation, which it is not, but about a political one.** How do you think should be remedied? What's going to happen?

G.: The future is unpredictable: who can say what's going to happen in the future? The isolation of Cuba is real, of course.... the imperialists are preparing for military intervention all over Latin America. And so the expectations are for huge armed battles by the revolutionary forces... there is going to be a direct intervention from the US imperialists, so the word should be given to mainly to the armed struggle.

D.L.: In Latin America there is huge revolutionary potential, but

isn't a complex and differentiated organization missing[?] Who can organize the enormous masses of the farmers?

G: (He winces and I have the impression that what I said about the farmers is what he thinks too. But this harmony revealed to be a misunderstanding during the rest of the conversation, because actually I meant a totally different thing: that before leading the masses to the armed struggle there's the need to get organized with democratic demands and necessary alliances--ed.). No. I'm going to say some things but it is better not to publish them... Because they accuse us of wanting to be the "popes" of the revolution, and we don't want to interfere in the politics of the "popular fronts," that have their different managers of the progressive forces on the Latin America. The only country in which there is a positive situation for the politics of the "Frente Popular" is Chile; where the "Popular Front" could keep going on and gain some power. But how is the action of the communist party?! it's "flaca" (weak, and he makes a gesture as to mean that it is very weak--ed.) There are parties that are born in the city, and are closed in the cities. Let's look at how we did it here in Cuba: an armed force that from the mountains went and lead directly to the heart of the enemy, went straight to the power and took it....not to talk about the strikes, the actions of the masses....

D.L.: There's need for building alliances for the masses of farmers, and to consider the lower middle class.

G.: (With a gesture of irritation) **but, in the end, what is this myth of the petit bourgeois?**

D.L.: But I was talking about revolutionary alliances, farmers conflicts, starting from the occupation of the land.

G.: There's a need to hit the national armies... the only solution is the armed struggle all the way.

D.L.: Are there other forces ready to stand up against the United States? Let's look at the revolt of Porto Cabello undergone by military forces; let's look at some anti- yankee positions in some strata of the Brazilian army and - like the Argentine comrade, that is also a friend of yours, told me - even - of a similar attitude in the Argentine army too!"

G: What about the Argentine Army?! And concerning **the revolt of Porto Cabello, it was not democratic: it was all about replacing one puppet with another. As far as we are concerned we tried to open up a dialogue with one of the "Frentes Populares," in which there is the lower-middle class, the one of [President C.J.] Arosemena [Monroy] in Equador. Two**

days after Fidel congratulated the victory of Arosemena, he cut all relations with Cuba.

D.L.: Just two more questions and we are done. One concerns economic matters, since you are an economist, the other is about the intellectuals. I would like to know how things are going in agriculture; are the farmers dealing with collectivization?

G: (laughing) But I'm not an economist! As I have already said we are having some troubles in agriculture but even in this field the production is growing. The farmers are accepting the collectivization up to a point, some strata do better accept the cooperatives.

D.L.: Are there different kinds of cooperatives, like in popular democracies with a certain gradual socialization of the means of productions and in the distribution of profits?

G: There is just one kind, the mixed one. The Cuban farmer does not have the attachment to the land.

D.L.: Like in Europe ...

G.: ... but, in some ways, he keeps it.

D.L.: I have been talking to many intellectuals. They exposed to me the problem of "Lunes de Revolución" (the literary weekly of the daily newspaper "Revolución", suppressed - I could not go deeper into the matter - it seemed to me, with brisk [administrative] measure--ed.). Now the same things that were written on the "Lunes de Revolución" are written in the "Gaceta de Cuba" (the new weekly of the Union of the writers, directed by Nicolas Guillen where two groups, more and more polemical, are coexisting, one of the old comrades that reports to Guillen, and the one of the youths of the "26 July" looking with favor at the PCI, and that utilized, in my opinion in a clumsy way and just for internal interests against the old communists, some scripts of [PCI leader Palmiro]Togliatti--ed.)

G.: Not only are they writing the same things, but also, it's the same people who write.

D.L.: And that's a sign of tolerance or of a lack of a political culture?

G.: Everything started with a film about Havana completely made in the old style. From the new Havana, with the militiamen and the militia, there was nothing. We tolerated it, but then we had to intervene. Our position on the intellectuals, has been expressed by Fidel: until they don't attack the Revolution

that we are making, we don't take much care of them, we're not experts in that field. I can say something on the Cuban ballet, for example, on the Licia Alonso's ballet (and here he starts with a long digression about pros and cons of the Alonso's ballet. Of course they could not, and cannot, accept, all that "mariconadas" – to mean pedophilia – and all those sexual storylines)

D.L.: My journalistic duties impose me to ask you some more questions about your private life.

G: (Standing up) No, no, for God's sake...

D.L.: Some of the bourgeois newspapers wrote that you are the grey eminence of the revolution, the "deus ex machine."

G: Yes, I know that. They did that trying to oppose me to Fidel, and even more to Raul, to show that there is rivalry among us. Nonsense... instead I should be clear about something (while flipping through his book - that I showed him - "Guerrilla Warfare" translated in Italian by the socialist publisher "Il Gallo"--ed.). On the cover, it is written that I work from 6 in the afternoon until 6 in the morning, in company only of two revolvers and my working documents: I would like to point out that I have just one revolver, and above all that I have my wife.

D.L.: I'll show you the written text of the interview, and you will tell me what can be published and what can't.

G.: No, no everything can be published but the two things I have told you not to.

(That means, the disagreements with the Soviets about collective management problems, and the direct controversy with the "progressive" parties (to read as communist) in the Latin America. On the last point I didn't get if the veto was limited to just this last part or over all the judgments about Latin America. I didn't have time to insist, because it was already 4:30 in the morning when we finished the interview and Guevara had already led us to the door. I kept the word given about the first topic and I solved the uncertainty about the second one keeping for the piece written in "Paese Sera" - written hastily, in the editorial office, pushed by several sides, and compelled to do, at the same time, the right thing - the controversial parts with the Chilean communist party and with the other parties. Some days after, since my departure was delayed, through the writer [Roberto Fernández] Retamar, a friend of mine that was meeting with Guevara, I asked him if he had been offended by any of my questions. Guevara let me know that he wasn't, that I just had done my job of journalist. He didn't let me know anything about the check on the written text that I asked from him. I had the impression that he just didn't

care. At the door, while saying goodbye, with vague words he just told me: "Just publish the interview, then, eventually, I'll see.")

[Source: 1962 Cuba Estero 502, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow.]



Minutes, Meeting of Italian Communist Party (PCI) Politburo, 31 October 1962

Directorate [Politburo] of the Italian Communist Party
Meeting of 31 October 1962

Present: Togliatti, Longo, Terracini, Roasio, Berlinguer, Novella, Colombi, Scheda, Alinovi, Cossutta, Pajetta, Amendola, Macaluso, Romagnoli, Alicata, Bufalini

Absent: Ingrao, Sereni, Scoccimaro

Invited: Occhetto, Barontini, Barca

Secretary: Amadesi

Objectives of the Day:

[...]

1. - The fight for peace (speaker Alicata);
2. - On the Congress of the Italian Communist Youth Federation [*Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana*] (speaker Barca);
3. - The situation of the dailies and other periodicals (speaker Pajetta);
4. - On the organization of the center of the party (speaker Longo).

- The fight for peace.

Alicata: It is difficult today to try and reconstruct the full course of events related to the American aggression in Cuba. [These were] surprising actions that only "L'Unita" had forecast. At the bottom of everything, is the US attempt to invade Cuba, even if the problem of the missiles should not have been a pretext. [There was a] large resistance in defense of Cuban independence, on the part of many countries and the in world public opinion. The crucial point of the crisis was the night between Friday and Saturday. The second message of Khrushchev and Kennedy can be explained by the need to exert pressures. What is unexplainable is the affirmation of [Soviet UN Ambassador Valerian] Zorin [to the UN Security Council on October 25] that in Cuba, missile bases do not exist.

The conclusion of the incident is positive only if the guarantees for Cuba are real. This objective is something of which we were fundamental proponents. If one makes other hypotheticals and considerations one can arrive at other critical conclusions, but that does not seem to be the case. The reaction in Cuba is not good; the reaction is negative for the fact that everything developed about and outside of them. The Cubans legitimately demand to obtain effective guarantees and justice on their request for Guantanamo.

A great possibility has opened for the development of actions in favor of coexistence, for the abolition of the bases, and disarmament. Even in [Italian Foreign Minister Attilio] Piccioni's arguments in the Camera [Italian Chamber of Deputies] this can be heard.

[There was a] positive judgement of the way that the party reacted. [There is] wide support for our actions: [amongst] intellectuals, socialists, youth. The élan of the students and the intellectuals seems to have surpassed that of the workers; at many demonstrations they are the vanguard. That must be because of the fact that many people don't believe that the danger of war is real. That is not only happening in Italy, in all of Western Europe, the reaction of the masses has been very limited. In Latin America, there has not been a political counter-movement like the one that accompanied the previous act of invasion of Cuba.

When there is a dramatic episode, like that in Milan, popular support becomes so vast.¹¹ [There are] diverse reactions in the party to the events. Not to say that they might have been disappointed at the absence of a show of force, but it is difficult to understand that to you all there were signs of weakness on the part of the U.S.S.R. in the sense that they abandoned the Cuban Revolution to fend for itself. To our allies, the reaction is positive. To give continuance to our peace initiatives; we insist on the opportunity to defend the independence of Cuba, and to develop actions against American bases in Italy and the world. [We should] enlarge and consolidate the alliances that are installed. The nuts and bolts of these problems are put up now for discussion.

Togliatti: On the diplomatic front there is something that can give you pause for reflection. There is an impression that we don't know everything. The fact that Zorin denied the existence of the bases doesn't worry me much. The truly important point is the eventual unrest of the Cuban leaders. Let's move the discussions in the party about this and that episode and concentrate them on fundamental problems, of principle.

Compared to other countries, in Italy we have done more, but the limits, the growth of the movement are evident. In many cities, they aren't doing anything or hardly anything — at the most some small demonstration. We need to analyze concretely the zones of passivity that are in the party. Among the comrades

[there are] two contrasting and paralyzing positions: nothing will be done, the USSR won't risk war. The other: The USSR will show the Americans what they are not expecting. They do not understand that it's possible to arrive at peaceful coexistence with battles, even bitter ones, for singular concrete aims. For example, the agreement on the objective of obtaining real guarantees for Cuba today is now possible, meanwhile 15 days ago it was not. Let's continue the struggle on this basis. Among other things it helps us connect with the socialist masses and other dispositions. The actions of the Chinese in this moment are not comprehensible.

Pajetta: [I'll] underline the positive and negative elements. [There was] activity in Spain a few weeks ago that demonstrated the vast potential for solidarity and for struggle. On the other hand [there is] deafness and passivity in certain zones of the party. There are potential units that for a long time did not hold demonstrations in Rome at Brancaccio. Certain unclear aspects of the events do not justify the incorrect orientation of some comrades. Let's not put on the same level those that renounce the struggle and those that are ready to fight. [A] positive judgement for the way that *L'Unità* illustrated the various phases of the crisis

Our position on the Chinese-Indian conflict. We are not, and, I do not believe we have to be, supportive of China for condemning certain positions of Nehru.

Throughout this crisis, we attacked the government and we must continue to witness their ambiguous positions. [There is a] major possibility to conduct effective actions that profit from the weakness of the adversaries: the position of [Italian reform socialist Giuseppe] Saragat is different than that of [Prime Minister Amintore] Fanfani and [Italian Socialist party leader Pietro] Nenni. The United States has "legalized" its right to control Cuba militarily and that can make more likely the renouncement of the invasion.

Cossutta: I do not doubt that the position: "ben vengà" the war¹², exists in certain circles. However more widespread is the idea: what could we possibly do? This is to be decided by only two men. [i.e., Kennedy and Khrushchev]

[...]

Berlinguer: The majority of the public opinion has risen regarding the views of the U.S.S.R. but in the class of Western managers, extremist elements are unleashed and even some that critically orient themselves toward Kennedy's politics remain perplexed and convinced that he was right.

[I have a] positive judgment of the mobilization of the party. There's a need to review the growth of the movement, the participation of the workers that, in some centers, was

considerable. In places where we are strong the movement has been weak and vice versa. This is due to the orientation of our group of directors. There's not just incredulity about the risk of the war but also some fatalism.

Amendola: Let's discuss the orientation of the party, I worry about the vast areas where incredulity, fatalism and bureaucracy dominate. In certain active parts of the party in the last few days you see there is a certain crisis ... [...]

Bufalini: [...] The peace march set for 1 November will not take place because the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement produced a certain demobilization. The demonstrations instead will probably take place in a theatre against the missile bases in Italy for the input of the Brancaccio presidency [...]

Alinovi: In Naples [...] The masses recognize that Khrushchev eliminated the residual malcontent of last year with the resumption of Soviet nuclear experiments [in September 1961]. We must be clear. There are comrades that undervalue the strength of the USA and therefore do not understand the need to find a way towards a *modus vivendi*. The potential existed for a bigger battle than that which manifested itself. The impression that the danger was real was widespread. There is an important function that non-involved countries not involved had. The position of the party on neutrality of Italy is to agreed upon. The proposal to collect signatures against the planned bases seems to me opportune. [...]

Roasio: There were different positions in the party that were caused by the dramatic, confused and also contradictory manner with which the news of the events unfolded from one hour to the next. Let's explain, therefore, the events and let's not seek deviations.¹³ Moving to the Chinese-Indian conflict. We must intervene somehow and present our positions.

Terracini: We protested in defense of Cuba, exerting pressure on our government because it modified its foreign policy. There are also those favorable to the independence of Cuba who did not criticize the government. Let's move forward in the developments of actions for solidarity with Cuba. The war is avoidable because the socialist world cedes: this can be the conclusion to which some comrades come under the influence of the opposing camp. Let's take this into account in our propaganda.

In the theses, a different avenue was adopted for China and Albania which to me seemed incorrect.

Togliatti: [Armando] Cossuta points out that in Milan they always acted in accordance with the C.d.L. [perhaps the

Consulenti del Lavoro—trans.] and that it was better to take charge of the demonstrations rather than leaving them without any direction. This would have happened anyway. The whole party apparatus present in Rome is responsible stimulating and organizing the party for Cuba. We certainly did not intend to open up a conflict with Chinese comrades on their current disagreement with the Indians. On this border question they are not wrong. The mistake is instead of not accepting preliminary discussions and to have pushed forward with military operations at the present time.

Alicata: Let's properly orient the party on the fight for coexistence, coordinating moments of attack and when they ebb. The foreign policy of the USSR — also in form and in method — distinguishes itself, and must distinguish itself with that of the bourgeois because it must be inclusive and accepted by the masses. If this does not happen, the consequences can generate a lot of confusion. Let's not have illusions about what the USA will do against Cuba to make sure it is not attacked.

It is critical to the government that their position was not extremist. For the India-China conflict, I underline that the solution would be easier if China was in the United Nations. The misjudgement by China that India is an imperialist country.

Decision: A communique from the party will be released.

[Source: 1962 *Direzione* 026, pp. 026-523 to 026-531, *Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records*, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translation by Alex Barrow.]



Letter from Italian Communist Journalist Carmine de Lipsis to Senior Italian Communist Giancarlo Pajetta re Interview with Che Guevara, 26 November 1962

To com[rade]. Pajetta
Direction [*Direzione*] PCI

Dear Pajetta,

I'm taking the initiative of sending to you and to the Secretary of the Party the uncut version of the interview I had with [Ernesto] Ché Guevara, it is reconstructed with a careful reading of the notes, and it is faithful in spirit and in form, but, small and secondary variations and omissions are possible in the final version.

Comparing the two texts – the one I'm presenting to you

and the one published in "Paese Sera" (for lack of space necessarily shorter: it was of 6 typewritten pages although the uncut one is of almost 15) – will show that:

1. I was faithful to the spirit and nearly always to the form given to me by my interlocutor;

2. I left out the more bitter things [i.e., statements] than the ones published;

3. That in the hurry in which I had to write the interview (the journal didn't give me the chance to stay at home writing with more attention to the piece, but forced me – while urging me to publish rapidly all before the eventual aggression by the US — to do simultaneously the editorial work) I made some mistakes that look like small details to the sentence you quote ("but in the end what's that myth of the petit bourgeois?") was actually said: "but in the end what is this petite bourgeoisie?" and was referring not to the hint of controversy that Guevara made to Poles and Hungarians but to the situation in Latin America related to the question that I posed to him about the alliances. He said that with an irritated pitch (repeated any time he was talking about the bourgeoisie) and then the word "myth" came out like an interpretation, summing up the content of the tone of his answers;

4) That the matter of the policy of the Popular Fronts in the Latin America [word illegible] in the spirit, in the terms in which it was published, as you will understand from Guevara's view on the situation in Chile and on the policy of the communist Chilean Party. Of this last part — these were the concluding points, and so made more hurriedly — but just of this last part, I'm not completely sure of having copied down in my notes (that are for the rest stenographic) of my interlocutor's words in the same order in which he pronounced them. But I'm sure about the spirit and the form.

I took the initiative of sending you the uncut text of the interview both for dispelling the doubts that you raised about some sort of an intentional alteration of it (and what for, in the end?), and also because it could be useful for you as a documentation about the Cuban situation.

About the truthfulness of this text — with the clarifications I made — I give my honor, inviting you, in the case you would believe it necessary and in the form you would think most appropriate, to deliver it to Guevara himself. On my side I already intend to send to Havana the published text with the other articles.

I've already taken note of your assurance — repeated by Lusvardi [Luciano?] — that my dismissal from "Paese Sera" has nothing to do with my articles about Cuba and specifically with the interview, but I would like to point out that inside the newspaper and outside it, there are still persistent rumors about it

being the cause of my present status; rumors that I believe come from the fact that I was dismissed (in such an inopportune way) while the publication of my articles on Cuba was still underway. Something that, by the way, I couldn't finish! What you told me, at the end of our conversation, about the possibilities of my collaboration with the Foreign Section and the Print and Propaganda have reassured me.

There are, anyway, some expressions that you used toward me during our conversation (the little story of the "provocation") that you used many times in a kind way and that, however, I firmly reject. And the fact remains that I was paradoxically confused, even if just for a while, by that attitude of childish extremism and sectarianism, against which I fought honorably my whole life, paying dearly (even for the misguided way I behaved sometimes in similar situations) many times in person; against which I fought for the newspaper, against which I keep fighting now that I am "free" and, mainly, against which I distinctly expressed myself in Cuba with my Cuban friends — as will result from what I'll write further — and with Guevara himself — as will result from the text of the interview — risking even the personal interests I have with them.

After my dismissal several, "discontented" (mainly from the left) got in touch with me, and also some "ex-journalists" settled somewhere else with big incomes, who were looking for some sympathy in the "common misfortune." I gave to all of them the same answer: what happened to me doesn't change in any way my loyalty to the party, to its direction, and mainly to its actual policy, loyalty that is not based on faith but is based on rational and intimate beliefs, passed through direct and sometimes painful experiences (read as Czechoslovakia, D'Onofrio, Rebetti, the old direction of "Unità" and, lastly, some lonely follower in "Paese Sera" and "Paese") during which I resolved any doubt — that I sincerely confess I had — about the leading group of our party, noticing that "my" demands weren't out of line with party or its leaders but were already involved in their dialogue of development. And so there are already those at the newspaper who smile about De Lipsis' affair, a "naïve conformist" who would have been hit by the same people that he was going to defend, and in private there are those who portray me as an "unreadable" character still busy defending, even with friends, just these comrades.

About this "atmosphere" and these epithets I don't give a damn, and I leave them to petit-bourgeois and sectarians, to tired and frayed ones. I put too much trust in my qualities as a militant and professional revolutionary (with or without a salary) to let myself be affected by them. But at this point I have to open a critical word on the unbelievable suspicions that sometimes were raised about some of my behaviors (but, how can one not see that they are just the fruit of my moral and

idealistic reactions to unsolved and un-explained problems?) or initiatives like trips abroad dictated by necessity (when I'm unemployed) and by my own specialization. The little story of the provocative behavior already came out, even at the newspaper, mainly when I was back from Czechoslovakia and I remained for a long time unemployed (I still have to ask for an explanation from Calamandrei, and I will if necessary, about why on that occasion he asked me, with an inquiring tone, from where I was taking money for living). Or maybe, by chance, were taken as serious (not from you, I know it!) the obscure and dishonest "ideas" of the Czechoslovak security services for which it looks like, finally, the day of the reckoning, in front of the tribunal of the communist morality, has come. Still a few days ago some Italian comrades who were in Czechoslovakia in the same period as me, told me that the reason of some behaviors that were held toward me was related to the fact that I went "in a prohibited military zone." Vulgar nonsense: in Czechoslovakia, I've never been in a prohibited zone. Where did they arrive was to hide other reasons like the insane internal fight of that party and its attitude toward us, for which I was just an easy target.

I want to point out to you the following:

-- I can't see why — given my full support, many times demonstrated, to the line followed by our party — I might have "provocatively" modified the Ché Guevara interview.

-- The reason could be have seen in what that the comrades of Print and Propaganda told me: the interview was inserted (intentionally?) in the debate about our thesis (and now we're definitively out of this world.) What does our thesis have to do with this? What do they have to do with the material of a journalist just back, after 40 days of absence, from Cuba? I just tried to provide a truthful description of a situation I saw "on-the-spot"; to make further developments understandable. So, then should we keep writing in the old manner, pre- XX congress [of the CPSU], to have it said to us — like had happened to me at the Unità and in the party sections — that we weren't critical and truthful enough? Look at the story about missiles that I gave in my first reports and for which, if you had asked me for direct information when I was back, you could have avoided some unpleasantry which took place in the party assemblies!): sectarians of our party would be elaborately formulating a sort of "generic Castroism" to mechanically apply to Italy. The name of "Ché" Guevara, taking advantage of the huge prestige of Cubans, would objectively serve to feed that. Not considering the fact that five days after the interview the first disagreements between Cubans and Soviets were clear (and I agree with the last ones, as I wrote in a letter, responding to comrade Conte

with whom you entered in a debate too, to the Congress of the Roman Federation) and so the interview, that I agree could have been published later, at least was useful in understanding from where the disagreements were coming from; for what concerns me, I'm declaring to be against this sort of "generic" or "concrete" Castroism applied to our condition. I think that it is idiocy, the fruit of childish extremism, of political primitivism, and worse of a tired breakdown in the application of the line of revolutionary action of our party. I'll not be considered one of the "Castroists for Italy" just because I'm married to a Cuban!

To prove to you what I'm saying, I'm ready to intervene, in words and actions, in our print and in our organizations, with the modest weight of someone who, like me, has already been to Cuba twice where these kind of rallies have happened. And I make a concrete proposal: I would be ready to go to Padua to hold a conference on Cuba, entering into a debate with those expelled by that Federation who, as has been said to me, raised these stupid principles.

I want to point out to you that any time that I had the occasion to, in the context of my competences and my contacts, I disagreed with the extremist, Trotskyist, "global" (and so on) positions. And the same happened mainly at "Paese Sera" in controversy with Riccardo Minuti; with youth from "Nuova Generazione" in private discussions, arriving to the halt of any form of collaboration with their newspaper; in occasion of the Congress about Capitalism in Italy, in the controversies, transferred to "Paese sera" and to "Paese," with all of what, in that occasion, Lucio Magri (against his "Catholic-Stalinist-Trotskyist" thesis I prepared a speech that I didn't give because I got sick) had to say; in the animated cell discussion, lasting for more than a month, about the newspapers that were following the XXII congress of the C.P.S.U. in which I was the protagonist of a political battle led against the two main tendencies manifested on that occasion (from the "right" Salerno and others and, mainly, for the "left," Minuti, etc.) supporting, with some critical consideration, the declaration made by the Secretary of the Party on that occasion, in one of my written mentions that was put in circulation, and so on.

-- Mainly I want to point out to you that during my stay in Cuba, when I was forced to, I rejected stupid opinions — even if I've heard nice ones — about our party: "The P.C.I. is an equivocal party" as it appears Fidel Castro himself said: "you can't take the power without the guns, what's this pacifist strategy?"; "[Party secretary Palmiro] Togliatti is a guy who made many mistakes at the Internazionale and after that"; "the movement of the people in Italy is stronger, more radical than the party"; "the P.C.I. is a Tito party"; etc... Rumors,

I'll say, that look like [they] were coming mostly from the old Cuban communists). I rejected these opinions in the following occasions: with Nicolas Guillen [head of the National Cuban Writers' Union]: even expressing my reserve about the fact that the group of young intellectuals were hostile with him and the cultural directors would have taken advantage of some writings of our party like the one from Togliatti, that I gave to you, for controversies and in a situation different from ours; I asked him the reason of some judgments on our party; with colleagues of "Revolucion" (among which I found a warm environment, favorably disposed toward Italians, humanly sane, even if some times superficial and politically heterogeneous). They reported to me some anti-P.C.I. opinions (I don't know of whom exactly) of some old comrades. Through them I told Fidel Castro's secretary, Celia Sanchez, with whom I should have had an interview, that in Cuba there were wrong opinions about our party due to a lack of information, and that I found contradictory the fact that there were misunderstandings [lit. incomprehensions] between two revolutionary movements: ours and the Cuban one, that have origins and some features in common (the popular character, the origin from wars for liberty, the connection with masses, the originality of the idealistic elaboration). With the Minister of Labor Augusto Martinez Sanchez and with the Foreign Minister Raul Roa to whom I expressed—in relation with the fact that I was having a few difficulties, for more than 2 years, in finding a job for my wife at the Roman Embassy [i.e., Cuban Embassy in Rome], although she was in Cuba an officer of the Revolution, difficulties that from some parts were considered caused by the prejudice toward the Italian communists – the opinion that the Roman Embassy [Cuban Embassy in Rome] could do much more, that the mistake of looking at the Italian situation with "Cuban eyes" was being made, even admitting that from some Italian comrades (I was referring to a journalist colleague), once in Cuba, the opposite mistake could have been made, With the comrades of the Cuban Institute for the Friendship with People to whom I spoke, without naming any name or going into detail, about the pervasive sectarianism at the Cuban Embassy in Rome, about the prejudices that there were (now there are many new officers) toward our party, and about the incomprehension due to superficiality and lack of study of the Italian situation. With a group of Argentine and foreign comrades, who considered the ideas expressed in the debate of "new generation" coming from the P.C.I. saying that we had rehabilitated Trotsky, explaining to them how thing were, instead.

-- For two years, even through my personal friendship relations, I argued and many times entered into a debate

with almost all my Cuban friends from the Roman Embassy [Cuban Embassy in Rome] replying to their extremism and their prejudices about the P.C.I., trying, often in vain, to make them understand the different peculiarities of the Italian situation, helping them to get along, and maybe compromising, with that, for last year's hiring of my wife.

-- If spite of it all I left a good impression in Havana (as it was said to me by different sources and also by the written praise coming from my Cuban friends in Rome); I obtained the hiring of my wife to the embassy and even an undefined office (external and not paid) of political counselor; I realized all of that on a sane basis, clearly, supporting always our party, and always refusing to get down to rumors and information about our internal situation, something that I was sometimes pushed to do (not from people of distinguished responsibility). I believe that this my individual action, occasional, always done using just my person (I've never feigned any right of representation) gave some fruit: Foreign Minister Roa said to me that the [Cuban] Embassy in Rome will be enhanced, with a crew [i.e., staff] which will be politically more qualified, and that he wants to keep good relations with our party, about the knowledge of which, he cares a lot.

Concerning the interview and my reports about Cuba in general I would like to add also:

-- I find correct the criticism that you made to me about the inopportune publishing, in that moment, of the interview with Guevara (but how would I have gone about not publishing it once I obtained it? How would the Cubans have interpreted, toward me and toward the party, that silence? The interview was published with a month's delay after I got it).

-- Also, the considerations made by the comrades of the Foreign Section and others related to facts and news published (originally) in some of my reports that would have been better not to say correct.

As I said, the reports were written in a hurry because as soon as I came back the Cuban crisis exploded; the newspaper didn't give me the option of staying at home concentrating on writing more carefully. I had to work 10 hours per day editing, writing the pieces in my spare time; I finished the interview with Guevara that was under editing, while I was pushed to publish it immediately. Also I was half-sick from an annoying vaccine given to me at the airport in Prague.

-- I prepared a scheme of the whole "reportage" for Coon before the crisis exploded. It was accurate and polished, right for more quiet times. The blockade, the danger of an aggression disrupted my report, I was forced to modify the tone, to make everything more bitter, and also the interview with Guevara suffered from that. I had to highlight the reasons behind the position of the Cubans more than my critics. The initial scheme, that Che approved, was more critical and distanced.

But from that to mistake me for the opposite of what I am: I'm surprised that all that happened for a one-time incident, forgetting all the rest (that I exposed to you) and mainly all my past as a militant and as a journalist, that is in a completely opposite direction from the suspicions to which I've been subject.

I want to make it apparent to you that this demonstrates how inefficient, superficial, and non-political the connection between the newspaper and your source are, if it's true that no one pointed out to you which was my real everyday attitude at the newspaper; that my relations with the party from 6 years ago to now have never been for me anything else than a sequences of administrative facts without any political or ideal nature.

This situation at "Paese Sera" was aggravated by the Regiment that was imposed on me, of just executive work, that brutalized me, leading me to a real process of alienation from any political discussion, if it's true that I ended up doing, involuntarily, in the case of the interview with Guevara, something that resulted as completely and objectively opposite, in effect, to my own convictions.

Many cordial salutes.

[signed]

(Carmine De Lipsis)

P.S. For what concerns "Paese Sera", I do not exclude the things that I said to you in the previous letter¹⁴, I don't expect much more out of them, taking advantage of the incident and of your intervention to do what was missing to the plans they had before I arrived there: exclude me from the editorial campaign, so that the stagnant water would remain so, in a deaf hostility to new times.

Rome, 26 November 1962

[Source: 1962 Cuba Estero 502, 2459-2467, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow.]



Italian Communist Ugo Pecchioli, Report on Trip to Cuba, 12 August 1963

COMMUNIST PARTY OF ITALY - FEDERATION OF TURIN

12 August 1963

To the Secretary of the Party
ROME

Dear Comrades,

I send to you the first notes on the results of the trip to Cuba in reference to the principal political questions examined in the meeting with Fidel Castro. Other relative information about the domestic situation in Cuba (economic development, life of the PURS [United Party of the Socialist Revolution], union activity etc) will be possible to send to you when - at the end of the month - I will meet with other comrades of the Italian delegation and we put together our notes and collected materials.

Additionally I will send to you and the Foreign Section a note on the concrete proposals to establish tighter contact between the two Parties and for other initiatives about which you will also find mentioned in the attached report.

I think the trip was very useful and it served to launch a basis for profitable collaboration and more intense relations between PURS and our Party. I consider that all of the complexities of the discussed proposals for Cuba should be well-examined as soon as possible, elaborating the opportune solutions. It is my conviction and the conviction of all of the comrades of the delegations that our Party can and must have a role of great importance in Cuba and in Latin America. In this sense, I hold that we do not just content ourselves to sending more materials, but we must think about the ways to have Cuba as another Comrade of ours. The proposals, contained in the notes, are for the radio, for l'Unità, for tourism etc. if they are sorted out for us, could allow us to have in this country a small collective that would have fortuitous connections, beyond Cuban comrades, also with many exponents and representatives of other Latin American countries that are always present in large number in Cuba.

A job well done, now for Cuba it is necessary above all to take into account with a general perspective of the development of the democratic and socialist movement in south-central America.

Heartfelt thanks to you for offering me the possibility of this experience, I salute you all cordially.

Ugo Pecchioli



The meeting with Fidel Castro, upon our prior request, had no formal character of simple courtesy - as is usually the case with numerous other foreign delegations - but consented to face the political problems and common interests for the two parties in a very frank and open manner. The conversation unwound itself in a climate of great cordiality and is considered very useful.

I sum up here the opinions of Fidel Castro on the topics that I posed to him:

1. Relative to the international situation of Cuba, Fidel Castro openly acknowledges that in the months that have followed the crisis of last autumn there has been a marked improvement. Although there remains a significant imperialist threat, for Cuba a phase of increased security has opened up. Many times he underlined — on this subject — the firmness of the responsibility to guarantee Cuban independence from every aggression directed by the United States. This commitment was confirmed in the joint Soviet-Cuban communique penned during the trip to the USSR of Castro and — added Castro — in different classified cables, marked with a strong support, from the Soviet government to that of the United States. Castro is definitive in saying the solution given to the crisis was positive, opens a new period of increased peace [tranquility] for Cuba, thus allowing the government and the Party — always maintaining at a maximum vigilance and bettering the level of military preparation — to gain momentum in order to strengthen the socialist party internally.

Castro confirmed that his recent trip to the USSR [27 April-3 June 1963] had definitively liquidated every possible residue of divergence and misunderstanding with the Soviet Union. Incidentally, this was well signaled in these weeks and in the course of the rallies for the tenth anniversary of 26 July, one of the dominant themes is the Soviet-Cuban friendship (the documentary of the Castro trip to USSR is broadcast in all of the cities after being premiered — Fidel Castro in attendance — to all of the foreign delegations with visible embarrassment from the Chinese delegates.)

Still on the topic of the international situation of Cuba, Castro said that only the politics of such an end [of USSR guarantees] by the Cuban government can discourage the intent of the more aggressive American imperialist circles and deepens the contradictions between them and the “opportunistic route” of Kennedy.

There is today in the Cuban leadership absolute certainty in Soviet protection; they have the conviction that a direct aggression by the United States would mean a world war. From this the documented opinion of a new level of relative security is derived.

The government’s decision, announced by Castro, to institute obligatory military service does not contradict this new phase of relative increased security. This measure has two fundamental purposes: to allow for the intake in the economic and social life of the country many technical and political cadres which until now were concentrated predominantly in the army and of absorbing in rank the mass army which still consists of youths that are out of work or not studying. A well thought decision of conscription means precisely an effort in favor of the social and economic development of the country.

Castro believes on the one hand, and we think with good reason, in the possibility of new attempts to land mercenaries (in Florida, Guatemala, Nicaragua departments of Cuban exiles continue to be trained and armed by the United States) and on the other that the army and the Cuban militia are today capable of repelling and disrupting in little time any operations of this kind. Also to this idea Castro underlined that the USSR furnished the Cuban army with massive quantities of conventional arms, technical assistance and the most modern equipment.

He continued to add that the normalization of the international situation of Cuba, and of relations between the US and Cuba, are strictly tied to the success of USSR in the socialist camp for the fight for peaceful coexistence. They firmly reject every prospect of aggravation of the international situation by means of accelerating, in Latin America and the world, the revolutionary process. In this regard — Castro affirmed — a solution must be found for the problem of Guantanamo. An attack by us on Guantanamo would signify an unpardonable provocation.

2. Regarding the profound divergence that exists between the Chinese Communist Party and the great majority of the other communist parties, Fidel Castro explicitly affirmed that the Chinese attack on the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] doesn’t have a foundation and that it was a grave error of the Chinese to publish their “25 points” during the course of the meeting in Moscow. Before speaking to the split with the Chinese, Castro underlined the great worry of the Cuban comrades for the current division: “In our difficult situation internally and internationally — he in essence said — and with a party that is still not ideologically prepared this discourages and deprives popular enthusiasm.”

He affirmed that, in an attempt to smooth out the contrasts and favoring compromise, the Party and the Government of Cuba have held that they must not take an explicit position of dissidence with a formal act. He considers, however, that at

this point it has become necessary for PURS to take an official position and that this position is under consideration.

The preference to not dive into a position of dissent (and that, as I see it, is even more important than not disturbing enthusiasm and revolutionary tension of Cubans and other revolutionary movements in Latin America) has also caused the Cuban leaders to publish nothing — up to the last few days — on the international debate in their media. Castro, however, announced to us that in the next edition of the PURS magazine, “*Socialist Cuba*,” it would be reporting the entire text of the letter of the CPSU and the “Chinese 25 points.” Two days after our meeting, in fact, the magazine came out with the two documents and this signals an opening, in the Cuban party, of a debate from which it was no longer possible to escape.

Fidel Castro on this topic said that he was confident that the Cuban communists know how to confront this issue without being discouraging. “The Cuban revolution will not fall because of this. Our Party is firmly united.”

On the subject of the divergence he was very rapid and explicit. He affirmed that he is completely in support the politics of the USSR. Peaceful coexistence, achieved by a struggle for reasonable agreements with the imperialists, opens up new possibilities for the advancement of the revolutionary movement. The liberation of the people can not ride on the use of thermonuclear arms. Relative to the liberation movements of the dependent colonized countries, Castro affirmed that they assert themselves and progress thanks to the help of the USSR — (“we live and build socialism because we have the help of the USSR. We help other revolutionary movements in Latin America because we have the help of the USSR.”)

Definitively Fidel Castro defined the [Cuban] relationship with the USSR and CPSU as “magnificent.” It’s also needed to point out that in his speech on July 26 he really underlined on the Soviet-Cuban friendship, he emphasized the agreement with Moscow to partially suspend nuclear experiments, he referred many times, to exalt them, to the politics of peace of Khrushchev. Meanwhile in previous speeches and official acts — also in the 2nd Declaration of Havana — he always made reference to the USSR and the People’s Republic of China jointly, in all the following rallies he cited only the USSR. It is not without significance the fact that the slogan repeatedly chanted by the hundreds of thousands of people present at the July 26 rallies was “Fidel-Khrushchev *nos estamos con los dos*” [“Fidel-Khrushchev we are with both”]. In numerous other contacts made with other Cuban leaders — particularly with Fabio Grobart, director of “*Socialist Cuba*”, with Calcinez [Rafael Calcines?] member of the leadership of PURS, with Jolanda Perez director of ICAP, etc. we ascertained that the Chinese comrades send out a great number of materials against the CPSU and other parties including our own. They are

ready to create an expanded media agency whose publications will reach every environment. Comrade Grobart sustains that the PURS [United Party of the Socialist Revolution] and the government must take positions to limit this fractious effort, he sees that at this moment it is difficult. Among all the comrades in leadership, there was talk of great indignation toward the Chinese comrades.

It is my opinion [and] that of the comrades of the delegation that the cadre of leaders of the Cuban Party have conquered the right position. However, we believe that while having their justifications, in the cautions and preoccupations of the Cuban comrades in informing the Party and public opinion about terms of dissent with the Chinese, in opening a debate and in taking a position, they can today — at the moment in which nothing can no longer impede a discussion — come up with some counter strokes. This also takes into account the level of education, experience, the still crude ideological grounding of the Cuban militants, for many of them the actual divergences with the Chinese comrades go off without actual understanding of all the moments that have led to these divergences. To this one can add two facts: that the Chinese comrades have worked and are working to widely disseminate their positions, and that in the Cuban people lives a sentiment of gratitude for the help given by the Chinese in their revolution.

There is however a good reason to believe that the great prestige of Castro and his group of Cuban leaders will succeed in overcoming these difficulties, just as they succeeded to overcome the critical moments in the “*caso Escalante*” [“Escalante Case”] and of the split with the USSR last Autumn [over the Soviet withdrawal of the nuclear missiles to resolve the crisis with the United States—ed.].

We did not have an inkling of eventual clashes in the group of Cuban leaders in terms of the present controversy in the communist camp. Comrade Grobart, speaking with me, did not exclude the possibility that the inferior level of the cadre of leaders might necessitate a political struggle, but he said that he was confident in the possibility to capture all of the party with the right positions.

3. On the development of the struggle for democracy and socialism in different Latin American countries Fidel Castro affirmed that he shared the conviction that it is not possible to generalize through a single model. Implicitly correcting an imposition that to us some time ago seemed to be in the media, from declarations and speeches of Cuban leaders and of Castro himself, it comes today clearly affirmed that also in a relatively homogeneous group — single Latin American countries have diverse situations (for the level of economic development, for tradition and experience, for knowledge and revolutionary and democratic organizations, for the amount of United States

intervention, etc.) consequently the revolutionary vanguards of every single country vie to elaborate and pursue their own avenues and objectives of advancement. Other than in the conversation with us, Castro also spoke about this question in his speech of 26 July. Speaking with us he wanted, country by country, to illustrate to us where a peaceful avenue that could be taken and where instead there was no other option but armed struggle. The two cases that speak most to this are that of Chile and Venezuela. For the latter country he reminded that some time ago the Venezuelan revolution was accused (he did not specify by whom) of risking armed conflict; today he underlined the correctness of this choice that corresponds completely with the actual situation of that country and is obtaining good results. Castro said that the armed conflict in Venezuela could rapidly bring stabilization of democratic liberty and to elections that would signify the broken cracks of [Venezuelan President Romulo] Betancourt. Regarding Chile, and in general in the countries where it is today possible to advance in a more peaceful way, he parsed that he fundamentally could identify with a peaceful avenue and with the possibility of the conquest of the majority in an election.

Considerations for a democratic route to socialism, that for example, were worked on by us (fights for economic revendications, for structural reforms, for the development of democracy, links between the different levels of these struggles, electoral momentum, etc.) seemed still like a very foreign political idea to the Cuban leaders. This question must be, I think, addressed with great depth on the occasion of the arrival in Italy of the PURS delegation and materials on this topic (as was explained before) must be sent to Cuba.

Speaking with us, Castro more than once expressed the concept that "Latin America is the weak link of imperialism. The collapse of the positions of power in Latin America will provoke an irreparable crisis in the United States." His opinion that was proposed is that in only a brief matter of time there will be other breaks in countries that today are today subjects of the United States. The situation is most advanced in Venezuela. He also insisted that because also the Parties of Western Europe, in the first place our own, which are intensifying their solidarity toward the liberation movement of the Latin American countries, [we should] not exclude the possibility of direct assistance.

Speaking then with some Argentine and Chilean comrades I had the impression that today - after Fidel's trip to the USSR - the relations are much better between the Cuban Party and the other Latin American parties, in whose ranks — these years — there have been open lacerations the origins of which were certainly not foreign to the view that the experience of Cuba was outright [*tout court*] reproducible everywhere.

4. On the relations between PCI and PURS and on the Italian situation the conversation can be summed up like this:

a) Castro expressed great admiration for our Party, for its struggles, for the great electoral success that for Cuba was loudly celebrated. Particular emotion was kindled by the solidarity of Italian workers during the landing [*sbarco*] at the *Playa Giròn* [i.e., Bay of Pigs] and during the crisis of '62.

b) He has a relatively exact knowledge of the conditions in which the PCI fights, of its objectives, of its strategy (knowledge which is very scarce and fragmentary, as was demonstrated by the fact that time and time again, in our trip we heard the question posed: "How come with two million registered and eight million votes you can't take power?") Castro said he understood and shared our political line given that the situation in the West entails a suitable revolutionary strategy. He recognized that the exchange of information between the two parties is too meager and occasional and that forms of organic contacts must be added. To this proposal he welcomed with enthusiasm the invitation contained in the letter of Comrade [Palmiro] Togliatti to send to Italy a PURS delegation. He then welcomed all of our proposals:

- 1) Transmissions in Italian language from Radio Cuba for Latin America where there are tens of millions of Italian emigres;
- 2) Exchange of correspondence between "Hoy" and l'Unità. It would be even better to have a reporter from l'Unità in Havana; it is rather more difficult for them — because of the absence of a group of expert journalists - to send a correspondent to Italy;
- 3) Reciprocal translations of political documents and books etc;
- 4) Organized and permanent sharing of party materials, asking that PCI regularly print its foreign bulletin in the Spanish language and send it in large quantity
- 5) Exchange of delegations of diverse nature
- 6) Reciprocal sending of lecturers

On all of these proposals I will enclose an attachment with some concrete proposals to be examined separately by other PURS comrades. Relating to defining a period for receiving a PURS delegation in Italy it will occur that the Secretary of the Party will solicit a written response from the Cubans.

I think that it will also be good to find a way to make known that it would greatly please us to receive a delegation of comrades of great qualifications.

c) Fidel Castro posed to us two other problems:

1) To find a way to send to Cuba a group of Italian technical experts (medics, teachers, industrial experts of any branch etc.) For them Italians offer a double advantage of coming from a country with a great democratic tradition and of not encountering great difficulties with the language. In successive meetings with other comrades in the Cuban leadership the question was proposed always with great insistence. They also consent to the sending of also the family of these technicians and they welcome the idea that their stay would be long. I consider that the question must be examined with attention also because the experience up to now has not been amongst the happiest, and it has left some bad legacy (on what we can now know especially from the experience of the failed group of our comrades sent to Cuba from Czechoslovakia and that are now almost all back in their homes, it will need to be examined fully).

2) To organize mass tourism to Cuba from Italy. Castro said that, through their touristic agency (INIT), Cubans are able to offer easy payment terms [*Rateazioni*]

also for up to two years. He insisted that there be rise in the direct contact between INIT and ITALTURIST. The Cuban leaders, to break the American blockade, make great efforts to establish economic, political and cultural relations with all of the countries of the world. To tourism from Europe they give great importance and it must be remembered that the pre-existing hotel-touristic apparatus that the old regime which has been recently prepared, offers ample possibilities in this sense.

[Source: 1963 Cuba Estero 492, 2555-2566, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow.]

Notes

1 Silvio Pons is Professor of East European History at the University of Rome 2 and Director of the Gramsci Institute Foundation in Rome, which holds the PCI archives.

2 O. A. WESTAD, *The Global Cold War. Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005); M. GALEAZZI, *Il Pci e il movimento dei paesi non allineati 1955-1975* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2011); O. PAPPAGALLO, *Il Pci e la rivoluzione cubana. La «via latino-americana al socialismo» tra Mosca e Pechino (1959-1965)* (Roma: Carocci, 2009).

3 S. Pons, *Il comunismo internazionale dopo Stalin. La Conferenza di Mosca del 1957*, in *Società totalitarie e transizione alla democrazia. Saggi in memoria di Victor Zaslavsky*, edited by T. Piffer and V. Zubok

(Bologna, il Mulino, 2011); Zh. Shen and Ya. Xia, “Hidden Currents During the Honeymoon: Mao, Khrushchev, and the 1957 Moscow Conference,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 11, no. 4 (Fall 2009); C. SPAGNOLO, *Sul Memoriale di Yalta. Togliatti e la crisi del movimento comunista internazionale (1956-1964)*, Carocci, Roma 2007. S. Pons, “The Italian Communist Party Between East and West 1960-1964,” in W. Loth, ed., *Europe, Cold War and Coexistence 1953-1965* (London: Frank Cass, 2004).

4 L. M. LÜTHI, *The Sino-Soviet Split. Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); S. RADCHENKO, *Two Suns in the Heavens. The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967*, (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press/Wilson Center Press, 2009); J. FRIEDMAN, “Soviet Policy in the Developing World and the Chinese Challenge in the 1960s,” *Cold War History*, vol. 10, no. 2 (May 2010).

5 S. Pons, *La rivoluzione globale. Storia del comunismo internazionale 1917-1991* (Torino: Einaudi, 2012; forthcoming with Oxford University Press), pp. 301-4.

6 [*Contadini*—literally peasants but working class or the support in the countryside in this context may be suitable as well.—trans.]

7 Ibid.

8 [*In seno*; literally, in the bosom—trans.]

9 [Literally: “In fact it was possible because one did not have to strike down any ‘middle class,’ such as commerce, which before did not exist, it was only carried out occasionally by speculators at a high price and almost only American products.”—trans.]

10 [Probably referring to the clergy or perhaps the Church as an institution—trans.]

11 Ed note: This is a reference to the US economic embargo, rather than to the “quarantine” (i.e., blockade) imposed by Washington during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

12 [In original—ed.]

13 [In original—ed.]

14 [In original—ed.]

15 [In original—ed.]

16 [In original—ed.]

17 [In original—ed.]

18 [In original—ed.]

19 [Trans. note: The original Italian word, maliziosamente, can also be translated as “maliciously”—but without the weighted negative connotations of the English word—or “artfully.”]

20 [In original—ed.]

21 [In original—ed.]

22 [In original—ed.]

23 [In original—ed.]

34 [In original—ed.]

[In original—ed.]

25 Ed. note: According to Italian scholar Leopoldo Nuti, the allusion to a “dramatic episode” in Milan refers to an incident on Saturday, 27 October 1962, in which a young student in a demonstration, Giuseppe Ardizzone, was killed when he was accidentally run over by a police jeep when police charged to disperse the crowd.

26 [“So much the better the war.” This in Italian is an expression of welcoming indifference but not of want or need. Best: “But if there is war, so be it.”—trans.]

27 [That is, let’s set the record straight and speak in a unified manner.—trans.]

28 Ed. note: Not found or further identified.

Italy and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Documents translated and introduced by Leopoldo Nuti¹

Italy was directly affected by the Cuban missile crisis for a number of reasons. The most important was the fact that together with Turkey, Italy was one of the two European countries which hosted the US Jupiter Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM), which inevitably drew comparisons with the Soviet deployment of the SS-4 and SS-5 (R-12 and R-14) missiles in the Caribbean. Italy also played, or tried to play, an active diplomatic role in the second phase of the crisis, after President John F. Kennedy's 22 October television speech to the nation: its prime minister, Amintore Fanfani, was a most energetic and dynamic personality, and he felt it was his duty to work for a peaceful resolution of the crisis, even if the extent of his initiatives has yet to be fully clarified.

An overall assessment of the Cuban crisis' impact on Italy should also take into account two additional aspects. First, by October 1962, the country was well advanced in an important domestic political experiment, the so-called opening to the left, which affected Italy's international posture during the crisis and in turn was affected by the crisis' solution: second, the aftermath of the crisis, with the withdrawal of the US IRBMs from Europe, had lasting consequences for Italy's nuclear sharing plans inside of NATO.

The presence of the Jupiter missiles in Italy was stressed by the ExComm at its very first meeting, when National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy specifically mentioned the IRBMs in Italy and added that perhaps Khrushchev had decided to deploy the Soviet weapons in Cuba to "sort of balance" the "political, psychological" effect those other US weapons in Europe might have had upon the USSR.² In all the subsequent meetings, the missiles in Italy (and Turkey) were frequently mentioned in the discussions, either as a possible target of Soviet retaliation in case of a US strike against Cuba, or, later on, as a possible pawn to be traded if a compromise solution had to be worked out: on the 18th, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara mentioned this option for the first time, and on the 20th the President himself mused that "at an appropriate time" these missiles might have to be removed to ease a solution.³ President Kennedy, moreover, was also quite concerned that the missiles in Italy or Turkey could be fired without the proper authorization, and on the 22nd, before his television address, he asked that personal messages be sent to the commanders of the Jupiter installations "asking them to take special precautions."⁴ When the crisis became public, and no solution seemed to be in sight, Secretary of State Dean Rusk asked the US ambassador in Rome, Frederick

Reinhardt, what the Italians would think about a trade, and Reinhardt replied that, if properly handled, a swap with the Cuban missiles could be implemented, particularly if it was presented as a result of an Italian contribution to the solution of the crisis, thereby playing on the Italian government's craving for major international status.⁵

As for the Italian government, the crisis drove home that the presence of the missiles had really become a double-edged sword. Italy had been the first European continental country to accept the Jupiter missiles, and even before they were fully operational the government and diplomatic corps had already begun to regard them as a powerful tool to enhance the country's standing inside NATO by giving Italy a nuclear status of some sort. According to a number of Italian documents from the late 1950s, Italian diplomats were convinced that the presence of these weapons gave Italy the right to participate in whatever inner circle of nuclear decision-making NATO was going to set up. With the passing of time, however, the Italian government also showed a growing awareness of the risks involved in their presence on Italian soil: liquid-fuelled and land based, the missiles had clearly become a possible target of a Soviet pre-emptive strike. Khrushchev did not fail to make this point clear to Prime Minister Fanfani in their August 1961 meeting in Moscow. While not anxious to get rid of them at any cost, the government was clearly interested in replacing them with a more modern, sea-based weapon system which would remove the threat from Italian territory while still enabling Italy to participate in any future NATO nuclear-sharing arrangement. To this purpose, Italy had begun to modify the cruiser *Garibaldi* and had installed in it four launch tubes which might have been used for the new Polaris missiles if the US were going to share them with its allies.⁶

The Fanfani diary and the diary of Manlio Brosio (then Italy's ambassador to France, later NATO secretary-general), reproduced below, clearly show the ambiguity and the different perspectives inside the government about the presence of the Jupiter missiles at the time of the crisis. Fanfani talks openly with some of his diplomats about a possible trade of the missiles, even if in his notes he is very careful to attribute these ideas to his correspondents and interlocutors and not to himself. Of particular interest are the references to the cables from New York on the conversation about a possible missile trade between US Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai E. Stevenson and Italian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs

Carlo Russo, whom Fanfani had sent to the UN to keep a close watch on what was going on; and to the opinion of the Ambassador in London, Pietro Quaroni, who recommended that a deal could be accepted, but only if proposed by the US—something which might be interpreted to imply that there might have been a discussion whether Italy should volunteer to offer such a trade.⁷ The more conservative Brosio, on the other hand, was concerned at the idea of any US trade-off, which he saw as the symptom of a frightening US trend to seek an understanding with the Soviets at all costs, and the pages of his journal reveal a gloomy pessimism about the possible solutions of the crisis. Remarkably, however, Brosio did not seem to believe that there was an actual Soviet-American deal about the bases: when in January 1963 he was finally informed about the American decision to withdraw the Jupiter missiles, saw this as the confirmation of his long-term concerns about a US-USSR entente, but not as the result of a specific agreement.

The extent to which Fanfani was actually willing to propose a missile trade himself has been the object of some controversy since the publication of the memoirs of Ettore Bernabei, one of Fanfani's right-hand men and the long-time Director General of Italian State Television (RAI). In his book, and in a number of interviews (including with this author), Bernabei tells the story of his trip to the United States in October 1962 to attend a special meeting to discuss satellite broadcasting. Bernabei then adds that at the height of the crisis Fanfani asked him to remain in Washington, keep in touch with Hombert Bianchi, Fanfani's Press Secretary, and to wait for further instructions. Without giving any evidence besides his own recollections, he goes on to state that Fanfani proposed to trade the Italian Jupiter missiles to both the Soviet and the American ambassadors, and concludes his narrative by writing that on 27 October he was actually received by Arthur Schlesinger inside the White House and given full assurance that Fanfani's proposal had been accepted.⁸ The story has a certain aura of plausibility, given Fanfani's propensity to act in favor of a peaceful resolution of the crisis, as well as the fact that Arthur Schlesinger was certainly the man inside the Kennedy administration who had the closest personal connections with the Italian political scene. Bernabei's narrative, however, features many gross factual mistakes, completely ignores the existing scholarship on the unfolding of the crisis, and finds no support either in the Fanfani diaries or in the available US documents—or, documents from elsewhere.⁹ In the Arthur Schlesinger papers at the JFK Presidential Library in Boston, there is significant documentation on the 27 October meeting, but what comes out from it is a completely different story. The record shows that Bernabei asked to see him even *before* arriving to the US

and *before* the crisis became public, on the 17th.¹⁰ According to Schlesinger's own report to the President, they did meet on the 27th, but Bernabei did not talk about the crisis at all. He told Schlesinger he had been asked to talk to some of the most trusted contacts inside the Kennedy administration to encourage the President to send to the US embassy in Rome a reliable diplomat who, acting confidentially and covertly, might develop a closer relationship with the Vatican and the new course opened by the Council and John the 23rd.¹¹ Bernabei and Schlesinger may as well have *also* talked about the crisis—after all it was on everybody's mind at the time—but unless any new evidence is found, the story about an Italian proposal to swap the missiles must be regarded as apocryphal, as an attempt to play up the role played by Fanfani—and by Bernabei himself—to ease the solution of the confrontation..

In light of Italy's interest in collaborating on a peaceful solution to the crisis, however, it is all the more remarkable that the Soviets asked for the withdrawal of the Turkish Jupiter missiles, and not the Italian ones. Fanfani's diary offers a possible explanation for this choice, but not a terribly convincing one. According to Frol Kozlov, the issue of asking for the dismantling of the Italian missiles was raised in the Soviet Politburo, but was eventually discarded as a sign of respect for Italy "on account of the memory" of Fanfani's (August 1961) visit to the Soviet Union. True or not, since 27 October the Italian Jupiter missiles stopped playing a central role in the discussions about the solution of the crisis, which focused almost exclusively on the missiles in Turkey. Nevertheless, even the Italian bases would be affected by the outcome of the crisis, as the Kennedy administration decided to shutter them in order to facilitate Turkey's acceptance of the withdrawal of their own Jupiter missiles under the pretext of a general package of NATO modernization of its weapons systems in the Mediterranean.

The crisis must also be seen from the perspective of the tense confrontation going on in Italian politics at the time concerning the so-called "opening to the left." After the stability of the early postwar years under the leadership of the Christian Democrat Alcide De Gasperi, Italy had entered a more troublesome course, in which the pro-Western forces enjoyed a flimsy majority against the largest Communist party in Western Europe (PCI) and a fellow-travelling Socialist Party (PSI) led by Pietro Nenni. One way out of the predicament seemed to lie in gradually drawing the Socialists away from the Communists, and in their eventual inclusion in the democratic camp. Such a change, which might isolate the Communists and promote social reforms at the same time, had been under scrutiny in Italian politics for quite some time under the name of an "opening to the left," but it

found many opponents both in Italy and in the US because of the heavy neutralist (if not entirely pro-Soviet) streak in the Socialists' foreign policy. The debate about the reliability of Nenni's Socialists lasted almost ten years, and reached a climax in the early 1960s, when some members of the Kennedy administration— Arthur Schlesinger in particular—gradually took a strong interest in the idea of a center-left government and started encouraging the PSI and the DC to form a reformist alliance that could isolate the PCI. In October 1962 the new alliance was cautiously taking its first steps, and the Cuban crisis was in a way a test of its trans-Atlantic reliability. Fanfani, as a matter of fact, took a relatively mild pro-US position, and—as he also makes clear in his Journal entries - both in his letter to Kennedy and in his speech to the Italian parliament he stressed the importance of acting through the UN to solve the crisis. This somewhat lukewarm position, which sharply contrasted with Fanfani's previously more clear-cut pro-American stances, was attributed by the State Department to his excessive concern with the domestic priorities of the new center-left majority and to the need to not alienate the Socialist Party. According to a number of later assessments, however, the risks for the US were very limited, and were more than made up for by the prospect of a new center-left coalition: “the desirability of drawing the PSI into the democratic coalition in Italy and of thereby strengthening Italy politically, socially, and economically may make some sacrifice of Italian open solidarity with us in fields of foreign policy matters a tolerable one, so long as the ultimate reliability of Italian adherence to the alliance is not compromised.”¹²

Finally, it is important to point out that the foreign policy the new Italian coalition would adopt might have been more attuned to the post-Cuban course of US foreign policy than the previous rigid Atlanticism Italy had displayed throughout the 1950s. As would become clear in 1963, the Cuban crisis was a real watershed that made the Kennedy administration opt for a policy of dialogue with the Soviet Union—difficult as it may have been—rather than a policy of confrontation which would involve reinforcing NATO through the nuclear sharing projects of the previous years. Disarmament and arms control initiatives would become a central feature of US foreign policy in the following months and years, and while this turn undermined any Italian hope for nominal nuclear status through a policy of Atlantic cooperation, it made possible for the new center-left coalition to support the US in its new search for a less confrontational attitude in the Cold War.

A Note on the Documents

The Italian archival situation offers a very mixed picture for

historical research on the Cold War years. In the last few years, a number of important personal collections of papers from some of the central figures in Italian postwar history—including Fanfani to Moro, Nenni, Gronchi, Andreotti, and Brosio—have been opened to research. Most of these collections contain not only personal papers but a vast amount of government records which politicians and diplomats stored away in their own files for their personal use. In addition, the State Central Archive (ACS, *Archivio centrale dello Stato*) has also opened up a number of collections which contain precious information about the evolution of Italian foreign policy, such as the papers of the Diplomatic Counselor of the Prime Minister (*Consigliere Diplomatico del Presidente del Consiglio*). Finally, there are the many Party archives which contain the official records of the DC, the PSI, and the PCI, which also offer an important contribution to our understanding of Italian politics. There is, however, one major gap, namely the Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: most of its collections are still open only through the late 1950s, due to a combination of scarcity of funds and sheer neglect. Clearly this situation makes it difficult to present a well-rounded picture of Italian foreign policy, as the documents we have collected for this special issue make clear enough. Both the Fanfani and the Brosio journals offer interesting insights into how the crisis was perceived, but scholars still need complete access to the existing documentation in order to develop a well-rounded picture of the initiatives that the Italian government may actually have implemented.

Italy and the Cuban Missile Crisis— Essential Reading

Books

Manlio Brosio, *Diari di Parigi 1961-1964*, edited by Umberto Gentiloni Silveri (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009)

Roberto Ducci, *I Capintesta* (Milano: Rusconi, 1982)

Agostino Giovagnoli e Luciano Tosi (eds.) *Amintore Fanfani e la politica estera italiana* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2010)

Evelina Martelli, *L'altro atlantismo. Fanfani e la politica estera italiana, 1958-1963* (Milano: Guerini e Associati, 2008)

Leopoldo Nuti, *Gli Stati Uniti e l'apertura a sinistra, 1953-1963. Importanza e limiti della presenza americana in Italia* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1999)

Leopoldo Nuti, *La sfida nucleare. La politica estera italiana e le armi atomiche, 1945-1991* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007)

Onofrio Pappagallo, *Il PCI e la rivoluzione cubana. La "via latino-americana al socialismo" tra Mosca e Pechino (1959-1965)*, (Roma: Carocci, 2009)

Articles

Ennio Di Nolfo, « L'Italie et la crise de Cuba en 1962 », in Maurice Vaisse (ed.), *L'Europe et la Crise de Cuba* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993), pp.123-157

Leopoldo Nuti, "Dall'operazione *Deep Rock* all'operazione *Pot Pie*: una storia documentata dei missili SM 78 Jupiter in Italia", in *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali*, vol. 11/12, n.1 (1996/1997) e vol.2 (1996/1997), pp.95-138 e 105-149.

L.N. «L'Italie et le missiles Jupiter», in Maurice Vaisse (ed.), *L'Europe et la Crise de Cuba* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993), pp.123-157

L. N., "Missiles or Socialists? The Italian Policy of the Kennedy Administration", in Douglas Brinkley and Richard Griffiths (eds.), *Kennedy and Europe* (New Orleans: Louisiana State University Press, 1999)

L.N. "The United States, Italy and the Opening to the Left, 1953-1963", in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 4, no.3 (Summer 2002), pp.36-55.

DOCUMENTS

The Amintore Fanfani Diaries

Covering his entire career from the late 1930s to the early 1980s, the Amintore Fanfani diaries are one of the most important primary sources for understanding a key figure of post-world war II Italian history. They are available at the Italian Senate Historical Archives [the *Archivio Storico del Senato della Repubblica*] in Rome and are about to be published in an integral version. This remarkable document, must be approached with care, as it alternates longer analyses and very fragmentary, sketchy information. According to one of the scholars who edited the Diaries for their final publication, Fanfani probably conceived them as a sort of personal notebook from which he could draw the necessary reminders

about his activities, rather than a place where he could muse at length about the meaning of what was going on.¹³ The few excerpts about Cuba are a good example of the importance of the diaries: not only do they make clear Fanfani's sense of danger and his willingness to search for a peaceful solution of the crisis, but the bits about his exchanges with Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlo Russo, with the Italian Ambassador in London Pietro Quaroni, or with the USSR Presidium member Frol Kozlov, help frame the Italian position during the crisis in a broader context.

22 October

Tonight at 20:45 [US Ambassador Frederick Reinhardt] delivers me a letter in which [US President] Kennedy announces that he must act with an embargo of strategic weapons against Cuba because he is threatened by missile bases. And he sends me two of the four parts of the speech which he will deliver at midnight [Rome time; 7 pm Washington time]. I reply to the ambassador wondering whether they may be falling into a trap which will have possible repercussions in Berlin and elsewhere. Nonetheless, caught by surprise, I decide to reply formally tomorrow.

I immediately called [President of the Republic Antonio] Segni in Sassari and [Foreign Minister Attilio] Piccioni in Brussels recommending prudence and peace for tomorrow's EEC [European Economic Community] meeting. I place a call to London and [British Prime Minister Harold] Macmillan says that he will send a message for me tomorrow.

23 October

The situation has generated great preoccupations. I call Segni on the phone and I advise him to get back within [to Rome] the day. I gather [Secretary of the Christian Democratic Party Aldo] Moro, [Secretary of the Social Democratic Party Giuseppe] Saragat, [Secretary of the Republican Party Oronzo] Reale, and I inform them, they approve the policy which I am going to present at the Senate and at the Chamber of Deputies tonight, after I have agreed upon the text of the declarations with Moro, [under-secretary for Foreign Affairs Carlo] Russo and the Chairmen of the Parliamentary Committees for foreign affairs.

I receive from Ambassador Ward a message from Macmillan, obviously critical of Kennedy's decision, and asking for an entente. I reply immediately suggesting an action for peace. I prepare my reply to Kennedy. I enjoin the PSI [Italian Socialist Party] not to associate themselves with the PCI [Italian Communist Party] and to take a moderate position, as it does afterwards under [Francesco] De Martino in

the Chamber of Deputies but not under [Emilio] Lussu in the Senate.

I send Russo to New York with the task of trying to make the UN take the situation under its control and solve it peacefully.

24 October

At 9:30 I see Segni, who has come back from Sassari yesterday evening, and I inform him of the events by reading him Kennedy's message, Macmillan's [message], and my own replies. He approves them, suggesting some corrections in my reply to Kennedy, which I will deliver at 12 to the US ambassador—something I could not do yesterday evening as I had to chair the meeting on the shipping yards in Leghorn until midnight, after the meetings at the Parliament. I see Piccioni, back from Brussels.

I inform Saragat about both messages. Moro knew about them since yesterday.

The French Ambassador [Armand] Berard expressed to some friends his appreciation for the speech I gave yesterday, which on the contrary worried [Soviet Ambassador Andrej] Kozjrev. In Moscow, TASS too interpreted it as pro-US, criticizing it. The Italian press in general welcomed it. Moro was satisfied with it. I solved the problems of the aqueduct in Paola and of the shipyards in Leghorn. I gave instructions that tomorrow at the NATO meeting in Paris Italy should not associate itself with the US proposal to suspend the supply of aid to the USSR, and to postpone the issue in order not to exacerbate East-West relations.

25 October

The Pope [John the XXIII] who has been informed about my activity for peace in the past days, lets me know about his satisfaction. At 11 am, at the Capitol, delivery of the Balzan Prize to the Nobel Foundation. Then at the Quirinale I talk with the King of Sweden, worried about the situation and critical of the Soviet decision about the blockade.

At 5 pm at Villa Madama reception of the Italian Episcopate. There are 22 cardinals and almost 400 bishops, most stressing their satisfaction at meeting the government which has honored them. How beautiful that this has crowned today's manifestations of peace, climaxing at noon with the Pope's radio speech in favor of negotiation at any level.

In the evening meeting with the ministers, about the hospitals. We conclude the project [draft] which we should approve. Piccioni has met both the US and the Soviet ambassadors, encouraging a peaceful resolution of the Cuban issue.

Soviet newspapers attack the position of the Italian government.

26 October

Russo cables me that he has seen [US Ambassador to the UN Adlai E.] Stevenson. S. thanked him for what I said in Parliament and then he asked him what we would think about an exchange between a withdrawal of the missiles from Cuba and a withdrawal of the missiles from the European bases, particularly if [the latter are] obsolete. Russo said it would be preferable to use the dismantling of the European bases in the framework of the conclusion of the disarmament negotiations. The Brazilians instead are proposing denuclearization [of] South America and Africa. In the evening comes the news about a stiffening in the US position. I have a call made to the US and at half past midnight I learn that there was a stiffening in the morning but that now it's been reduced a bit. I have lunch at Segni's and I find there [Chairman of the Senate Cesare] Merzagora and [Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies Giovanni] Leone who are trying to paint a black picture of the economic situation. When I compare that with the serene report presented by [CEO of the Italian Commercial Bank Raffaele] Mattioli to the Commercial Bank on the 19th, they fall back, saying they certainly do not want to open a parliamentary crisis, knowing full well that "they would be the ones who would have to replace me," and this modest prophecy changes the tone of the conversation completely.

I receive an anonymous express message from Milan with the announcement from the [unreadable] of a death sentence for me and my family if I do not resign within 48 hours. I give a copy of it to [Chief of Italian Police Angelo] Vicari and [Commanding General of the Carabinieri Giovanni] De Lorenzo.

27 October

From New York Russo cables that he has seen U Thant, and I learn that Cuba would be willing to dismantle the missiles under UN control, if the US would publicly declare that they do not want to intervene in Cuba any longer, [as well as] to close down the camps for training the Cuban exiles under UN control. I see Piccioni and I ask him to cable Russo that he should go back to see U Thant encouraging him and supporting him in his conciliatory actions. I ask him to instruct [Italian Ambassador to Moscow Carlo Alberto] Straneo and [Italian Ambassador to Washington Sergio] Fenoaltea to meet respectively with [Soviet foreign minister Andrej] Gromyko and [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk encouraging them to find a solution for Cuba. [Italian Ambassador in London

Pietro] Quaroni does not overestimate the danger and agrees to stick to a close Austro-Italian contact. He would suggest that, in case of necessity and if asked by the US, we might as well consider a trade off of the dismantling of the bases in Cuba with the dismantling of the US missile bases in Europe. After half an hour I learn that Khrushchev has suggested to U Thant a trade off for the Cuban bases as well as the Turkish ones.

At 8 pm, [Ministry of the Interior Paolo Emilio] Taviani informs of his fears about the airplane of [ENI President Enrico] Mattei, which has not arrived in Milan at 7 pm. I order the necessary search to be carried out and unfortunately at 9 pm we learn that the plane crashed in Bascapè near Linate. Everyone's dead, including Enrico Mattei.

28 October

I order that Mattei be given a state funeral. For fifteen years he has given the republic powerful tools of progress and he has honored Italy everywhere. I still cannot accept that he may be dead, this intrepid pioneer of progress. His widow, that I visited together with [Fanfani's wife] Bianca, is in the same mood.

In the morning an alert for an unforeseen meeting of the Atlantic Council. But then at 3 pm the news from Washington that the USSR is willing to remove the missile bases from Cuba since the US does not intend to attack Cuba has generated new hopes. I have informed Segni. Then I waited for a confirmation and at 6 pm I let the US and the Soviet ambassadors know that we look upon with favor to the news and that we encourage both countries to draw useful consequences for peaceful restoration of the situation.

[...]

11 December

Dinner at the Russian Embassy where I find Kozlov, who at 6 p.m. paid a visit to Segni. I had met him in Moscow and he is gracious enough as to tell me that I have left a great impression there. He tells me that he visited Pompei, and that the ruins have deeply impressed him, make him imagine what the world would have become if on the 28th [of October] a nuclear war over Cuba had broken out. He recognizes that only the wisdom of Kennedy and Khrushchev has saved us from the abyss, twice very close. Now he believes that an understanding can be achieved. Some say that the document for Kennedy about Cuba initially included also the request to withdraw the missile bases from Italy. Then during the discussion in the Soviet government the idea prevailed of respecting

Italy on account of the memory of my visit [to the Soviet Union]. I reply that I was certain that they would not bring the Italian bases into the picture for [...] their discussion in a possible treaty between NATO and the Warsaw pact. He says it's a good argument.

The Manlio Brosio Diaries

The Diaries of Manlio Brosio span his entire career as a diplomat in the Italian Foreign service (Ambassador to Moscow, 1947-51; Ambassador to London, 1952-54; Ambassador to Washington, 1954-61; Ambassador to Paris, 1961-64; Secretary General of NATO, 1964-71) and offer a unique insight into Italian foreign policy as well as into the evolution of the postwar international system. They are available at the Einaudi Foundation in Turin and have been published (not in their integral version) by Il Mulino, edited by Umberto Gentiloni Silveri. If Fanfani's notations are sometimes sparse and sketchy, Brosio's are quite the opposite: he ruminates for pages and pages about the events of his life, both the professional and the personal ones. The following pages come from *Diari di Parigi, 1961-1964* [*The Paris Diaries, 1961-1964*], edited by Umberto Gentiloni Silveri (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009), pp. 253-260.

Monday, 22 October

An eventful evening intrudes upon a colorless day. While [Director General for Economic Affairs at the Foreign Ministry, Egidio] Ortona arrives around 11 p.m., [Diplomatic Counselor to the Prime Minister Carlo] Marchiori calls me on the phone to have more news about what is going on in Cuba. The news [reports] are more and more dramatic. In Rome they are nervous. I get in touch with [General Secretary of the French Foreign Ministry Eric] De Carbonnel who informs me about the NATO meeting which is going on and tells me "Il ne fait pas de doute que la notre sera une attitude de solidarité." I phone this message to Marchiori and in the meantime I get in touch with [Italian Ambassador Corrado] Orlandi [Contucci]; later I get a call from [Italian Ambassador to the North Atlantic Council Adolfo] Alessandrini and I also inform [Italian Ambassador in Brussels Antonio] Casardi in Brussels where Piccioni wants to be informed too. After the NATO meeting Alessandrini tells me that Dean Acheson has arrived, and that the French have been the only ones to issue a strong declaration of solidarity. Alessandrini behaved "as a friend who asks some clarifications on a matter of common concern." I tell this to Marchiori and [Director General of Political Affairs at the Italian Foreign Ministry Giovanni]

Fornari who is also in Brussels. I speak again with Carbonnel. He refrains from giving any assessment about the measures adopted by Kennedy. In the meantime Ortona has listened to Kennedy's speech, intense and grave. My impression, as well as Ortona's, is that these are half-measures, an empty show of energy which will not produce any result. It will allow the Soviets to react with an offensive—once again with words—against the American bases. Kennedy looks to me more and more like the kid who wants to keep everybody happy: you do not resort to force by asking for the presence of the *carabinieri* and the assent of the timid ones. First you use it and then consent will come.

Before going to bed Ortona discusses with me his serious preoccupations about the Italian political and economic situation. There is a lack of confidence, nobody is investing, people fear a major crisis in six months. In the meantime, everyone is criticizing Fanfani and no one dares to challenge him. Ortona says this reminds him of the campaign against Greece: everybody was saying that we were running towards disaster but all hurried behind the Duce.

Tuesday, 23 October

The Cuban crisis dominates the day, but so far nothing particularly serious has happened. We wait for the meeting between the Soviet ships and the American fleet. The French are in favor of solidarity but they are critical of the lack of consultation. On the other hand, we once more witness the close interdependence among the different parts of the world as well as the impossibility for a great power to base its decisions—in an area that interests it directly—upon the consultation and the doubts of all the other ones. Among the others I have at lunch [...] the Norwegian Ambassador, who sees the whole situation exclusively from the view point of the commercial fleet of his country. Thus it is necessary that, in its own sectors of interest, a great power decides by itself, and then she must take part in the decisions concerning those distant areas to which she has committed her own responsibility. This is what *de facto* happens: one grumbles about the principle, but then one toes the line. [...]

Wednesday, 24 October

Talk with [Secretary General of the Italian Foreign Ministry Attilio] Cattani and Alessandrini. Cattani is happy about the [EEC] meeting in Brussels. [...] As for Cuba, there was a clear French position of understanding more than of solidarity for the American initiative: understanding because the initiative does not regard the NATO zone, solidarity for the repercussions which it could have in Europe. Alessandrini has

reassured Cattani and he has asked for instructions. These will come, if possible. Cattani does not exclude a government crisis in Italy if the international crisis will get worse. Alessandrini has once again mentioned the issue of the Italian bases and of their transformation into mobile naval bases: Cattani believes that we cannot discuss the issue in Italy on a bilateral basis with Americans. We will have to wait for a multilateral solution. Cattani is concerned by Piccioni's absences. He goes into his office 15 minutes each day, and it is almost impossible to speak to him. It took a lot of effort to make him chair the meeting of the Six—after which, instead of rushing down to Rome (in light of the Cuban crisis) he wasted an afternoon in a carefree walk through the Waterloo battlefield. An excellent idea, if it hadn't been the symptom of a systemic crisis.

[...] At eleven p.m. the last news [bulletin] announces that part of the Soviet ships had turned back. Shortly before that, I had explained to [Italian Consul General in Paris Nicolò] Di Bernardo [...] that there would be no war, but that the Kennedy operation had been badly conceived as it raised to the level of the missile bases an issue which should have remained at the level of Cuba and Castro. After the news of the ships' withdrawal, we analyze the situation: my thesis is confirmed, there is a tactical success for Kennedy, a check for the Communists, but Khrushchev will not fail to get his payback with the European bases.

Thursday, 25 October

In fact this morning [US columnist Walter] Lippman is already proposing to obtain the dismantling of the bases in Cuba by renouncing those in Turkey. It's the usual [...] I talk about it with [Italian Defense Minister Giulio] Andreotti who arrives during the morning. Then I have lunch with Andreotti and [French Minister of Armies Pierre] Messmer. Messmer's evaluation is clear and it matches mine: "Kennedy has had a success for the time being, but we will pay for it later in Europe, in Berlin, or in the other bases in Turkey, etc." Before that, at 8:30, I met [FIAT CEO Vittorio] Valletta: he said that Fanfani's speech was "most beautiful," yet he was worried about the government's position for its weakness towards the Socialists and the Communists, and about the economic situation [...] Andreotti later tells me that he has spoken with Messmer about the [French] *force de frappe* (which will not be discussed at the December NATO Council, it's too early) and of the nuclear submarine which we want to produce and for which we ask for support from both the Americans and the French [...]

Friday, 26 October

The Cuban accident is in a waiting phase, which however does not exclude tension. Kennedy does not seem inclined to accept the mediation terms proposed by U Thant. What does he want? In the evening at the Opéra I see [Head of Treaty Service and of Atomic and Space Affairs at the French Foreign Ministry, Jean] De La Granville who tells me that the Americans talk too much about the necessity to dismantle the Cuban bases. De La Granville is afraid that they want to invade Cuba, and this is clearly the impression at the Quai d'Orsay. He fears this solution, he does not want it: I reply that Kennedy is now emboldened by the Russian prudence, and that if the operation is not carried through to the very end it will not be a success.

[...]

Saturday, 27 October

I wake up early and I finish my report: basically I state that [French President Charles] De Gaulle is worried for the effects that Kennedy's action will have on Europe (bases in Turkey, etc.) and for the influence that the unilateral American decisions may have on his interests. There may be a tacit compromise between the two colossi, in the sense of tolerating reciprocal interferences. The respect for the spheres of influence is relative, since for Russia all of Europe is a sphere of influence. De Gaulle, therefore, is strengthened in his belief that Europe must be united and reinforced: with nuclear weapons, he means.

In the meantime the newspapers are writing that Kennedy wants to dismantle the bases and may as well invade Cuba. All the Italian left of course rises as one man in defense of Cuba, including the intellectuals.

Khrushchev tries to prevent Kennedy's action by offering him an exchange between the Cuban bases and the Turkish ones—QED. But Kennedy politely declines the offer contained in Khrushchev's message. He is now stronger than ever and it would be a disaster if he does not use it.

Sunday, 28 October

The referendum day. Three major events: Khrushchev unconditionally gives up the bases in Cuba, Mattei dies in a plane crash, De Gaulle wins the referendum [...] Why did Khrushchev, after demanding the dismantling of the Turkish bases, precipitously abandon his request unconditionally, while he could have still gained some time and kept the US under pressure? The answer is one and one only: because for him it was important to prevent an American landing in Cuba and the elimination of the Communist outpost in

America. Why, on the other hand, did Castro shout and demand conditions? Because he understood that Kennedy did not intend to attack him, and he started shouting like a child who is not scared any longer. Thus it's a success for Kennedy, but only a half one; and a subsequent trade-off for the bases cannot be excluded, as it may happen through the disarmament negotiations, as Kennedy promised. Why did Kennedy feel it necessary to grant Khrushchev a certificate of pacifism, after the latter had attacked him, insulted him, and was now withdrawing? Because the Americans keep aiming at a direct agreement with the Russians and they do not want to interrupt it. Only consideration: Kennedy condescended to hint to its allies. [...]

Tuesday, 30 October

[Italian journalist from the *Corriere della Sera*] Domenico Bartoli dropped by, he is all happy about the Kennedy victory. He is not worried by the fact that Castro is still in power: but he is wrong. I go to see Lucet in the afternoon. [...] We also talk about Cuba. The French are generally satisfied, uncertain about the reasons for Khrushchev's oscillations (they talk about the domestic opposition too) and still worried, even if less than before, by the development of a direct Russo-American dialogue. They too fail to understand that Kennedy has half-lost his battle by leaving Castro in power. There are already demonstrations in support of Castro in Uruguay and Argentina. Khrushchev preferred to lose face rather than losing Castro: here one must agree with [French Socialist intellectual] Suzanne Labin when she complains that the Americans underrate the cold war. [...]

Thursday, 1 November

[...] The Cuban crisis is fading into quibbles: Castro is posing his conditions, U Thant's mission is failed, [First Deputy Premier of the USSR Anastas Ivanovich] Mikoyan is arriving, the Republicans in Washington are asking Kennedy some embarrassing questions. Nothing can come out of this other than a bad compromise, or a new crisis without tragedies, in which Kennedy will yield a little more and will receive a little less...

Sunday, 13 January 1963

[Ambassador Mario] Toscano passes through Paris and he tells me that the Americans will withdraw their atomic bases from Italy and Turkey. It's a unilateral decision which Reinhardt has communicated to Piccioni on Wednesday January 9. The invitation from Kennedy to Fanfani had already been

made: Fenoaltea had informed about it from Washington [...] Toscano believes there is already an agreement between the Soviets and the Americans. I do not exclude it any longer: at the very least, the gesture is a development of an American foreign policy of decoupling from their nuclear commitments in Europe, but it may also be the sign of an agreement, of which I am not entirely persuaded yet. Nenni must know about it and probably is referring to it when he talks about serious foreign policy reasons which advise against a government crisis: he wants the merit of the closing down of the bases to be attributed to himself and to the center-left. Fanfani, in turn, by going to Washington will try to sell to the Italians the American gesture as the result of his own initiative and as his own success. Finally the Communists must know about it as well—through Nenni—because they are starting their demonstrations in Italy against the bases, to take credit for the initiative. Everyone wants to assume the sad merit of a foreign policy that does not exist. [...]

Monday, 14 January 1963

I go to see [French Foreign Minister Maurice] Couve [de Murville] to inform him about the American decision on the bases in Italy and Turkey. He does not believe it to be a Russo-American agreement; he believes in technical-military reasons, the obsolescence of the Thor and Jupiter missiles. I point out that the decision also shows a policy of concentrating nuclear weapons in American hands. He admits it. Couve is happy about the information: he will inform immediately [Charles] Lucet [Director of Political Affairs, French Foreign Ministry] and [Jean] Laloy [Minister of European Affairs, French Foreign Ministry], and the latter will remember immediately that on 27 October 1962, during the Cuban days, Kennedy asked [Supreme Allied Commander, Europe Lieut.-Gen. Lauris] Norstad (according to the latter's testimony) if abandoning the bases in Turkey would have been catastrophic from a military point of view. Norstad answered yes, both from a military and above all a psychological point of view. Thus he thought about it, but this does not mean that he negotiated with the Soviets, then or afterwards. Those were the days when one talked about it. In general, the withdrawal of the bases has made a strong and bad impression to the Quai d'Orsay. [...]

Roberto Ducci—*I capintesta* (The Big Bosses)

Ducci was another of the key Italian diplomats of the postwar period. Among his many important assignments, he chaired

the Committee that drafted the 1957 Rome Treaties, was posted as Ambassador to Helsinki (1958-62), Belgrade (1964-67), Vienna (1967-70) and London (1975-80). Between 1970 and 1975 he was appointed Director General for Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ducci did not keep a Diary but wrote a book of memoirs [*I capintesta* (Milano: Rusconi, 1982)] which fully reflects his witty, incisive and lucid understanding of Italian foreign policy and international affairs. The following pages (142-48) come from the chapter “La notte che non scoppiò la Guerra nucleare” (The Night when the Nuclear War did not break out) and vividly describe the atmosphere among some of the key Italian diplomats after Kennedy's speech of 22 October. In the early pages of the chapter, Ducci describes how by 22 October 1962, he had just arrived in Brussels as member of a delegation which included the top echelons of Italian foreign policy: Foreign Minister Attilio Piccioni, Undersecretary Carlo Russo, Secretary General of the Ministry Attilio Cattani, and a number of other key dignitaries, including himself, who at the time was at the head of the Italian delegation which negotiated the possible accession of the United Kingdom to the European Economic Community. They had all gone to Brussels for a week of meetings between the Six members of the EEC, and were engaged in a preparatory meeting for the work ahead, when the news spread that the situation between the US and Cuba was deteriorating and that President Kennedy was about to give an important speech.

“While arguments often discussed were thrown around the table in the big dining room—with limited interest and attention—[Ambassador to Brussels Antonio] Casardi entered the room and whispered something in the ear of the minister. The President of the Council, Amintore Fanfani, was on the line from Rome and wanted to talk to the hon. Piccioni. Mumbling something in his thick Roman accent, (“And what does he want now?”), Piccioni stood up without enthusiasm and followed the ambassador in his study. We learned afterwards that Fanfani was furious, as he had placed several calls to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs searching for the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, the secretary general, the General Director for political affairs, and so on, without finding any of them; and as a first reaction he unleashed his wrath on the Minister of Foreign Affairs who had taken all of them with him to Brussels. He told him that a few minutes before he had received the US Ambassador, Freddie Reinhardt, who had asked to meet him to deliver him a message from Kennedy. [...] Fanfani asked Piccioni to try and get in touch with the authorities of the other European countries to find out how they intended to react to Kennedy's decision, a decision which, by provoking the most serious crisis for

world peace since the time of the Korean war, could lead to a confrontation with nuclear weapons between the superpowers, and involve all of Europe.

Piccioni told us that our meeting was over; all of those who had not been invited to dine at the Embassy were not encouraged to stay. We found him gloomier, but still affable and not nervous at all. Those of us who stayed were consulted by him mostly to discuss how we could implement Fanfani's directives. It was a dead afternoon, if one did not know what was going on across the Atlantic—the dramatic gravity of which many in Europe continued to ignore. As a starter we tried to get in touch with the Belgian authorities: from Rue de la Loi they informed us that the President of the Council was gone, at the Quatre Bras Palace neither [Foreign Minister Paul-Henri] Spaak nor his deputy, Fayat, could be found. Then Casardi called Dirk Stikker, the former Dutch Foreign Minister who had been appointed Secretary General of NATO, at his private residence in Paris: he had gone to the country. Brosio was given the task to find him and ask him if he intended to summon an extraordinary meeting of the Atlantic Council—even our best ambassador at the time had not been informed about the ultimatum. Time went by, spent in disappointing efforts to show ourselves that we were not completely reduced to impotence, until the wife of the ambassador told us that dinner was ready.

[...] Every once in a while, the waiter whispered something in the ear of the Ambassador, then either he or one of us left the table and went to talk on the phone. Stikker had been found: no, the Americans had not proposed an extraordinary meeting of the North Atlantic Council yet, and none of the other European Allies had requested it. Then Brosio called to tell us that De Gaulle, after having received the American Ambassador, had let the word spread around that France would stick together with President Kennedy, following its loyal duty as an ally. The Belgians had not much to say, their Council of Ministers had been summoned for the next morning. As the waiters were about to serve a dessert called an "ice bomb," one of Fanfani's counselors called from Rome: we told him what little we had learned, and he assured us that he would refer it immediately to the President, who was at his desk in Palazzo Chigi. [...]

After coffee, Piccioni told us he would have liked to play a hand or two of bridge, which was his favorite game. I sat at his table: he played with an inner passion, as a Tuscan peasant, and he clearly showed pleasure in having good cards in his hand. The man I was teamed with, at least once for that evening, had been the pupil of [Founder of the Italian Catholic Party Partito Popolare Don Luigi] Sturzo, the companion and the dolphin of [Italian Prime Minister Alcide] De Gasperi, but also someone who in World War One had volunteered as

a pilot in the Air Force and had been the instructor of [Italian World war I aircraft ace] Francesco Baracca; and the man who was said to have been a great speaker, the best together with [President of the Republic Giovanni] Gronchi, of the whole Catholic Party [...]. At around eleven p.m. he was called to the phone once again: Fanfani wanted to talk to him. "God knows what he wants: wait for me here." We did not wait for him at the gaming table, and followed him in the study. We gathered around him and heard his replies to the President of the Council, who was still in Palazzo Chigi. From them, and from what Piccioni told us afterwards, we could form a good picture of their dialogue. Fanfani had talked with a half dozen foreign ambassadors in Rome and with four or five of our own ambassadors abroad. He had even managed to get in touch with someone at the White House, where they had confirmed to him what Reinhardt had told him a few hours before. "You did well, Amintore," said Piccioni on the phone, "we have already informed you about what we were able to find out from here. What? No, ... I would not say so...". Fanfani wanted to send someone to Washington immediately to recommend, to exhort, to motivate... "No, I cannot, I have the meetings here..." Fanfani insisted, said that otherwise he would send Russo, together with Fornari, who was Director General for Political Affairs. "If you really think it is necessary... Then, tomorrow..." The "no" from the President of the Council was so energetic that leaped out of the microphone and reached our ears: no, immediately or with the first available aircraft which would enable them to catch the Pan American flight from Rome at one pm the next day.

We did not go back to the gaming table. We started looking for a flight to Rome, while Russo and Fornari were snorting. There was one bound to Congo which was making a stopover in Rome, leaving at six am. Piccioni decided that this was the one that the two should catch, and told them so by spreading his arms, as if to signify that as far as he was concerned it was totally useless. In the meantime someone had found a powerful radio, and we were assured that it would allow us to listen to Kennedy's speech. We gathered around that technological wonder, which would reveal to us what was going to be our fate. It was almost midnight, and from the device came a sequence of whistles and booms, as it always happens when one tries to tune in on a short wave length. Finally we found an American radio station: with the appropriate tone it announced that the President of the United States was about to speak to the American people. We all lent our ears, even Piccioni who did not speak any English: we were not about to listen to an oracle, but directly to one of the Gods, armed with the lightning which can incinerate the world. Kennedy's voice, which was always high-pitched, came out meowing and broken, interrupted by a frequent fading

which seemed to push it farther away into the ether. We did not understand much, not even Virginia [the Ambassador's wife] who had joined us: and this inability totally disheartened us, for the first time since we had realized the gravity of the crisis. Something immense was happening, but outside of us and in the name of a logic which we could understand as correct but from which we felt excluded. We understood, even if we did not share it, Fanfani's agitation: but who was luckier, he, to whom the possibility to act somehow gave the impression to be *in*, inside the story (which on the contrary was being written in a completely different place), or Piccioni, who accepted being *out* with great equanimity? Luckiest of them all was certainly De Gaulle, who did not hesitate for a moment in placing France side-to-side with the US in the hour of its supreme risk. After several attempts to improve the reception, Casardi raised his questioning eyes towards the Minister. "Let's go to bed," said Attilio Piccioni, "the ball now is in Moscow's court."

Russo and Fornari left after three hours of sleep; during the rest of the day, others left Brussels as well. Those who stayed accompanied Piccioni to the meeting with the Ministers of the Six, where we discussed the regime of Cyprus' tomatoes and potatoes in a Common Market enlarged to the UK. The news got worse by the hour: Moscow had not replied to the ultimatum, the US armed forces were being placed in a state of alert [...]

The morning after, I went upstairs to the second floor of the Embassy, where Piccioni's apartment was located. In the corridor I met to my great surprise Mr. Pace, the minister's valet, who was carrying two large suitcases. When I asked him, he replied with a Roman accent thicker than usual, which revealed his disappointment at the news "Don't you know? They informed us we must go back to Rome. But I say, couldn't they leave us here? What are we going to do in Rome, save the world? When will they ever realize that we have very little to say?" ...

The Italian Foreign Ministry assesses the causes and consequences of the crisis (December 1962)

[From a background paper prepared for the Italian Delegation at the December 1962 meeting of the North Atlantic Council:]

[...] Point 1. Analysis of the international situation.

A. 1) Trends of Soviet policy

The Cuban Crisis

The motivations that pushed the Soviet leaders to the Cuban adventure probably have their roots in the fact that by 1962 they had come to share the Western assessment of the strategic nuclear balance of power between the blocs: that is, that the balance is favorable to the West.

To re-balance the situation, the Russians had two options:

1. To overcome the Americans in the production of ICBMs and SLBMs based on submarines: a slow and expensive way for which the Soviet economy has less resources than the American one
2. To deploy IRBM launching pads next to the American territory.

Cuba seemed to offer the conditions required to adopt the second option. If the initiative had succeeded, the Soviet opportunities for an initial atomic strike would have grown so much as to reduce considerably the American capacity to retaliate, and with it, the effectiveness of the "deterrent."

It is also possible that Khrushchev intended to use the bases in Cuba for a trade-off against Berlin in the next few months.

The critical mistake the Soviets made in their calculation was about the American reaction, which turned out to be much different and much sterner than they had foreseen.

The Russians realized immediately that an American air strike against the bases in Cuba, with the consequent loss of Soviet lives, or an American landing, with the overthrowing of Castro's regime, would have left them with no other choice between a nuclear war—which they are not willing to face—and accepting a defeat much worse than the withdrawal of the missiles.

By accepting the latter, the Russians have actually decided to cut their losses. (The Soviet attempt to obtain in return the removal of the Turkish bases was promptly withdrawn, thanks to the American firmness.)

The fact that the Soviets gave in, however, must be interpreted as a withdrawal but not as a weakening or a substantial change in their military posture or political intentions. (And even the withdrawal was skillfully used by the Russians, stressing its peaceful nature.)

Furthermore, if it is true that the Cuban crisis has confirmed the role attributed to conventional weapons by Atlantic strategy, as the timing of the American actions was clearly based on the possible use of these weapons, it is also true that in other areas a conventional balance of power might as well turn out to be more favorable to the Russians. Hence

the need not to draw any general conclusions about the Soviet attitude.

The situation of Soviet inferiority in terms of strategic nuclear weapons, which was at the origin of the Cuban affair, has not been modified. In order to get out of this situation, therefore, we must expect the Russians to step up their defense program, which as a consequence will produce a worsening of the population's economic conditions. In the meantime, the Soviet government will probably continue to negotiate partial disarmament measures in order to gain time, but without searching for a real and definitive détente in its relationship with the West.

The domestic consequences of the Cuban issue inside Russia seem to be rather modest, if there are any at all. Khrushchev seems to be in full control of the situation without the need to adopt any specific measure against old and new opponents. Even the position of the USSR as the leader of the satellite countries does not seem to have been shaken after Cuba, as demonstrated by Khrushchev's convocation of all the leaders of those countries in order to impose his own leadership and break any possible resistance (see the energetic purge in Bulgaria).

In the Sino-Soviet context, on the contrary, Khrushchev's redeployment in the Caribbean has reinvigorated the diatribes between the two countries, even if a break such as the one with Albania does not necessarily seem imminent.

In conclusion, the Cuban affair has demonstrated:

- a) The audacity and the unscrupulousness of the Soviet Prime Minister, as well as his self-control and his exceptional speed in recovering
 - b) The possibility that the Russians might drop their customary caution if the prize at stake seems to them a large one and if they overrate their chances of success
 - c) That world peace and security are indivisible and that any crisis hotbed, even outside of the NATO area, has immediate repercussions in the area of Atlantic commitments: hence the necessity to strengthen the consultations inside NATO in order to focus on those potential hotbeds
 - d) The necessity for the West to adopt a firm and united stand in time of an emergency
 - e) The serious danger for peace at any time when one tries to alter the balance between the blocs: which confirms the validity of the Western position on a gradual and balanced disarmament.
- [...]

[Source: *Esame della situazione internazionale*, in *Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Fondo del Consigliere diplomatico della*

Presidenza del Consiglio, 1957-1962, box 8, Fascicolo R.I.C.A. allegato al Rapporto 7091 del 4.12.1962.]

Notes

1 . I would like to thank Renato Moro and Evelina Martelli for their help with the Fanfani diaries.

2 . "White House Tapes and Minutes of the Cuban Missile Crisis. ExCom Meetings, October 1962," *International Security*, Vol.10, No.1 (Summer 1985), pp.175-176.

3 . John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL), Boston, President's Office File (POF), Presidential Recordings, Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings, October 18, 1962 afternoon meeting, transcripts available in Timothy Naftali, Ernest May, and Philip Zelikow, eds., *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy: Vols. 1-3, The Great Crises* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2001); Minutes of the 505th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, 20 October 1962, 2:30-5:10 p.m., in US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XI: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997). [Ed. Note: On the role of the Jupiters in the Cuban Missile Crisis, see Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).]

4 . JFKL, POF, Presidential Recordings, Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings, October 22, 1962, morning meeting. Unofficial transcript available at the National Security Archive; Report by Frank A. Sieverts, *The Cuban Crisis, 1962*, p.89, in JFKL, National Security File: Country File (NSF:CO): Cuba Subjects, f. History of the Cuban Crisis, Memos 1/9/63-9/1/63 & Report, b. 49. Manned by Italian airmen of the 36th Air Brigade together with some 350 US personnel from the 7230th Support Squadron and the 7230th USAF Dispensary, the missiles were operated under a dual key system which required the insertion of a physical key by (in this sequence) both the Italian and the American Launch Authentication Officers (LAOs).

5 . Rome (Reinhardt) to State, 26 October 1962 (tel. 936), in National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Collection, # 1963.

6 . For a detailed reconstruction of the Jupiter story, see Leopoldo Nuti, "Dall'operazione *Deep Rock* all'operazione *Pot Pie*: una storia documentata dei missili *SM 78 Jupiter* in Italia", in *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali*, vol. 11/12, n.1 (1996/1997) e vol.2 (1996/1997), pp.95-138 e 105-149, and chapters 5 and 6 of my book *La sfida nucleare. La politica estera italiana e le armi atomiche, 1945-1991* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007). Coincidentally, the *Garibaldi* was in the US for testing at the time of the crisis.

7 According to another source, Fanfani also asked Russo “to maintain contact not only with the US representatives but also to talk to the Soviets,” something which Russo refused to do.” The same source, however, insists that “Fanfani here [in Rome] continued the bilateral approach.” Airgram A-824 from the US Embassy in Rome, “Conversation with On. Flaminio Piccoli,” 2 November 1962, released to the author through FOIA NN 93-429.

8 Ettore Bernabei, *L'uomo di fiducia* (Milano: Mondadori, 1999), pp. 169-170.

9 Arthur M. Schlesinger also denied the validity of this story in a personal communication to the author.

10 Gretchen Stewart note for AS, October 17, 1962, in JFKL, Arthur Schlesinger Papers, White House (WH) Files, Subject File 196\64, box 23, f. Vatican.

11 Memorandum for the President, November 2, 1962, from AS, “Relations with the Vatican,” in JFKL, AS Papers, WH Files, Subject File 196\64, box 23, f. Vatican.

12 W.H. Brubeck, Memo for Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. ,”The Italian Center-Left Government and the Cuban Crisis: Lessons for American Foreign Policy,” November 30, 1962, in JFKL, NSF:CO:Cuba-General, box 37, f. 11/21/62-11/30/62.

13 Interview with Renato Moro, a member of the Diaries’ editorial board.

The Netherlands, the Missile Crisis, and Cuban-Dutch Relations, 1962-1964:

Documents from the Dutch Archives

Introduction by Rimko van der Maar¹

Documents obtained by van der Maar and translated by van der Maar and Bastiaan Bouwman

With regard to the Dutch perspective on the Cuban Missile Crisis, the following types of documents have been used: the diary of Prime Minister Jan de Quay, the minutes of the Council of Ministers, and coded cable traffic and other documents from the Dutch embassies in Havana and in Washington.² The first two types of documents show that the Dutch government, although a loyal NATO member and a strong supporter of close transatlantic relations, only reluctantly supported the United States during the crisis. Initially, Foreign Minister Joseph Luns refused to cut short his vacation on the French Riviera. He told Prime Minister De Quay that he totally disagreed with the American policy towards Cuba and he did not intend to make a declaration. However, pressured by parliamentarians who were very critical of De Quay's initial, hesitating statements on the matter and probably alarmed by the threatening situation in Cuba, Luns returned to The Hague. By then he had already accepted that an official communication would be issued, in which the Dutch government would express its sympathy and support for the US position.

The initial, reluctant Dutch attitude towards the Cuban Missile Crisis can partially be explained by Dutch maritime, commercial and colonial interests in the region and elsewhere (since 1954 Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles were autonomous parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands). In the months preceding the crisis, the Dutch government had already criticized the American embargo against Cuba, being afraid that supporting the US on this subject would damage the credibility of Dutch maritime transport, especially in countries associated with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). More importantly, in August 1962 the Netherlands had lost its last colony in Asia, New Guinea. Luns especially held a grudge against President Kennedy for failing to support his country in its long conflict with Indonesia over Netherlands New Guinea (later renamed Irian Jaya after being taken over by Jakarta and sometimes known as West Papua). Besides, the Dutch foreign minister and some of his colleagues reasoned that Cuba was outside of NATO territory and therefore none of their concern. However, as noted above, within a few days Luns altered his position and chose

to support the US. Still, Prime Minister De Quay was not satisfied, but he did not push the issue too hard. Astonished, he described the mood in his cabinet in his diary as "kind of indifferent" and that he would have liked to support Kennedy more strongly.

The Dutch ambassador to Cuba at the time of the crisis was Gideon W. Boissevain, a 65-year-old diplomat who had made career in the Consular Service before becoming the envoy to Havana. Naturally, his informative cables and lively letters during and after the Cuban Missile Crisis were highly important to the Dutch government.³ In fact, his messages became a source of information for State Department officials as well. At the height of the crisis, the Dutch ambassador to Washington since 1950, J. Herman van Roijen, reported that several State Department staff members were very eager to learn more about what was actually going on in Cuba. He requested The Hague to redirect all of Boissevain's messages to the Dutch embassy in Washington. Being a former minister for Foreign Affairs and senior negotiator during the 1945-1949 Indonesian revolution, Van Roijen was highly respected and well-connected in American diplomatic and political circles and in October and November 1962 he visited the State Department many times. In his search for information about the US position, Van Roijen noticed that he was better informed about the situation in Cuba than some officials were, among others Ward P. Allen, then the director of the State Department's Bureau of Inter-American Regional Political Affairs.

In addition to the cables that included only the most important topics and developments, Boissevain's letters, which took a week to arrive in The Hague by air mail, offered background information about the internal political and economic situation in Cuba. Topics ranged from speeches by Fidel Castro, his brother Raúl, and Che Guevara, to Brazil's part in finding a diplomatic solution, to espionage activities in the Dutch embassy by the Cuban Secret Service and the possible construction of underground fortifications to hide offensive weapons. In the course of 1963, Boissevain informed the Dutch government specifically about Fidel Castro's ongoing attempts to strengthen Cuba's political and economic relations with Western European countries, including the Netherlands. He repeatedly told the Dutch ambassador that he admired his country for its agricultural and industrial achievements. Perhaps also in light of the recent Dutch-American confrontation over New Guinea, he approached Boissevain in July 1963

with a remarkable proposition. Castro said that he felt obliged to pursue an agreement with the US, and he asked him to perform as a mediator. The Hague did not approve, however, and the ambassador received instructions to wait and see if Castro would bring it up at a later date. He never did. In his reports, Boissevain often described the impulsive Cuban leader with irony. During a reception at the Egyptian embassy in the summer of 1963, he witnessed Castro boasting to the Chinese and Soviet ambassadors about his decision to nationalize the former building of the US embassy. Boissevain reported to The Hague about this conversation: “The best response... would have been: ‘After you have already confiscated 1,000 million dollars worth of American property, why not throw the building in as well!’ and then speak of the taking charge of the administration of the refinery of Shell and so forth. It seems better, however, to use the ‘goodwill’ with regard to our country to induce negotiations about such matters.”



DOCUMENTS⁴

DOCUMENT No. 1

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
12 September 1962

Received: 19 Sept. 1962

No. 2024/489

Havana, 12 September 1962.

CUBA:
Politics.

The press has burst into jubilant tones, as the attached front page of “Revolución” shows, now that Moscow has finally delivered a statement containing a military guarantee in case of aggression against Cuba or against any other country that would ask for help. The “press of the button” which had been celebrated in Havana earlier—until the S.U. had caused the rejoicing to come to an end—has now become a reality because this time there can be no doubt: “...today Cuba cannot be attacked in the hope that this aggression will remain unpunished. If this does occur it will mean the start of the war....”

Foreign reactions to the statement are also being published including those from American senators who speak of “bluff,” “propaganda,” “no longer be browbeat,” and so forth.

If the Cuban leaders earlier addressed the US provocatively now they will be beside themselves. It therefore seems apparent to the observer there is a risk of a conflict with nuclear weapons.

Yet what has actually happened? President Kennedy has stated that he has no intention of attacking Cuba (although, according to the Cuban press, he used the unfortunate expression “not yet”), provocative firing at hotels and ships afterwards has been the work of Cuban counter-revolutionaries and this was followed by the request to Congress regarding the mobilization into active service of 150,000 men in relation to the situation in Berlin and Cuba, among other things. Therefore the warning from Moscow can be seen as a propaganda countermove: “You increase the size of your army, we send experienced troops home and replace them with recruits.....is the US that afraid of an attack from Cuba? and so forth.”

In order to be prepared for anything the Cuban government is alleging that Washington intends to use legionnaires (French and Spanish) in its next attempt at invasion. Of course they will attempt to persuade the Kremlin to accept the thesis that an attack by such troops would be equal to a landing by American marines. May those in Washington keep cool heads!

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 17318. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 2

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
21 September 1962

Received: 26 September 1962.

No. 2095/505

Havana, 21 September 1962.

CUBA:
Blockade?

During the past days a US senator has ventured to urge the imposition of a blockade of Cuba which would include hailing all commercial vessels which bring goods to the island and if they refused (by continuing on or refusing investigation) a warning shot and ultimately hitting the “mark.”

Such a proposition means a major step backward to the period in which H[is].M[ajesty]. Johan Maurits of Nassau [Prince of Orange] began to protect the Dutch shipping trade in the Mediterranean Sea against the arbitrariness of the Spanish or to that in which the 100 year “Pax Britannica” ended. Yet there are many ways to obstruct sea-faring.

During the “drôle de guerre” Japan had increasingly come to regard the Yellow Sea and the coastal area of Northern China and of course Manchuria and Korea as part of the Japanese sphere of influence. World trade and the shipping trade had resigned themselves to this and were limited to China south of Shanghai. When a Norwegian captain violated the unwritten rule by paying a commercial visit to northern ports the navy of the land of the Rising Sun so impeded his journey—without shooting—that he returned to Shanghai without having accomplished his aim and complained to the British Resident Naval Officer. The latter gave the Norwegian a lesson in practical maritime law: “Your country possesses 5 million tons of tonnage, the highest per capita tonnage in the world. Do you protect it? No, for as long as we can remember the existence of the British fleet has sufficed to function as a police force for all sea-faring nations, currently the situation has been changed: the Yellow Sea has become a Japanese sea.”

If the government of the US would embark on the misbegotten project of obstructing the shipping trade in any form such as that proposed by the abovementioned senator the sea-faring countries would not tolerate this, N.A.T.O. would be jeopardized and all this would pale in comparison to the abuse of accepted principles of the law of peoples which would result in an enduring loss for mankind.

When Cuban youngsters from Florida shoot at merchant ships in the Caribbean that is bad enough, let Washington not be tempted to lend its sanction to these antics!

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 17318. Obtained for CWIHP

by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 3

Minutes of the Council of Ministers, The Hague, 19 October 1962 (excerpt)

TOP SECRET

2. Foreign policy

a. America and Cuba

In a meeting with the mayor of Berlin, [Willy] Brandt, Assistant Secretary [of State Hans R.] Van Houten received some information relating to the former’s visit to president Kennedy. He had the impression, that he [the president—trans.] was extremely nervous. This was the result of information regarding the numbers of Russian military technicians, who had arrived on Cuba, coupled with the pressure from public opinion and congress to do something against this. Although president Kennedy himself was very firm about the situation concerning Berlin it appeared to Brandt that the Americans are looking for a solution to this matter, which nevertheless for now is unsolvable.

Minister [of Justice Albert Christian Willem] Beerman, in response to the troubles that the “Java” owned by the Royal Rotterdam Lloyd is having in an American port, inquires whether Foreign Affairs has determined a standpoint regarding shipping to Cuba. Assistant secretary Van Houten replies, that in the NATO council the Americans have said, that if a ship transports weapons to Cuba the ports of the US will be closed to all ships of that country. Furthermore a ship that carries other goods to Cuba will no longer be permitted to enter American ports. From our side it has been said, that we are prepared to adopt the measures to constrain shipping to Cuba, but that these should not be such, that the principle of the freedom of the sea is eroded. England, Italy, and a few other countries have taken a similar standpoint. The prime minister adds to this, that the Dutch government has no instruments of power to prevent Dutch ships from transporting goods to Cuba. Minister Beerman remarks, that the government can only prevent these ships from loading weapons in the Netherlands.

[...]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Minutes of the Council of Ministers, 2.02.05.02, 19 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 4

Cable from Washington (Schiff) via The Hague (CELER), 23 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 23 October 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 23 October 1962

TO: Havana

FROM: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

SECRET

On 22 October under 899 Schiff sent a cable from Washington “In response to press reports regarding intensive internal deliberations at the highest level with regard to ‘New US Foreign Policy Move’ [in] relation to which highest government officials [have been] confined to Washington and president this morning summoned key leaders of Congress to Washington, regarding which it should [be noted] that secrecy is of a level rarely observed here. Attempts made at important departments [of] State to acquire at least an indication of the issue at stake, Berlin, Cuba [Cuba is underlined with pen—trans.] or India so far have been unsuccessful. On inquiry it became clear that neither British nor French embassy has any idea what is going on.

Kennedy has convened both National Security Council and cabinet this afternoon and will make a statement at 19.00 hours.”

CELER [on behalf of the minister]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 119. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 5

Dutch Prime Minister Jan E. de Quay, Diary, 23 October 1962

Will it be war? I cannot believe it, that would mean destruction; yet a precarious matter (...) if the West never says ‘Halt’, communism will always carry on.

[Source: State Archives, Den Bosch, archive J.E. de Quay, diary 48, no. 5296, p. 96-97, 23 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 6

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 23 October 1962

Received: 8 November 1962

No. 2337/545.

22 October 1962,

Havana, 23 October 1962.

C U B A:

Politics.

The speeches of Dr. Ernesto Guevara, Minister of Industry, are worth listening to because he does not mince words. If the hard truth needs to be told then “Che” will tell it.

In the past days he addressed the Cuban Youth Movement, since then changed by Fidel Castro into the “Union of Young Communists” [“*Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas*”], on the second birthday of this organization, with a speech that was only rarely interrupted by applause.

He described the task of the U.J.C., was of the opinion that its members ought to have showed greater initiative, turned against sectarianism and other faults of the past, pointed out weaknesses, amateurism and childish romanticism and then the Argentine medic flogged their more than mediocre labor performance. In the succeeding sentences of his argumentation the word “trabajo” [“work”] appeared six times. Now we all know that the U.J.C. was drummed up to harvest the coffee berries. The city was full of billboards with a drawing, representing a happily smiling figure reaching for the last berry of a bush with the caption: “so no berry is lost.”

Where are then these professional coffee pickers, one would be inclined to ask? They are on guard duty! A short

while ago the women's union was called upon to help pick coffee: the U.J.C. had not been able to pull it off on their own.....

23 October. Reflections on labor performance in general have by now become academic because of the general mobilization proclaimed yesterday. Moreover the airport is closed, one hopes temporarily, so that it is impossible to ascertain when these lines will reach Your Excellency.

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 7

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
23 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 23 October 1962
TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

General mobilization proclaimed, Fidel [Castro], who will speak today, probably waits for instructions Moscow. Airport closed. Copy letter P.G. [permanent representative, trans.] Cuba V.N. [United Nations—trans.] to president V.R. [Security Council—trans.] sent to heads of mission by Cuban department Foreign Affairs.

Boissevain 66

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 82. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 8

Dutch Prime Minister Jan E. de Quay, Diary, 24
October 1962

He [minister for Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns] totally disagrees with the American step and does not want a communiqué.

[Source: State Archives, Den Bosch, archive J.E. de Quay, diary 48, no. 5297, p. 97-98, 24 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 9

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
24 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 24 October 1962
TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

Provocative speech [by] Fidel [Castro] offers no news. President [of] Brazil [João Goulart] has [instructed Brazilian] Ambassador Havana [Luis Bastian Pinto] to find out whether government Cuba would permit investigation concerning "offensive weapons," after which definitive negative answer. With this Rio touched the heart of the matter to prevent either fruitless name-calling or war.

Boissevain 67

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 82. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 10

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana
(Boissevain), 24 October 1962

To His Excellency
the Minister of Foreign Affairs
in
The Hague

CONFIDENTIAL.

2345/550.

Havana, 24 October 1962.

C U B A:

Espionage.

Through my report No. 1671/418 d[ate]d 31 July 1962 I have informed Your Excellency with regard to attempts from the government to move Cuban members of the staff of diplomatic missions and the housekeeping staff to provide information concerning their employers.

In the French Embassy this has led to a resolute demarche by the Quai d'Orsay to the Cuban Ambassador who no doubt will have informed his government thereof. Notwithstanding this a second attempt was undertaken: a Cuban secretary, whose husband had previously been imprisoned on suspicion of anti-revolutionary intentions, was summoned at a police commissariat, supposedly for reading a compromising American text. When she attempted to show that the piece objected to was completely harmless an interrogator of the infamous Departamento de Seguridad del Estado (G2) appeared and told her that the accusation had only been a pretext for asking her what she was doing for the revolution or what she was prepared to do. Was there not a member of the embassy staff who spoke German? Indeed such was the case (the Alsatian Vogt). If yes, perhaps she could busy herself with the acquisition of information regarding the embassy of the Federal Republic [of Germany] and not the French....

When I was temporary deacon of the Corps Diplomatique I addressed a personal letter to Dr. Roa, the Minister of Foreign Relations, to complain about these practices on behalf of my colleagues (the nunciature had also voiced a complaint) and myself.

The reason was that the gardener of the official residence had been visited by a person who had made him propositions like the ones indicated above. He would among other things note the license plates of the automobiles of visitors to which the man responded that he

1. mostly carried out his work in the garden behind the residence and therefore was unable to observe arriving automobiles,

2. that his employers had treated him well, reason for him not to lend himself to such work.

Shortly thereafter three persons came to his house, took him with them in a car, subjected him to a harsh interrogation during which one of them struck him in the jaw and left him on the street, far from his house. Since then these agents have returned once more.

In my letter I argued that I thought it honorable for Cuba that all these persons had refused and—despite the dangers this presented them with—had reported the matter to their chefs, and that, as I trusted, this statement would result in the immediate cessation of these threats and bribery.

The response of the Minister was an “Es ist nicht wahr!” [“It is not true!”] My accusation was an offense to the Departamento de Seguridad del Estado (G2) which was incapable of doing such a thing. Perhaps agents of the Central Intelligence Agency had played a role in the events!

An oral demarche by the French Ambassador and myself to the vice-minister of Foreign Relations followed which, in the case of Burggraaf Du Gardier, has led to a tempestuous talk.

Today the gardener informed me that the same person who had “visited” him the first time had come to smooth things over: there had been a misunderstanding, protection of the embassies, good relations with the Netherlands.....

Could one be more naïve?

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: *National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.*]



DOCUMENT No. 11

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 24 October 1962

REFERENCE No. 10209

DATE OF DISPATCH: 24 October 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 25 October 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

Regarding Cuba

Since the period of strict secrecy was ended by Kennedy's speech last Monday [22 October] the press has of course embarked upon extensive speculation regarding both what preceded the quarantine decision and the considerations that laid the foundations for that decision and the further course of events. The article by [Max] Frankel in today's *New York Times* contains a fairly complete overview of the lines of argument that one can hear at [the] State [Department]. In response to the statement therein that if the Russians would be willing to negotiate about the dismantling of the base in Cuba "it was conceivable that the US might be willing to dismantle one of the obsolescent American bases near Soviet territory," the State [Department's] Western Europe department [head?] upon being asked stated categorically that there could be no such trade-off and that this was not being considered in the least: "completely and flatly untrue."

In my opinion it is not entirely inconceivable that at a certain moment they might still proceed to meet a Russian retreat on Cuba with the removal of a single American base, for which dismantlement had already been considered as an option. If this would indeed be the intention of course the value of such a gesture would be greatly diminished in advance by labelling such a base "obsolescent."

From the circles of the ambassadorial working group concerning Berlin it was heard that yesterday among other things they discussed the argumentation used by the Americans to announce the quarantine; apparently especially [French ambassador to the United States Hervé] Alphand pointed out that the argument of the offensive nature of the Russian missile installations is not very strong since after all the question whether a missile is defensive or offensive demands a purely subjective answer, while in fact strategic intentions determine the nature of the weapons involved. In the American reasoning for example [Soviet] ICBMs are by definition offensive while those same missiles clearly play a defensive role in the Western strategy. In the same way the Cubans can posit that the Soviet MRBMs and IRBMs are of a purely retaliatory nature and therefore in fact form a deterrent and not a threat. Consequently in the group it was said that the US would have a much stronger position if they would make the disturbance of the strategic equilibrium and therefore the status quo the centrepiece, in other words if they focus the attention on the unprecedented element brought into the international strategic relations by the Soviets.

Van Roijen 907.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 12

Minutes of the Council of Ministers, The Hague, 25 October 1962

TOP SECRET

Council of Ministers
No. 3098

Minutes of the meeting
held on Thursday 25 October 1962 in the Trèves Room
commenced at ten o'clock in the morning

Present:

Prime minister De Quay and ministers Van Aartsen, Beerman, Klompé, Korthals, Marijnen, De Pous, Toxopeus, Veldkamp, Visser (partially) and Zijlstra

(Absent are ministers Cals en Luns)

Secretary: J. Middelburg

1. The Cuban issue

The prime minister—before proceeding to the actual subject of this meeting—raises the Cuban issue. The previous day he had a telephone conversation with [foreign] minister [Joseph] Luns, who will return to The Hague this evening. In the House of Representatives the chairman originally was to announce that the government could not yet make a statement about the Dutch standpoint, but he called the speaker shortly before the start of the meeting to ask if he would do so himself. [...]

Minister [of Home Affairs Edzo] Toxopeus also feels that the statement is too long. [Belgian Foreign] Minister Spaak, after a meeting with the ministers of foreign affairs of the Six, made a statement. Whatever one's opinion of the American action toward Cuba may be, the unity of the West demands, that it is supported.

The prime minister agrees with minister Toxopeus, that even if the government would not agree with the American

government, it would still be obliged to be in solidarity. Speaker concludes, that the introduction should be greatly reduced in size.

Minister [of Transport, Public Works and Water Management Henk] Korthals remarks, that Cuba does not belong to NATO territory. Speaker has in a letter sent the previous day repeated his earlier request of 4 October to the ship owners to abstain from transporting weapons to Cuba. To this he has now added instructions for the captains not to cause incidents, should they be stopped by the American navy.

Minister [of Justice] Beerman asks whether it is right to mention NATO in the government statement, since the American government took the measures with no prior knowledge of the NATO Council. Minister [of the Treasury Jelle] Zijlstra remarks, that Cuba might not be in NATO territory, but that if a crisis were to ensue there, it would have repercussions for the Berlin issue. Speaker points out, that it was not possible for the American government to consult the NATO Council in advance; consultation will however be necessary regarding the offering of support, since that should be dealt with within NATO. Minister [of Social Work Marga] Klompé inquires as to what was discussed in the NATO Council. The prime minister answers, that the American representative in NATO has said, that there is no doubt, that offensive military bases have been constructed in Cuba. Furthermore it was said, that the NATO countries would be kept informed about the continuation of the American quarantine measures. From other NATO countries' side it has been stated, that Cuba falls outside of NATO's territory, but that all countries are politically very interested in this action. In the other NATO countries only a few special measures have been taken. Minister Beerman wonders what the American quarantine measure means. It cannot only consist of checking ships' papers, but must also include bringing ships into an American port.

[...]

Minister Zijlstra understands support for the American policy, with which the draft statement ends, in the first place to mean the effort to get the Dutch ships to cooperate with the American measures (which for the Netherlands with its large fleet could mean a sacrifice) and furthermore supporting the American standpoint in the UN by dismissing all other resolutions. The prime minister proposes, that he will once more attempt to get in touch with minister Luns, so as to tell him, that the Council of Ministers agrees with issuing the (shortened) statement. The council is agreed on this.

[...]

The prime minister later in the meeting announces, that has spoken to minister Luns on the telephone and that the latter agreed with the statement that speaker will now send to the chairman of the House of Representatives.

[...]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Minutes of the Council of Ministers, 2.02.05.02, 25 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 13

Dutch Prime Minister Jan E. de Quay, Diary, 25 October 1962

[concerning a cabinet meeting:] The attitude is kind of indifferent. I think [US President John F.] Kennedy's act is good. I would like to support him more strongly.

[Source: State Archives, Den Bosch, archive J.E. de Quay, diary 48, no. 5298, p. 98, 25 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 14

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 25 October 1962

Received: 8 November 1962

No. 2355/553.

Havana, 25 October 1962.

C U B A:
Politics.

As I have noted in previous reports, in the speeches of Cuban government persons often what is not said is of greater importance than what is.

In his T.V. address Fidel Castro did not deny that weapons of the kind that the C.I.A. has suddenly discovered in Cuba, would have arrived and been installed here. This denial has in fact been heard from Khrushchev these days. The impression these statements to and fro give is that they are probably building installations in Cuba which from the air look like the batteries of dangerous long-range "ground to ground" missiles which could possibly be fitted with nuclear warheads. The US however also knows that their full equipment will take some more time and therefore intends to prevent the supply of any necessary parts and materiel.

Apparently the Cuban government considers the recent development in the [United Nations] Security Council satisfactory because the Rancho Boyeros airport near Havana has been reopened to approved flights, to which the local representative of the K.L.M. [Royal Dutch Airlines] responded by proposing to his superior in Curaçao to make both flights on next Monday, 29 October go through.

In the current distressful situation, in which a heavy burden has been laid on the Cuban people, there has been one "note gaie": the elephants, lions, tigers, and bears of the Soviet Russian circus are expected or have already arrived. In diplomatic circles the question is being considered whether these are defensive or offensive weapons. I have remarked that the smell of some of these animals is certainly highly "offensive".....

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 15

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 25 October 1962

REFERENCE No. 10255

DATE OF DISPATCH: 25 October 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 26 October 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

Reference my 907.

During a talk with [Galen L.] Stone, deputy director [of the State Department's Bureau of] Western European Affairs, he gave a more detailed overview of the recent developments.

firstly Halfway through the summer it had become clear to Washington that Khrushchev was out to realize Russian objectives with regard to Berlin as soon as possible. In the opinion of the Americans Khrushchev had become so involved in the Berlin issue and the internal pressure had become so great that he could not afford to compromise and therefore was aiming at a showdown.

secondly The Soviets had first confidentially and then also publicly let the US know that they would engage the Berlin issue after the American [mid-term Congressional] elections.

thirdly Concerning Cuba the Soviets had firmly assured the US that they would not supply Cuba with offensive weapons and in this vein had even specified the range of the weapons which were being delivered. For instance TASS had in early October sent out an emphatic statement that the weapons stationed on Cuba could not reach the US.

Incidentally the statement by [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko on weapons delivered to Cuba referenced by Kennedy in his address on the twenty-second of this month had been read from paper by the former.

fourthly In a departure from what had previously been heard from [the Department of] State Stone stated that Khr[ushchev] during his talk with [US ambassador in Moscow Foy D.] Kohler on the sixteenth of this month had stated that he was "virtually decided" to come to the US during the second half of November.

fifthly The fact that the construction of the bases was carried out with such haste that no effort was made to apply camouflage, indicates that this construction was bound to a certain time limit.

All these facts had convinced the administration that the Soviets had the fixed determination to confront the US during Khr[ushchev]'s visit with the fait accompli of an operative missile base in Cuba and by this startling acute threat [against] the US bring the Berlin issue to the solution they desired.

The administration is convinced that the Western position concerning Berlin has now as a result of the initiative in the

Cuban matter—through which the Soviets have lost a valuable trump card—been strengthened.

Van Roijen 910.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 16

Dutch Prime Minister Jan E. de Quay, Diary, 26 October 1962

This morning [Foreign Minister Joseph] Luns came to visit me, returned from vacation. He looked well, listened and was much calmer. At last he agreed with the support for the US.

[Source: State Archives, Den Bosch, archive J.E. de Quay, diary 48, no. 5299, p. 98, 26 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 17

Cable from Dutch Foreign Minister Joseph Luns, The Hague, to Dutch Embassy, London, 26 October 1962

REFERENCE No. 7355
DATE OF DISPATCH: 26 October 1962
FROM: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].
ORIGINAL INITIALED BY: tb [not further identified]
TO: London
SECRET

On the 23rd of this month the British temporary envoy handed the interim minister of foreign affairs a personal letter from [UK Foreign Secretary] Lord [Alec Douglas-]Home to me, the text of which, with salutations left out, follows below “you will have heard what the president said to the public about Cuba, and received a report of what passed in the North Atlantic Council. I would be most grateful if you

would let me know your thoughts. We shall, of course, do what we can to give support to the United States in the [UN] Security Council. At the same time, there may be repercussions not only in the Caribbean, but also in Europe and elsewhere. We must surely keep in the closest touch when we see the Soviet government’s reaction.”

After returning from vacation I took note of this letter today the 26th of this month upon which I sent the following reply to Lord Home via the British embassy here.

“Thank you very much for your message of October 23rd. I agree with you that the government of the United States must be supported in its policy to prevent the Soviet Union from turning Cuba into an offensive military base. We intend to show understanding with regard to measures taken for this purpose. At the same time I agree with you that developments must be watched closely on account of repercussions which they might have elsewhere and of possible consequences for the North Atlantic alliance. I welcome your suggestion that we keep in the closest touch.”

Luns 134.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 18

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 26 October 1962

REFERENCE No. 10300
DATE OF DISPATCH: 26 October 1962
DATE OF RECEIPT: 27 October 1962.
TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].
FROM: Washington
Information copy sent to: New York
SECRET

Although the president in his address on Monday left no doubt that the policy of the US strives not only to stop the supply of offensive weapons to Cuba but also most certainly the removal of the missile bases there, the measures taken so far have been exclusively aimed at the former goal. This does not mean that there is not a very active effort to develop plans to also realize the second desideratum. Consequently

Secretary [of State Dean] Rusk yesterday in an off-the-record press conference with a limited number of journalists very emphatically stated that the dismantlement of the bases and the removal of the missiles are essential. The reason is of course that the president has through his announcement of the facts made it impossible for the Soviets to surprise the US with the announcement of the presence of bases on Cuba as part of a new approach to the Berlin issue, but that the acute threat to the US remains in existence and will weaken the negotiating position of the US at the critical moment.

[Francis E.] Meloy, [Jr.] director [of the State Department's] Western Europe [Bureau], confirmed again that the construction of the bases is being continued at a frantic pace and that as time goes on the threat to the US increases. The element of time is therefore of great significance. In response to a request for comment on a press release that "the State Department made clear today that further action of an unspecified nature is being considered to deal with the continuing Soviet missile build-up in Cuba" Meloy could not provide an answer. He merely pointed out that the use of force to remove the bases is not excluded, although of course this will not be resorted to save in the worst case.

By way of an elucidation of the above and the explanation by Stone contained in my [cable no.] 910 I believe to be able to summarize the American point of view as follows.

As a result of various circumstances Khrushchev sees himself forced to definitively address the Berlin issue in the short term, i.e. before the end of this year, of course with the intention to make the Soviet position prevail. To this end it is necessary for him to strengthen his negotiating position through a military threat. The latter would have to include the possibility for the Soviet Union to launch a first blow that would if not neutralize the American "second strike capability" then at least weaken it severely. Since the Soviet Union, which does possess a large number of MRBMs and IRBMs, does not possess enough ICBMs to achieve the stated goal, the Soviet threat lacks the necessary credibility. This lacuna will be filled by the installation of MRBM and IRBM bases in Cuba, where the missiles are "zeroed in" on the American retaliation bases. This threat would be serious in itself but the US would have been caught in an even more impossible situation if the announcement of the addition to the Russian "first strike capability" would by surprise have coincided with a Soviet initiative to acutely address the Berlin issue. The American action has struck the trump card of surprise from Khrushchev's hands yet the much more important trump card of the Cuban bases remains in existence and gains in significance the more those bases near their completion.

The preceding could confirm that the US indeed only very recently acquired indisputable evidence of the presence

of the Soviet missiles and also explains the great speed with which the administration has acted. Furthermore more effective action in the short term would fit well into this line of reasoning.

Van Roijen 916 +

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 19

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 27 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 26 October 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 27 October 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

CONFIDENTIAL

Obviously State Department is showing great interest in messages from Havana about mood and developments over there. If [Dutch ambassador to Cuba G.W.] Boissevain still has the opportunity to report in writing, would you approve of redirecting not only his telegrams but also his letters to me?

Van Roijen 918

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 20

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 27 October 1962

REFERENCE No. 10319

DATE OF DISPATCH: 27 October 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 28 October 1962.
TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].
FROM: Washington
Information copy sent to: New York
SECRET

Concerning the statement issued by the White House today regarding the latest proposal by Khrushchev [vide my 365 559] I learned the following from a very trustworthy and generally very well informed member of the press.

The fact that this statement was [tough] in wording must be attributed primarily to the fact the text of Khrushchev's message this morning, which before receipt in Washington had already been released in Moscow, was completely different from that of a personal message which Kennedy received last night from Khr[ushchev] and which amounted to complete capitulation, with no preconditions regarding the bases in Turkey.

The reason for this about-face can only be guessed at. My informant put forward the possibility that those close to Khrushchev, e.g. the military, pressured him to withdraw his first offer. Yet the present offer also includes such an element of capitulation [since the bases in Turkey that the US press referred to as "obsolescent" cannot equal the value the Cuban bases have to the Soviets] that one must wonder what moved Khr[ushchev] to this new move. It is possible that we are dealing with an attempt to create the greatest possible confusion, not as much in Washington as among the [Soviet] allies and sympathizers. Another possibility, which was put forward by *NY Times* correspondent [Max] Frankel, is that the Soviets are afraid of US action against Cuba and are attempting to gain time, in which regard the frantic pace with which the construction of the bases in Cuba continues can be pointed at.

In any case, it seems to me that Kennedy reacted in the right way by resolutely refusing to accept the offered "deal," while at the same time keeping the door open for consultations regarding the Soviet desiderata after the Cuban threat will have disappeared.

Van Roijen 920.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 21

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
29 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 29 October 1962
TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

With reference to tripartite agreement US-UN-SU Fidel declared that no guarantee sufficient unless, besides abolishing blockade, the following will be ceased:

- Firstly economic blockade
- Secondly aid to anti's and espionage
- Thirdly pirate attacks from US and Puerto Rico
- Fourthly flights over Cuba
- Fifthly dissolving [the US] base [of] Guantanamo

Boissevain 68

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 22

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
29 October 1962

Received: 8 November 1962

No. 2378/559.

Havana, 29 October 1962.

C U B A:
Worries about the future.

Many Cuban "gusanos" (counterrevolutionaries [lit. "worms"—ed.]) are presently worrying about the possibility that after the dismantling of the Russian missile sites in Cuba under the supervision of the U.N., the prospect of guarantees against an invasion put forward by Kennedy will result in a

perpetuation of the Castro-regime and possibly even a restoration of trade relations with the US

They are beginning to wonder if, to put it crudely, “as on Playa Girón [i.e., at the Bay of Pigs—ed.] they will again be abandoned and have only been used as instruments to provide the Democratic Party with the prestige it so urgently requires for the upcoming American elections.”

The statements of Raúl Castro (in a speech made yesterday at Santiago de Cuba shortly after the decision to dismantle) only 5 days after those of Fidel (the day after the quarantine was proclaimed in a television program on the 23rd of this month) are indeed reminiscent of a first step on the road to adjustment to the circumstances that underwent such change in this short time. Compare:

Fidel: “We do not even consider giving account to or asking advice from the august members of the Senate and House of the US about the weapons, which we consider it proper to purchase.”

“We purchase weapons for our defense at will and we take the measures we consider necessary for our defense at our discretion.”

Raúl mentions in passing the decision taken by Khrushchev to dismantle the missile sites as a run-up to new Cuban demands for guarantees, including those concerning the evacuation of the naval base of Guantánamo.

Fidel: “No one inspects our country, no one can come and inspect our country because we will never authorize anyone to do so and never will we give up our sovereign right that it is we who are in charge within our borders and that it is we who inspect and no one else.”

“Anyone who proposes to inspect Cuba, knows that he should show up in battle dress.”

Raúl does not mention a word about the arrival tomorrow of U Thant, who is coming to further arrange the supervision of the dismantling.

Fidel: “Opposite this policy of provocation and violence: our forceful, calm attitude of self-defense. The attitude of the Soviet Union: the calm, exemplary attitude. The answer of the Soviet Union has been a true lesson for imperialism, forceful, calm, loaded with arguments, loaded with reasons, which reveals the aggressive policy of Mr Kennedy.”

Raúl must have found it difficult to have to be the first to also say a good word about the

gesture made by the Soviet Union “in the name of mankind,” which should serve as an example to the US “if indeed a good will exists and we should be allowed to believe that this (good will) can arise in the brains of the American leaders.”

Toward the end of his speech Raúl addressed his big brother “comrade Fidel, highest representative of the Party and of the Government, founder of the first Socialist State of America,” with assurances that the people stand behind him as one and that it is “prepared to unconditionally accept and carry out the orders, which he will wish to give in name of the people of Cuba, of the Party, and of the Government, and as supreme commander.”

This is what is being worried about: that after the settlement of the conflict, Fidel, however sobered up inwardly, will in his familiar way manage to announce to the common herd that he has likewise “for the sake of mankind” abandoned some of his demands (including Guantánamo!); with the guarantees given to Cuba and the Soviet Union, which put an end to the economic boycott, to piracy, and to the violation of Cuban airspace, the country will however be able to freely work on its golden future in cooperation with its Marxist-Leninist brothers!

Whether this fear will prove justified, or whether after Fidel’s grandiloquence his “people” will still be inclined to swallow everything he puts in front of them, remains an open question. The fact is that after the exuberance of the first days of mobilization a silence has set in among the ranks of his supporters, an anxious silence that is shared by his enemies who live between hope and fear.

Most of my foreign colleagues believe that Fidel will emerge from the battle stronger than ever, be it without the missile installations.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 23

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
31 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 31 October 1962
TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

Rmc [Reference my codes message, trans.] 68. Statement [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa to the Brazilian Ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto] shows 5 points are not so much directed to the US but against the SU whose concession given around the Cuban government disturbed Fidel [Castro].

Regretful that from both sides [put] pressure on peace apostle [UN Acting Secretary General U] Thant: American press presents his mission meant for organizing inspection rockets installations; airport English declaration: "we support 5 points [of] Fidel." Asked by Roa what he thought about the points, the Brazilian answered that Cuba asked too much, after which the minister said that these points are negotiable.

On short term dismantling [of] rocket bases in exchange for abolishing blockade. The rest is part of future settlement Cuban US conflict

Boissevain 69

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 24

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 1 November 1962

Received: 8 November 1962
No. 2387/562.
Havana, 1 November 1962.
C U B A:
Politics.

Although I cannot guess when an occasion for sending this report will present itself, I will nevertheless compose it by way of a kind of chronicle of the events that follow each other rapidly in this restless country.

In one of many anecdotes about [George] Bernard Shaw, during the performance of one of his plays, he said to a noisy "critic" in the gallery: "We appear to be in agreement Sir, but what is our opinion against that of the majority!"

In Cuba things are the other way around: not spontaneous support for government actions and a handful of opposition, but a "máximo líder" time and again more prominently standing out who is taking decisions and announces these in public and then assures adhesion in the form of slogans, newspaper articles, poems, radio shouting, and telegrams from all countries of the Soviet bloc plus Bertrand Russell.

The ensuing step is a speech by Fidel wherein he gives the people a full explanation of what has already taken place.

Even the Soviet Union seems to have taken part in this game in the scene of the second act that was enacted just now: Tass has declared its [i.e., Soviet] agreement with the five points [of Fidel Castro] and Anastas Mikoyan is on his way to Havana as a "trouble shooter." Is the Armenian coming as a "Dutch Uncle" or to eat humble pie? A third possibility is that he will inform Fidel about some deep game or another that the Soviet Union is playing with the United States.

Meanwhile Mr [U] Thant has returned to New York without accomplishing his aim, the blockade will probably be resumed, and in Cayo Hueso there is the same military busyness as everywhere in Cuba.

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 25

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 1 November 1962

REFERENCE No. 10448
DATE OF DISPATCH: 1 November 1962
DATE OF RECEIPT: 2 November 1962.
TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].
FROM: Washington
Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

I would like to draw attention to the following points from a conversation I had today with one of the officials of the directorate far eastern affairs of the State Dept

firstly [My] informant said that the people at State were very pleased, at least so far, that Sukarno had not made any statement in support of Castro in the Cuba crisis. The Indonesian president did have the occasion to do so, such as during a recent speech to students. According to [the] informant perhaps this wise forbearance from Sukarno's side could be read as a first indication of the salutary effect the firm and resolute course of action of the Kennedy government regarding Cuba will have—according to expectations.

secondly The US government intends to point out to Jakarta, as they hope superfluously, the way in which the S[oviet] U[nion] did not hesitate to abandon its friend India which had gone out of its way to curry Moscow's favour, once push came to shove in the conflict with China; "we hope the lesson won't be lost on Sukarno." I then gave as my opinion that Sukarno would continue untiringly in his attempts to play US and SU off against one another.

thirdly Informant said that my colleague [Indonesian Ambassador Zairin] Zain will soon pay a four to six week visit to Indonesia. Zain has lately devoted himself to procuring new economic support from the US to his country. He has taken steps to achieve this both at State and with other bodies. According to informant the US side is in principle willing to provide support in order to prevent Indonesia from slipping into chaos any further. At the same time they [the Americans] are determined only to provide this support if assurances will be obtained that the money for economic development will be usefully spent. To this end for example the International Monetary Fund could according to informant be engaged. Under no circumstances do they want to run the risk of later finding out, as recently happened in the case of Brazil, that the support/money ended up in the wrong hands.

Van Roijen 926 ++

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 26

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 2 November 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 2 November 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

Speech [on evening of 1 November by] Fidel [Castro] about conversations with [UN Secretary General U] Thant, of which second confidential, shows that Cuba refuses inspection; If UN accepts American guarantee of non-aggression then promise SU with regard to taking back strategic weaponry without inspection can be accepted. Mentioned his 5 conditions for peace and declared Cuba prepared to cooperate to reach true peace. Mentioned disagreement with SU but called for discipline, confidence in SU and its leaders and indicated weaponry property SU and supervised by Soviet technicians. Hinted that global politics which does not concern Cuba reason for Soviet concession. Have impression Cuban government determined and solution conflict extremely difficult.

Boissevain 71

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 27

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 2 November 1962

Received: 9 November 1962

No. 2398/566.

Havana, 2 November 1962.

C U B A:

Politics.

I could have written the speech made by Fidel Castro last night to report to the Cuban people about his meeting with U Thant before it was delivered. The people must be kept at boiling point to make the many sacrifices which are

demanding of them and to forget the many hardships which are imposed on them as a result of anti-American policy and the shiftlessness of the people themselves. The interim [UN] Secretary General came to sound out the revolutionary government concerning a settlement of the burning issue which threatened the world with war, namely the Russian missile bases and the American blockade. Yet he was presented with a series of complaints which, however justified some of them might be, concern the long-term deterioration of US–Cuban relations. According to my perception this can be traced back to the non-execution of the indemnification part of the agricultural reform law and the subsequent confiscation of American property in Cuba, also without indemnification. The ensuing development is only too well known. The case has turned into a kind of Corsican vendetta.

However much the prime minister has urged discipline, understanding for the world political problems of the Soviet Union, and the expression of friendship with Moscow and its leaders, followed by the exclamation, “above all we are Marxist-Leninists” (approving looks from the old communists and several minutes of applause), all Soviet flags and slogans have nevertheless disappeared from the streets, even the words of welcome to the astronaut [Yuri] Gagarin which still hung by the road to the airport in Spanish and Russian.

There is great disappointment that Fidel missed such an opportunity for blackmail and fussing. [Anastas] Mikoyan will have a hard time because the Cuban is as intransigent with the one side as he is with the other. But he has to be careful: if he goes too far or if an excited revolutionary does something imprudent with respect to the Armenian leader of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin might just leave him flat!

Fidel called the inspection of the dismantling of the missile bases an American attempt to humiliate Cuba. On this sole point Mikoyan could make a pacifying gesture by giving Washington the solemn assurance that the “strategic weapons” installed by Russia will indeed be removed. This would allow for a return to the “status quo ante” [before] the recent crisis. I do not dissemble that such would by any means lead to an amelioration of the relations between the US and Cuba in which the great stumbling block is the communism accepted by the revolutionary government which has brought the US to the mentality described in the verse:

“I do not like thee Dr. Fell, the reason why I cannot tell,
but all the same I know full well, I do not like thee Dr. Fell.”

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 28

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 2 November 1962

REFERENCE No. 10502

DATE OF DISPATCH: 2 November 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 3 November 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign]. A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

During the talk with [the] director [of the State Department's Bureau of] Inter-American Regional Political Affairs [vide my 935] I inquired as to further actions to be expected from the side of the OAS. [Ward P.] Allen said that although intensive consultations are taking place on the level of the OAS, in the near future probably only a decision to establish a sort of “unified command” can be expected in this regard he noted that the first Argentine warship is expected at Trinidad today or tomorrow where the admiral, charged with the execution of the quarantine, has set up his headquarters.

Concerning the attitude of the various Latinos Allen in the first place mentioned Mexico whose standpoint of course enjoys great recognition. About Brazil he remarked that the impression is that the Brazilian government displays a different attitude towards other countries than it does domestically. Finally he was full of praise for Bolivia which had in the hour of danger declared solidarity with the hemisphere, thereby stepping over its national grievances, and especially for the Bolivian representative who without instructions decided to attend the OAS meeting last week and to vote in favor of the US standpoint, without having the assurance that his action would be completely accepted by the Bolivian government.

It was apparent that Allen possessed very little information concerning the situation in Cuba itself. He was informed by me on the basis of Boissevain 69, for which Allen showed himself most appreciative.

Van Roijen 934 ++

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 29

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 2 November 1962

REFERENCE No. 10499

DATE OF DISPATCH: 2 November 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 3 November 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

SECRET

r u c [unknown abbreviation, presumably “reference your cable”—trans.] 593

Matter of the thirteen Cuban instructions sent in *currie* [unknown term/name—trans.] was taken up with [Ward P.] Allen, Director [of] Inter-American Regional Political Affairs [at the State Department]. He stated that the notice in question had come from Venezuela where a message had been intercepted by the government. In order to obtain more insight into the content of the instructions and in order to ascertain on the basis of the text whether the instruction was clearly intended for all pro-Castro organizations in Latin America they had asked for the text through the US embassy in Caracas, yet so far without avail. Although [the Department of] State therefore possesses nothing but the report from Caracas, Allen assumed it virtually certain that this was indeed an attempt by Castro to stir all Latino countries.

The reports from the various Latin American posts received so far did not yet enable State to infer whether a “pattern” of agitation and sabotage had in fact begun to emerge. They did establish that in the week of the 22nd of October, so immediately after the announcement of the quarantine, the size of the protests that occurred had been limited. It was not clear to what extent these demonstrations which antedate the abovementioned Cuban instructions, should be ascribed to the independent initiative of local communist and other pro-Castro groups, or to instructions from Havana or from Moscow. In any case informant was inclined to draw the conclusion that the communist following in Latin America

was less sizeable, or at least less active, than is often thought. Incidentally he did not exclude the possibility of a significant role being played by the fact that in the various countries the police had been warned after the US embassies in the various capitals had prepared the governments for the possibility of troubles.

Van Roijen 935 ++

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 30

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 7 November 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 7 November 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

German embassy reports that in several places Russian weapons are hidden in holes or under cement after which yards photographed by helicopters probably for later identification. With regard to conversation [between] Fidel [Castro and Anastas] Mikoyan nothing new but Soviet [national] day celebrated with expressions of friendship and notification of 5 points by ex-communist [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez.

Boissevain

73

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 82. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 31

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 9 November 1962

REFERENCE No. 10705

DATE OF DISPATCH: 9 November 1962.

DATE OF RECEIPT: 10 November 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

SECRET

Today I had a talk with my British colleague [UK Ambassador David Ormsby-Gore] from which I should like to mention briefly the following:

With regard to the question of how Moscow will react to the defeat suffered in the Cuba crisis, Ormsby-Gore currently distinguishes two tendencies: on the one hand those who are of the opinion that Khrushchev will, if only to restore his prestige, be compelled to make a powerful countermove; on the other hand those whose judgment is that Khrushchev has finally understood that the Americans in fact are willing to fight for their vital national interests, has drawn the necessary lessons from this and in his further cold war policy will proceed with the necessary prudence.

My colleague himself, and as he said his government as well, is inclined to believe that the Kremlin will not take any more major risks in the current circumstances and is more likely to operate in a circumspect fashion. "All straws in the wind seem to point that way." [In this regard it should be noted that [Llewellyn E.] Thompson, former ambassador of the US in Moscow and presently advisor for Soviet affairs of the secretary of state, today told one of my other Western European colleagues that he personally did not believe that Moscow will make a countermove in Berlin.]. In the meantime Ormsby-Gore agreed with me that it was yet far too early to form a well-grounded opinion about this with any certainty [since in Moscow too a re-assessment is taking place] and that especially that NATO should be prepared for anything and take precautions for all eventualities.

My British colleague agreed with me that one of the most critical moments during the Cuba crisis had probably been the moment between the announcement of the quarantine measures against Cuba on Wednesday morning, the 24th of October and Thursday the 25th of October when it became clear that the Soviet ships had received orders to change their course. We had both established that at the time in government circles in Washington possible incidents involving Russian ships and which through a chain reaction could have led to a nuclear war were very seriously reckoned with.

During a recent meeting at the State Department, at which both Ormsby-Gore and our [West] German colleague

[Karl-Heinrich] Knapstein had been present, the latter had made a passionate speech about the possibility that the Russians or Cubans would hide missiles and other weapons in the caverns of the island. The Brit had countered that aerial reconnaissance had so far not detected any suspicious activities or traces near the caverns and furthermore that it was not very probable that the Russians after having been caught red-handed and having been forced to retreat would now risk a second fiasco with the purpose of hiding a few weapons inadequate to truly threaten the US clandestinely.

Informant responded affirmatively to my question whether he was not also convinced that the US government would not compromise regarding her demands concerning the removal from Cuba of the Ilyushin-28 bombers and regarding the verification within Cuba itself.

Van Roijen 960.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 32

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 19 November 1962

Received: 30 November 1962

No. 2510/583.

Havana, 19 November 1962.

Cuba "on a war footing."

I have the honor of offering Your Excellency, apart from the latest edition of "Verde Olivo" d.d. 18 of this month, the attached page of the Sunday supplement of the daily newspaper "El Mundo" with pictures of various posters that currently brighten up the townscape of Havana. Below a translation of the texts of these posters:-

"Supreme commander: command!"

"On a war footing"

"We are going to crush them and we are going to fire at them with every mortar and every cannon"

“To destroy the enemy!”

“Camilo—We will drive them back!”

“Death to the intruder!”

“The attack on Cuba will be the beginning of the end of imperialism” (loosely after Winston Churchill!)

“We will stop the intruders, drive them back and bury them”

“We are all one”

“To arms”

“Cuba will prevail”

“Against the blockade—More production”

“Every building, every labor center—a trench in defense of the fatherland”

“And... your blood will save a life.”

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 17318. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 33

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
20 November 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 20 November 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

Derive from the following firstly presidential farewell dinner for [Anastas] Mikoyan secondly absence Fidel [Castro] who was supposedly seen drunk elsewhere thirdly Fidel's let-

ter to [U] Thant in which concession with regard to Soviet bombers IL 28 (...), that Armenian [i.e., Mikoyan] finally got concession and with this accomplished mission.

Air raid on Cuban cargo vessel apparently intended to intimidate, after all Rio Damuji undamaged after 11 bombs, only understandable as expansion of quarantine towards a boycott of all shipping to Cuba which inevitably will result in hostilities.

Boissevain

78

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 34

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
21 November 1962

2517/585.

Havana, 21 November 1962.

C U B A:

Politics.

This is the country of heroic postures and noble slogans. When one sees a notice at a workshop, factory, or agricultural enterprise: “we support Fidel's five points” or “we will increase production in fraternal competition with x,” then it seems as if Mario, Pedro, and Ramón have been asked for their opinion and this has been put into writing. In reality of course the reverse is true. Mario, Pedro, and Ramón are reading—as far as they are able to read—what they are supposed to be thinking.

Since Fidel has brought in the Spartan mothers (he had read a book again) tensions have been rising because of the lack of a satisfactory settlement of the dispute. Now that President Kennedy has ended the “quarantine” the motto is: 1st no indiscretion about military affairs; 2nd despite the end of the illegal blockade, keep the powder dry or as it is literally called: “la guardia en alto.”

In the meantime the island has become almost completely isolated and already practice has shown that orders in Europe cannot be shipped or are received with considerable delays.

This does not however keep the revolutionary government from participating in popular movements elsewhere and the attached badge⁵ proves this.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 82. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 35

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
26 November 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 26 November 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

Farewell speech [was given by] Mikoyan which [was a] “pep talk” without contents showed that he did not succeed in getting further concessions from Fidel [Castro], which was confirmed by manifest rev. reg. [revolutionary government—trans.] in which 5 points [were] repeated, inspection [was] turned down, and the US [was] provoked.

Boissevain
79

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 36

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
26 November 1962

2528/588.
Havana, 26 November 1962.
C U B A:

Politics.

As [I reported to] Your Excellency through another channel, Anastas Mikoyan made a speech on the evening before his departure [from Cuba] consisting of communist platitudes and expressions of admiration for the Cuban people in its struggle against imperialism and its love for world peace. Time and again he covered himself with the mantle of Khrushchev’s name and he repeatedly mentioned Fidel Castro. Like Achilles the latter has withdrawn into the tent of the University, where he basks in the admiration of students of both sexes.

What the “máximo líder” has concocted was revealed on the morning of the long-awaited departure of the first vice-prime minister of the Soviet Union, namely a manifesto printed as: Cuba’s answer to Kennedy.

Apart from a repetition of the familiar five points this piece contains the provocative demand that the U.N. launch an investigation in the United States into the sites where attacks on Cuba are being prepared and that it accomplish the dismantling of the camps where volunteers are trained.

Cuba reserves the right to acquire any kind of weapons for its defense. “As Marxist-Leninists we defend peace out of conviction and as a principle.” The naked assurance of non-aggression does not satisfy the revolutionary government: she has as little faith in the words of President Kennedy as she has fear for his threats.

The die is cast! Unless the Soviet Union, which has abandoned or been forced to abandon friends in the past, pressures Cuba, for which means are available in abundance, I fear that the crisis will continue as will the boycott on the shipping trade with which the government and labor unions of the United States wield a powerful economic weapon.....

Now the jokes about the length of Mikoyan’s stay are subsiding.

Mr [James] Donovan was supposed to arrive to negotiate a ransom for Mikoyan⁶; the Armenian would not leave over sea, nor by airplane, but “con el caballo” (= Fidel Castro). What can the members of the bourgeoisie, who at the moment are not even able to leave, expect other than [or “as”] a steady deterioration of their living conditions?

For the Cuban people an anxious time begins!

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv.

87. *Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.*



DOCUMENT No. 37

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
28 November 1962

VIA AIR MAIL
F 15445/62

SECRET.
No. 2549/590/GS.91

Havana, 28 November 1962.

Hiding of offensive weapons? [the following line is in handwriting:] vide van Roijen 1021 (copy attached) regarding construction of underground fortifications, to which Cuba-distribution has been given. [unknown initial (BD? RD?); first number of date hardly legible but probably a "1":] 10/12-62

I have the honor to hereby present Your Excellency with a translation of some confidential information from the same trustworthy source as referred to in my GS.101 and 103 of December last year.

In this instance I have again chosen not to inform friendly missions, leaving it to Your Excellency's better judgment to pass this information on to the suitable foreign governments and international institutions.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain



[document begins with a sketch of a concrete arch, approximately 2.60 by 10 metres, on the back of a semi-trailer—trans.]

Over the past months several hundred concrete arches like the one sketched above have been spotted being driven through Caibarién (N.coast Las Villas province), loaded onto semi-trailers a few at a time, most likely because of the weight that these can carry.

This traffic was interrupted during the days of the crisis, but resumed from 21-23 November on, be it on a smaller scale. During these days for the full 24 hours great activity was observed near the hill of Viñas, located right of the road from Bartolomé (south of Remedios) to Central Adela, where work has already been going on for months. On the 23rd, 14 large trucks loaded with stone and sand were counted, en route to this location, which has been closed off as a military zone.

At 1 KM. distance right of the road, which leads from Bartolomé in southern direction to Zuluete there is another hill of little height named "San Ramón," where during the past days there has also been much activity.

These low hills belong to the series of hills called Bamburanao, which stretches out as far as the surroundings of Yaguajay and Mayajigua (N.E.tip of the Las Villas province). Throughout this region there was great activity until the 24th, especially on this last day, which was participated in by a large number of Russians, who during the days of the crisis wore the uniform of the militia.

Just beyond Tapaste (Havana province), by the San José de las Lajas highway to Jaruco, are the so-called caves of the priest (Cuevas del Cura) and during last week (18-24 November) a large amount of army truck traffic took place in the direction of these caves. These trucks were all carefully covered, so that their cargo could not be ascertained; in the proximity of the caves the Cuban drivers hand them to the Russians, who drive them the remaining distance to the caves, where they are unloaded to subsequently be returned to the Cuban drivers.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 38

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
13 December 1962

Received: 7 January 1963
No. 2658/615

Havana, 13 December 1962.

C U B A:

Cold war.

The current climate here with a decrease in temperature to 13° matches the political and economic condition. The cold war with the United States continues as long as on-site inspections are denied. Notwithstanding government promises of extra distribution of all kinds of tools and utensils, toys and provisions, scarcity is all too apparent. The Cubana [de Aviación] maintains a precarious service to Mexico City which is dogged by interruptions and delays, and the shipping trade from the West is limited to Cuban and Spanish merchant ships and vessels under flags of the Soviet Union and satellite states.

The latest address by President Kennedy provides the glum prospect of even greater troubles and hardships.

Which means, will Washington use to move Castro to reason?

An indication was given to me today during a return visit to the Japanese Ambassador who received me shivering with the cold in his official residence (Mr [Rokuzo] Yaguchi was “en poste” in Burma) and told me about pressure being exerted on his government by Washington to cease or at least limit the significant Japanese import of Cuban sugar, against which Cuba buys car parts and other much-needed items.

It would surprise me however if this was all that is to come, since such measures only herald a period of “attrition” which could last a long time.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 17318. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 39

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 14 December 1962

REFERENCE No. 11586

DATE OF DISPATCH: 14 December 1962.

DATE OF RECEIPT: 15 December 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

Concerning C u b a

Director UN political affairs [at the] State [Department], [Joseph] Sisco, while requesting utmost discretion informed me that State is currently proposing to let the Cuban affair quietly come to an end. This would boil down to the US and the SU “agreeing to disagree,” which leaves the question whether such could be done while going around the v r [veiligheidsraad; (UN) Security Council].

According to Sisco the SU is very keen on having a final round in the v r [Security Council] both to make propaganda for the fact that Khrushchev has kept all his promises and to pin the US down to a concession that Cuba will not be invaded. Furthermore it can be assumed that the Cubans themselves would like to have the opportunity to come down on America in the v r [Security Council].

State tends toward the view that there should not be a v r [Security Council] debate, among other things because the US of course is not willing to make said concession as long as the conditions for inspection and assurances have not been met. Sisco affirmed again that, although it would have been important to make a communist country accept UN inspections, the current situation is not unwelcome to the US since on the one hand no promise of non-invasion has to be made [I assume that this is not disagreeable to Kennedy from the point of view of domestic politics either] and on the other hand American surveillance can continue quietly.

Sisco also confirmed that a “firm commitment” has been acquired from the Soviets that the Soviet troops will be withdrawn from Cuba. According to Sisco this concerns eight thousand men who primarily had the duty of “servicing” the various installations which have now been removed so that their stay is of no further use. This does deviate from information indicating that this Russian personnel was organized into military units [vide my 971].

Van Roijen 1041 ++

[Source: Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, The Hague, 2.05 118 inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 40

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 27 December 1962

REFERENCE No. 11807

DATE OF DISPATCH: 27 December 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 28 December 1962

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New YorkSECRET

During a tour d'horizon with Rusk this afternoon he said that the Cuban issue still worried him, especially with reference to the situation in Havana. It is being considered that the celebration of the takeover by Castro on the coming second of January, for which occasion a large number of militia members would be concentrated in Havana, will preface events of far reaching nature. Although they are not sure exactly which direction things will go Rusk said he saw the following possibilities:

A. Castro may announce a "change of policy" which would boil down to a break with the Russians followed by a reorientation either in the Chinese-Albanian direction, or a Titoist line.

B. The extreme militant wing of the Cuban communist party could overthrow Castro with the aid of the Russian troops.

C. The moment could be seized for a revolution which would be directed not only against Castro but also against the Russians present.

Especially the latter possibility gives the US much cause for worry since it could lead to a situation as in Hungary in 1956, with the difference that this time the US [in my opinion also for domestic political reasons] would have to intervene.

During a brief review of the Cuban crisis Rusk pointed out that Kennedy although forceful had nevertheless acted very prudently especially by always leaving Khrushchev a way out. For instance the US had first addressed the removal of the missiles [Rusk here noted that indications neither of the presence of nuclear warheads nor of the preparation of missiles for launch in the direction of the US were ever received; if the latter would have been observed the US would have struck immediately] only when the issue of the missiles had

been dealt with was withdrawal of the bombers demanded and only when the the IL-28[s] had been removed, had the withdrawal of the Russian troops been tabled. He confirmed that Khr[ushev] had conceded withdrawal of the troops, albeit without committing himself to a definite time limit.

Van Roijen 1057 ++

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, MFA 2.05 118 inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 41

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 27 December 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 27 December 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 28 December 1962

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

During my talk with [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk [vide my 1057] Rusk, in relation to his remark on a possible reorientation of Cuba toward China, revealed that he was factoring in new Chinese initiatives. These could occur as a direct reaction to possible events taking place in Havana, e.g., by a military demonstration against the off-shore islands. He however also saw the possibility of Chinese action in North Korea and furthermore singled out North Vietnam as a possible area for Chinese activities, which could cause the unstable situation in Laos to collapse. Such a Chinese initiative would, according to your colleague, face Moscow with the highly difficult choice of abandoning an ally or getting involved in a war. Therefore the relationship with Beijing is not only a "long-term worry" for Moscow but certainly also a short term worry.

Regarding the possibility of action in Korea Rusk made clear that the US would in case of emergency this time not hesitate to use nuclear weapon at once.

Van Roijen 1058 ++

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.169, inv. 119. Obtained for CWIHP

by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 42

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain),
19 March 1963

551/119 Havana, 19 March 1963.

CUBA:
Russians.

The presence in Cuba of a large number of military and economic experts from the S[oviet].U[nion]. has aroused a good deal of controversy. Their number, their task, the fact that their presence could result in the outbreak of a world war and so forth. Dr. Castro too has used the Russians for demagogic effect for instance when during the recent crisis he painted them as heroes who would either triumph or perish together with the Cuban people as if the poor Russians had a choice!

Currently the “question brûlante” is if and at what pace they are disappearing from Cuba. I do not know what has happened during my absence travelling on duty but am certain that during last weekend a thousand of them left the country. I personally saw a series of open trucks, stuffed with blond Slavs drive toward the harbor and a friendly embassy with a chancellery on the sea shore has been able to follow the embarkation and.....photograph it.

Of course rumors and unverifiable tips have been plenty: it was said that Russians were taken away in the harbor in cuffs; supposedly Cubans had clashed with Russians inland and killed some.

For the average Cuban their departure is a relief and probably for most Russians likewise.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 119. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 43

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 1
July 1963

DATE OF DISPATCH: 1 July 1963.

FROM: Havana

ORIGINAL INITIALED BY: GWB

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The
Hague]

BY COURIER.

CONFIDENTIAL

With respect to my message sent via a different channel and a note included in the “Brief Cuban Notices” of this week I will allow myself a few more remarks.

The noon meal at the Embassy, where Dr. Castro was present as a guest of honor, was followed by his appearance two days later—again at the fixed hour!—as the enunciator at the reception given on the occasion of the induction of H.H. Pope Paul VI.

One of his close staff members stated that the prime minister would, if possible, gladly accept like invitations. Although this may well be one of Fidel Castro’s whims, it seems more probable this is a purposeful attempt at rapprochement with the West, bearing in mind that this may replace the US in matters of economy. Khrushchev giving a nudge in this direction is also a possibility: it would reduce the burden on the Soviet Union and vex the US.

Fidel inquired after Dutch export products and breeding cattle, which was utilized to send him a number of books and booklets. During his presence at the Embassy I had drawn his attention to the fact that there still are Dutch experts in the area of sugar planting—Cuban sugarcane is “descendant” from the testing station in Pasuruan—and that complete sugar factories can be supplied (Stork) [a major Dutch machine factory].

The plans which the prime minister had for the industrialisation of the island seemed to me only partially economically responsible, unless they intend to transform this country “à la Russe” into a closed economic region with high prices and an advanced form of mercantilism or autarky. I therefore remarked that Cuban sugar, for which the Soviet Union pays 6 cents per lb., is sold to the Soviet people for 46 cents (what democratic government would dare to do so?!) and compared such a situation with that of the Dominican Republic under Trujillo.

Fidel Castro recounted that during his visit to the Soviet Union he had the opportunity to observe the effect of [a] megaton of bombs.

Before lunch an officer of the security service appeared in order to inspect the residence with regard to security [one word illegible, presumably to the effect of “of the prime minister”]. This window had to be shut, who lived in that house, where would Fidel Castro sit at the table, etc.

I was reminded of the attempts by that same service to move my gardener to espionage (see letter No. 2345/550 d.d. 24.10.1962⁷).....

My servants, who are all disgruntled about the current situation, were nevertheless very excited and when Fidel Castro before departing made his habitual visit to the kitchen, from the streets too there were “sounds of jubilation” from the public at large.

BOISSEVAIN 29.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 44

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 8 July 1963

DATE OF DISPATCH: 8 July 1963.

FROM: Havana.

ORIGINAL INITIALED BY: GWB

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

TOP SECRET.

Yesterday in [the] seaside resort Varadero Fidel Castro told my spouse [I had stayed in Havana with [a] severe cold] he [is] convinced ideals must sometimes [be] tested against reality; he feels obliged [to] pursue agreement with US yet would like [to] use me as middle man. Since Fidel, after clear language from my side, cannot harbor illusions regarding my feelings I personally am willing but of course only if mandated by You. For now [I] await demarche from Cuban side and Your instructions. As Fidel requested to communicate regarding this matter not with BB [*Buitenlandse Betrekkingen*, i.e., (Minister of) Foreign Relations Raúl Roa] but with doctor [Rene] Vallejo⁸ I consider, given the man’s mentality, personal

action without prior knowledge [of] P.U.R.S.C. [the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution] possible. Since Fidel currently probably expects some initiative from me quod non⁹ please respond expediently

BOISSEVAIN 33

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archive of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 45

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 8 July 1963

DATE OF DISPATCH: 8 July 1963

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

TOP SECRET

With reference to my 33 second question is whether SU was consulted which appears to me as likely, third question why not the Swiss or Czech ambassador in Havana and Washington respectively’.

Be noted that Fidel [Castro] told my wife that Cuban government too large debt to Soviet bloc, only the US able to provide aid but nevertheless he was determined to continue revolution and this is the bottleneck.

Boissevain

34

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 119. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 46

Cable from Dutch Foreign Minister Joseph Luns, The Hague, to Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 9 July 1963

DATE OF RECEIPT: 9 July 1963

TO: Havana

FROM: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

TOP SECRET

Have read Your 33 and 34 with interest.

As statements by Castro related by You give insufficient grounds for determining status and significance thereof [I] share Your judgment that You should by no means take initiative: utmost reserve is called for. Should Castro approach You directly with [a] similar proposal I should like to be informed.

On our part the US Embassy here will be most confidentially informed of Your telegrams and the above.

Luns 25.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archive of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 47

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 24 July 1963

1348/263.

Havana, 24 July 1963.

C U B A:

Fidel and the Netherlands.

After the latest doings by Dr. Fidel Castro I wonder if, had he received instead of “Das Kapital” the Bible and met a preacher or priest, the “máximo líder” would have become a devout Christian with all the ramifications thereof for the course of the revolution and relations with the US.

The above thought came to me as a result of Fidel delivering a two hours long lecture at the University on the subject of..... the Netherlands. Apparently he was so struck by the

contents of the books and booklets which I had sent to him that he wanted everyone to partake in his discovery.

Yesterday evening, at the reception given by the U.A.R. [Egyptian] Ambassador, the prime minister was already busy saying goodbye when he saw undersigned and inquired where the Swiss T.Z. [unknown abbreviation, apparently to the effect of “representative”—trans.] was (he had already left). He had wanted to inform Mr. Masset of a decision by the Cuban government which entailed nationalisation of the former building of the US embassy, currently in use by the Swiss embassy acting as the representative of the interests of the US As if he intended to provoke a reaction by me, while the Ambassadors of the Soviet Union [Aleksandr Alekseyev] and China [Shen Jian] stood guard on both sides, he elaborated to me most vividly about this retaliation for the freezing of Cuban assets in the US, during which he tapped my arm and—before he was unfortunately called to the telephone—had the air of one who is boasting to a trusted friend about how he has crossed an opponent.

The best response to the announcement in question would have been: “After you have already confiscated 1000 million dollars’ worth of American property, why not throw the building in as well!” and then speak of the taking charge of the administration of the refinery of Shell and so forth.

It seems better, however, to use the “goodwill” with regard to our country to induce negotiations about such matters. I repeat my request to be sent a magnificently illustrated work about the Netherlands to present to Dr. Castro, to ensure that his current appreciation of our country remains undiminished.

The Ambassador,

[BOISSEVAIN]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archive of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 48

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Reinink), 16 August 1963

DATE OF DISPATCH: 16 August 1963.

FROM: Havana.

ORIGINAL INITIALED BY: KWR. [K.W. Reinink, First Secretary of the Embassy]
TO: NERECODI. [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]
BY COURIER.

CONFIDENTIAL

Despite the positive press in Cuba about the Moscow test ban treaty one gets the impression that this is more a case of “lip-service” and that the enthusiasm of the party leadership is less great than public commentaries would lead one to believe. From a conversation I had with a high-level official of the Ministry of Foreign Relations one could infer that especially the “new communists” have strong reservations about the agreement. According to informant, who himself belongs to the group of the neo-communists, Havana intends to accede, although not soon. The “new communists” in the party leadership, among whom are Fidel and Raul Castro as well as Ernesto Guevara, apparently do not much like the idea of an agreement of which one of the most important authors, Washington, is obstinately resisting a modus vivendi with Cuba. According to informant sixty percent of the party leadership shared this opinion. The “new comrades” have criticized Khrushchev at party leadership meetings, openly displayed their agreement with the position of Mao [Zedong] and even ventured to praise the forcefully negative attitude of [French President Charles] de Gaulle against the agreement, even if they did so half in jest. The pro-Chinese disposition of many “new communists” and the fear of Soviet-American agreements around Cuba analogous to the arrangement between Moscow and Washington that brought a solution to the October-crisis of 1962 seem to be the basis of said critical attitude. Nevertheless, taking into account the economic dependency which marks Cuba’s relationship with Moscow, it is doubtful whether Havana will in the long term be able to withstand Soviet Russian pressure to accede to the agreement. Furthermore it does not seem unlikely that Havana, apart from certain ideological and political objections, will gladly let Moscow entreat it in the hope of making a positive reaction conditional upon further economic and/or political concessions.

Reinink 47.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 119. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 49

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana, 19 September 1963

CONFIDENTIAL.

1824/346.

Havana, 19 September 1963.

Cuba’s foreign policy.

One does not get the impression that Havana’s foreign policy has been subject to substantial change over the past months. The much discussed “politics of the smile” does not seem more than a tactical maneuver by Castro which is principally aimed at improving economic relations with those “capitalist” countries here accredited and to soften Cuba’s political isolation. In the recent past these attempts have manifested themselves in certain advances to the representatives of the Netherlands, England, Canada, France, and the Vatican. As part of this Castro among other things accepted an invitation for a déjeuner at the home of my predecessor and by the British and Canadian Ambassadors while he made an appearance at a reception by the Temporary Envoy of France and the Nunciature. It is known that the Cuban Embassies in the “capitalist” countries have received orders to contract experts in the most far-flung technical and scientific areas. Ambassador Maristany in The Hague has proven himself active in such matters. The Minister of Industry, “Che” Guevara recently approached my first staff member with the question whether the Netherlands would be willing to deliver goods of non-Dutch patent to Cuba. Clearly this referred to American-produced goods. As has been relayed the vice-minister of said Ministry asked me if the company Tomassen in De Steeg would be willing and able to supply a 3000 horsepower gasturbine for the ESSO oil refinery that was nased [nationalized—trans.] in 1960. In this case however it should be assumed that Havana has so far not succeeded in procuring this vital equipment from the USSR or from another country of the “peace camp.” Also some days ago a visa was issued to a highly placed member of the Revolutionary Army, “comandante” Félix Paulino Torres González and to an official of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, Jaime Enrique Medina Sierra who, after visiting the USSR, China and other communist countries, will travel to the Netherlands to study

some “technical agrarian questions.” This at least according to an announcement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here. During the visit I paid to Dr. [Raúl] Roa to hand him a copy of my credentials, he emphasized the desirability of strengthening economic ties with the Netherlands.

[document continues]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archive of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 50

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 1 November 1963

REFERENCE No. 7694

DATE OF DISPATCH: 1 November 1963

DATE OF RECEIPT: 2 November 1963

TO: Min[istry]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

SECRET

During my meeting with Rusk this morning he on being asked informed me that currently no military Soviet units remain in Cuba. There are still some technicians and instructors but the US believes that all combat units have departed. Over the past forty days two thousand Russians have left Cuba and the expectation is that the instructors will likewise leave as soon as the training is completed.

Rusk in this context noted the tense relationship between Moscow and Havana, among other things as a result of the refusal by Castro to sign the treaty regarding the suspension of test explosions, only a few days after Gromyko had informed Rusk that Cuba would indeed sign.

The secretary of state emphasized the highly confidential nature of the statements set out in the first paragraph of this message and I would request you to use these with utmost discretion.

Van Roijen 698.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP

by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 51

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Pos), 11 November 1963

2248/411-GS.60

Havana, 11 November 1963.

SECRET

Espionage in Dutch Embassy.

With reference to letters from our part d[ate]d 30 June 1962 and 24 October the same year, resp. no. 1395/359-GS.67 and no. 2345/550 confidential, it is my honor to report the following to Your Excellency.

Today the gardener of the Embassy, Mario HERNANDEZ, reported to Dr. Reinink that on the 7th of this month upon leaving the Embassy he was invited to take a seat in an automobile without license plates in which there were four persons employed by the Cuban secret service. He recognized one of the passengers because he had been present at a first interrogation which was the subject of aforementioned letter of 24 October. Two of the passengers belonged, according to Hernández, to the white race while the other two were mulattos.

In contrast to the first time Hernández said this time he was not taken to a secret service office. During a ride through town Hernández was, according to him, urged to render certain services for Cuba and his revolution in his capacity as gardener of the Embassy. He could make himself truly meritorious by closely observing which Cubans and foreigners frequented the chancellery of the Embassy and by noting the numbers of their automobiles, if any.

As he did the first time, Hernández this time too forcefully denied the request of his interrogators and stated that he was, given his work, not only unable but moreover not willing to act as a spy against his Dutch principals. Thereupon they had offered him money for such services but Hernández said he did not accept this offer either. Finally they had urged him not to let the Embassy know of this conversation. If he would nevertheless do so—and they claimed to have means to discover this—he would come to regret this. Hernández told Dr. Reinink he had then made clear to his interrogators that he indeed would be reporting about this matter immediately.

The Embassy council has thanked Hernández for his report and his firm attitude yet at the same time advised him to be prudent and to avoid that the Cuban agents in question would as a consequence of overly emotional reactions from his side be more agitated than would be strictly necessary.

For the record it is to be noted that the conversation related above took place in the garden of the Embassy.

The Ambassador,

Dr.R.H.Pos.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archive of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 52

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Pos), 17
March 1964

S E C R E T.

493/122-GS.21.

Havana, 17 March 1964.

Meeting with Castro.

With reference to earlier notice from our side through a different channel, below a note from Dr.Reinink [First Secretary of the Embassy] containing some particulars of his recent meeting with Fidel Castro.

The Ambassador,

Dr. R.H. Pos.

Note attached to letter no.493/122-GS.21.

S E C R E T.

On 11 March around half past two René Vallejo, Fidel's personal physician, had called me to say that Castro wanted to talk to me and would receive me at four o'clock. Vallejo himself would come to pick me up. A few minutes before the agreed time Castro's sphinx-like physician appeared in front of the Embassy behind the wheel of an Oldsmobile and invit-

ed me to sit next to him. In the back was a soldier with a sub-machine gun resting on his knee. We slowed down in front of the entrance to a street in the same district that contains the Dutch and a few other Embassies. The entrances had, as had been established on earlier occasions, been blocked and were guarded by sentries. After the sentries had recognized Vallejo they raised the barrier and a short while later we stopped in front of an apartment building the entrance of which likewise was guarded by soldiers. Vallejo led the way up the stairs to the third floor. The door of the apartment that accommodated the "Supreme Leader" was opened before we had even reached the end of the stairs and just afterwards I found myself in a spacious, but not luxurious, flat, probably previously inhabited by someone from the upper-middle class. Castro has several of such apartments. Primarily out of safety considerations he never stays at the same address for long. As such he is someone with no regular place of [illegible, presumably "work"] or residence.

Vallejo led the way to the kitchen where Castro, this time smoking a pipe, dressed in an undone pajama top from which his chest hair protruded and in uniform pants, was busy stirring a pan of milk. Without removing the pipe from his mouth Fidel greeted me with an "hola" ["hello"], slapped me on the back, and explained that he was undertaking an attempt to make ice cream. The prime minister had apparently only just gotten up. At least he looked unwashed and uncombed. The young woman who was also present in the kitchen looked rather more groomed but I was not introduced to her. Dressed in a fashionable red dress and scuttling about on sharp spike heels she let herself be commanded by Castro and helped him, as far as her attire permitted, with the stirring and mixing. Occasionally Fidel took a draft of his brew and asked me to do the same. After it had been finished and put in the refrigerator the prime minister took me to the living room, offered me a chair, and himself sat down in a rocking chair.

While he laboriously filled his pipe I had the opportunity to look around. The room led to a spacious terrace onto which a valuable parquet floor had been laid. Apparently this was where Castro performed gymnastics. There was a rowing machine and weights; in one of the corners stood a buck, and opposite hung a skip rope. The living room itself was furnished frugally but [in a] modern [style]. Here and there a submachine gun and some heavy caliber handguns were scattered about. The doors to some of the bedrooms were open. A number of them contained camp beds, clearly intended for the members of his bodyguard. Although the terrace was located on the side of the street, any opposite neighbors did not have a view of it as this was obstructed by about six closed

cubicles which looked like little dressing rooms but probably were also intended as sleeping space for Castro's bodyguards.

Rocking back and forth vigorously Castro began to speak and started with an account of his economic policy. Sugar, agriculture, and cattle breeding were currently priorities in Cuba. At the beginning of the Revolution he had made some mistakes which included neglect of the traditional Cuban cultures in favor of an industrialization for which the country was not yet ripe or for which it did not possess the raw materials. This misconception however now belonged to the past. No country could develop properly without taking into account and making an appeal to the international division of labor. Cuba possessed excellent products which were unique and which given the necessary rationalization and mechanization would for example in the area of sugar production make it second to none. The USSR-designed machines for the cutting and loading of cane were most satisfactory and would more than counterbalance the shortage of professional reed cutters. Through additional scientific methods and good soil nutrition it would easily be possible to harvest ten million tons of sugar in 1970. 1970 was even a conservative estimate. Most likely this amount would already be reached earlier, possibly even already in 1968. The world demand for sugar was rising steadily so that Cuba would for the time being be assured of high prices on the international market; in any case such would be the case until approximately 1965. After this year prices would probably go down. Nevertheless for Cuba this could never be a disaster because it had assured sales to the USSR of 5,000,000 tons for the years 1968, 1969, and 1970, at a price of 0.06 USD per pound. I asked him if this contract did not mean he had become very bound and if perhaps it would not have been better to reserve large quantities of sugar for the international market, especially since he was so sure of rising demand. Castro responded that he had taken this risk gladly. The USSR would always continue to supply high-quality products such as oil and oil derivatives at a price lower than that of western oil companies; tractors and other agricultural machinery, chemicals, trucks, and so forth. Certain risks just had to be taken. As far as he was concerned he was prepared to immediately come to a like agreement with the Netherlands for example for the period 1965–1967.

Cuba would of course not remain an agrarian state. Based on its sugar it would gradually build a sucro-chemical industry and also develop other sectors of its economy. Yet this required money and technical expertise. Financially the outlook was considerably more positive than at the time of his coming to power. They possessed currency reserves of about 100,000,000 USD and this amount would increase significantly as a result of sugar sales in the international market. They had no great obligations of supply to the Asian “social-

ist” sphere. The Chinese People's Republic would receive only 600,000 tons in 1964, equal to the amount of the previous year. With the exception of the Soviet Union, Cuban trade with the Eastern European countries had now been dramatically changed. This trade was now mainly conducted on the basis of cash. Although Fidel did not delve into this subject any further it was clear that he meant that countries, especially Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany, and Hungary would only be able to obtain sugar if they were prepared to pay the world market price in US dollars. They had made a concession to Bulgaria by enabling this country to buy approximately 250,000 tons against a price of 0.06 USD for its canning industry.

Castro said he did not intend to save the foreign currencies he had acquired or to let them flow back to Moscow, in the way countries such as Japan saw their dollars disappear back to Washington. He planned to spend the money on capital goods. A substantial percentage of the Cuban income in convertible assets had already been and would also in the future be spent in Western Europe, next to the United States the most strongly industrially developed part of the world. They were already doing good business with England, Canada, Spain, and France. As far as England was concerned, he recollected the recently signed Leyland contract. Cuba would order future industrial equipment there, such as chemical plants. In France they had placed orders for trucks—Berliot—and equipment for road construction. Spain would supply freight and fishing ships, for the time being amounting to a total of 400,000,000 USD, of course if Madrid would remain firm in maintaining its commercial relations with Havana. To help it resist the pressure it was presently receiving from Washington Havana was prepared to let a certain percentage of the payment for its sugar shipments to Spain run via the treaty account [*verdragsrekening*].

Relations of Cuba with the countries of Western Europe are currently being cleared of the obstacles that for the most part had been brought into existence by the Revolution itself. Especially during the first years the Cubans had in a sort of hubris and inexperience oftentimes needlessly offended Western Europe, among other things by way of a nationalization policy that eventually could not but cause a negative effect. The Cuban Government understood this perfectly well and already began making a serious effort to pay its old, pre-revolutionary debts while also offering compensation to Western European companies for the branches that were nationalized [*genaast*] here, such as Shell. Castro did not say whether or not Shell had responded positively to this probing. He did add that he was also willing to indemnify Standard Oil and Texaco for their nationalized refineries. Responding to my question why he had not brought this to

the attention of the interested parties themselves he remarked that he wanted to wait until after the [November 1964 presidential] elections in the United States before making a concrete proposal. To do so now could have politically unfortunate consequences. Washington would probably continue to cross Cuba until the elections. After that perhaps the conversation could become more pleasant. In any case he would have to come to an agreement with the US sooner or later. A solution of what he referred to as the “only small remaining problem” with the United States was vital to secure for Cuba the peace and quiet it needed. For this reason it was convenient for Cuba to lay the material foundations for such a solution. Incidentally it did have to be taken into account that, as more time went by, Cuba’s interest in a resumption of commercial ties with America would decrease. Trade with Eastern Europe had now been reasonably well consolidated and Western Europe would also take an increasingly important position in Cuban foreign trade. Washington could or would not see that its policy toward Cuba was not only doomed to fail but in addition irritated its allies. The measures against the shipping of the United States’ allies would come to backfire both for Washington and for its allies. After all, it forced Cuba to build a trading fleet of its own and thereby would make it less and less dependent on foreign tonnage for its overseas connections.

Not only Cuban sugar cultivation but also agriculture and cattle breeding had to be thoroughly modernized. Especially dairy production presented a serious problem. There was a severe scarcity of milk and milk products. Thus from the perspective of the abovementioned international division of labor the Netherlands could take an interesting position here. Castro said that one should not take too literally his remarks viz. that Cuba would in a certain amount of time surpass the Netherlands in the area of dairy production. He meant here to take the Netherlands as an example, as a model of an agriculturally highly developed country that, although small in surface area, had managed to secure an important position in the world both in the areas of agriculture and cattle breeding and the area of industry. What Cuba was especially lacking was technical-scientific “know-how.” [...]

As part of the modernization of the sugar industry and the plans to come to a production of ten million tons of sugar Castro explained that here too he would like to appeal to Dutch goods. [...]

Next the prime minister suggested that Philips would resume its transactions with Cuba, particularly in the area of radio, television and electronics. I reminded Castro that this company had for many years had a good market here as well as some commercial and technical branches the latter of which had however been nationalized by his regime in March

of 1961. Yet according to Castro, this belonged not only to the past, but it was simply part of the “socialist” system. All the same, he said, this did not mean that Philips should not be indemnified for the losses suffered here. [...]

The impression the prime minister made on me during this long meeting was that of a dynamic, indefatigable man who is not only aware of his great power but also wishes to exercise it even in areas that would normally belong to the competencies of ministers. He is conscious of the inexperience and the bureaucratic disposition of a large number of his technical institutions. This explains why he urged me to send any possible communications not via the “bureaucratic apparatus” of Foreign Relations [i.e., the foreign ministry—ed.] but present them directly to him. It is hard to avoid the impression that one is dealing with a restless, almost chaotic man. He hates regularity, fixed working hours, and a fixed working place. A prime minister, also first secretary of the Party, who at four o’clock in the afternoon is in the kitchen in his dressing gown making ice cream and then takes out almost three hours for a conversation with a foreign diplomat certainly does not seem to attach much value to a normal schedule. Nor can one ascribe to Fidel Castro an exaggerated interest in protocol and etiquette; he is more boorish than informal, more roughly jovial than amiable. Yet he is by no means naïve but rather a cunning Galician who, when necessary, displays a tough tenacity and is prepared to use any means necessary to achieve his goal. He knows little about the West, at least too little to form a proper image of it. His convictions about the “capitalist society” come across as antiquated. Incidentally he also seems to have only a superficial impression of the reality of the communist world, primarily shaped by tendentious literature and information from his own Eastern European advisors. He does now seem to have woken up to the fact that that the one-sided economic orientation of his country toward the “socialist” camp has serious drawbacks and that the trading practices of these countries cannot always be reconciled with the so loudly proclaimed principles of “proletarian solidarity.”

The Cuban economic advances are now also directed at the Netherlands. By formulating the abovementioned desiderata personally Castro wanted to take the shortest route and prevent the Cuban propositions from being treated or dismissed as not being very serious.

From this point of view some of them seem attractive, particularly the suggestions regarding the purchase of Dutch cattle, veterinary medical supplies, and installations for the preparation of dairy products. The execution of large projects, such as the supply of sugar plants, seem to be of a more complicated nature because these may involve more than only commercial and financial factors. The proposals concerning

Philips, especially those regarding the question of indemnification, seem to merit serious consideration, as do those which aim to bring about a resumption of trade transactions in non-strategic products and goods.

Perhaps unnecessarily I should like to note that I mostly limited myself to listening to Castro's discussions and confined myself to remarking that his interesting suggestions would be expediently taken cognizance of by the competent Dutch authorities.

K.W.R. [Reinink]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 53

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Reinink), 15 June 1964

DATE OF DISPATCH: 15 June 1964.

FROM: Havana.

ORIGINAL INITIALED BY: KWR [K.W. Reinink, First Secretary of the Embassy]

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

BY COURIER.

SECRET

Regarding the visit by Fidel Castro, vide my 30, the following should still be relayed.

The prime minister arrived unannounced. The streets in the vicinity of my house had been cordoned off for his arrival. Castro's car was followed by four others filled with soldiers armed with submachine guns. The car in which he was seated also contained a four-man bodyguard. When they reached the front door Fidel jumped out of his Oldsmobile and kept his finger on the bell until the girl who was on duty and had been dozing in the noon heat opened the door. He entered and asked if I were at home. The girl confirmed this but said I had just a short while ago gone to take some rest. "When?" Fidel asked, and, when he heard this was about an

hour ago remarked that this was long enough and instructed her to call me.

Usually the prime minister is accompanied by René Vallejo, his personal physician and confidant. However Vallejo had been sick since about a week, said Fidel, who had already installed himself in the living room and had also already undertaken a search for my cigars. He did not want whisky but tea because the evening before, with the British, he had drunk enough alcohol. At the reception given by Ambassador Watson on the occasion of "Queen's Birthday" Castro had already approached me twice: the first time with a question about the whole complex of Dutch-Cuban relations with regard to the extensive talk I had with him in March of this year and the second time more specifically about matters of agriculture and cattle breeding. Yet a serious conversation had not proven possible at those times, because of the heterogeneous company present and not least due to the inseparability of Aleksandr Alekseyev, the Soviet Ambassador, who is in the habit of not losing Fidel from his sight for an instant, as if he were his aide.

Under his arm Fidel carried the Spanish translation of André Voisin's "Sol, herbe, cancer," a scientific treatise intended for veterinarians. In this he had read that the Dutch professor Seekles (Utrecht) had remarked in a presentation at the Congress for Comparative Pathology in Madrid in 1952 that the livers of more than half of the Dutch cattle showed a serious shortage of copper. Voisin had made a rather alarming comment about this fact. Fidel had made some remarks about this at the British Embassy. Upon coming home he had however wondered if his remarks might not have offended the Netherlands, especially because perhaps by now a remedy had been found for the ailment in question and therefore the problem need not be acute anymore. It had by no means been his intention to make offensive remarks with respect to the Netherlands, which he esteemed highly because of its achievements in the areas of agriculture and industry. The Netherlands were an example for Cuba to follow. I tried to ease the prime minister's mind by assuring him that the Netherlands were not offended and that his remarks at the British Embassy would in no way be considered negative criticism. Yet Castro urged me to inform him as soon as possible of the current state of affairs regarding the disease observed by Seekles. He would then make the necessary corrections in public and announce those pieces of information from the Netherlands that could also be of importance to his cattle breeders. They could and would learn much from the Netherlands. Any cattle imported from the Netherlands would, he had decided, be brought to Isla de Pinos [Isle of Pines], an island near the south coast of Cuba. There it would be easier to control it and isolate any possible cases of

foot-and-mouth disease. In Cuba there was great anxiety for this illness and thus his institutions kept stubbornly resisting the import of sperm from the Netherlands for the artificial insemination that is practiced here too. Yet he wanted to procure Dutch cattle and said he hoped that the appropriate [or “qualified”—trans.] Dutch exporters would display the requisite activity. I said that I imagined only few prime ministers would be so intensively engaged in all these specificities of their economy. According to Castro this might be the case but that was the result of there being only few prime ministers who, like him, had so few experts at their disposal. Therefore it was necessary for him to busy himself with all aspects of the national economy and read the necessary books. He would like to take on a large number of experts from the Netherlands both in the areas of agriculture and cattle-breeding as in the area of industry. Perhaps it would also be possible to have a number of Cuban agricultural engineers take a course in the Netherlands.

Fidel requested an extensive briefing about the Dutch reaction to our talk of March this year. I pointed out that the Netherlands does not have state trade and that the government therefore plays a much more passive role in regular trade than for example in the communist world. The contents of the mentioned talk had immediately been brought to the attention of the Dutch Government which, as I explained, had so far as possible informed potentially interested commercial circles. This had essentially meant the end of the government’s task. Fidel immediately scented something politically suspicious. He said he understood very well that the Dutch authorities in most cases could do little more than publicize information they possessed. He, from his side, wanted to trade with the Netherlands “without noise and publicity,” analogously to the trade with Spain. Cuba had signed contracts with Spain for the purchase of sheep for a total of 60,000,000 USD and not a letter had appeared in the press. The case of the Leyland-contract had been mishandled by the British. It had been written and talked about in England from the outset which had needlessly politicized the issue. As far as relations with the Netherlands were concerned this had to be avoided, especially [the risk] that The Hague would be subjected to pressure from Washington.

He again extensively discussed the desiderata regarding trade with the Netherlands formulated earlier. There was an urgent need for dairy installations, equipment for the projected sucro-chemical industry, parts for the existing, partially antiquated sugar plants, and at least one new, large sugar plant. I repeated that his wishes were known in the Netherlands yet Castro insisted that I again present his suggestions to the Dutch Government and personally keep him informed of all that could interest him with regard to Dutch-

Cuban relations. He noted my private phone number and said that I need not call him but that he would be in touch.

After an hour Fidel Castro said goodbye and left his copy of Voisin’s treatment about pathological symptoms in cattle as a gift. I got even by offering the prime minister two Edammer cheeses. Fidel drove away, followed by his bodyguard, amidst loud cheering and applause from a crowd of scholarship students who had gathered near my house.

Castro made a tense impression. It is clear that he, to put it graphically, is fighting a losing battle, drowning in the countless problems which his internal and external policies have caused. As he had done during the first meeting, this time he again complained about the inexperience of staff members and technical and official institutions. He does not only want to be the *spiritus rector* [a Latin expression meaning “guiding spirit”—trans.] in the most divergent of areas of his society but also thinks he must gain in-depth knowledge of all related technical and scientific aspects. He does not only want to bring his agriculture and cattle-breeding to a higher level but also master the specialized knowledge of agronomists, phytopathologists, and veterinarians. In the same way that Khrushchev was for a long time—and perhaps still is—obsessed with the growing of corn, Castro is possessed by agriculture and cattle-breeding. A few days ago he even had a complicated book about certain agricultural questions distributed to his ministers and other high officials which they, as the vice-minister of Foreign Relations told me, are now diligently studying because they know that Castro can subject them to a sort of examination at any moment.

Castro also made the impression of a restless fairly lonely man who enjoys the occasional company of others than his usual flatterers and unquestioning admirers. There seemed to be no immediate, concrete reason for his visit this Saturday afternoon. He could have summoned me at any time that suited him. Moreover I had upon being asked already let one of his confidants know that I had no important notifications for the prime minister. I had then informed said confidant of the Dutch position in the same way as I now explained it to Castro himself.

It is also clear that the prime minister realizes that in matters of economy he cannot expect more from the USSR and the other communist powers than what they are currently willing and able to do for Cuba. He is aware of the many drawbacks associated with his one-sided orientation toward the “peace camp.” Castro is therefore striving, most likely with full consent and support from Moscow, for a substantial improvement of economic and political relations with Western Europe and even seems to want to force such an improvement.

Fidel Castro's behavior displays the same traits that secured him success in the underground struggle against Batista: audacity bordering on recklessness, willpower and an almost maniacal doggedness and tenacity. He is, however, psychologically not very stable, intelligent but hurried, impatient, and short-tempered. His unstable state of mind and irritability probably explain why he believes the Netherlands to be offended by a public remark about lack of copper in the liver of our cows and his impatience to apologize for this.

Reinink 31.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]

Notes

1 Rimko van der Maar is Researcher, Research Institute for History and Culture, Utrecht University, and lecturer University of Amsterdam. Together with Hans Meijer (University of Groningen), he is currently writing a biography of J.Herman van Roijen, a

long-time Dutch diplomat and ambassador to the United States, forthcoming in 2013.

2 In addition, the following article has been consulted: J. Ploeg and P. van der Vlies, 'Zal dat oorlog geven? Nederland en de Cubacrisis, oktober 1962', in D.A. Hellema and G.T. Witte, eds., *'Onmachtig om te helpen': Nederlandse reacties op de socialistische dreiging* (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 65-77.

3 Some of the later translated documents from Havana were produced by R.H. Pos, Dutch Ambassador to Cuba, 1963-1964, and K.W. Reinink, First Secretary of the Dutch Embassy in Havana, 1963-1965.

4 To simplify reading, punctuation of the documents has been altered in some cases—ed.


5 Not further identified—ed.

6 The joke alluded to the lawyer who was negotiating with Castro terms for the release of Cubans taken prisoner during the Bay of Pigs invasion—ed.

7 Reproduced above—ed.

8 Rene Castro Vallejo was Castro's physician and aide at the time—ed.

9 A Latin phrase meaning "which is not the case," i.e., Boussevain did not plan to take an initiative to contact Castro to pursue the mediation idea, at least not without instructions—ed.



The Cuba Crisis of 1962—As Seen through Danish Intelligence Sources

by Peer Henrik Hansen¹

When the Cuban Missile Crisis—or the Cuba Crisis as it is called in Danish literature—was at its most acute in late October 1962, the Danish Defense Intelligence Service (DDIS) delivered its contribution to give a sound and clear picture of the conflict and the Soviet threat. And it was because of two main factors that Denmark played no small role. First of all, the geographical position of Denmark made it possible to follow the Soviet vessels to and from Cuba very closely. Secondly, the DDIS had made a name for itself among its Western colleagues as a service that was able to deliver excellent intelligence, sometimes on demand.

Gatekeeper of the Baltic Sea

For several centuries Denmark has been the gatekeeper of the Baltic Sea. During the Cold War it was the Danish Defense Intelligence Service that kept NATO informed about the latest developments in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Poland, and parts of the Soviet Union. Denmark had an important geographical position. As former intelligence officer and historian Hans A. Schröder states: “Denmark’s geographical location—only a few-minutes flight from East Germany and Poland—and the fact that large ships on their way into and out of the Baltic Sea are forced to pass through the Sound or the Great Belt, meant not only that Denmark was extremely vulnerable in case of attack, but also that Denmark had a unique opportunity to monitor any training activities in and over the Sound.”²

Controlling the Danish sounds and straits—and hereby the entrance to the Baltic Sea—was of great importance to both East and West. Within NATO Denmark was given the responsibility to keep eyes and ears open regarding enemy activities in the Baltic. The Danes were asked to follow all kinds of activities in the air and at sea. A large number of Soviet, Polish, and East German ships passed through the Danish straits when they left or entered the Baltic Sea. The rules about the Danish sounds and straits dictated that submarines had to be on the surface when passing through. This provided several opportunities to take good photographs of new Soviet submarines on their way to, for example, the Atlantic Ocean. Vessels and planes from the Danish navy and air force followed them closely. Merchant ships and fishing vessels were actively used by the Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian intelligence services to obtain information

from the Baltic Sea area. According to the Danish service, the Danes had provided 35 per cent of pictures in one secret NATO book about the Soviet navy. The reason for this was Denmark’s geographic location.³

The Role of Danish Intelligence

The Danish Defense Intelligence Service delivered daily, weekly, and monthly intelligence briefs on the situation. More comprehensive reports were delivered every three, six, and twelve months. Signals intelligence was the Danish speciality, but “legal travellers” were also used to collect intelligence behind the Iron Curtain. Whenever the Warsaw Pact held exercises, Danish intelligence would follow them closely and afterwards produce reports on these exercises. And whenever there was an observation of new planes at a Polish military airfield or new SAM sites near an East German port, it was scrutinized and published in the Danish intelligence briefs.

The intelligence service was able to create a “status of normality” which showed whenever it was “business as usual” in the Warsaw Pact. HUMINT and SIGINT were the cornerstones in the creation of that status. And the situation behind the Iron Curtain was followed closely. As a front line state, Denmark had a natural interest in being able to put its defense on alert as soon as possible, and the intelligence service therefore would use great portions of its capabilities to study and follow the Warsaw Pact countries and their military activities. “The military activities in the Eastern Bloc is seen as normal for this time of year and there is seen no preparations for an attack,” the intelligence service wrote in August 1962.⁴

Developments in the Eastern Bloc following each conflict or change in political, economic, and military affairs were analyzed by the Danish service. The situation of Berlin and the Soviet leadership were recurring topics in the Danish briefs. When Nikita Khrushchev returned to the Soviet Union in May 1962 after his first trip abroad in about a year, the Danish intelligence service made a comprehensive analysis of his stay at the Black, his health, and his officially known illnesses.⁵

If the Cold War turned into a confrontation, Danish waters were secured with underwater microphones and hydrophones, which made the intelligence service able to follow all naval activities in and out of the Baltic Sea. The service kept a watch over the passing of ships through Danish waters as part of the Danish Surveillance- and Early-warning Service. This

took place around the clock through the use of ships, aircraft, radar-stations, lookout-stations, and under-water stations that located and identified any individual passing ships. Along the coasts, several observation posts from which Warsaw Pact vessels could be followed, photographed, and tape-recorded. Denmark had its own small version of the American SOSUS (Sound Surveillance System, underwater listening posts in the North Atlantic). Danish submarines would sneak their way into the deepest corners of the Baltic Sea and record the sound of the propellers and engines.⁶ In this way, Danish intelligence could supply NATO with an audio fingerprint of Soviet vessels. And the Danes could help identifying “new” Soviet vessels as, now and then, the Soviets would rebuild old ships to make them look new. But the sound of the engines and propellers would give the vessels away and reveal that they were just in fact old ships which the Russians had tried to disguise to confuse NATO.

Tracking the Enemy

Danish pilots were often sent on assignments over the Baltic Sea for the purpose of capturing Warsaw Pact ships on film.⁷ Patrolling the Baltic Sea area was not only a matter of “marking one’s territory” but indeed also a matter of collecting intelligence about the Eastern bloc navies and air forces. Here the Danes quickly developed a solid reputation within the NATO alliance. The Danes delivered a vast number of photographs of Soviet, Polish, and East German planes and naval vessels throughout the Cold War.

“The Danes, who have an excellent reputation within NATO for the gathering of intelligence in the Baltic area, have a magnificent collection of photographs of the latest Soviet aircraft, including various versions of the Tupolev Backfire bomber.”⁸

Danish pilots would now and then act a bit aggressive towards their Eastern counterparts and go very close to the enemy airplanes. A few episodes got a bit more exciting than necessary and would later on lead to that the Danish pilots got a reminder of the existing rules of interception and engagement.⁹

The Summer of ‘62

The Danes followed Soviet ships long before anyone ever knew that a crisis would arise. From outposts along the Danish coast, from navy vessels, and from radar stations, Soviet ships were followed closely. Months before the Cuban Missile Crisis in late 1962, the Danish air force followed the

Soviet merchant vessels carefully and photographed them every time they passed through Danish waters. The Danish Air Force used RF-84F Thunderflash planes to capture the Soviet ships on film.

On 31 July, the pilot L. Poulsen flew over the Soviet cargo ship Sovetskaya Gavan in his RF-84F Thunderflash and photographed four crates on the deck. The length, span, height, and shape of the crates indicated that they were holding torpedo boats of the KOMAR-class. US planes later photographed the same ship close to Cuba.¹⁰

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Danish Defence Intelligence Service wrote in its weekly brief:

“In UO 41/62 a delivery of 12 missile motorboats to Cuba is noted. It can now be established with certainty that these boats have been delivered from the BALTIC SEA area. The boats were carefully covered. It has hitherto been established that the boats were built at the PETROVSKIJ shipyard in Leningrad at a fairly limited pace.

It is worth noting, that CUBA is the first country outside of the Soviet Union, which have received this type of boats. Before, the SOVIET UNION, Northern Fleet, delivered patrol-craft of the KRONSTADT-class and MTB’s of the P-6 class.”¹¹

On 2 August, a Danish plane taking pictures overflew another Soviet ship. Alexandra Suvorov was transporting four P-6 torpedo boats on the deck.

The Danish pilots had reported everything during the summer and fall of 1962 but it was not until US President Kennedy’s famous TV speech that they realized what they had been part of. Nobody had told them anything about the use of the collected intelligence.¹²

The delivery of intelligence from the Danes has been mentioned in US sources. On 29 August 1962, the same day the first Soviet SA-2 SAM’s were discovered on Cuba, a meeting was held of the US Intelligence Board on Soviet ships on their way to Cuba. General Marshall Carter and Ray Cline, both deputy directors of central intelligence (DDCIs), raised the question about receiving information and pictures from Denmark and Turkey quicker. It was of course surveillance on Soviet vessels in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea that the two were interned in and hoped to have delivered more quickly.¹³

The Crisis Emerges

The Danish surveillance service in October 1962 was normal. During the summer and fall of 1962, several Soviet ships passed through Danish waters on their way to Cuba. It was standard procedure to send out Danish planes to photograph the passing ships. The events around Cuba did not have any

direct influence on Denmark. Prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis several dozen Soviet ships passed Denmark on their way to Cuba but it wasn't until last half of October that the Cuban situation found its way into the weekly intelligence briefs. From then on and through the rest of the year, Cuba was mentioned almost every week, just as the struggle for Berlin had been all through the Cold War.

On 21-22 October a number of Soviet merchant-ships—M/S Krasnograd and M/S Kasimov—were observed on their way out from the Baltic Sea through Danish waters. The ships were loaded with military equipment destined for Cuba. There was nothing out of the ordinary in that. The televised speech in which President Kennedy announced, that the United States had “irrefutable evidence, that the Soviet Union has constructed nuclear-rocket bases on Cuba” had not yet been aired.

Early in the morning on 24 October the crew at an observation post at the Danish naval fortress Langelandsfort made an interesting observation. Early in the morning the crew reported, that M/S Krasnograd had turned around and was passing by the observation post on its way back to the Baltic Sea. The next day M/S Kasimov did the same. Vice-chief of the DDIS, Commander P. A. Mørch, forwarded the observations of the Soviet ships to the Danish Prime Minister Jens Otto Krag and both were relieved by the Soviet reaction.¹⁴

Both observations were immediately reported to NATO. The report on the M/S Krasnograd was one of the first pieces of evidence that the Soviet Union had understood Kennedy's warning. It was seen as a sign that Nikita Khrushchev was not ready to go all in to keep the missiles in Cuba. More observations were made through November and December.¹⁵ Afterwards the DDIS chief in 1962, Col. Hans M. Lunding, revealed in his memoirs “when it was discovered that certain ships turned around and headed south for the Baltic Sea, it was of course of utmost importance and a momentous knowledge for US president Kennedy in the tense situation.”¹⁶



DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT No. 1

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief (Excerpts), 25 October 1962

Danish Defense Intelligence Service

Weekly Brief

25 October 1962

[excerpts]

Political

World-political activities of the Eastern Bloc: The first days in the reported period proceeded “normally” and without any important derivations from the usual foreign-political routine. President Kennedy's speech on the night between 22 and 23 October [i.e., 7 p.m., Washington time, after midnight, European time—ed.] did not provoke any immediate reaction from the Eastern Bloc; the content was briefly mentioned in the early hours the following day and only a couple of comments were added. It was not until Tuesday, [23 October,] 14.00 hours Danish time, that the Soviet Government released a lengthy statement, which was subsequently broadcast every hour on Moscow radio and later in the people's-democratic radio-stations. The statement was characterized by general phrases without any concrete counter-propositions and ended with the words “The Soviet Union will take the necessary precautions in order to give a proper answer to the actions of the aggressors.” What these “necessary precautions” actually entail is unknown. However, the Soviet Union has on its own accord asked the UN Security Council to take up the issue, which could possibly be interpreted as a wish for negotiations. It is however too early to say anything concrete about the attitude of the Eastern Bloc. The willingness to “mediate” in the conflict between India and China could possibly be seen as a sign that Moscow, under the prevailing conditions, wishes to avoid any warlike complications. Concerning developments in US-Cuban relation, see below. (Finished Wednesday the 24 [of October], 03.10 pm.)

(...)

Cuba, the chronological political development since 1959.

The following is a description of the political developments in Cuba since 1959, to serve as a background for the events which have recently occurred in Cuba:

On the 26th of July [1953,] the 27-year old lawyer Fidel Castro leads a revolt against the dictatorial regime of Batista. The revolt fails and Castro and his followers are sentenced to 15 years of forced labour. He is already pardoned in 1955, after which he and a group of followers flee to Mexico. Here he founds the revolutionary “26th of July Movement.” Approximately one year later (in December 1956), Fidel Castro along with his brother Raul and 80 of their supporters, land illegally in Cuba, where they establish a partisan unit.

This partisan unit fights with increasing success against the Batista regime. At first the Communists denounced the “26th of July Movement,” calling them a “bourgeoisie movement,” but when the Batista regime began to show signs of weakness under the pressure from the Castro-partisans, they decided to approach the “26th of July Movement.”

On the 1st of January, [1959,] Batista flees; Castro appoints Dr. Manuel Urrutia as President and takes control of the armed forces himself. The Communists have in the meantime occupied the key positions in the trade-unions in Havana, and their party, “The Popular Socialist Party [PSP],” becomes the only party to be officially allowed next to “26th of July Movement.” Communists, who had fled abroad during the Batista regime, returned home and with the help from the trade-unions they are given leading positions in Havana. These returned emigrants support Castro, but without any enthusiasm for his movement; they wish to be able to act independently. Castro himself declared in an interview, that “...the “26th of July Movement” is a radical, but not Communist movement...” And three months later, in April 1959, he adds in a TV interview that “...if there by chance should be any Communists in my government, there is exactly zero...”

This open non-communist tendency in the Castro movement continues, although several original Castro supporters claim that the “26th of July Movement” is slowly being infiltrated by Communists. Thus Castro’s former partisan-comrade and chief of the air-force flee in July 1959 in protest against the communist infiltration, and for the same reasons President Urrutia is forced to abdicate, with [Osvaldo] Dorticos becoming the new President. The Communists (“Popular Socialist Party”) is now under the leadership of the general secretary Blas Roca, who in August 1959 in the international communist organ “Problems of Peace and Socialism” announces a hard communist line on Cuba.

In the meantime the relations between the USA and Cuba are deteriorating on a monthly basis. In June 1959 a land-reform is adopted, which heralds the confiscation of all American-owned land without compensation. The United States protests; Cuba responds by claiming that the United States is supporting an anti-Castro-revolution. In February 1960 [Anastas] Mikoyan arrives in Cuba in order to open a Soviet exhibition. At the same time a credit and trade deal is made (mostly Soviet oil for Cuban sugar). In May 1960, some months after Mikoyan’s visit, Cuba re-establishes diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union, which had been severed in 1952, and at the same time a Cuban ring of control is established around the American naval base at Guantanamo (leased for 99 years by the USA in 1903). The United States proclaims the suspension of all economic aid, which is countered [by the

Cubans] with the confiscation of all American hotels and oil companies in June 1960.

Coinciding with the break between the United States and Cuba, the [Cuban] relationship with the Soviet Union is strengthened, which among other things manifests itself in Khrushchev’s words on the 9th of July 1960:

“...we (the Soviet Union) will do anything to support Cuba in its struggle. More plainly said, the Soviet artillerymen can if necessary come to Cuba’s aid with rockets...”

On 21 September 1960, Castro meets Khrushchev during the UN general [assembly] summit in New York, and one month later the Soviet deliveries of weapons begin. The United States begins an embargo against Cuba. In December the same year, a Soviet-Cuban agreement is made concerning expanded trade and increased technical aid. At the same time, all remaining non-communist elements are removed from the trade unions. In January 1961 Castro demands a drastic reduction of the American embassy personnel, which is in turn answered by the United States with the cutting of all diplomatic connections. (Eisenhower: “There are limits to what Americans can endure...”) On the 1st of February, Castro among other things declares:

“initially we mistrusted the communists... but later we learned to know each other and to understand each other and began to work together...”

To this, President Kennedy replied on the 3rd of April by describing Cuba as a dangerous bridgehead for international communism. On the 17th [of April 1961] the “invasion” (Bay of Pigs) begins. But it collapses on the 20th.

In May that same year during a victory parade, Castro proclaims Cuba to be a socialist state, and the country is mentioned in the communist may-paroles immediately after the list of people’s-democracies, as a state on its way toward socialism. Subsequently, the establishment of a totalitarian regime is begun. The communists along with the “26th of July Movement” create a unified party, and Castro professes himself to Communism:

“I am a Marxist-Leninist and shall remain as such to my death”, he declared on 1st of December 1961.

Subsequently, action and counteraction rapidly follow one another. On the 22nd of January [1962], on the suggestion of the USA, the Organization of American States (OAS) in

Punta del Este (Uruguay) adopts a resolution (the original suggestion had been severely limited), which said that a profession to Marxist-Leninism was irreconcilable with the inter-American system. On the 4th of February, President Kennedy broadcast the provisions for the import and export embargo of Cuba—excluding medical supplies. On the 7th of March the communist Enrique Lister becomes the military adviser for Castro, following the takeover of the land-reform by another communist (Rodriguez) a couple of days earlier. On the 9th March, a politburo is established for the unified party (the communists and the 26th of July Movement was unified to a single party in August 1961), consisting of 25 persons, including 10 professed communists. These try to take power from the inside, pushing Castro in the background. He fights back, after which [Anibal] Escalante, the general secretary for the unified party, flees to Czechoslovakia on the 26th of March. Castro calls Escalante a leftist sectarian. Moscow and Peking approve of Castro's steps 14 days later.

On the 2nd of July, Raoul [Raúl] Castro travels to Moscow where he obtains the commitment of increased military aid, after which an agreement is signed on the 2nd of September for the delivery of weapons and military instructors. This is regarded by the United States as a threat, and President Kennedy is given the authority to call in 150,000 reservists in case of a crisis. This is perceived as a war-threat by the Soviet Union, and it is added that an attack on Cuba will be answered by the Soviet Union with, among other things, a counter-attack with rockets. On the 20th of September, Congress gives Kennedy the authority to use military force against Cuba. Subsequently, the Soviet Union signs a "fishery-agreement" with Cuba on the 25th of September. The agreement includes the construction of a Soviet fishery harbor in Cuba.

The decision to establish a Soviet "fishery-base" on Cuba provoke a strong reaction in the United States. During his campaign for re-election [sic; actually the mid-term Congressional elections—ed.], President Kennedy is repeatedly urged to "act" and is accused of being "soft" on the Cuban issue. The American request to the Western merchant shipping companies not to ship weapons to Cuba, is referred to in the Soviet press as "anti-Cuban hysteria," and [the Soviets] repeatedly threaten that "an attack on Cuba will mean a world war with nuclear weapons."

Other similar declarations followed, and it is underlined that the fishery harbor, which is supposed to lay in Havana, "has no military purpose." The foreign minister of the Soviet Union, [Andrei] Gromyko, assures President Kennedy during their talks on the 17th [actually 18th—ed.] that the Soviet weapons deliveries only consist of weapons for self-defense. This assurance apparently prompts the President's

National Security Advisor, [McGeorge] Bundy, to declare on a television-broadcast, that the military deliveries from the Soviet Union presented no immediate threat against the United States.

However, it is apparent in Kennedy's speech on the 22nd, that after receiving new intelligence about the Soviet deliveries and "technicians," the United States regards Gromyko's assurance as "untrue." It is therefore decided to take precautions, as President Kennedy said in his speech. The new developments are at the current time (the 24th, 03:00 PM) very unclear and vague, and the world press is furthermore shedding light on it from all angles, so that one can only get the background information from these sources.

[...]

ARMY

A. SOVIET UNION.

Extension of service-time and cancellation of leave.

SISC no 170 N

Confidential

Minister of Defence, marshal [Rodion] MALINOVSKIY, issued the order on the 23rd of October 1962 to cancel all leave for the armed forces. Furthermore, the impending returning home of the personnel of the rocket forces, the air defence and submarine fleet is suspended. These measures are done as a quick response to the American actions around Cuba.

It is therefore not a case of a general extension of the service-time of the armed forces; it only concerns the forces which—also under normal circumstances—are under maximum readiness.

Thus, it seems that the demobilization order issued by the Minister of Defence on the 7th of September 1962 is still standing for all other personnel of the armed forces.

B. WARSAW PACT

Readiness.

SISC no 222 M/C

Confidential

Simultaneously with the above-mentioned order from the Soviet Minister of Defense, the chief of the Warsaw-Pact unified command, Marshal [Andrei] GRECHKO, gave the order to increase the level of readiness for all Warsaw Pact forces.

The increased state of readiness can be seen as a result of the increased readiness of the American forces.

There has to date (24 October, 06:00 PM) not been seen any special activity among the Soviet forces in East Germany and Poland, nor from any of the satellite states. A heightened state of readiness has been seen before during periods of political tension. It is also seen implemented during the conduct of a major NATO-military manoeuvre.

100. CUBA'S MILITARY STRENGTH

SISC no 200 12E

Confidential

See appendix 1 to this paper.

[...]

C. Miscellaneous.

1. In UO [*Uge-Oversigt*—Weekly Brief].41/[19]62 a delivery of 12 missile motorboats to Cuba is noted. It can now be established with certainty that these boats have been delivered from the BALTIC SEA area. The boats were carefully covered. It has hitherto been established that the boats were built at the PETROVSKIJ shipyard in Leningrad at a fairly limited pace.

It is worth noting, that CUBA is the first country outside of the Soviet Union, which has received this type of boats. Before, the SOVIET UNION, Northern Fleet, delivered patrol-craft of the KRONSTADT-class and MTBs of the P-6 class.

2. On 22 October, the Soviet merchant-ship KRASNOGRAD passed out through Danish waters, carrying about 12 vehicles on its deck, en route to CUBA. On 24 October the same ship passed back through into the BALTIC SEA via STOREBÆLT, carrying the same cargo on its decks.

As this ship has been sailing for a longer period from the BALTIC SEA to CUBA, and as it seems that the voyage went normally without any incident or accidents, the ship's return can be connected to the situation around CUBA.

[...]

REVIEW OF CUBA'S MILITARY FORCES

(Time: October 1962)

A. DEFENSE SYSTEM

1. Defensive Alliances.

No direct defense alliances with the Soviet Union or any other country, but agreements of weapons-deliveries and military advisors with the Soviet Union, China, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany.

2. Base of recruiting

Army:)

Navy:) recruiting.

Air force:)

Militia: "Volunteer" arming of men and women (workers, students and peasants).

3. Division of the Armed Forces

Army and militia.

Navy.

Air force.

4. Defense Leadership

FIDEL CASTRO's brother, RAOUL [RAUL] CASTRO, is chief of the Cuban armed forces.

5. Military aid from other countries.

August 1960: CZECHOSLOVAKIA delivers rifles.

June 1961: Combined communist weapons aid is estimated to be about \$100,000,000.

January 1962: Combined communist weapons aid is estimated to be about \$175,000,000.

September 1962: Combined communist weapons aid is estimated to be about \$225,000,000.

The 64-year old Soviet-General ENRIQUE LISTER (LISTYT SIN), known from the Civil War in Spain (commander of "The International Brigade"), has from 10/3 [10 March] 1962 been on CUBA as leader of the EAST-military missions (is mentioned as the leader of the entire CUBAN defence).

Furthermore, the Soviet-General ALBERTO BAY (trained in MEXICO as part of CASTRO's original small guerrilla-force) is on CUBA.

USSR-technicians on CUBA, 5000-6000 (among these are probably also other personnel than technicians).

USSR-military mission)

East German-military mission)

Czech-military mission) on CUBA.

Chinese-military mission)

B. ARMY.

1. Strength.

a. Peacetime forces.

38,000 (1961) in the regular army, including police.
(Ca. 6,000).

b. National Guard and paramilitary forces.

Militia:

8,000 in 1959,

250,000 in 1961, made up of students, peasants and workers (men and women).

2. Materiel.

A lot of American materiel exists from before the revolution.
65,000 new Belgian FN-rifles.

125,000 Czech automatic weapons,
(including CZR semi-automatic rifles with folding bayonet, ZB.R-2.30 calibre.)

75 T-34 tanks (Soviet)

25 JS-2 (-3) tanks (Soviet)

100 T-54 tanks (Soviet) with infra-red battle and driving equipment.

100 mm cannons (Soviet)

Armored personnel-carriers (Soviet)

Light artillery, 85 mm, cannon (Eastern Bloc)

Heavy artillery, 155 mm, self-propelled cannon (60 km/H).

Multiple barrel rocket launchers (Soviet).

1,000 pieces of field artillery.

Vehicles of the jeep type.

Radar-equipment (Eastern Bloc)

Signal-equipment (Eastern Bloc)

2,000 Anti Aircraft Artillery (30-40 mm—SKODA)

Czech ZPU-4 LVMG in quad mounting.

12 batteries of Soviet SA-2 anti aircraft missiles (Guideline),
(radar corrected—altitude 60,000 feet, distance 40-50 km, angle of impact 30°).

3. Training.

80,000 soldiers (and militia?) have received two months of training and discipline with the help of Czech, Russian, East German, and Chinese military advisers.

All soldiers are equipped with automatic weapons.

4. Order of Battle.

2 Air defence missile batteries, SA-2:

1 Battery (with 6 launching ramps) (operational) in BAHIA HONDA 70 km

West of HAVANA.

1 Battery (with 6 launching ramps) (under construction) 100 km East of HAVANA in MATANZAS.

Anti aircraft batteries on the PINE-islands [Isle of Pines—ed.].

5. Miscellaneous

Many of the 5-6,000 Soviet technicians have manned the radar-installations for the SA-2 missiles.

Other Russians are manning the large radar-installations, from which they can “eavesdrop” on Cape Canaveral. It is also from here [that] Soviet cosmonauts are directed.

Czech ZPU-4 LVMG in quad mountings are positioned around the Soviet camps.

C. NAVY.

1. Strength. (in 1961)

380 officers

220 NCO's

5,000 men.

2. Materiel.

Frigate “CUBA” (is mentioned as a cruiser) launched in 1911 in the United States, modernized in 1936-37 and 1956.

Frigate “ANTONIO MACEO”

ex. USN PF-type

-'- “JOSE MARTI”

--

-'- “MAXIMO GOMEZ”

-

Patrol-escort craft “CARIBE”

ex. USN PCE-type

-'- “SIBONEY”

--

Patrol-vessel “BAIRE”

ex USN PC-type (anti-submarine)

4 coastguard-motorboats “HABANA”, “LAS VILLAS”, “ORICUBA”, “PINAR DEL RIO”.

1 coastguard-motorboat “LEONICIO PRADO”

Auxiliary coastguard-motorboats “DONATIVO”, “MATANZAS”

Motorboats “R 41”, “R42”, “R43”

ex. USN motortorpedoboats.

Auxiliary patrol-vessels “SV 7”, “-8”, “-9”, “-10”, “-12”, “-14” and SV 1, -2, -3, -4, -5 and -6.

Auxiliary craft “GRANNA”

10 rescue-vessels.

CUBA has furthermore received a number of Soviet motor-torpedo-boats of the KOMAR-class (the figure 100 has been mentioned, but that is impossible—10 is the more likely amount of vessels). It is possible that CUBA in 1961 received two Soviet destroyers, for the time being crewed by Russians, until a Cuban crew has been trained. The two destroyers might be a mistake, however, and it could just be two coastal patrol vessels.

3. Combat strength.

The Navy might be unreliable, since it was not put into action during the rebel invasion in 1961.

4. Bases.

Frigate observed in MARIEL in may 1962. Fleet academy in MARIEL.

5. Miscellaneous

Agreement with POLAND for deliveries.

1960—a number of motor-torpedo-boats

-2- minesweepers

-2- coastal vessels

1961—a floating dry-dock.

If any of these deliveries has ever arrived in CUBA is unknown.

D. AIR FORCE.

1. Strength.

Ca. 200 pilots

2. Materiel.

25 MIG-15

45 MIG-17

20 Supersonic MIG-19

25-30

MIG-21

24 MI-4 helicopters

20 AN-2 air-planes

8 IL transport-planes

3. Training.

The Ca. 200 pilots are trained in Czechoslovakia.

4. Morale.

In 1961, a few air force officers helped the rebel forces, as they took off from CUBA,

bombed CUBAN ammunition depots, and then landed in the USA.

5. Bases.

San Antonio de Los Banos (air force)

Havana/Campo/Columbia

Mariel (Naval air-planes)

Mendoza/San Julian (air force)

Camaguey (civilian)

Santiago de Cuba (air force/civilian)

Varadero (civilian/air force).

There is furthermore the airfield at PLAYO SALADO (possibly one of the above mentioned, which has its location only roughly mentioned.). In May 1962, work on the lengthening of the take-off strips [runways] was observed.

OVERVIEW OF SOVIET PERSONNEL ON CUBA

Locality

Number—type—occupation

BAHIA HONDA A group of technicians, who have manned the radar of the air defence missile-battery. (arrived on the Soviet ship MS “KHABAROVSK”).

SAN JULIAN

400 men with 35 pieces of heavy guns.

QUIEBRA HACHA

(East of CANABAS)

2,000 men in a Soviet military base.

DEL CANO

(South of HAVANA)

3,500 soldiers and technicians in the old reformatory at TORRENS.

MATANZAS-province

Probably 3,000 men.

CLIMONAR and near the coast

at RIO CAMINAR

LAS VILLAS-province

1,000 men

CASILDA harbour

NB. The number of the personnel might be too high (most of the information is not confirmed).

[Source: Danish State Archive, Copenhagen, Archives of the Danish Defense Intelligence Service. Translated for CWIHP by Henrik Brandt.]



DOCUMENT No. 2

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief (Excerpts), 1 November 1962

Danish Defense Intelligence Service

Weekly Brief

1 November 1962

[excerpts]

SUMMARY

(for the period 25-31 October 1962)

The only conclusion which can be made with any certainty at the moment following the Cuba-crisis, is that the Soviet Union does not wish a Third World War. The ultimate goal, world dominance, has not been abandoned. This is amply illustrated by the fact that the Soviets have given up Cuba as a military base, but seek to keep it as a political base. It should be noted, that among the reasons for the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Cuba was the fear, as the situation developed, that the United States should gain unwanted insight into Soviet missile data.

The cancellation of the sales of weapons and material to India by the Soviet Union, must, in the light of the Chinese-Indian border dispute, be regarded as a wish not to worsen Soviet-Chinese relations.

Both the Cuban and the India-China crisis will probably make it more difficult for the Soviet Union to penetrate into ASIA, AFRICA, and LATIN AMERICA.

Four more nuclear test detonations have been conducted in the Soviet Union.

An expansion of certain roads in East Germany may have a military purpose.

A certain degree of readiness is maintained in the Eastern Bloc, especially among the strategically important forces (rocket troops, air defence, etc.) as well as internal security forces in the Warsaw Pact countries. The latter is apparently in order to maintain internal order.

An intensified patrolling of the western and eastern parts of the Baltic Sea can be observed.

Apart from this, no abnormal dispositions can be observed.

Only limited training activity has yet been observed in the newly discovered areas, which have been sealed off for military purposes.

On the fronts between China and India, the Chinese attack has stalled, and Indian forces have begun a counter-attack.

POLITICAL

The world political activity of the Eastern Bloc: The reported time period is marked by the Cuban-American-Soviet conflict concerning the bases on Cuba. Perhaps as a consequence of the crisis, the Soviet Union has furthermore taken a friendlier stance in the Indian-Chinese conflict.

Moscow's latest step in the Cuban conflict is estimated in the following account of the chronological development since Wednesday the 24th:

24 October, 15:00 hours Danish time: the American naval quarantine is initiated. Several Soviet ships nearing the quarantined zone change course. Khrushchev sends a non-publicized message to President Kennedy, in which he supposedly warns the United States and remarks, that the blockade could trigger a nuclear war. He simultaneously answers Bertrand Russell and declares that the Soviet Union does not intend to act unpremeditated and is willing to participate in a summit conference to avoid a war. U Thant urges the Soviet Union to stop its weapons transporters and the United States to lift the quarantine.

25 [October]. A Soviet tanker is stopped, but is then allowed to continue, after it had been ascertained that it did not contain any offensive weapons. The ship was not boarded. Khrushchev accepts U Thant's plea. Kennedy declares that the United States is ready to negotiate. However, according to a US spokesman the quarantine is to be maintained, as long as the construction of the rocket bases continues. The UN Security Council asks U Thant to mediate in the matter. According to unconfirmed messages, Kennedy has sent Khrushchev an extremely serious warning and assured him, that the United States will act, if the construction of the bases is not stopped immediately. There is a dramatic clash between [Soviet UN ambassador Valerian] Zorin and [US UN ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson in the UN Security Council.

26 [October]. Polish radio and press thank both Khrushchev and Kennedy for their positive attitude to U Thant's request, and there is talk about "judicial" consequences in the eventual boarding of a Polish ship. East German radio mentions Kennedy in positive terms. Khrushchev agrees that Soviet ships must stay away from the forbidden zone. Kennedy promises that the United States will try to avoid direct

confrontation with the ships for a couple of days. The US spokesman declares that if the building of the bases continues, "further action will be justified." At the same time Washington announces that the construction of the bases "continues at a rapid pace." U Thant mediates between the parties.

27 [October]. Khrushchev's second message to Kennedy. He suggests the removal of the rockets from Cuba in exchange for the Americans doing the same with their rockets in Turkey. The United States rejects the "deal," but displays a willingness to negotiate, if the construction of the rocket bases on Cuba is stopped.

28 [October]. Radio transmissions from the Eastern Bloc is dominated by declarations about how Khrushchev is unwilling to let himself be provoked into making rash actions. At 3 PM Danish time, Khrushchev sends his third message to Kennedy that the Soviet Union is prepared to dismantle and ship home the Soviet Rockets, which are in the care of Soviet officers on Cuba. If Cuba will allow it, this removal could be done under the supervision by the UN.

29 [October]. Soviet press and radio hail Khrushchev as a "champion of peace"; also the "sensible" approach by Kennedy is mentioned. U Thant declares that he, accompanied by military and political advisers, will travel to Cuba on the 30th to negotiate about the UN-supervised removal of the Soviet rockets.

30 [October]. The United States suspends the quarantine and aerial reconnaissance during the time U Thant is staying on Cuba. U Thant arrives on Cuba along with 17 advisers, including several officers. He negotiates with Castro for 2 ½ hours. From the Cuban side it is declared that the negotiations did not lead to any results, whereas U Thant says that the talks were "extremely useful."

31 [October]. During the afternoon at 4:00 PM Danish time, the negotiations are continued. The Western powers have given the United States diplomatic and moral support during the action and the Organization of American States (OAS) has approved Kennedy's steps and denounced both Cuba and the Soviet Union. India has not taken any direct stand on the matter and has only uttered general statements, whereas Cuba has supported China in the conflict with India.

If one tries at this early moment to get an idea as to why the Soviet Union suddenly gave in, one should probably regard the following reasons: 1) The disagreement expected by the Soviet Union among the Western countries failed to

materialize. 2) Poland probably gave voice to its concerns for the Warsaw Pact not to overreach themselves. 3) The concern that the blockade and in the event of a US invasion of Cuba, Soviet classified information about missiles and their propulsion could fall into American hands. (This is probably also the why they want to hurry up the dismantling of the rockets, so that the UN observers won't get any information about the Soviet rockets.) 4) Moscow apparently does not [believe that the] time is good for starting a major conflict, maybe because of the major restructuring of the political and economical life in the Eastern Bloc.

The Soviet Union has apparently already from the start of the crisis been willing to initiate a "flexible withdrawal," which goes parallel with their stand on the Indian-Chinese border-conflict. Here the Soviet Union, maybe because they did not want to deepen the antagonism towards China, took an almost anti-Indian stand. In the Cuba-United States conflict, the politics used by the Soviet Union was not exactly in harmony with the wishes of Castro. Confronted with a grave situation, Moscow chose to preserve its friendship with communist countries, at the expense of the non-communist countries India and Cuba. It has to be said that it is far too early to make a reliable analysis of the events; they can after all hardly be regarded as being definitively over yet. Therefore, the views presented here must only be seen as an attempt on a preliminary assessment.

[...]

ARMY

A. Soviet Union

Readiness.

SISC no. 222 N

Confidential

The consequences of the ordered readiness of the armed forces mentioned in the last weekly brief, including the cancellation of leave, has only been observed in certain regions, especially those in the South and South East of the European part of the SOVIET UNION (CAUCASUS and the BLACK SEA region).

Note: It is unknown, if the above state of readiness still exists following president Khrushchev's radio-broadcast at 15:00 hours on 28 October.

The combat readiness only seems to include (have included?) the forces, who are deployed close to TURKEY as well as the rocket forces and the air defence. It can not be ruled out

that these measures were part of Khrushchev's proposal for a barter trade for the rocket-bases in TURKEY.

[...]

C. Miscellaneous.
For Official Use

1. There has in the period in question been observed a great deal of Soviet trawlers in the waters around SKAGEN. About three fishery-motherships are also present in the area, and it is therefore probable that just like the previous years there will be established a fishery base here.
2. The following Soviet merchant-ships have passed through Danish waters destined for CUBA and have later returned to the BALTIC SEA with cargo:

KRASNOGRAD
Northbound 22 October
Southbound 24 October

KASIMOV
Northbound 21 October
Southbound 25 October

KISLOVOPSK
Northbound 15 October
Southbound 29 October

BOLSHEVIK SUKHANOV
Northbound 17 October
Southbound 30 October

METALLURG KURAKO
Northbound 16 October
Southbound 30 October.

[Source: Danish State Archive, Copenhagen, Archives of the Danish Defense Intelligence Service. Translated for CWIHP by Henrik Brandt.]



DOCUMENT No. 3

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief
(Excerpts), 8 November 1962

Danish Defense Intelligence Service

Weekly Brief
8 November 1962

[excerpts]

Summary
(for the period 1-7 November 1962)

Foreign policy this week has been marked by the negotiations about the inspection of the dismantling and shipment of the Soviet missiles and bombers on and from Cuba. The negotiations have apparently reached their conclusion at the closing of this period.

Of note this week is Khrushchev's successive bilateral negotiations with the communist leaders of all the individual Eastern European countries. Especially the attitude of Poland has been interesting.

On the Berlin/Germany issue, it is noteworthy that the word "separate peace" has, at least for the time being, disappeared from official East European vocabulary.

The Soviet Union has during the week conducted 6 nuclear-weapons test explosions, including two in high altitude. The testing will continue until 20 November.

The heightened state of readiness inside the Warsaw Pact, introduced because of the Cuban crisis, has been lifted. The East German army, however, is keeping up a certain level of combat readiness, and the Soviet, Polish, and East German established patrolling in the western part of the Baltic Sea, including regular circumnavigations of Zealand, continues.

Some of the Soviet merchant-ships that were on the way to Cuba, have after a very short stay in Baltic Sea ports continued their journey toward Cuba. It is assumed that sensitive material has been unloaded.

In the reported period an increased Eastern Bloc trawler activity in the waters east of Skagen. The activity is deemed normal for the time of year.

[...]

POLITICAL
For Official Use

World political activity of the Eastern Bloc: The period covered in the report has been dominated by Cuban-problems. The chronology is as follows:

31 October: U Thant's negotiations with Castro ends without results, as Cuba stands firm and refuses to allow any inspection on Cuban soil. At the same time Moscow support Castro's "5 demands" to the United States (including the abandoning of

the Guantanamo base), and “Pravda” present new charges against the United States for “hatching new attack plans against Cuba.” In the Chinese party-organ “Renmin Ribao” [*People’s Daily*], a fierce attack is aimed at Khrushchev, who is accused of having “bowed to the imperialist aggression.”

1 November: [Anastas] Mikoyan leaves for Cuba via New York, where he negotiates with the United States and representatives of the UN. At the same time the Eastern Bloc once again attacks the “reactionary anti-Cuban propaganda, which tries to sow doubts about the gravity of president Kennedy’s obligations.” The pro-Cuban campaign in China continues, and the Chinese foreign minister Chen Yi gives the Cuban Chargé d’affaires a note with support for “the great leader Fidel Castro.” The United States initiates once again their blockade, which had been lifted during U Thant’s visit in Havana.

2 November: Mikoyan arrives in Cuba after having supported Castro’s demand of an abandonment of the Guantanamo base before his departure from New York. Simultaneously the United States and the Soviet Union agree to use observers from the Red Cross, partly to determine which of the ships on the way to Cuba is carrying offensive weapons, and partly to keep the parties informed about the progress of the dismantlement. Castro once again sharply rejects any form of inspection as a violation of Cuban sovereignty. Kennedy informs in an address to the nation, that the dismantling of the rocket bases is progressing with great speed, but promise, that the situation will be watched closely, until an inspection on site has been made. At the same time, the Soviet Union is reminded through a grave warning, that the “dismantling and return” must also include all the IL-28 bomber planes, which are present on Cuba.

3 November: The Red Cross in principle agrees to inspect the ships bound for Cuba. Mikoyan meets Castro twice, but nothing is divulged about these conferences.

4 November: Mikoyan continues his negotiations with Castro, but any practical results are still kept in the dark. The United States continue its inspection flights over Cuba and firmly sticks to its demand for inspections of the sites themselves, whether by the UN or the Red Cross.

5 November: U Thant has a meeting in New York with the Soviet Vice-Foreign minister [Vasily V.] Kuznetsov, who is thought to have provided the [UN] Secretary-General with an overview over the negotiations between Mikoyan and Fidel Castro. Over 1 million Chinese demonstrate in

Beijing in support for Castro (and thereby indirectly against Khrushchev).

6 November: [US UN Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson negotiates for 5 hours with Kuznetsov and hands him a written note (no. 2) with the demand to withdraw all IL-28 bombers. After the conference, Stevenson declares that the talks have not produced any concrete results. Based on aerial reconnaissance, the United States announces that 20 IL-28 [bombers] are still operational, and that there is evidence that more are being assembled. A couple of hours later it is announced that Soviet technicians have stopped assembling the remaining IL-28s. Cuba agrees to let the Red Cross do the inspections of ships en route to Cuba for the duration of one month. U Thant negotiates the technicalities of the inspection with the Red Cross. Mikoyan continues the negotiations with Castro. Nothing leaks out. The Chinese make declarations which strongly support Castro.

7 November (until 12:00 hours Danish time): U Thant informs the United States and the Soviet Union about the negotiations with the Red Cross.

The issues which still remain unsolved are the following: 1) the control on Cuba itself, 2) the dismantling and return of the IL-28 planes, 3) control [i.e., inspection—ed.] of the ships, which leave Cuba, 4) Castro’s “5 points” and 5) the duration of the control. How these issues are to be solved can not be seen at the moment; there are signs, however, that Moscow—presumably with the promise of increased financial aid and/or the threats of cutting it—will make the attempt to “persuade” Castro to give in. It is complicated, however, by strong support by the Chinese, which can probably increase Castro’s resistance to the wishes of the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev’s position of power: Both the information about the Soviet Unions rocket-bases on Cuba and Khrushchev’s rapid decision to have them removed apparently came as a surprise for most of the leaders of the people’s-democracies, who presumably had not been consulted. This procedure must have produced tension between Moscow and the capitals of the people’s-democracies (especially Warsaw), making it necessary for Khrushchev to explain the situation for his—somewhat disoriented - allies. This can be seen by the fact that all the leaders of the people’s-democracies in the period of 29 October to 5 November, one by one, have been to Moscow and negotiated with Khrushchev. By this unusual form of East Bloc-consultation, Khrushchev has probably tried to avoid any “group formations” that a combined East-conference might have produced. Most of the people’s-

democracies leaders seem to have accepted his policy. This was expressed among other places in [Polish leader Wladyslaw] Gomulka's article in "Pravda" on 5th [November] and in the statements the other leading Communists gave during the Cuban crisis. However, the statements from East Germany and Czechoslovakia showed some reticence.

The cleansing [purge—ed.] in Bulgaria can be seen as the underlining of Khrushchev's position as leader in the Eastern Bloc, since the ousted party-leaders all belonged to the Stalinist (pro-China) wing of the party. In Hungary this wing was already removed from the party a couple of weeks ago. Stalinist elements can therefore only be found in the parties of Czechoslovakia and East Germany; these countries' somewhat "lukewarm" attitudes toward Khrushchev's Cuba-policy seem to reflect the influence of the Stalinists. However, the coming congresses in both countries could—as was the case in Bulgaria—lead to in-depth reorganization of the party-leadership in favor of the Khrushchev wing. Also Yugoslavia has given absolute support during the crisis period, whereas China, North Vietnam, and North Korea (but not Outer Mongolia) have taken a decidedly anti-Khrushchev attitude.

Inside the Soviet Union itself, Khrushchev has apparently won great popularity in the wider population with his swift decision to let the rocket-bases be dismantled ("he has saved the peace"), which can maybe counter potential opposition from the dogmatist-group's side. That such a wing probably exists can be seen in an article in "Pravda" from 4 [November], signed by Marshal [Kliment] Voroshilov. In it he (who has himself been accused of Stalinism) supports Khrushchev by emphasizing, among other things, his view that nuclear war would lead to total destruction, as opposed to the dogmatist and Chinese view, that only "the corrupted capitalist" countries could be [destroyed] in a war with nuclear weapons, whereas the "socialist countries" would survive. The article can be a sign that Khrushchev with the help of Voroshilov, whose name resounds well in military circles, will seek support among officers and old Bolsheviks against potential, China-supported, opponents.

Poland: Gomulka travelled to Moscow on the 3rd [of November] and back again [to Warsaw] on the 4th. As far as it known, he was contrary to the other leaders alone and he left an article in "Pravda", which strongly supports Khrushchev's policies, especially on the Cuban issue. It also contains sharp attacks against the United States.

It seems it was very important for Gomulka to make at clear as possible to underline Poland's stand on the issue of the

time, first and foremost to the Soviet Union, but also to the opposition at home. Competent sources say that that the Polish government had not been notified about the Soviet rocket-bases on Cuba. When the situation had been solved, the government acted very cautious and with restraint. The American notes were not rejected, no restrictions were put on the American diplomatic corps, and no demonstrations [took place] in front of the American embassy. On the contrary, the relations between the representatives of the government and the staff of the American embassy remained on a friendly note during the Cuban crisis. The press and the propaganda apparatus limited itself to only demand for a peaceful solution to the crisis. The usual reliable sources tell about open demonstrations against the Soviet rocket-bases on Cuba, and in several businesses there were even notes of sympathy toward the United States; one case saw students openly express their opinions. Inside the Party, the open and secret expression of sympathy has aroused serious concerns. It was therefore greeted with great relief, when the news of Khrushchev's decision to back off was received, also because a continuation of the crisis would have caused trouble because of the overwhelming amount of hoarding among the population.

[...]

ARMY

A. WARSAW PACT.

1. Readiness.

SISC no 222 M/C

Confidential

The combat readiness, which was observed inside the Warsaw Pact during the height of the Cuban Crisis, has been gradually stepped down for all forces; only the East German army is retaining a certain level of readiness.

[...]

E. CUBA.

Confidential

1. The prelude to the crisis.

During the first half of the year the United States received several reports about heavy military construction activity on CUBA, including digging, construction of bunkers, roads and the extension of runways on airfields. At the same time, a close watch was kept on the supply of weapons and personnel from the SOVIET UNION and

other Eastern Bloc countries.

But it was not until in September 1962 that reports about major fortification works both above and below ground in isolated areas, where only Soviet personnel was allowed, suggested, that something special was going on. Soon afterwards reports were coming in about the unloading in Cuban ports of electronics, cargo-containers for specialized fuel (presumably for rocket fuel), “towers” or ramps, which looked like missile launch-ramps, and large containers (presumably containing missile-parts), and in one instance an observer saw several parts of a missile during transportation. At the same time, information was received about large truck convoys to the aforementioned closed-off areas. Only Soviet personnel were occupied with the unloading and transportation, which was shrouded in secrecy and often protected by jeeps with civilian Soviet personnel armed with rifles. There was also news about Soviet camps with up to 500-600 men in each. One particular camp was reportedly housing 6000-7000 men.

It is probably because of these reports that the United States decided to start its photo- reconnaissance of CUBA.

2. The photo-reconnaissance missions.

Soon the picture became more clear. They were building missile bases for medium range missiles, and both the missiles and the launching equipment had arrived to CUBA and was in the process of being deployed. The reconnaissance flights also revealed, that the many Soviet technicians which had been reported about earlier, were in fact for the most part regular Soviet troops. It is thus believed, that two Soviet regiments—one infantry regiment and one armored regiment—have been confirmed to be present on CUBA.

Marked on the following map are the bases for medium range missiles that were revealed by reconnaissance flights. It is made up of 40 launch-ramps spread out on 4 bases, which are:

SAN CHRISTOBAL (west-Cuba)

SAGUALA GRANDE (central-Cuba)

GUAN AJAY(near Havana)

REMEDIOS (Island off Santa Clara)

3. The dismantling of the missile-bases

The missile equipment is now being dismantled by Soviet personnel, but there has still not been reached any agreement on a control [i.e., inspection—ed.] of this dismantlement and the shipping of the equipment. It is estimated that at least 6 special ships are needed for the transportation for the missile equipment alone.

It should be noted, that a large amount of the materiel can be hidden in large, subterranean tunnels and sites that are known to have been constructed during the last year on CUBA in connection with the establishment of the bases.

[...]

3. The following Soviet merchant-ships have during the period covered by this report sailed into the BALTIC SEA after having been en-route to CUBA:

1 November	POLTAVA	
passed out from the BLACK SEA		14 October
3 November	YURIY GAGARIN	
passed out from the BLACK SEA		11 October
3 November	KIMOVSK	
passed out from the BALTIC SEA		13 October

Furthermore has the following ships passed out, probably en-route to CUBA, after a short stay in the BALTIC SEA:

3 November	BOLSHEVIK SUKHANOV	
passed into the BALTIC SEA		29 October
5 November	POLTAVA	
passed into the BALTIC SEA		1 November

[Source: Danish State Archive, Copenhagen, Archives of the Danish Defense Intelligence Service. Translated for CWIHP by Henrik Brandt.]



DOCUMENT No. 4

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief
(Excerpts), 15 November 1962

Danish Defense Intelligence Service
Weekly Brief
15 November 1962

[excerpts]

POLITICAL

For Service Use

World political activity of the Eastern Bloc: The period covered in the report has once again been marked by Cuban problems. The chronology is as follows:

07 November: Washington announces that arrangements are being made with the Soviet Union concerning the inspection of the Soviet ships that are leaving Cuba on their way back with the dismantled rockets. Continued disagreement between [US UN Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson and [Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily V.] Kuznetsov concerning the inspection of ships sailing to Cuba.

08 November: The first Soviet vessel is stopped and inspected by an American naval ship. The inspection is conducted in a friendly atmosphere.

09 November: The concentration of naval forces in the Caribbean Sea is maintained, while the United States continue to insist on its demand on inspections on Cuban territory; Khrushchev sends a new letter to Kennedy, but nothing is divulged about its content, however; furthermore, it is reported that also the Soviet technicians are on their way home. American inspections on high seas continue.

10 November: After staying for a week in Havana, Mikoyan has still not achieved any noteworthy results. The Americans continue to demand the removal of the IL-28 planes.

11 November: The Soviet Union still haven't agreed to the demand by the United States, that the control inspection period of the Red Cross should last for 30 days. At the same time it is reported that the United States might have to abandon its demand for an inspection on Cuban soil. To the American demand for the removal of the IL-28 planes, Kuznetsov argues that these planes are of an obsolete model, and that they have already been taken over by the Cuban air force.

12 November: [US] Vice Defense Minister [i.e., Deputy Defense Secretary Roswell] Gilpatric reports, that 42 of the [Soviet] rockets have been removed [from Cuba], but that the American aerial reconnaissance over Cuba will continue; simultaneously, security work on the Guantanamo base continues. After a meeting of the National Security Council, it is declared that the United States is steadfast in its demands

for an inspection on Cuba and the withdrawal of the Soviet bombers. For the second day in a row, the Cuban newspapers are quiet about the negotiations between Mikoyan and Castro.

13 November: Mikoyan delivers a speech at Havana university, in which he strongly supports the Cuban point of view and Castro's "5 demands" to the Americans. Concerning the IL-28 planes, it is stated from Soviet side that the planes are Cuban property. Heated negotiations are taking place, partly between Stevenson and Kuznetsov, and partly between U Thant, Kuznetsov, [Soviet UN Ambassador Valerian] Zorin and the Cuban delegate, Carlos Lechuga on the other. After the negotiations Stevenson declare, that his talk with Kuznetsov has been "constructive," and a spokesman for U Thant says that the Soviet Union and Cuba in unison has proposed a solution to the Cuban-situation. Furthermore, it is decided to shelve the plan for the inspections of the shipping to Cuba by the Red Cross. From Cuba it is reported of an arrest of an American agent, it is supposedly the leading man of the American intelligence on Cuba, who was arrested during a sabotage action. This is rejected by the Americans, however, as being a mere propaganda stunt.

14 November until 12:00: The American-Soviet negotiations are expected to continue. To date, 35 ships have passed the American line of blockade on their way to Cuba. The naval units who enforce the blockade are joined by two destroyers from Venezuela as well as several other ships from Argentina and the Dominican Republic.

Summary:

Since the Soviet Union and the United States at the current moment have reached on an agreement about the inspection of the transports to Cuba, two issues are left unsolved, that is, the issue of an inspection on Cuba itself and the removal of the IL-28 planes. With regards to the inspection on Cuban territory, it seems like the negotiation efforts of Mikoyan have been in vain. And as for the removal of the Soviet planes, Moscow has expressed itself very negatively, since the planes now are regarded as Cuban property.

[Source: Danish State Archive, Copenhagen, Archives of the Danish Defense Intelligence Service. Translated for CWIHP by Henrik Brandt.]



DOCUMENT No. 5

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief
(Excerpts), 22 November 1962

Danish Defense Intelligence Service

Weekly Brief

22 November 1962

[excerpts]

OVERVIEW

(For the period 15-21 November 1962)

One of the dominating foreign-political features has been the gradual lessening of the tensions of the Cuban-crisis. The contours of a more general period of détente can be faintly discerned.

Another remarkable feature has been the development in the Indian-Chinese conflict. The proclaimed withdrawal of the Chinese can have several possible reasons (Soviet, political and financial pressure, as well as Chinese supply problems). It is however too hasty to talk about any real détente in this area yet.

The week brought another Soviet nuclear test in Central Asia, probably the last of the series.

The period covered by the report exhibits the normal activity and the normal amount of training activities for the season of the year.

The readiness measures prompted by the Cuban-crisis are still active. However, among the East German forces, a degree of easing up of the tension can be traced.

The reinforced patrol- and surveillance-service in the western Baltic Sea, including the occasional circumnavigation of Zealand, has continued unabated, but is expected to be cancelled.

On the 21st of November, [Soviet Defense Minister] Marshal [Rodion] Malinovskiy received instructions to call off the readiness measures taken.

One of the few new items demonstrated during the parade on the Red Square on 7 November was a naval missile, which could possibly be a ballistic-missile for submarines.

Both the PVO [(Soviet) Air Defense Forces] and the rocket-troops have received new chiefs, respectively Marshal V. A. STUDETS, former commander of the tactical air-force, and Marshall S. S. BIRYUZOV. The latter is a member of the Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet.

[...]

POLITICAL

For official use

World political activities of the Eastern Bloc: The development around Cuba:

14 November: Stevenson negotiates with U Thant and commented after the meeting, that the Cuban-issue must be concluded in the Security Council, where it had started. It is considered whether to hinder the supply of fuel to Cuba.

15 November: Cuba [i.e., Castro] sends a message to U Thant, wherein he threatens to shoot down American reconnaissance planes over Cuban territory.

16 November: As an answer to Castro's threats, Washington answers that the aerial-reconnaissance will be continued, and that the planes if necessary will be protected by fighters. Any fire will be returned. Moscow repeats its bartering proposal with regards to a mutual dismantling of rocket-bases.

17 November: The negotiations concerning Cuba are once again at a stalemate.

18 November: In order to keep the airspace above Cuba open for military flying and to counter the American reconnaissance, Castro orders the suspension of all civilian air traffic over Cuba. Washington makes it apparent, that Kennedy, if Khrushchev does not declare himself willing to full-fill his obligations with regards to the withdrawal of the IL-28 bombers from Cuba, will give the order for initiating harsher measures. This will probably mean a strengthening of the blockade with the objective to cut Castro off from further fuel deliveries to the aforementioned bomber-planes.

19 November: The threat to shoot down American reconnaissance planes is repeated by the Cubans. Of the foreign airlines, only the routes to Prague and Mexico City will be kept going. In the evening Mikoyan has a two hour meeting with Fidel Castro, after which the text for a letter from Castro to U Thant is publicized on Havana radio in the night between the 19th and the...

Notes

- 1 PhD., Head of the Cold War Museum Langelandsfort.
- 2 Hans A. Schröder, *Det sku' vere saa godt – Danmarks Luftforsvar under Den Kolde Krig* (Copenhagen, 2002), p. 278.
- 3 Søren Nørby, *Danske ubåde 1909-2004* (2005), p. 186. Thede Palm, *Några studier till T-kontorets historia* (Stockholm, 1999)

pp. 52-53. Olav Riste and Arnfinn Moland, *'Strengt hemmelig' – Norsk etterretningsteneste 1945-1970* (Oslo, 1997). For the English version of this, see Olav Riste, *The Norwegian Intelligence Service, 1945-1970* (London, 1999). Wilhelm Christmas-Møller Obersten og Kommandøren, Copenhagen (1995). Hans Davidsen-Nielsen, *Spionernes Krig* (Copenhagen, 2008), pp. 69, 82.

4 Danish State Archive. Archives of the DDIS, weekly reports for week nr. 20, 22, 34 and 37 (1962). For more on US-Danish intelligence relations, see Peer Henrik Hansen, *Second to None – US Intelligence Activities in Northern Europe 1943-1946*, Dordrecht (2011).

5 When Nikita Khrushchev visited Denmark in 1964 the Danish intelligence service went quite far in order to confirm or deny the rumor that Khrushchev suffered from bad kidneys. The service had altered the plumbing at the hotel where the Soviet leader stayed and was thereby able to secure his urine and feces and analyze them. The results showed that Khrushchev was rather fit for a man at 70. Hans Davidsen Nielsen (2008). See also <http://politiken.dk/indland/ECE588747/danske-spioner-stjal-khrusjtjovs-affoering/>

6 The sound of a ship propeller is – just as the sound of the engine – unique for every ship and can therefore be seen as the fingerprint of every ship. According to a former Danish chief of intelligence the Soviet Union would rebuild some of its ships in an attempt to deceive the Western intelligence services. The sound of the propeller and engine would disclose that it was in fact an old familiar ship of the Soviet navy that had been rebuilt.

7 Jørgen E. Larsen, *Hawkeyes – og hvad de så!* Karup (2004), p. 51.

8 Dick van der Art, *Aerial Espionage*, Shrewsbury (1985), side 109.

9 Hans A. Schrøder (2002), p. 280. Dick van der Art (1985), pp. 106-108. For an example regarding an important Soviet vessel, see *Flyvehistorisk Tidsskrift*, number 1, March 2004.

10 http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/9.jpg

11 DDIS. Weekly Brief 25 October 1962.

12 Jørgen E. Larsen (2004), pp. 15, 42, 51, 57.

13 "Chronology of Specific Events Relating to the Military Buildup in Cuba", udateret rapport. Punkt 67-68. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/chron.htm

14 See telegram number 49 dated 24 October 1962 and telegram number 53 dated 25 October 1962.

15 The Danish observations regarding Soviet ships continued. In December 1962 M/S Kasimov returned from Cuba carrying Soviet IL-28 Beagle planes on the deck. It was photographed when it passed through Danish waters.

16 Bob Ramsing Den Hemmelige Tjeneste, Copenhagen (1980), page 90. *Jyllands-Posten*, 26 July 2005. H.M. Lunding and Otto Lippert, *Stemplet Fortroligt*, Copenhagen (1970), p. 144. Helge Hjortdal, *Tre Røde Konger – set fra sidelinjen*, Copenhagen(1999), p. 225.

Our Man in Havana: When a Local Danish Newspaper was Able to Report from Cuba

by Peer Henrik Hansen¹

On the 28th of October 1962, Danish journalist Jørgen E. Petersen took off by plane from the Czechoslovak capital of Prague heading for Havana. Together with four Swedish colleagues, he hoped to be able to report from Cuba and work as a free journalist. But as soon as the plane had arrived, the Scandinavian journalists were arrested. They were placed in house arrest at Hotel Capri and were placed on the 13th floor. From the windows, the journalists would follow movements on the streets below and document them by writing articles, filming the activities, or taping radio programs.

Rumors said that Petersen and his Swedish friends were about to be expelled. Petersen wrote several articles and pointed out that the situation of the Cuban Missile Crisis had strengthened the Cuban dictator and people had armed themselves in order to defend the country against an American invasion. But he couldn't get his articles back home. After a couple of days under house arrest, Petersen grabbed the phone and asked to be connected to a receiver in Denmark. The operator went silent before replying "one minute, please." And then the most incredible thing happened. The operator put him through to New York where Petersen explained to an American operator his peculiar situation. She forwarded him to Denmark and he tried to establish contact with his editor and to his story to the newspaper. But this did not happen. He tried several times to repeat the phone call but without any luck. He eventually got through to Danish national radio and went on the air live for twenty seconds before the Cubans cut him off.

Swedish journalist Sven Öste reported how he had been jailed for 24 hours and spent time in a Cuban prison cell together with several others. The Cubans claimed that Öste was an American spy and that his passport was forged. He was placed in a cell "where prisoners apparently are placed and then forgotten...." All contact with the outside world was cut off by the polite but rough prison guards. After being released, Öste soon discovered the great disappointment among the Cubans towards Nikita Khrushchev and the Soviet decision to remove its nuclear missiles. Propaganda posters with slogans such as "[the] Soviet Union is behind us" and "We are not alone" were being torn apart and removed from the walls

around in the city. The Cubans were frustrated about the outcome of the conflict.

Three of the Swedish journalists were expelled and they smuggled out a tape that Jørgen E. Petersen had recorded while observing the streets of Havana from his hotel room. Shortly after it arrived in Copenhagen, the tape was played on the radio. But he stayed in Cuba. Petersen was given a working permit and released from house arrest and was able to move around the city of Havana. In the first ten days of November, Petersen was able to send back home several articles about the conditions in Cuba before he flew back home on the 10th of November. Among the articles which he was able to send home was an interview with member of the Cuban government, the 1st Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Pelegria Torras, which was printed in the newspaper *Demokraten* (*The Democrat*) and is reproduced in translation below:

The Democrat, Friday 9 November 1962

First free interview from Cuba

Deputy Foreign Minister state the views of the Castro-government

HAVANA, Thursday, correspondent of *The Democrat*, Jørgen E. Petersen

As the very first journalist [in Cuba] since the outbreak of the Cuban crisis, I have been received by a member of the Cuban government, the 1st Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Pelegria Torras, a 49-year old former university professor. The prerequisite for the talk was that the statements of Dr. Torras should be seen as reflecting the official standpoint of the Cuban government.

- How is the Cuban foreign policy going to look in the future?
- Dr. Castro's Five Points form the foundation. The formulation of these points shape the effective guarantees

for Cuba.

- Will Cuba pursue its own policy or that of the Soviet Union?
- Cuba has always pursued its own policy, a policy based on peace and peaceful co-existence. This is not a question of tactics. We desire peace to rebuild our society. Socialism needs peace in order to do its constructive work in agriculture and industry. We also wish to be among the countries who wish for peace because we are a small country. This policy has been clearly formulated by Dr. Castro and it has been formulated in the UN. This policy is almost the same as in the Socialist countries. Our principle is the one of Socialism. Socialism is our foundation, but with a distinct national character.
- There are three choices in the world today: the Western bloc, the Eastern bloc and the neutral. Does Cuba want to be in the Eastern bloc or in the Neutral?

Differences, not a division

- There is a difference between the Socialist camp and the Capitalist bloc. The Capitalist bloc is also opposed to certain neutral countries. The Socialist isn't. The Socialist bloc emphasizes, that it isn't opposed to any bloc in any country. Coincidence has brought us into unison under these principles.
- Fidel Castro said in his speech last Tuesday [actually Thursday, 1 November 1962—ed.], that there was a divide between the Soviet Union and Cuba?
- Fidel Castro said that there were differences, but not a rift.

Cuba and Scandinavia

- How does Cuba view Scandinavia?
- There is a difference between the Scandinavian countries, with neutral Finland and Sweden on the one side, and Denmark and Norway as NATO members on the other. But we appreciate that there is a difference between the politics of the Scandinavian countries and the Imperialist bloc.
- What about the negotiations with [Anastas] Mikoyan?

- I can't give any details, but the talks are conducted in a fraternal spirit.

The Trade with the East Countries

- Is Cuba going to receive more support from the Eastern European countries?
- There will surely have been trade-policy negotiations these days with Mikoyan and his people.
- What are the terms for a Cuban reconciliation with the United States?
- The Five Points, that Cuba demands, are necessary for our sovereignty.

Respect for our sovereignty

- What if the United States agrees to them?

With a smile: - That would be a complete abstraction. But it would mean a major change in the foreign policy of the United States. In that case we would be willing to discuss the differences. All we want is respect for our sovereignty and the wishes of our people. But the reality is that the United States continues its aggression with the blockade, even though Kennedy has already admitted that the rockets are on their way out. However, this does not prevent Cuba from receiving a lot of friendly support from all over the world.

- If the Five Points are recognized, will Cuba then accept the Red Cross inspection of the rocket-dismantlement?

Cannot accept inspection

- At the moment, it is the Cuban government's standpoint, that it cannot possibly accept an inspection.
- But if the Five Points are accepted?
- Then maybe we would allow the Red Cross to inspect the dismantling of the American base on Cuba. In the Cuban terminology, Guantanamo is Cuban territory. If we should allow an inspection of the dismantling, then we

would have agreed to an inspection on Cuban territory.

- Might it not be possible to extend this, as a one-off event, to including an inspection that the rockets are dismantled and gone?
- In that eventuality, it should of course be considered. Today, however, the answer has to be no. Cuba prefers negotiation and peace, but only in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The Cuban people today therefore wait with weapon in hand for this right to live in peace.

[Translated for CWIHP Henrik Brandt.]

Notes

1 Ph.D., leader of Cold War Museum Langelandsfort. Sources consulted for this article include the Danish newspapers *Demokraten* (30-31 October, 5, 8-9, 11-12 November 1962); *Jyllands-Posten*, (30 October, 2 November 1962); *Politiken* (30 October, 1 November 1962); *Information* (31 October 1962); *Aktuelt* (1 November 1962); and *Land og Folk* (3 November 1962); and the television documentary “Cuba-krisen 1962” as part of the series *Danmark i den kolde krig* (Denmark in the Cold War), aired 29 September 2000.



Switzerland and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Documents obtained, translated and introduced by Stephanie Popp

Chocolate, cheese and neutrality are some of the things Switzerland is most known for. While people generally love chocolate and cheese, not everyone likes neutrality. At the end of World War II, Switzerland experienced biting criticism for remaining neutral from the nations that had fought in the war. Alfred Zehnder, a Swiss diplomat, recalled, “we were classified as blockade runners, arms dealers, and gold hoarders, in short as war profiteers.”¹ It was not surprising that, when the formation of the United Nations was discussed in San Francisco, France proposed a clause that would bar neutrals from joining.² Switzerland was thus in a position where it had to prove its worth as a neutral state in an interconnected world.

Max Petitpierre, who was elected to the Swiss Federal Council in 1944 and who led the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the next seventeen years, set out to change this hostile international perception of Switzerland. Living in a world that was increasingly divided by the oncoming Cold War, he advocated the policy of “Neutrality and Solidarity.” In a 1948 exposé he explained that:

Switzerland’s neutrality rests on two elements: the first is the voluntary act by which the Confederation proclaimed its neutrality... Switzerland does not want to be mixed up in foreign countries’ disputes. The second gives Switzerland’s neutrality its contractual character... it is the declaration of the Vienna Congress [1815]... by which Switzerland’s neutrality was recognized as being in the true interests of Europe... there is also the declaration of London [1920], by which Switzerland’s neutrality was recognized again as being in the interest, not only of Europe, but of peace.³

As a result of the London Declaration, Switzerland had a duty to help where it could to promote peace. Hence, Petitpierre advocated the nation’s role as a mediator. In this manner, Switzerland provided its good offices in the conflict between France and Algeria and participated in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission that was established at the end of the Korean War.

Referring to the threat posed by communism, Petitpierre maintained that “we are now in a position where, if we remain neutral, we, in fact, take side,” because this would play into the hands of the Communists.⁴ He emphasized that:

Our moral position could become untenable, and we risk exposing ourselves to reproach - which has already been formulated – that we believe in the same values as other democratic countries, that we have the same interest as them,

that we are threatened by the same danger as them, but refuse to associate with their efforts, in the hope that, if the threat becomes a reality, they will save us, without having wanted to assume the risk of undertaking the common resistance.⁵

Based on these assumptions, Petitpierre concluded:

I do not believe that we should renounce our neutrality, or the policies that follow from it... But we have to realize that it will become more and more difficult to conduct this Janus-faced policy: one being the neutrality, the other being solidarity. The margin to maneuver will become increasingly narrow. I believe that solidarity... is today the more efficient mean for the realization of our goal: to guard our independence... It is thus no longer on neutrality that we have to put our focus in the immediate future, but on solidarity. This does not mean that we will renounce our neutrality – but it serves primarily to not let us participate in any political or military alliances on the one hand, and, on the other, to keep commercial relations (the only ones possible) with the states of the East.⁶

Consequently, Petitpierre’s policy of “Neutrality and Solidarity” advocated remaining out of political and military alliances while joining the Western democracies in the containment struggle. Under Petitpierre’s auspices, Switzerland became more involved internationally, while staying true to the principles of political and military neutrality.

Switzerland’s image before the world improved over the years as a result of its redefined focus that emphasized solidarity. In October 1960, when US-Cuban relations soured, the US inquired from Switzerland if it would be willing to take over US interest in Cuba if need be. Document 1 illustrates Switzerland’s positive response to this entreaty. On 27 October, the Swiss Foreign Ministry filed for authorization from the Federal Council to inform Washington of Switzerland’s readiness to provide its good offices and represent the US in Cuba. The Foreign Ministry emphasized that Switzerland customarily accepted such requests and pointed out that earlier that month Switzerland had approved a similar inquiry from the Federal Republic of Germany. The Federal Council responded promptly on the following day and granted the authorization.⁷ When the United States withdrew its entire diplomatic corps from Cuba on 3 January, 1961, Switzerland took over US interest as it had been agreed on the preceding fall. Switzerland’s increased responsibility in Cuba was the backdrop against which the Cuban Missile Crisis arose.

Switzerland's readiness to get involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis has so far been underappreciated by the historical scholarship. The Swiss historian Thomas Fischer has authored two articles on this subject. "Die guten Dienste des IKRK und der Schweiz in der Kuba-Krise 1962," published in 2000, investigates the different roles the International Committee of the Red Cross and Switzerland played in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Fischer argues that while the ICRC was eager to help, Switzerland was "unavailable" and not willing to get involved.⁸ His conclusion could be due to the fact that, according to his own statement, Fischer was unable to draw on pertinent sources from the Federal Archives in Switzerland, as these were still classified. "Talking to the Bearded Man: Mandate to represent US interests in Cuba, 1961-1977," Fischer's working paper of 2010, addresses Switzerland's role as the US's protecting power in Cuba. In this more recent article, Fischer portrays Switzerland as more active and more involved than he did in his earlier piece. Yet, in regard to the Cuban Missile Crisis, he confirms his previous conclusion "that the Swiss did not play a major role in these events beyond their classic assignments as protecting power."⁹

Documents from the National Security Archive in D.C. and particularly from the Swiss Federal Archives in Berne and from DoDiS, an online collection of Swiss diplomatic documents, demonstrate that Switzerland's neutrality of the 1950s and 1960s did not imprison it in a state of isolation from global affairs. In accord with Petitpierre's policy of "Neutrality and Solidarity," the Swiss realized that they had a responsibility as a member of the world community and could no longer hide their heads in the sand. In this manner, Switzerland expressed a willingness to engage in the Cuban Missile Crisis and to provide its good offices in a manner consistent with its redefined position of neutrality.

Document numbers 2 and 3 address how the news of the missiles reached Switzerland. The Swiss first learned about the crisis at 6:30 p.m. (1:30 p.m. Washington time) on 22 October when US Ambassador Robert McKinney met with Secretary General Pierre Micheli. Compared to other nations this notification was relatively early.¹⁰ The fact that the Swiss were representing the US diplomatically in Cuba might explain this peculiar timing. However, it seems more likely that Switzerland was not intentionally briefed so early, but that it was a mistake on the part of an overzealous US ambassador. At the time McKinney visited Micheli, the text of Kennedy's speech had not even fully been decoded yet. McKinney was, therefore, able to provide only the first part of the speech and he returned at 9:00 p.m. with the rest. By then, he had been specifically instructed to hold on to the speech until one hour before Kennedy's public appearance. The Ambassador, however, orally related the most pertinent

points, and the Swiss received the complete speech later that night.¹¹

Like the ambassadors of other neutral nations, the Swiss ambassador to Washington, August Lindt, was called to the State Department that evening to be briefed by Dean Rusk. Due to the unique position Switzerland held as the US's diplomatic placeholder in Cuba, he received an additional, so to say a pre-briefing, briefing. William Tyler, assistant secretary of state for European affairs, asked Lindt to come half an hour early for a special session, in which Tyler wished to communicate additional information. Thus Lindt learned a number of important points. Tyler, for instance, related that the missiles in Cuba were pointed at the United States and would be able to hit most of the urban centers in the nation. He, furthermore, expressed uncertainty in regards to the nuclear warheads but mentioned that, given the "great quantities of Soviet cargo planes [that] have landed in Cuba over the course of the last few days, it can be assumed that the 'war heads' were brought to Cuba that way."¹² Tyler explained that the US did "not know how, where and when Khrushchev [was] going to react"¹³ and speculated about Khrushchev's motives for deploying the missiles. Finally, Tyler mentioned the possibility of a meeting between the US and Soviet heads of state, but underscored that this was still undecided.¹⁴

At the end of the day, Switzerland had received a substantial amount of information on the crisis through different channels and had enjoyed the United States' special confidence. Swiss officials understood the seriousness of the situation when the Federal Council met the following day. While the Swiss executive government organ reacted with concern to the crisis, they also showed approval of the US measures. McKinney cabled to the State Department:

Acting Foreign Minister Micheli [Foreign Minister Friedrich Traugott Wahlen missed the meeting because he was attending an EFTA conference in Oslo¹⁵] and Chief Western Section [Raymond] Probst regard quarantine measure as maximum course available short of risking war. US action greeted as evidence [that] US [is] not merely reacting or readjusting to Soviet moves[,] but is now taking initiative... [the] Swiss [are] obviously grateful [for] our efforts [to] keep them advised. President [of the Confederation, Paul] Chaudet in personal talk with Ambassador said: 'Kennedy speech [was] clear, energetic. Time has come to take a stand. Personally[,] I welcome quarantine; personally[,] I would be happy with world "barrage" against Communism. But objective analysis must be that chances of accidental war [have] now materially increased. I would think that with respect to Cuba[,] Soviets might lie low for a while, at least to see what US actually does. But they might act from fear or rage. I ask myself, would they

attempt counter action in Berlin, and find [that] I cannot answer. Happily I am not a prophet.¹⁶

Addressing broader responses, McKinney related that “Embassy officers have received unanimous congratulatory reactions from Swiss contacts. Assistant to Swiss Air Force Commander opened conversation with Air Attaché by saying ‘congratulation.’ Swiss Chief of Staff quoted as saying US faction [sic.] comes late but better late than never.”¹⁷ These statements distinctly illustrated the fervent anti-Communist and pro-Western attitude of the Swiss and underscored their strong support for the United States. The Swiss reaction, moreover, demonstrated that military and political neutrality did not automatically entail neutrality in spirit.

Document number 4 illuminates here for the first time how Dean Rusk tried to take advantage of the Swiss’ disposition to approach Castro. After the briefing of the neutral ambassadors on 22 October, Rusk took Ambassador Lindt aside and clandestinely inquired about the possibility of having the Swiss Ambassador in Cuba, Emil Stadelhofer, emphasize to Castro the danger Cuba was in and relate the advantages of breaking away from the Soviet Union. Rusk, referring to an apparent speech by the president, explained that the US would be willing to talk with Castro if Cuba were not aligned with the Soviet Union. Lindt listened carefully, but characteristically for a diplomat, refrained from taking a concrete position.¹⁸

The Foreign Ministry in Switzerland was faced with a dilemma upon receiving Lindt’s report of this encounter with Rusk. Rusk’s suggested initiative was, on the one hand, very risky in terms of Switzerland’s neutrality. Rumors and concerns had already emerged that the Swiss neutrality had been impaired by its strong leaning towards the West in the Cold War struggle.¹⁹ Swiss officials were aware that once the nation’s neutrality and impartiality were blemished, it would be very hard to regain the world’s confidence. Yet, on the other hand, Switzerland did not like to turn down an opportunity to help and potentially make a difference in the ensuing crisis. The Foreign Ministry, therefore, reacted by expressing reservation, but at the same time, gave the ambassador free reign to seize the opportunity to influence Castro if it arose—of course “without any reference to Berne or Washington.”²⁰ Document number 5 shows that the Foreign Ministry followed up on its earlier telegram. It related to Stadelhofer the official Cuban position on the US blockade as it had been explained to them by José Velasco, the Cuban ambassador to Switzerland. It is noteworthy that the Foreign Ministry highlighted which passage would be a particularly fitting reference point for a conversation with Fidel Castro. It appears that the Foreign Ministry was not disinclined to see such a meeting materialize.

Documents numbers 6 and 7 relate that Stadelhofer, making use of the leeway he had been given, went to the Cuban Foreign Ministry on 24 October in the hope of soliciting a meeting with Castro. To his dismay, no one was available to organize such an appointment. According to Stadelhofer, all apposite officials were preoccupied with an urgent meeting at the presidential palace. Stadelhofer, however, did not get discouraged and he returned in the morning of 25 October. This time Raúl Roa García, Cuba’s Foreign Minister, was available and the two met. Stadelhofer then asked him for an audience with Castro under the pretext of wanting to gain a better understanding of Castro’s viewpoint and to improve his reporting to Berne. Stadelhofer also must have mentioned some of the talking points Rusk had highlighted, because he cabled to Berne that Roa did not know about the point relating to negotiations that Kennedy had allegedly made.²¹ One has to wonder whether Stadelhofer did not inadvertently show his hand when he brought up Kennedy’s apparent statement and requested an audience with *el líder máximo* in the same conversation.

Stadelhofer returned to the Cuban Foreign Ministry the following day to meet with the Cuban chief of protocol for an unspecified “different matter.”²² During this visit he learned that the chief of protocol had been informed that he would potentially be asked to pick Stadelhofer up and bring him to the audience with Castro. Stadelhofer’s frequent visits to the Foreign Ministry and particularly his conversation with Roa on the 25th seem to have stirred some concern in Ambassador Lindt in Washington. Document number 8 shows that on 27 October, Lindt cabled the Foreign Ministry and suggested that Rusk’s idea might already be outdated, since some conditions had changed. Lindt no longer thought that Castro could be lured away from the Soviet Union. He underscored that any initiative along these lines, like Stadelhofer had made, could ultimately be very dangerous.²³

Lindt’s cable seems to have had a temporary effect on the Swiss Foreign Ministry. It relayed Lindt’s concerns to Stadelhofer and told him not to push the issue further about the audience with Castro. It did not, however, express any serious or concrete opposition to a meeting. Instead they cautioned Stadelhofer to be very cautious if a meeting with Castro were to materialize and instructed him not to offer any good offices.²⁴ Document number 9 illustrates that Stadelhofer tried to allay their concerns by explaining that, in any case, he did not expect a response from Castro until the Cuban had learned of the reaction to the invitation he had extended to U Thant. The ambassador, as per his own statements, followed the orders and did not further pursue an audience with Castro, that is, for a while at least.

The Soviet Union did not make an overture to the Swiss as explicit as the one Rusk had made, but the Soviet Chargé D’Affaires in Berne, Sergej Loginov, did visit Foreign Minister Wahlen on 25 October. Document 10 number gives insight into this meeting, during which Loginov attempted to convey the Soviet point of view. He also emphasized that “he hope[d] that Switzerland will do its best to maintain peace.”²⁵ Even though Loginov refrained from concretely asking the Swiss for help, his statement illuminates the Soviet perception of Switzerland as a potential mediator. Wahlen responded by “remind[ing] him of Switzerland’s policy of peace.”²⁶ The Foreign Minister’s choice of words is noteworthy, as he specifically utilized the phrase “policy of peace” rather than “policy of neutrality.” This nuance is significant as the former traditionally called for a slightly more active role than the latter. Wahlen’s response to Loginov was thus another manifestation of Switzerland’s redefined foreign policy.

The same day, the Swiss ambassador to Moscow, Max Troendle, sent two letters to the Foreign Ministry. Document numbers 11 and 12 shed light on the Swiss interpretation of Khrushchev’s Cuba policy and its evaluation of the situation in the Soviet Union. In number 11, Troendle analyzed the official declaration of the Soviet government and shared his understanding that Khrushchev wanted to focus on Berlin rather than Cuba. He outlined other possible readings of Khrushchev’s actions in Cuba and explored potential consequences of the Soviet premier’s response to the US blockade in document number 12. In both cables Troendle addressed the state of the Soviet population, describing them as calm yet worried, and not fully understanding recent events and underscored his belief that Khrushchev did not want to go to war in Cuba.

Two days later Attorney General Robert Kennedy met with the Soviet ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, and offered him a secret Cuba-Turkey missiles swap. The following morning, on Sunday, 28 October, Khrushchev announced that he would withdraw the missiles from Cuba over Radio Moscow. The immediate danger of the Cuban Missile Crisis had thus already abated when on 7 November, the eager Ambassador Stadelhofer was invited to a reception at the Soviet embassy in Havana. Stadelhofer recognized the chance to resume his quest for an audience with Fidel Castro, who also attended this event. The Swiss ambassador seized the moment and initiated a dialogue with the Cuban leader. To Stadelhofer’s dismay, there were too many people around to conduct a serious conversation. He was particularly discomforted by the company of President Osvaldo Dorticós and Che Guevara, minister of industries, who, as Stadelhofer felt, were eavesdropping on his discussion with Castro. The conversation ended after five minutes without having achieved

much. Castro did, however, tell Stadelhofer that he would like to speak to him some more “either immediately after the Soviet reception if it ended early or otherwise in the next few days.”²⁷ Castro even inquired about the location where Stadelhofer could best be found. In spite of these promising words, Castro never did visit the Swiss ambassador.²⁸

On 17 November, Stadelhofer finally concluded that the basis for Rusk’s entreaty had changed since he had made it several weeks before.²⁹ Rusk’s initiative thus fizzled out and bore no direct results. It was, nevertheless, an important episode in the history of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Stadelhofer’s tireless attempts to turn Rusk’s suggestions into action and the fact that the Foreign Ministry did not prevent him from doing so, demonstrated Switzerland’s desire to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Rusk’s proposal is significant because it illustrated the effort of the Kennedy administration to pursue a diplomatic solution to the crisis with Cuba directly. A similar approach through the Brazilian government has been examined by historian James Hershberg.³⁰ Talking about the various courses of action that were available to Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Hershberg has pointed out that these plans to influence Castro through foreign intermediaries have been mostly overlooked by the historical scholarship. The evidence presented here demonstrates that secret feelers were extended to Castro, not only through the Brazilians, but also through the Swiss. The fact that there is another example of this strategy further highlights the significance the Kennedy administration attributed to this diplomatic course of action during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Rusk’s inquiry was not the only instance where Switzerland considered getting involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Over the course of the ensuing conflict, Switzerland, still trying to prove the worth of its neutrality, showed a disposition to lend its good offices. Another example was the question about the makeup of the UN’s inspection team that was to examine the missile bases in Cuba. By 29 October, the Swedish had already been asked to help.³¹ Neutral Switzerland would also have been a fitting match, but it had not yet been approached by the UN.

Document numbers 13 and 14 present the two cables that Ernesto Thalmann, the Swiss observer to the United Nation in New York, sent to Berne on 29 October regarding this issue. Thalmann had heard from Agda Rössel, the Swedish ambassador to the UN, that the final composition of the team had not been determined yet and that it was possible that the Swiss would also be asked to help with the inspection. Rössel, however, had also mentioned that it seemed to him like U Thant preferred the “unef” (the United Nations Emergency Force) or the “onuc” (the United

Nations Organization in the Congo) to participate in the expedition.³² Thalmann hoped to learn more details about the makeup of the teams once U Thant returned from his trip to Cuba. Accordingly, Thalmann merely related this information without much additional comment on his part. Later that same day, he followed up with another message. In the meantime, Thalmann had heard rumors that the inspection team was to be made up of Swedish, Mexican and Swiss citizens. These rumors further claimed that the Swiss were hesitant to accept the entreaty due to the potential conflict of interest as the diplomatic representative of the US in Cuba. A number of delegates, likely spurred on by these speculations, went to Thalmann for verification of what they had heard. Thalmann, himself completely ignorant about this potential mandate, inquired about the official Swiss position from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³³

Document number 15 shows that the Ministry, likewise, knew nothing about the potential participation of Swiss citizens in the inspection of the bases in Cuba. It responded that if Switzerland were to be asked to provide officers, it would “examine the request with benevolence in the framework of our constant policy of lending our services wherever they may be of use.”³⁴ The Swiss officials indicated that they would seriously consider such a proposal and would not dismiss it off hand. Switzerland, however, never got a chance to participate. U Thant’s visit to Cuba did not bear the expected fruits. Castro was ardently set on denying any kind of inspection in Cuba. Hence the Swedes did not get to go to Cuba and the UN never even requested Switzerland’s assistance.

While the Swiss government was not approached to take on any duties related to the inspection in Cuba, the International Committee of the Red Cross was. The UN was looking for an entity, acceptable to all parties involved, which would board ships coming into Cuba and examine them for offensive weapons, and also inspect the missile sites in Cuba to ensure the complete removal of offensive weapons that had been brought to the island by the Soviet Union. As the UN was considering these points, the ICRC extended a general offer to help. In the evening of 25 October, Roger Gallopin, the delegate general of the ICRC, went to see Martin Hill, Personal Representative of Secretary-General to Specialized Agencies, at the UN and told him that he “had been asked by Mr. Boissier, the President of the International Red Cross, to convey to us informally the Committee’s readiness and desire to help the Secretary-General in any way in its power, should the need arise.”³⁵

Document number 16 demonstrates that the need did arise and ultimately the UN asked the International Committee of the Red Cross to take on this mission on 29 October. Ernesto Thalmann cabled Berne the following day that Chakravarthi

Narasimhan, chef de cabinet at the UN, had informed him that Pier Spinelli, director-general of **United Nations** Office in Geneva, had approached Boissier and asked him for the help of the ICRC in the Cuban crisis. To this, Thalmann related, Boissier responded with general acceptance, under the condition that Castro would agree to this solution.³⁶ At the time, there was some confusion as to how this demarche to the ICRC came about. US officials as well as the American media believed that the Soviets had made the initiative. The Soviets, however, emphasized that the UN had offered them the choice between three alternative entities for this undertaking. The three options were the UN itself, neutral states or the ICRC, out of which the Soviet Union chose the Red Cross.³⁷

The exact nature of the mission the ICRC was asked to take on changed over the course of the next few days. Initially, the ICRC was to inspect incoming ships that had departed from bloc countries and survey the launch pads in Cuba once the missiles had been removed.³⁸ The first part of these duties would then allow for the ceasing of the US quarantine around Cuba. A State Department memo recorded that “inspection of incoming vessels would make possible suspension of enforcement of quarantine, but US ships would stay on attention.”³⁹ By demonstrating a willingness to be replaced by the ICRC as the executioners of the quarantine, the United States hoped to show their goodwill and to “lower [the] temperature.”⁴⁰ The second duty entailed in the ICRC mission, the inspection of the missile bases, however, was undercut by Castro, who rejected all forms of on-site inspections in Cuba. The Cuban leader, moreover, opposed the examination of the Soviet ships that were leaving Cuba in Cuban ports.⁴¹ Therefore, the UN initiated negotiations with the ICRC to also take on the task of boarding outgoing ships and examining their cargo to determine if the Soviet Union was removing all the offensive weapons it had previously deployed to Cuba.⁴²

Clearly, the nature of this proposed mission went beyond the humanitarian assistance that the ICRC was generally known for. The ICRC, however, had adopted the “Declaration of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross” at the meeting of the International Red Cross in Prague in 1961.⁴³ This declaration now provided the organization with enough leeway to provide its good offices in this case.⁴⁴ The ICRC’s statement of its principles included a phrase, stating that the ICRC “promotes mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peacing [sic.] amongst all peoples.”⁴⁵ The ICRC could thus get involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis, because in so doing, it would promote peace between the involved parties.

The ICRC, however, did not yet officially accept the mission and its officials were a little uncomfortable with their potential new role. On 6 November, Paul Ruegger, a former

ICRC president, flew to New York to discuss the details of the ICRC's mandate with U Thant.⁴⁶ Ruegger's hesitance showed as he initially agreed to use the Red Cross emblem and then, as the enthusiasm waned, he gradually changed his mind.^{47,48} Ultimately, the ICRC refused to fly its flag and advocated using the UN's.⁴⁹ Likewise, the ICRC insisted that it "would not assume direct responsibility for these inspections."⁵⁰ Thus the ICRC became the "executive agent of the UN," with the UN bearing the ultimate responsibility.⁵¹ The Red Cross underscored the need to comply with international law and accordingly declared it would not force the boarding of any ships that did not voluntarily submit to inspection.⁵² It insisted that all three parties affected, the United States, the Soviet Union and Cuba, had to agree to this mission.⁵³ Ruegger particularly emphasized the need for Castro's approval.⁵⁴

Although the ICRC proceeded with great caution, it did get to work and began planning the potential mission. Its representatives proclaimed that the ICRC exclusively would choose the corps that was to undertake the mission and stated that this team was to be made up of Swiss citizens.⁵⁵ These, in turn, were to be flown to New York, where they would be instructed in more detail on their assignment.⁵⁶ The ICRC emphasized that "it would be necessary for general instructions to be given by the UN to this corps to be first communicated 'in advance' to the Red Cross. This is to ensure that such instructions are in accord with Red Cross principles."⁵⁷

It was not long before the first challenges to the ICRC's mission began to surface. The first was of its own making. Due to its refusal to take on the responsibility, U Thant felt that there was little reason to have the ICRC do the inspection, since ultimately the UN would be responsible. He thus inquired from the Soviets if they would not agree to UN, instead of ICRC, inspection. In response, the Soviet delegate at the UN merely commented that he would forward this to his home government.⁵⁸

The second, and ultimately fatal, challenge was timing. On 5 November, the Soviet Union highlighted in regard to outgoing ships that "dismantling will be completed and all offensive weapons will have been shipped out of Cuba by Nov. 12. Some necessary Sov[iet] ships are already in Cuba and remainder will arrive during current week. There is therefore no reason for continuing Red Cross system more than ten days from today."⁵⁹ Platon Morozov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Valerian Zorin's deputy, underscored that "if the proposals he was putting forward were not accepted, particularly that of duration of ICRC operation, objections would have to be taken up at a higher level."⁶⁰ The Soviet's sense of timing clashed with the US's schedule. The US, in contrast, underscored that "no specific date for the termination of Red Cross system could be fixed at this time. Red

Cross inspection is temporary substitute for US quarantine, which [the] President had agreed would be lifted when the Sov[iets] had withdrawn [the] offensive weapons, this withdrawal had been verified and satisfactory assurances had been given against reintroduction [of] such weapons."⁶¹ On 7 November, the Morozov responded by emphasizing the illegality of the quarantine as well as by underscoring that the "Red Cross inspection is not a substitute for the quarantine" and he advanced the termination date of the Red Cross mission to 10 November.⁶²

An additional complicating factor was the ICRC's insistence on getting Castro's approval for its mission, which he did not grant until 9 November.⁶³ Ruegger explained that it would probably take a week until the ICRC was logistically ready to assume its role in the Caribbean.⁶⁴ It quickly became evident that by the time the ICRC could begin the inspection, the Soviet deadline would have had already passed. Hence there was no reason to further pursue this plan and hence ended the ICRC's mission before it even began. Ruegger returned to Switzerland on 10 November.⁶⁵

As all this was happening, the Swiss government did not sit by idly. The ICRC, while being an independent, international organization, had strong historical ties to Switzerland and its headquarters are located in Geneva. Moreover, all ICRC members, including the officials involved in the Cuban mission, Boissier, Ruegger and Galopin, were Swiss citizens, as were the people that were to be recruited for the inspections. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the Swiss Federal Council discussed the matter and developed an opinion about the mission.

Document number 17 illustrates the Swiss officials' initial responses. Secretary General Pierre Micheli and Jakob Burckhard, chief of the Division for International Organizations at the Foreign Ministry, believed that it was hardly possible for the ICRC to turn down the UN entreaty. Foreign Minister Wahlen, however, held the view that the Red Cross should not accept the mission and expressed concern about the ICRC's venturing into the political sphere.⁶⁶ There was more to it though than Wahlen initially revealed. At the Federal Council meeting on 9 November, Wahlen showed the true reason behind his opposition to the ICRC mission. To his colleagues, he expressed his regret that the ICRC was already involved. Now, he explained, "it cannot well withdraw [from the mission]... It would have been better if it had refused from the beginning."⁶⁷ Then, Wahlen, who was a defender of Petitpierre's policy of "Neutrality and Solidarity" emphasized that "if one wants a neutral control, it would be better to address Switzerland than the ICRC."⁶⁸ Wahlen's comments demonstrate that he was not generally opposed to the mission, but that he did not like that the Red

Cross was the one undertaking it rather than the government of Switzerland.

Hans Schaffner, minister of economic affairs, who had taken over the Free Democratic Party's (FDP) Federal Council seat after Max Petitpierre retired, was even more candid. In this manner he stated that "one should look to exercise an influence on the ICRC, through the mediation of Mr. Petitpierre for example. We should help the ICRC to make a retreat. We could say that Switzerland would be prepared, as necessary, to take on a mission, in the place of the ICRC."⁶⁹ Schaffner, just like Wahlen, expressed a willingness of the Swiss government to take on responsibility in the ensuing conflict and to provide its good offices. Schaffner further declared that "if one wants a neutral control, it should be taken to the Swiss and the Swedes – or only the Swiss – because they exercise a reliable control."⁷⁰ Schaffner apparently did not think highly of the ICRC and believed that they would not do a good job. Switzerland, on the other hand, Schaffner argued, would be a much better match. Schaffner's blunt statement raises the question whether the Federal Council might have been piqued because the UN had asked the ICRC to lend its good offices and not Switzerland. The other five Council members did not contradict Wahlen and Schaffner and they too voiced their unanimous displeasure with the possibility of ICRC taking on this mission.

Throughout the crisis, Switzerland demonstrated a readiness to at least seriously consider, if not willingly accept entreaties, for its good offices. Since Rusk's initiative had fizzled out and Switzerland had not been approached in regard to inspections, it jumped at the opportunity when U Thant asked it to help with bringing the body of Major Anderson, the American U-2 pilot that had been shot down over Cuba on 27 October, back to the US. U Thant obtained the permission from Castro to return the deceased pilot during his trip to Cuba.⁷¹ The Secretary General had offered the Cuban leader the selection of using a Cuban plane to bring Anderson back or to submit it to the UN, the ICRC, Switzerland as the US representative, or just Switzerland, out of which Castro chose the last option.⁷² Switzerland accepted the mission on 1 November.⁷³ In document number 18, Stadelhofer described the mission in detail. The Swiss ambassador related that the negotiations with the Cubans about the details of Anderson's transport were quite onerous. He, for instance, had to contact the Cuban authorities nine times to get everything lined up. Likewise, Stadelhofer kept in close touch with Ambassador Lindt in Washington and together the two managed to successfully organize the undertaking.⁷⁴

Initially it was planned that the Swiss would bring Major Anderson's remains to Guantanamo. However, as Stadelhofer explained, there were logistical issues that would have made

this difficult, and, more importantly, Castro did not agree with this plan, as he felt it was an affront to Cuba's national honor. Instead, the parties involved decided that the body of Major Anderson was to be transported directly to Florida. To accomplish this, Ambassador Lindt organized a US cargo plane and had it repainted so that it displayed the Swiss Cross. In the afternoon of 4 November, Stadelhofer went to Rancho Boyeros airport, located outside Havana, to accept Anderson's remains.⁷⁵ While Stadelhofer ran into some last-minute administrative difficulties, he underscored that the transfer went well and that Anderson was granted "a simple, but fairly dignified" ceremony.⁷⁶ Switzerland's first official involvement in the Cuban Missile Crisis was therefore a success.

Shortly after, Switzerland got the chance to take on a second, albeit much smaller, task. The Soviet ambassador to Cuba inquired from Stadelhofer, if he could obtain permission for Anastas Mikoyan, first deputy premier of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, and five Soviet experts to enter the United States, because they wished to stop in New York on 10 November on their way back from Cuba to the Soviet Union. Stadelhofer stated that "this [was] not within the Swiss Mandate, but in view [of the] delicacy surrounding [the] entire Cuban situation[, he] did not want to take formalistic actions."⁷⁷ Hence it was agreed and the Swiss took on its second mission in relation with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Like their government, Swiss citizens demonstrated a readiness to take part and help during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Document number 19 illustrates that a large number of Swiss citizens "wanted to volunteer their services" to the ICRC to help with the inspection of the missile bases in Cuba.⁷⁸ The policy of "Neutrality and Solidarity", conclusively, did not just pertain to a few officials in the government, but indeed to "numerous" citizens as well.⁷⁹

Throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Swiss government as well as the population expressed its willingness to become involved and lend its good offices where they may be of need. Rusk's initiative posed the first opportunity for the government to participate in the Crisis. Swiss officials in Berne were a little reluctant to grant authorization, though Stadelhofer in Cuba was highly enthusiastic, and they ultimately decided to proceed cautiously. The Swiss government would also have been willing to consider helping with the inspection of the missile dismantling, as it related to Thalmann. The Federal Council, likewise, would have liked to see the UN ask Switzerland for its good offices in this regard. In accord with the policies put forward by Max Petitpierre, Switzerland did not turn down a single entreaty when asked and when it was not, it expressed sincere regret. Throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis Switzerland tried to put its neutrality to good use and work in the interest of peace.

Swiss Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis

Translated by Stephanie Popp



Document Number 1

Notes on Swiss Agreement to Represent US Interests in Cuba if US-Cuban Diplomatic Relations Are Broken, 27-28 October 1960

1833

Secret Friday, October 28, 1960

Potential assumption of representation of the United States of America's interest in Cuba

Foreign Ministry. Petition of October 27, 1960 (Enclosure).

Based on the petition of the Foreign Ministry, the Federal Council has decided:

The Foreign Ministry is authorized to:

1. Inform the American State Department through our embassy in Washington that the Federal Council is willing to take over the representation of American interests in Cuba in the case of a break in diplomatic relations between the United States of America and Cuba.

2. At the same time, point out to the American State Department that it goes without saying that the Federal Council can, should the situation arise, only take on the observation of American interests in Cuba, after the Cuban government has previously given its approval.

Protocol excerpt to the Foreign Ministry (5 copies) and to the Federal Chancellery for execution.

Verifying accuracy of excerpt,

the Secretary:

[Illegible signature]

Berne, October 27, 1960

o.840.USA.Cu.

- CR/st

Distributed

p.B.24.Am.2.

Secret

To the Federal Council

Potential assumption of representation of the United States of America's interest in Cuba

On 26 October, the American State Department sounded out our Chargé d'Affaires in Washington [most likely referring to Ambassador August Lindt], if Switzerland would possibly be willing to represent the American interests in Cuba. Even though the Americans do not want to take the initiative, a break in relations between the two states has to be considered a possibility. Currently, there are about 4,000 American citizens in the country, whereas in the case of a break in relations, there would probably hardly be 1,000 left. The majority of American companies have, by the way, already been seized.

On 21 October, the Federal Council has approved our petition to take over the representation of the [West] German interests in Cuba, should the German Federal Republic break off her relations with Cuba. Traditionally, we have never turned down such mandates, even if they entailed – as was regularly the case – certain disadvantages and inconveniences. Such a disposition is, in our opinion, also to be taken in respect to the American entreaty.

We are taking the liberty to petition the Federal Council to authorize the Foreign Ministry to:

1. Inform the American State Department through our embassy in Washington that the Federal Council is willing to take over the representation of American interests in Cuba in the case of a break in diplomatic relations between the United States of America and Cuba.

2. At the same time, point out to the American State Department that it goes without saying that the Federal Council can, should the situation arise, only take on the observation of American interests in Cuba, after the Cuban government has previously given its approval.

Federal Foreign Ministry.

Protocol excerpt to the Foreign Ministry (5 copies) and to the Federal Chancellery for execution.

[Source: *Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland*, *www.dodis.ch*, doc. 14974, *Petition from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Federal Council*, 12/28/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 2

Orientation of Swiss officials on 22 October 1962
through the US Embassy in Berne
24 October 1962

FYI Hans Schmidlin

p.B.73.Cuba.O. U'Ch.- PO/mh
Berne, October 24, 1962

Memorandum for the record

Cuba mission USA.

Orientation through USA. Embassy

1. On Monday afternoon, 22 October, Ambassador [Robert] McKinney asked for an audience with Secretary General [Pierre] Micheli. He is received in the presence of the signatory at 1830h and hands over the beginning of the speech that President Kennedy will give at midnight [7 pm, Washington time]. From this it is already apparent that it relates to Cuba and the Soviet missile bases. The American measures, however, are not evident yet. Regarding the – longer – rest of the text, it was still being decoded. It is agreed that the Ambassador will audition again at 2100h to hand over the rest.

2. McKinney, accompanied by the Secretary of Legation [Warren P.] Blumberg, auditioned on 22 October at 2100h, with the Secretary General and the signatory. McKinney now has the entire speech. In the meantime, however, the instruction from Washington has been received to hand over this text no earlier than one hour before the speech will be given to the President of the Federal Council, if he is not available to the Head of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if he is also not available then to the “highest ranking senior officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” To simplify the matter it is agreed that Mister Blumberg will visit the signatory between 2300h and midnight to hand over the speech. The Ambassador, anyway, already hinted orally at the basic points (Partial blockade, calling a meeting of the [UN] Security Council etc.).

3. Blumberg’s visit at the house of the signatory on 22 October between 2300h and midnight. Handing over of the entire text. Short oral commentary in accordance with instructions from the State Department (compare my separate note of 23 October).

4. Three more information-flashes from [Swiss Ambassador to Washington August] Lindt arrive over the course of the night (briefing through Secretary of State Dean Rusk etc.), of which the signatory is notified by the telegram office.

5. Ambassador Micheli briefs the President of the Federal Council [Paul Chaudet] on 23 October between 8 and 9h on the basis of the received texts and dispatches, so that he can report on this to the Federal Council at this morning’s meeting.

6. On 23 October at 1700h Ambassador McKinney auditions again to hand over the two attached supplementary documents.

7. In the evening of October 23, the Secretary General and the signatory inform the Head of Department [trans. note: Friedrich Traugott Wahlen], who just returned from Oslo (EFTA conference).

2 attachments

[Signed: Raymond] Probst

[Source: *Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv*, 2001 (E): 1976/17, *Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962*. Memorandum for the record, 10/24/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 3

Telegram from Swiss Ambassador in Washington
Lindt regarding briefing by Assistant Secretary of
State William Tyler
23 October 1962

FYI to: 112 110 108 113 149 152
p.B. 73.Cuba.O.U'Ch

152 154 155 157 217 DZ JD
Original for handling to: 217

Washington 23.10.61
12.45
cable 308

[...]
11

Half an hour before this briefing [translator's note: the briefing of the neutral ambassadors by US Secretary of State Dean Rusk at 8 p.m. on 22 October 1962], [William] Tyler, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, had asked me to come see him. After he expressed thanks on behalf of the USA for what Switzerland has done, and will yet do in the future, for the American interests in Cuba, he said that he wished to inform me more extensively than Rusk would be able to do in front of the assembled group of ambassadors.

1. All missiles stationed in Cuba are targeted north with an angle that would make it possible to hit most of the American cities. We, however, do not know if the missiles have been mated with nuclear warheads. Since great quantities of Soviet cargo planes have landed in Cuba over the course of the last few days, it can be assumed that the "war heads" were brought to Cuba that way.

2. "We do not know how, where and when Khrushchev is going to react." The telegram that has just arrived from the American Ambassador to Moscow only mentions a radio text, which talks about an imminent American declaration of war on Cuba without mentioning a Russian reaction. Currently, any reaction is possible, even nuclear war.

3. There are indications that the Soviets were informed that the US could detect the missiles. This raises the question, why Moscow, if it in fact means war, warned the Americans by erecting the missile bases, which foils the surprise effect. Personally X [probably Tyler—trans.] believes that Khrushchev is trying to practice diplomacy by military means. He might be thinking in terms of trading the American forward bases for the Russian bases in Cuba.

4. It is certain that Khrushchev fully realizes the challenge his Cuba policy represents to the US and to Kennedy personally. In his meeting with Gromyko [on October 18], Kennedy read the part from his speech where he stated that he cannot tolerate an offensive buildup in Cuba. Whereupon, Gromyko pulled a note out of his pocket and

said that he had instructions to read the following "the Soviet Union intended under no circumstances to provide offensive weapons to Cuba." Khrushchev possibly believed that the Americans would take the affront [of deploying the missiles] without protest. This would have empowered him to push his Berlin solution. At any rate, it [sic—most likely "he"] is a too calm a "Berliner" [translator's quotation marks] to not also have prepared itself [sic—most likely "himself"—trans.] for the current reaction.

5. The possibility of a summit between Kennedy and Khrushchev has, today, not yet been eliminated, but neither has it consolidated.

In his conversation with the American Ambassador Kohler, Khrushchev hinted, in a convoluted manner, at the possibility of a meeting with Kennedy, without, however, setting a place or time. The conversation between Gromyko and the President did not lead to any clarification either.

Embassy of Switzerland

[Source: *Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Telegram 308, from the Swiss Embassy in Washington, 10/23/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.*]



Document Number 4

Telegram from Swiss Foreign Ministry, Berne, to
Swiss Embassy, Havana (Stadelhofer),
23 October 1962

p.B.73.Cuba.O.U'Ch. - PO
Original to: [Handwritten:] 155
Copy also to: [Handwritten:] 113, 152

Telegram no. 49
23.10.1962 09h10

Embassy of Switzerland

Havana

FLASH To Ambassador [Emil A.] Stadelhofer. – Top Secret

1.) Following the briefing of the neutral and neutralistic ambassadors on Cuba-mission on Monday night, the American Secretary of State took [Swiss] Ambassador [August] Lindt aside and told him – in a very serious manner – approximately the following:

“I am talking to you on a purely personal basis, and what I say should not be associated with my name. The situation is so serious that your country could also become affected. Would it not be possible that your ambassador in Havana ask Castro on his own initiative and denying any instruction on my part how he pictured Cuba’s future. Because it is Cuba that would suffer first from possible developments. Could he not remind him of the speech Kennedy gave, whereby the US could negotiate about anything with Cuba, provided that Cuba is not allied with the Soviet Union and that it does not accommodate Soviet bases on its soil? Think about it.” Lindt remained completely noncommittal. He was under the impression that the Secretary of State considers negotiations with an independent communist Cuba possible and even wishes, insofar as Castro is still able, to break away from Russia.

2.) Forwarding you this suggestion with considerable reservation. We absolutely want to avoid the impression of inappropriate and hasty demarche that could lead to misunderstandings. But believe that we cannot keep Secretary of State Rusk’s thoughts from you just in case. In our opinion, you should not take a conspicuous initiative to strike up such a conversation. If, however, the opportunity should arise to do so without causing a sensation, or if Castro, which cannot be ruled out completely, possibly brought up problems pertaining to the future by himself, you could, insofar as the atmosphere seems appropriate to you, personally and without any reference to Bern or Washington, drop remarks along these lines.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Copy to: - Mr. Minister Burckhardt

- Mr. Minister Bindschedler

(cleaned up version after discussion with the department chair)

A. 2453

[Source: *Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland, www.dodis.ch, doc. 19007, Telegram no. 49, from the Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/23/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.*]



Document Number 5

Telegram from Swiss Foreign Ministry to Swiss Embassy in Havana (Stadelhofer),
26 October 1962

p.b.73.Cuba.o.(U’Ch.) – PO

Original to: [Handwritten:] €Ð [handwritten letters illegible]

Copy also to: [Handwritten:] 152, 113

Telegram no. 50

26.10.1962 11h00

Embassy of Switzerland

H a v a n a

Flash: Secret. – For Ambassador Stadelhofer.

Your 34 and 35. Yesterday, the Cuban Ambassador [José Ruiz Velasco] brought a written statement from his government concerning the US blockade measures to the Head of Department. Following, the most important parts:

“Cuban government condemns the naval and aerial blockade, it considers it a criminal act that infringes on human rights and violates the charter of the United Nations. Letting you know that people are willing to give their life to defend the sovereignty and integrity of the homeland. Paragraph. In these times, when the United States pose more than ever a threat of war to Cuba, government solemnly declares that it desires peace and is always willing to negotiate any dispute by peaceful means as long as they do not damage its sovereignty. Paragraph. All the people must know that the reckless acts decreed by the United States against Cuba and free navigation in jurisdictional waters of a country that is not in a state [of] war is a flagrant [act of] piracy and represent one of the most dangerous steps to triggering nuclear war.”

Particularly the second paragraph might be of interest to you and might possibly also offer a connection for conversation with Fidel Castro.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Copy to: - Mr. Minister Burckhardt

- Mr. Minister Bindschedler

A.2503

[Source: *Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Geheim. Telegram no. 50, from Foreign Ministry to*

Stadelhofer, 10/26/1962. Translated from German and French by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 6

Message from Swiss Embassy, Havana (Stadelhofer), to Swiss Foreign Ministry, 25 October 1962

Original to: [Handwritten:] 155
Copy also to: [Handwritten:] 112, 110, 113, 152

Telegram no. 34
Havana, 25.10.1962. 12h45
Foreign Ministry
B e r n e
F l a s h

Today at 10h00 I had a conversation with [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa, who promised to do everything to make a meeting with Castro happen quickly. I mentioned emphatically that this was my own initiative with the goal to enhance and improve my reporting on Castro's relevant explanations in public speeches to Berne and to, given the current situation, get an authentic interpretation. Roa is not familiar with Kennedy's statements that you mentioned. I am reserving more flashes.

Embassy of Switzerland

Communicated over the phone to M. Probst, 21.h30 BZ
E . 2 4 7 4
25.10.62.o
21h30 T.lo.

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Geheim. Telegram no. 34, from Stadelhofer to Foreign Ministry, 10/25/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 7

Letter from Swiss Ambassador to Cuba (Stadelhofer) to the Secretary General of the Swiss Foreign Ministry (Micheli)

17 November 1962

[Handwritten note:] Mr. Head of Department
Embassy of Switzerland
Havana, November 17, 1962
In Cuba
B.44.USA. – Std/p
SECRET

Mister Ambassador P. Micheli

Secretary General of the Swiss
Foreign Ministry

B e r n e
Mister Ambassador,

In reference to the possibility that was mentioned on 22 October in the form of a question to Ambassador Lindt, I am taking the liberty to supplementary report to the earlier quick exchange of messages that I first went to the Foreign Ministry on the 24th of the previous month, without, however, being able to relay anything. Everybody, who would have come into consideration to arrange talks with Fidel Castro, was at the Presidential Palace for an urgent meeting. The following day, on 25 October, I had the conversation with Foreign Minister Roa that you already know about, where I, while noting that I was acting on my own initiative, cautiously mentioned a few points, which might be interesting to address if a meeting were to materialize. On Friday, 26 October, the Chief of Protocol, whom I had visited formally for a different matter, mentioned that he had been asked by Dr. Roa to pick me up from the Embassy with his car and to bring me to the location of the talks, should the situation arise. Afterwards, in accord with your instructions, I took no further steps.

On the occasion of a big reception that took place on 7 November at the Soviet Embassy, I was able to, after the Russian Ambassador introduced me to First Deputy Chairman Mikoyan, talk for about 5 minutes with Fidel Castro. Since the conversation took place directly next to the table reserved for members of the government and since President [Osvaldo] Dorticós and Minister of Industries, [Ernesto] Che Guevara, were listening in, I had to refrain from addressing issues of importance. On his own initiative, Fidel Castro told me that he wanted to see me either immediately after the Soviet reception if it ended early or otherwise in the next few days and he asked if he should come to the Quinta Avenida (location of the Embassy) or to the new residence. So far, no such visit has occurred and until proven otherwise, I am not expecting one.

The Cuban Prime Minister was, meanwhile, extremely polite and made, like Mister [Anastas] Mikoyan had done before, some very flattering remarks about our country.
[...]

[Source: *Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Letter from Stadelhofer to Micheli, 11/17/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.*]



Document Number 8

Telegram from Swiss Foreign Ministry, Berne, to Swiss Embassy, Havana (Stadelhofer),
27 October 1962

p.b.73.Cuba.o.(U'Ch.) – PO

Original to: [Handwritten:] €Ð [handwritten letters illegible]
Copy also to: [Handwritten letters illegible]

T e l e g r a m n o . 5 3

27.10.1962 11h00

Embassy of Switzerland

H a v a n a

Flash:

Secret. – For Ambassador Stadelhofer, continuation of our cables 49 and 50. Lindt just cabled:

Quote #1. Have so far not been able to locate Kennedy's public speech that would correspond with the wording of Rusk's quotation. Stevenson's speech before the UN general assembly responding to Dorticos contains the following part: "If Cuban regime is sincere in its request for negotiations and wishes to lay its grievances before appropriate forum – the Organization of American States - I would suggest the Cuban government might start by some action calculated to awaken the confidence of the inter-American system. Obvious place to begin would be the severing of its multiple ties to the Soviet bloc."

#2. Cuban statements are following the Russian line completely, they even go beyond by denying the existence of nuclear bases. It appears to me that Rusk's initiative was made based on preconditions that have changed in the meantime. In this superpower confrontation, Cuba has more and more lost its right of self-determination. We should avoid anything that could give the impression that we want to try the impos-

sible and, in terms of the policy of neutrality, dangerous – the separation of Cuba from the Soviet Union. Unquote

In the face of these new developments we recommend you to act with the utmost caution. Most of all, please refrain from soliciting an audience with Castro in case this takes a long time to materialize. Rather wait, until Castro potentially seizes the opportunity himself to start a conversation with you, which would have to be conducted with much restraint. In any case, it were to be refrained from even hinting at an offer of good offices.

Foreign Ministry

a .2454

[Source: *Schweizer Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Geheim. Telegram no. 53, from Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/27/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.*]



Document Number 9

Telegram from the Swiss Embassy in Cuba to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
27 October, 1962

p.B.73.Cuba.O.-U'Ch. - PO

Original to: [Handwritten:] †55-[handwritten note illegible]

Copy also to: [Handwritten:] 112, 110 113, 152

Telegram no. 36

27. 10. 1962 2107

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

B e r n e

Urgent Secret. – Regards your 53. I absolutely share your opinion. I will strictly keep to it. I am under the impression that Castro wants to await the reaction to the invitation [translator's note: extended to] U-Thant to Havana, before he takes a position on the prompting to receive me.

Embassy of Switzerland

B. 2503

28.10.1962 – 0900

[Source: *Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv*, 2001 (E): 1976/17, *Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Telegram no. 36 from Embassy of Switzerland in Cuba to Swiss Foreign Ministry, 10/27/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.*]



Document Number 10

Notes on the visit of Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, Loginov, with Foreign Minister Wahlen, 25 October 1962

MC/hd

Berne, October 25, 1962

[Handwritten:] [Sergej Tichonovic] Loginov
Visit of the Chargé d'Affaires of the USSR* with the head of the Foreign Ministry

[Handwritten:] 25. 10. 1962

The Chargé d'Affaires of the USSR read to Mister Federal Councilor [Friedrich Traugott] Wahlen the Russian declaration regarding Cuba and gave him the text in Russian. This text is identical to the one already published by the press.

The head of the [Foreign] Ministry thanked [trans. note: the Chargé d'Affaires]. It should be noted that the Russian declaration was already known to him and that he had given it his attention.

The Chargé d'Affaires said that, given the seriousness of the situation, his government had found it necessary to give notice of this statement to the Federal Council. He hopes that Switzerland will do its best to maintain peace.

Mister Wahlen reminded him of Switzerland's policy of peace. This [trans. note: policy] hopes that a solution will be found between the two parties.

The Chargé d'Affaires said that he was well aware of Switzerland's policy of peace. He hopes that the declaration will help [trans. note: the Federal Council] to better understand the Soviet point of view. He alluded to the American bases in the proximity of the Soviet border. He mentions specifically those in Norway. The USSR did not use this as an excuse to establish a blockade around that country. He added that Cuba conquered its independence and that it did not pose a threat to the United States. In return, the United States have threatened Cuba's independence continuously. In

Latin America, the opposition that manifests itself against the United States is but the consequence of the European policies. (The text of the declaration was given to Mr. Schmidlin)

[Handwritten signature:] Micheli
CC: Embassy of Switzerland, Moscow
Eastern Section

[Source: *Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv*, 2804 (E): 1971/2, *UdSSR (Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken). Conversation between Federal Councilor Friedrich Wahlen and the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, Sergej Loginov, 10/25/1962. Translated from French by Stephanie Popp.*]



Document Number 11

Political letter from Ambassador Max Troendle to Secretary General Pierre Micheli, 25 October 1962

EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND
Moscow, October 25, 1962
IN THE USSR
B.12.1.(132). – AN/cm

Political letter

Mister Ambassador Pierre M I C H E L I
Secretary General of the Federal Foreign Ministry
B e r n e
C u b a

Mister Ambassador,

I have the honor to herewith give you for your information, the text of the declaration of the Soviet government of 23 October.

In addition to the commentaries that I have already cabled to you, I am adding that this declaration demands that the Cuban crisis be submitted to the Security Council. The editorial of Pravda of 23 October is even more insistent on this subject: "In this decisive moment, the United Nations are seriously being tested. The question is, whether they will fulfill the mission that was given to them by the people and whether they will justify it, otherwise they will suffer the fate of the League of Nations and will face the widespread contempt of the peoples. There is no third way."

25 October, the telegram from Khrushchev to Bertrand

Russell (annex 3), which is being broadcast, concludes by recognizing the benefits of a summit meeting.

It seems that on Cuba, the Soviets want to avoid meeting the American challenge, that they want to negotiate, talk, and not to face a showdown.

Going back to the declaration of the Soviet government, you will find that its legal argumentation is solid. But it is vitiated, since it keeps silent about the discovery of medium range missiles in Cuba, which was the cause of the American decision.

It also seems, from the meager echoes of the public opinion that I could gather, that the Soviet population does not understand why the crisis has suddenly worsened. It [trans. note: the Soviet population] is aware of an imminent danger, but for it [trans. note: the danger is] inexplicable. As a consequence it seems more depressed than exalted.

I am under the impression, as I have already told you, that the Caribbean is not a terrain favorable to the Soviet Union and that it will refuse the fight. This impression is shared by the majority of Western diplomats. Moscow will seek to win the second round in Berlin, this is in my opinion probable. But on this point, the opinions of my colleagues differ much. Please accept, Mister Ambassador, the assurances of my distinguished consideration.

[Trans. note: Ambassador Max, handwritten:] Troendle

Referred to annexes

(1 copy)

[Source: *Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2300 (E): 1000/716, Moskau, Politische Berichte und Briefe, Militärberichte, 1962. Political letter from Ambassador Max Troendle to Secretary General of the Federal Foreign Ministry, Pierre Micheli, 10/25/1962. Translated from French by Stephanie Popp*]



Document Number 12

Political letter from Ambassador Max Troendle, 25 October 1962

[Handwritten:] p.B.21.31.Moskau

FYI to:

112 110 108 113 149 152

153 154 152 157 217 DZ JD

Original for handling to: 217

Moscow, 25.10.62 1800 cable 165

Political letter (b.12.1 – 133)

[Stamped:]

Destroy confidentially

after reading

1. The population of Moscow is calm in the face of the Cuban crisis. [Trans. note: There are] no signs of a panic, but [trans. note: there are] worried faces everywhere. The demonstrations in front of the American Embassy have been insignificant, and the police warned the few hundred demonstrators over loudspeakers not to disturb the traffic. In the big companies, the workers appear to have been asked, given the situation, to stick together and to increase performance, without inflaming the national sentiments by underscoring an imminent threat of war. This allows for the assumption that the Soviet government does not intend to “march.”

2. The attacks on the United States in the daily news are published in a milder form in today’s editorial of the Pravda, which is probably due to the positive response that Premier Khrushchev has given U.N. General Secretary [U Thant].

3. a) Some diplomatic missions in Moscow tend to think that the Soviet government could intend to sell their position in Cuba for Western concessions in Europe and elsewhere or that it [trans. note: the Soviet government] will strike a blow against Berlin or against Turkey.

b) Israel’s newly arrived ambassador, J o s e p h T e k o a h, who is familiar with the conditions in Latin America from his own experience, believes, however, as do other colleagues, that Cuba is too important for the Soviet Union as a foothold for the Central and South American sphere of influence as that it could consider to trade this position for an advantage on a different front, nor for Western concessions in terms of the Berlin question, regarding which time is working against it [trans. note: the Soviet Union] anyway.

c) For the sake of completeness, I am mentioning the not very convicting version, according to which Moscow consciously provoked the American reaction, because Fidel Castro’s regime was near political bankruptcy and because it would have been better, in the interest of

conserving the “ideological Castroism,” if it were to be brought to fall by an “imperialist” intervention rather than by its own failure.

4. Since the Soviet government is keeping its ships out of the danger zone to avoid incidents and [trans. note: since] it appears in principle to be willing to settle the dispute in the forum of the United Nations or [trans. note: since it] might tend towards a summit meeting, it is possible that its yielding will be interpreted as weakness by the opposite side and that those will appear to have been correct, who advocate a policy of strength. An aggravation of the situation could result out of this due to Moscow’s desire for prestige. My Israeli colleague contrasts this eventuality with the significant advantage that the Soviet Union gets, that it can provide evidence to the neutralistic states with its provisional yielding to the sincerity and the trustworthiness of its policy of peaceful coexistence.

[Max] Troendle

e. 2491
26.10.1962 19h00 t. lo

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2300 (E): 1000/716, Moskau, Politische Berichte und Briefe, Militärberichte, 1962. Political letter from Ambassador Max Troendle, 10/25/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp]



Document Number 13

Cable from Swiss observer at the United Nations (Thalman) to the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs 29 October 1962

[Handwritten:] p.B. 58.2 Cuba
[Handwritten illegible notes in the upper right corner]
[Handwritten:] F-ONU
ORIGINAL to: [Handwritten:] 217

For acknowledgement to: 112 110 106 113 149 152
[Handwritten:] p.B.73.Cuba.O.U'ch.
153 154 155 157 217 DZJD

New York
29.10.1962
12.30 cable no. 151.

Cuba. From the Swedish Ambassador [Agda] Roessel I have learned that the composition of the inspection team has not yet been decided. The fact that Sweden has been asked, does not mean that the team will be made up solely of Swedes. Misses Roessel was welcomed first by the Secretary General last night, because the team of 6 people that will accompany U Thant to Cuba tomorrow, includes a Swede, who, in this case, holds the position of a UN functionary. Roessel does not exclude the possibility that the appeal could also be made to us, he is, however, under the impression that U Thant seems to be thinking more in terms of consulting with observers from onuc and unef. A definitive decision will possibly not be made until after U Thant’s return to New York. Thalman.

e. 2517

29.10.62 1930 t.lo

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 151, from Thalman to Foreign Ministry, 10/29/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 14

Cable from Swiss observer at the United Nations (Thalman) to the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs 29 October, 1962

[Handwritten:] p.B. 58.2 Cuba
[handwritten illegible notes in the upper right corner]
[Handwritten:] F-ONU
ORIGINAL to: [Handwritten:] 217

For acknowledgement to: 112 110 106 113 149 152
[Handwritten:] p.B.73.Cuba.O.U'ch.
153 154 155 157 217 DZJD

New York 29.10.1962 18.00 cable no. 152.

Cuba. The message distributed this afternoon through upi [United Press International], according to which the team for the supervision of the dismantling of the Soviet bases was to be made up of representatives from Sweden, Mexico and Switzerland, whereas our country was hesitant, regarding its

representation of American interest in Cuba, to accept the mandate, led to numerous delegates inquiring about the Swiss position from my colleagues and me. I would appreciate it, if you could inform me of your position on this matter. From what [UN aide C.V.] Narasimhan tells me, the upi message is, by the way, incorrect except for the part on Sweden. (Compare my 151). The definite composition of the team will not be decided until after U Thant has returned from Havana. Thalmann.

e. 2521

30.10.62 0800 t.lo

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 152, from Thalmann to Foreign Ministry, 10/29/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 15

Telegram from Swiss Foreign Ministry, Berne, to
Swiss Mission, United Nations, New York
30 October 1962

p.b.73.Cuba.O.U'Ch.
Original to: [Handwritten:] D
Copy also to: (See below)

Swiss Observer
N e w Y o r k

Berne 30.10.1962
18h45 t.lo.
cable no. 163

Your 151 and 152 stop can respond to your eventual interlocutor that if UN Secretary General asked for participation of Swiss officers in a surveillance team for the dismantling of the Soviet bases in Cuba, and if the conditions of the mandate are acceptable, we will examine the request with benevolence in the framework of our constant policy of lending our services wherever they may be of use.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Copy sent to:

- Mr. Minister Bindschedler

- Mr. Minister Burckhardt
- Mr. Diaz
- Mr. Janner
- Mr. Jaeggi

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 163, from Foreign Ministry to Thalmann, 10/30/1962. Translated from French by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 16

Telegram from the Swiss observer to the United
Nations (Thalmann)
30 October 1962

Copy also to:
Original to: [Handwritten word illegible] to [Roger-Etienne]
Campiche [two handwritten words illegible]

New York
30.10.62 11.15
cable no. 153.

U r g e n t

Cuba. I have just learned from [U Thant aide C.V.] Narasimhan that [UN Geneva office director Pier P.] Spinelli contacted [Red Cross president Leopold] Boissier last night and this morning to negotiate ICRC participation in Cuba. In connection with the removal of the quarantine, the Soviet Union has declared that it would be willing to let representatives of the ICRC inspect its ships bound for Cuba. The USA has proclaimed its agreement with this right away. Although the initiative could set a precedent, Boissier expressed general willingness, on condition that Castro agrees as well. U Thant will negotiate with him about this today. About 30 ICRC representatives (Swiss), i.e. 6 for the 5 ports of entry, would be required to carry out this plan.

Please keep me informed. [Ernesto A.] Thalmann.

[Handwritten note:]

In consultation with Misters Micheli and Burckhardt, Campiche will call B [rest of the name illegible], so that we are up to date. The Committee meets tomorrow.

[Illegible signature]

e.2526.

30.10.62 . 1745. tlo.

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 153, from Thalmann, 10/30/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 17

Note on the potential ICRC mission
31 October 1962

o.- BJK/etc

October 31, 1962

[handwritten:] p.B.73.Cuba.O.U'ch IKRK

Note

I. Phone call with Mister L. Boissier, President of the ICRC.

I told him that we had been informed by [Swiss Observer at the United Nations] Mister [Ernesto A.] Thalmann of Spinelli's demarche to him regarding the potential acceptance of the mission to inspect ships bound for Cuba. In Mister Ambassador Micheli's and my opinion it would be difficult to reject the mission if it suits all interested powers. The Department, however did not want to influence the Committee's decision in any way. I asked B. to inform us of their decision and to keep us posted.

B. confirmed the information, as Thalmann had reported it to us. He particularly pointed out that he told Spinelli that the acceptance of the mission would only be considered, if in addition to the USSR and the USA, the Cuban government also gave its consent. U Thant will look into this on his trip to Cuba. The Committee will address the matter in today's

meeting. B. will recommend accepting the mission if the conditions are met. The mission was a matter that serves to uphold peace and from which the Committee could hardly withdraw, all the less so because the offer was evidence of the acknowledgement that was shown to the ICRC.

He would, should the situation arise, ("re") inquire of Ambassador Rügger or potentially Director Fröhlich if they would take on leading this mission. Furthermore, 30 Swiss experts, most likely from the field of transportation, had to be found.

II. Conversation with Messrs. Federal Councilor Wahlen and Ambassador Micheli.

Mister Federal Councilor [Friedrich Traugott] Wahlen tends to think that the ICRC should reject the offer. The task was beyond the framework of its humanitarian mission. If it were accepted, it could cause serious difficulties for the ICRC. It could become the "arbiter" (translator's note: arbitrator) in a political situation, which could get more compromising than the exercise of its functions in a humanitarian sense.

III. -

I will call B. again with the purpose of correcting the statement of this morning and to inform him of Mister Federal Councilor Wahlen's opinion, while emphatically remarking that the Head of Department does not want to intervene in the decision of the Committee.

B. confirmed that he had, in the meantime, received official statements of agreement by the USA and USSR. He was still waiting to learn about Fidel Castro's decision. This would, in any case, if the ICRC decided to accept the mission, be undertaken with all the necessary precautions and with emphasis that this was an exception. It would, by the way, probably be the first case of a mission for peace as the bylaws provide for. He said "L'affaire est grave." ["The affair is serious"—trans.] It would be easier to reject than to accept, but the easier way was not always the right way. After initial soundings the views of the members of the Committee were divided.

[Illegible stamped signature]

[Source: BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Inspizierung russischer Schiffe die nach Kuba fahren durch Vertreter des IKRK. (Schweizer). Note on potential ICRC mission, 10/31/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 18

Report from the Swiss Ambassador to Cuba (Stadelhofer) to the Division of Political Affairs, Swiss Foreign Ministry, about the transfer of the remains of Major Anderson
7 November 1962

Embassy of Switzerland
Havana, November 7, 1962
In Cuba
B.44.USA. – Std/p

To the Division of Political Affairs
of the Swiss Foreign Ministry
B e r n e

Transfer of the remains
of Major Rudolf Anderson

Mister Ambassador,

Following up on my quick report on the 5th of this month, I am taking the liberty to inform you further on details that seem important.

1. Reason and sense of the engagement of this embassy is still not fully clear to me even after the termination of the mission. There was probably, despite the apparent agreement between all the parties involved, a persistent misunderstanding. It appears that Secretary General U Thant and the American entities viewed the acceptance of the coffin by the embassy for the transfer to Guantanamo base as the most practical solution. It is about 130 km from the province Pinar del Rio, which is located in the West of Cuba, and where the remains were, to Havana. The distance Havana – Santiago de Cuba is 1000 km and from there to the American naval base it is about another 80 km. Since the Cuban domestic air traffic was interrupted and the train connections between the capital and the Eastern province are complicated, it would have required a 1100 km long road trip, for which, besides the fact of the enormous expenditure of time, there was not a single official car from the American inventory of the Foreign Interests Service that would have been in sufficiently good conditions.

Decisive was that, which various discussions showed with clarity, the Cuban government for political reasons and referring to its national honor, was unwilling to allow

the transfer to the naval base. Therefore – and that was also practically easiest – the transfer to the nearby American mainland was the only option.

2. Settling the matter required 8 audiences with the [trans. note: Cuban] Foreign Ministry, three of which were with Dr. Roa, plus one long phone conversation with him, as well as six phone conversations with Washington. Dr. Roa expressed already during the first conversation on Friday, 2 November, and during the one on Sunday with significant pungency, that he gave U Thant the Cuban consent to enlist me as the Swiss representative, but not the embassy as protecting power for the USA. He added that the Cuban government preferred Switzerland's appointment with the repatriation modalities over the U.N. and the ICRC because of the high reputation that our country enjoys.

3. To be sure and to prevent unpleasant last minute surprises if possible, I explicitly asked the question on Saturday, 3 November, if the Cuban side desired to have a record of delivery drafted, I added that I would be happy to waive such a document, since some photographs would fulfill the same purpose. Dr. Roa asked me thereupon to prepare a draft, which I handed over in the afternoon (see attachment III). Although the final drafting per se was planned for Sunday 10 a.m., the Chief of Protocol could not inform me over the phone of the amendment the Prime Minister required until 13.10. It boiled down to the fact that the description of the cause of death should have been determined bilaterally, i.e. covered by my signature. In extraordinarily tough, but never hurtful negotiations that lasted almost an hour, I was able to achieve the version of the fourth paragraph that is known to you. [...]

4. Due to the negotiations with Dr. Roa I did not arrive at the airport on Sunday, 4 November, until [UN aide] General [Indar Jit] Rickhy [Rikhye], the envoy sent by Secretary General U Thant, was preparing to leave the airplane, i.e. at exactly 3 o'clock. The Chief of Protocol, who had to wait for the fair copy of the delivery record, arrived at about 15.45. The transfer ceremony was simple, but fairly dignified. Although, it was originally planned to allow either the foreign correspondents also or no one from the press, there were some Cuban journalists and photographers. They were, however, not called up by the Foreign Ministry, but had gained access on their own initiative. The local press gave wide publicity to the affair and also printed the Cuban version of the record of delivery. [...]

5. The fact that Ambassador Lindt managed, in the shortest time, to organize a cargo plane, contributed crucially

to the success of this mission. The point that the upper part of the plane was newly painted and endued with the Swiss Cross made a strong impression on the [trans. note Cuban] Foreign Ministry and moreover on the public.

[...]

The Swiss Ambassador

[Handwritten signature: Stadelhofer]

Attachments:

1. Conformation note of 3 November, 1962
2. Informally submitted questions
3. Draft of the record of delivery from the Embassy
4. Copy of the record of delivery

[Source: *Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland*, www.dodis.ch, doc. 30384, Report from Stadelhofer on the transfer of Major Anderson's remains, 11/07/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 19

Note for the Division of International Organizations regarding ICRC involvement in the Cuba inspections
20 November 1962

Copy for Mister Ambassador Micheli

[Stamped:] Swiss Foreign Ministry

[Handwritten:]

Political Affairs [signed: Probst]

p.B.Cuba.O.U'Ch.

(IKRK) PO/mb

Berne, November 20, 1962

[Stamped:] [illegible] 20. Nov. 62 [illegible]

Note for the Division of International Organizations

Involvement of the ICRC
in the Cuban inspection

During our discussion, Dr. [Andre] Amstein, Chief of the federal police, mentioned the notifications the ICRC received, according to press releases, over the last weeks from numerous Swiss, who wanted to volunteer for the Cuba inspection. In Dr. Amstein's opinion, it would be expedient if the ICRC would, in the event, forward the names of such candidates prior to appointment to the federal police for a "screening" either directly or through your division.

This thought seems correct to me. If the ICRC were in fact to send an inspection team of Swiss into Cuban waters, one would have to be sure that these would only be reliable and especially politically unobjectionable constituents.

Although the Cuba mission no longer seems an issue at the moment, I wanted to inform you just in case of this thought which you probably have considered yourself already.

[Source: BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, *Inspizierung russischer Schiffe die nach Kuba fahren durch Vertreter des IKRK (Schweizer)*. Note for the Division of International Organizations, 11/20/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]

Notes

1 Quoted in: Paul Widmer. *Schweizer Aussenpolitik und Diplomatie* (Zürich: Ammann Verlag & Co., 2003), p. 384.

2 Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland (hereafter DoDiS), doc. 30470, Speech by Federal Councilor F. Wahlen: Quelques aspects des relations extérieures actuelles de la Suisse, Conférence de M. F. T. Wahlen à la Société Académic de Genève, 11/22/1962.

3 Documents Diplomatiques Suisse, volume 17, 1. VI. 1947 – 30. VI. 1949, ed. Antoine Fleury (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 1999), doc. 61, Exposé, Head of the Foreign Ministry, M. Petitpierre, to the Swiss Federal Council, 8/9 March, 1948, p. 199-200.

4 Ibid., p. 203.

5 Ibid., p. 203-204.

6 Ibid., p. 204.

7 Paragraph after DoDiS, doc. 14974, Request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Federal Council, 12/28/1962.

8 Thomas Fischer. Die guten Dienste des IKRK und der Schweiz in der Kuba-Krise 1962. Center for International Studies, Zurich, *Beiträge*, no. 30 (October 2000), p. 12.

9 Thomas Fischer. Talking to the Bearded Man: Mandate to represent US interests in Cuba, 1961-1977, *Working Papers in International History and Politics*, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, no. 5 (August 2012), p. 4.

10 In *One Minute to Midnight*, Michael Dobbs relates that "[m]ost foreign governments, including the Soviet one, would hear the news at 6:00 p.m. Washington time, an hour before Kennedy went on television. A few close allies, such as Britain, Germany, and France, received advance notice from special presidential emissaries." (p. 39).

- 11 Paragraph after DoDiS, doc. 14974, Request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Federal Council, 12/28/1962.
- 12 Schweizer Bundesarchiv (hereafter: BAR), 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Telegram 308, from the Swiss Embassy in Washington, 10/23/1962.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Paragraph after: BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Kuba-Aktion USA, Orientierung durch USA-Botschafter, Memorandum for the record, by Raymond Probst, 10/24/1962.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 National Security Archives (hereafter: NSA), Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, doc. 00637, Cable no. 185, from McKinney to Secretary of State, 10/23/1962.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Paragraph after DoDiS, doc. 19007, Telegram no. 49, from the Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/23/1962.
- 19 DoDiS, doc. 30438, Exposé by Dr. A. Lindt, Washington, 01/25/1962.
- 20 DoDiS, doc. 19007, Telegram no. 49, from the Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/23/1962.
- 21 Paragraph after BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Letter from Stadelhofer to Micheli, 11/17/1962.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Second part of the paragraph after BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Geheim. Telegram no. 53, from Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/27/1962.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 BAR, E2804#1971/2#309*, UdSSR (Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken). Conversation between Federal Councilor Friedrich Wahlen and the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, Sergej Loginov, 10/25/1962.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Letter from Stadelhofer to Micheli, 11/17/1962.
- 28 Paragraph after ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 James Hershberg. The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962 (part 1), in: *Journal of Cold War Studies* Vol. 6, Issue 2 (Spring 2004), p. 3-20.
- 31 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 151, from Thalmann to Foreign Ministry, 10/29/1962.
- 32 First part of the paragraph after Ibid.
- 33 Second part of the paragraph after BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 152, from Thalmann to Foreign Ministry, 10/29/1962.
- 34 DoDiS, doc. 19007, Telegram no. 49, from the Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/23/1962.
- 35 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Memorandum from Martin Hill to C.V. Narasimhan, 10/26/1962.
- 36 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 153, from Thalmann, 10/30/1962.
- 37 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Cable no. 159, from Thalmann to the Foreign Ministry, 11/05/1962.
- 38 Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited, NSC Executive Committee Record of Action, 10/29/1962.
- 39 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Memorandum from Martin Hill to C.V. Narasimhan, 10/26/1962.
- 40 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1635, from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/05/1962.
- 41 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of Meeting between U-Thant, President Dorticos, Premier Castro, and Foreign Minister Roa, 10/30/1962.
- 42 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 19, 11/03/1962.
- 43 http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_Nov-1961.pdf
- 44 Thomas Fischer. Die guten Dienste des IKRK und der Schweiz in der Kuba-Krise 1962. Center for International Studies, Zurich, *Beiträge*, no. 30 (October 2000), p. 15.
- 45 http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_Nov-1961.pdf
- 46 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Inspizierung russischer Schiffe die nach Kuba fahren durch Vertreter des IKRK. (Schweizer). Cable no. 170, from Foreign Ministry to Thalmann, 11/06/1962.
- 47 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Secretary General's meeting with Paul Ruegger, 11/06/1962.
- 48 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and American Officials, 11/07/1962.
- 49 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1688, from Stevenson to Secretary of State. 11/08/1962.
- 50 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Secretary General's meeting with Paul Ruegger, 11/06/1962.
- 51 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1166, from Dean Rusk to United States mission to the United Nations, 11/01/1962.
- 52 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and American Officials, 11/07/1962.
- 53 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Secretary General's meeting with Paul Ruegger, 11/06/1962.
- 54 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and American Officials, 11/07/1962.
- 55 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1688, from Stevenson to Secretary of State. 11/08/1962.
- 56 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, CIA Memorandum, The Crisis USSR/Cuba, 10/31/1962.

57 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and American Officials, 11/07/1962.

58 Paragraph after NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1688, from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/08/1962.

59 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1635, from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/05/1962.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and Soviet Officials, 11/07/1962.

63 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1703 from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/09/1962.

64 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and Soviet Officials, 11/07/1962.

65 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1703 from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/09/1962.

66 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Inspizierung russischer Schiffe die nach Kuba fahren durch Vertreter des IKRK. (Schweizer). Cable no. 153, from Thalmann to Foreign Ministry, 10/30/1962.

67 DoDiS, doc. 30390, Minutes of Federal Council Meeting, 11/09/1962.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ramses Nassif. U Thant in New York. 1961-1971, A Portrait of the Third Secretary General (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 35.

72 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Telegram no. 446, from Stadelhofer to Foreign Ministry, 11/05/1962.

73 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Telegram no. 1605, from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/02/1962.

74 DoDiS, doc. 30384, Letter from Stadelhofer to Division of Political Affairs, Foreign Ministry, 11/07/1962.

75 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Telegram no. 446, from Stadelhofer to Foreign Ministry, 11/05/1962.

76 DoDiS, doc. 30384, Letter from Stadelhofer to Division of Political Affairs, Foreign Ministry, 11/07/1962.

77 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Telegram no. 221, from McKinney to Secretary of State, 11/06/1962.

78 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Inspizierung russischer Schiffe die nach Kuba fahren durch Vertreter des IKRK. (Schweizer). Note for the Division for International Organizations, 11/20/1962.

79 Ibid.

French Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis

Introduced and translated by Garret J. Martin

Like many other European countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain, France only played a marginal role in the Cuban Missile Crisis. France was neither involved in the US decision-making process, nor did it facilitate the denouement of the crisis. But the confrontation in the Caribbean certainly did have an important long-run impact on French foreign policy, and in particular on Franco-American relations.

While only a secondary player throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis, France did assist its American ally by providing important information thanks to its diplomatic and intelligence presence in Cuba. As pointed out by Maurice Vaïsse, the French intelligence services were among the first to provide hints of the arrival of nuclear missiles in Cuba to the United States. French Colonel Houel, stationed in Washington, had heard reports of the missiles thanks to contacts within the Cuban resistance. The French authorities then contacted the US Air Force, which overcame its doubts and decided to send spy planes to investigate the claim.¹ During the crisis and after, French Ambassador to Havana, Roger Robert du Gardier, gave valuable insights into Cuba's internal situation (see documents two and four).

Moreover, if the United States did not include France in its decision-making process during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Washington did maintain consultations with Paris. President John F. Kennedy sent former secretary of state Dean Acheson to solemnly inform French President General Charles de Gaulle about the presence of nuclear missiles in Cuba and the initial American response. The seriousness of the situation led de Gaulle to pledge his full and unconditional support to the United States (see document one). Kennedy's national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy, also met soon after the end of the crisis with the French ambassador to Washington, Hervé Alphand, to share their analyses of the confrontation in the Caribbean (see document three).

Finally, the lessons France drew from the Cuban Missile Crisis would prove very significant (see document five). While de Gaulle fully supported the United States during the crisis, he also felt that the whole episode vindicated his beliefs on the improbability of a superpower confrontation in the nuclear age. The Cuban Missile Crisis thus marked a turning point in his mind because it seemingly demonstrated that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union – especially the latter – wanted war.² “Russia would never dare” became a leitmotiv for the General, opening up the prospect that

Moscow might be willing to consider peace, especially as the Cuban Missile Crisis also confirmed to Paris the weakness and turmoil within the Communist camp. At the same time, since the Americans only informed their European allies of their decisions, instead of actively consulting with them, and since the United States appeared hesitant to risk a nuclear war to defend Europe, this provided, in the General's view, the best justification for his policy of independence and the establishment of a national deterrent.³



DOCUMENTS

Document No. 1:

Meeting between General Charles de Gaulle and Dean Acheson⁴, Elysee Palace, Paris, 22 October 1962, 5 pm

Very Secret

M. Dean Acheson hands General de Gaulle a letter on Cuba from the president of the United States, which the General reads.⁵ He also hands over the first part of the speech (the only part that has yet reached the United States embassy) that President Kennedy will pronounce the same evening at midnight (Paris time). The rest of the speech will be sent to the Elysee once the embassy receives it.

Invited by General de Gaulle, in line with a passage from President Kennedy's letter, to provide further information, M. Acheson first indicated, in line with M. Kennedy's desires, the importance that the latter attaches to the final passage of his letter in regard to the close contacts that should be maintained between Washington and Paris, and the interest he attaches to General de Gaulle's viewpoints.

To sum up, the President will announce the following decision: starting immediately, subject to a grace period of twenty four hours expiring at midnight (Paris time) on the 23rd October, a naval blockade – and maybe even an aerial one (M. Acheson is not sure) – will be put in place around Cuba. This blockade will first affect all types of weapons; within a short delay, it will also include oil products, and if necessary, it could later on become a complete blockade.

It is likely that what has already arrived in Cuba will not be withdrawn; but it seems that the weapons systems being currently built are not finished. In particular, no nuclear warheads have been spotted on any photography. The aim is to prevent the delivery of those.

President Kennedy had first contemplated more draconian measures: relying on surprise, an attack by bombers could have destroyed all the missiles in place. The President had given up on the idea because the United States' European allies would have faced a high risk of reprisals; in addition, the high number of Soviet technicians that would have been killed in such a bombing attack could have led M. Khrushchev to react excessively. Responding to a question from General de Gaulle, M. Acheson explained that the mission would have involved bombers flying at low altitude, using conventional bombs, and targeting installations that are based far from cities, which would have helped to prevent civilian victims.

It is clear that the situation will become very tense once the blockade comes into force. Several scenarios are possible. Maybe the Russians will try to force the blockade with or without the use of submarines; in this case, the situation will rapidly escalate to a massive attack against Cuba.

It is more likely that the Russians will try to force the United States to fire the first shot, which would allow them to respond elsewhere: Berlin? Quemoy? South-East Asia? Korea? Or maybe all these locations at the same time.

Moreover, the Russians will not fail to launch a massive propaganda campaign, especially towards the neutral countries – Africans or Asians – in order to push their public opinions to call on their governments to pressure the United States.

It is with this perspective in mind that the Secretary of State will speak tomorrow to the Organization of American States, in view of guaranteeing Latin American moral support for the United States. Furthermore, the main Latin American governments have been warned about the risks that riots could break out in their countries, and they have been promised that American forces could be put at their disposal to put down these riots.

In addition, M. [Adlai E.] Stevenson will refer matters to the United Nations Security Council in order to pass a resolution condemning Soviet policy in Cuba. M. Acheson pointed out that in his mind this was a “prophylactic” step, whose sole outcome could be to prevent the Russians from taking the initiative.

In concrete terms, planning for a possible extension of the operations in Cuba, the American air forces are in a state of alert, the navy is mobilized to organize the blockade, and important army units are ready to intervene.

What goal is M. Khrushchev pursuing in Cuba? First, it is likely that he is trying to use this affair to force the United States to pay elsewhere for a favorable evolution of the situation in the Caribbean.

Second, we have to clearly admit that the direct Soviet threat against the United States has become seriously more acute with the installation in Cuba of maybe up to 36 M(edium) R(ange) B(allistic) M(issiles), with a range of 1,100 miles or more.

There is also a political goal: weakening the morale of the Western hemisphere.

Finally, diplomatically, M. Khrushchev has given himself the option to say: “let us talk about removing all military bases on foreign territories.”

M. Acheson added that the clues on this growing offensive potential on Cuba are barely a week old: the first worrying pictures were taken on 12 October, and the following pictures two days later. Many pictures have been taken since then, and in the last three or four days, we have the feeling of seeing the situation as it is.

General de Gaulle carefully read President Kennedy's letter and what he was showed of his speech; he listened to what M. Acheson said with the same attention. It seems that for the first time, the United States are directly threatened, since the missiles that were spotted can only be targeting the United States. President Kennedy wants to react immediately. France cannot object, since it is normal for a country to defend itself, even with preventive measures, once it is threatened and it has the means to defend itself.

The planned measure is a blockade. How effective will it be? It is hard to say: will it be unbearable enough to push the Cubans to remove the missiles that are already installed? In any case, it should prevent any new weapons from arriving.

General de Gaulle cannot appreciate the result of a presentation in front of the Organization of American States: how will these states react? It is normal in any case that the United States consult them.

As for the Security Council, a referral is in line with American policy. For his part, the General sees no practical value as there will be debates, discussions, and nothing else. The only positive fact remains the blockade.

If there is a blockade – and once again France is not objecting as the United States are threatened – the Soviets will react. Maybe they will react in Cuba, more likely they will do so elsewhere and in particular in Berlin.

If they blockade Berlin, the three responsible powers will have to take the needed measures. Counter-measures have been planned. They will have to be implemented. It is possible that there is also among the Soviets – and maybe even in the United States – a desire to relax the situation in order

to clarify it through talks, and quite likely high level talks between M. Khrushchev and M. Kennedy. Those could focus on Cuba and Berlin. Khrushchev is surely thinking about this, maybe M. Kennedy as well.

As for France, if a crisis breaks out in Berlin, it will act in concert with its partners, especially if there is a war. General de Gaulle does not think there will be a war, but there could be difficult moments with threats and counter-threats, which is a pity, because this will increase tension.

He appreciates M. Kennedy's message, even though it is a notification and not a consultation, since the decision has already been taken. He will respond. It seems essential to maintain a close contact in Washington through [French Ambassador in Washington] M. [Herve] Alphand, whom he trusts completely, and soon in Paris where [the new US Ambassador] M. [Charles] Bohlen is expected.⁶

Two CIA representatives were then brought in. They showed the General maps and photographs that highlighted on the one hand the installation, spotted since early August, of defensive equipment (including some MiG 21s), and on the other hand, the transport and then the installation of the Illyushin 28, capable of carrying nuclear missiles, and especially MRBMs with a range of 1,100 to 2,200 miles. Four and maybe eight of these missiles seem ready to be launched; the activation of the others will take place by the end of the year, when 36 missiles would be ready to be fired, with each ramp having the possibility of a second launch four to six hours later.

Based on the studies that claim that the USSR has 70 I(nter) C(ontinental) B(allistic) M(issiles) [that] are operational [and can reach] the United States, the installation in Cuba could improve by 50% the arsenal aimed towards the United States.

This last point is underlined by M. Acheson when the meeting resumes.

General de Gaulle believes that M. Khrushchev has planned a vast maneuver around Cuba that could allow for talks on military bases as well as Berlin, that could lead to direct Russo-American talks and which could impress the Latin American states. This is a serious affair, since the United States had guaranteed Europe's defense to prevent Europe from becoming an anti-American base, and now such a base exists in America.

After hearing that the only three governments which received such notice were the French, British and [West] German governments, General de Gaulle asked M. Acheson, who is returning to Washington tomorrow, to transmit his regards to the President of the United States.

[Source: Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1962, Tome II (1er Juillet-31 Décembre), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1999), pp. 315-19. Translation by Garret J. Martin.]



Document No. 2:

Roger Robert du Gardier, French Ambassador in Havana, to Maurice Couve de Murville, French Foreign Minister, Telegram number 538-540⁷, 23 October 1962

While announcing, in big headlines, that the nation is ready for war, and that the Prime Minister will speak to the nation tonight, the morning newspapers have not published any in-depth commentary on the speech given last night by M. Kennedy.

On the radio, the propaganda specialists relied on their usual blustering when referring to the speech in question, but they have certainly not received the necessary guidelines to develop new propaganda themes on this subject.

The lower cadres of the revolution seem preoccupied and worried.

As early as 5 pm yesterday – before the broadcast of President Kennedy's speech – the reserve militias had been mobilized and all the defense posts on the island had received maximum reinforcement.

On the opposition side – or at least the few people who dare to claim to be – the declaration of the American President caused a strong feeling of relief.

Mixed with this, however, is a certain anxiety due to the likely harsh police measures or precautionary measures that will undoubtedly be taken against all of those who have not taken an active part in the regime's demonstrations.

For the moment, the population remains calm as a whole and traffic is normal in the capital.

[Source: Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1962, Tome II (1er Juillet-31 Décembre), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1999), p. 320. Translation by Garret J. Martin.]



Document No. 3:

Hervé Alphand, French Ambassador in Washington, to Maurice Couve de Murville, French Foreign

Minister, Telegram number 6179-6185⁸, 1 November 1962

The long meeting I had on 1 November with M. McGeorge Bundy inspired in me the following thoughts:

1. Before examining in detail the possible consequences of a Cuban settlement, M. Kennedy wants first to focus on ending the current crisis, which in his view is not over yet. It is likely that the Russians want to fulfill the promises made in M. Khrushchev's letter. A Soviet general in Havana gave guarantees to M. Thant's Indian military adviser [Gen. Indarjit Rikhye] that the missiles would be dismantled on Friday 2 November. But until now, the aerial photographs have not been able to prove these statements. We do not know yet whether the pictures made today will provide any decisive indications on this subject. Moreover, if Castro remains intransigent, it will be very difficult to organize an inspection that could both allow to check the departure of the missiles and the absence of offensive nuclear weapons on the island. The administration is considering what methods it could implement (international inspection at sea, aerial surveillance, etc...). No decision has been taken yet, and this problem presents political and technical challenges.

2. It is clear that Castro is furious and he is very bitter with his Russian friends for having abandoned him without consultation. M. McGeorge Bundy thinks that M. [Anastas] Mikoyan is coming to Havana⁹ to try to make Castro understand the situation. The Russians have their "Phoumi" [a right-wing Laotian military and political figure allied to the United States] and the current episode will maybe show them that some satellites, be it in the East or West, are not always docile.

3. M. Bundy described Khrushchev's behavior in the Cuban affair in line with the explanations that I have already reported (in my telegram 6106-6111¹⁰). He added that maybe the military leaders, especially [Soviet Defense Minister] Marshal [Rodion] Malinovsky, pushed him to build nuclear bases in Cuba so as to try to catch up in the arms race. Thus M. Khrushchev would, to a certain extent, have been victim of the carelessness of his generals.

Since we ignore the state of Khrushchev's relations with the other members of the Presidium, it is important not only to not compromise him by making him appear as a friend of the West, but to also to not humiliate him in front of his colleagues. The President is very conscious of this psychological problem

4. Does Soviet behavior in Cuba already amount, as some commentators claim, to an important turning point on the

international stage? A drop in the prestige of the USSR and its leader could, of course, have very important consequences not only for East-West relations, but also vis-à-vis the peoples of developing states and within the communist bloc itself. But it is very difficult to predict how events will unfold. It is possible that tomorrow the Soviet leaders will once again launch into their usual themes about the "free city of Berlin," general and complete disarmament, a moratorium on nuclear tests, etc... It is also possible that an era of real negotiation in a spirit of détente will emerge.

5. In this case, the gap that separates Russia from China will widen further. China will try to present itself even more as the leader of the communist world, determined not to seek any compromises with the Western imperialists. It could provide further evidence of its intransigence by pursuing its invasion of India, and by supporting throughout the world, in Cuba as in South-East Asia or Africa, the demands of the extremists. The evolution of the situation in India will be the main test for the evolution of Sino-Soviet relations.

6. The Cuban adventure highlights the strategic concepts of the nuclear era. It appears to M. McGeorge Bundy that it has underlined the necessity of conventional weapons to avoid a thermonuclear conflict. It proves also that, despite what [NATO Commander] General [Lauris] Norstad claims, medium range missiles placed on the ground and easily detectable are of little use when facing an invulnerable nuclear deterrence carried by planes and placed in submarines.

[Source: Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1962, Tome II (1er Juillet-31 Décembre), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1999), pp. 358-60. Translation by Garret J. Martin.]



Document No. 4:

Roger Robert du Gardier, French Ambassador in Havana, to Maurice Couve de Murville, French Foreign Minister, Telegram number 610-611, 15 November 1962

Since I have the unexpected opportunity of using a diplomatic pouch, which is heading to Mexico and then on to France, I want to put to good use the few hours that remain before the departure of the diplomatic pouch to give the Department a general impression on the Cuban crisis up to now.

I am purposefully using the word “impression.” My European colleagues and I, indeed, are facing imprecision and uncertainty regardless of our efforts to get clear and verifiable information. The meetings of M. Mikoyan¹¹ are taking place in great secrecy – if there are any more meetings at all: some feel, indeed, that in the last few days, the Soviet first Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers has run out of arguments and topics of conversation, and that he is only kept here as a sort of “shield” against an eventual American invasion. Once again, they are announcing his departure for the end of the week – tomorrow even, for the most convinced of the rumor spreaders – but there is no apparent reason for this to be true, as there is no apparent reason for this to be false either.

As I signaled in several of my previous messages, the great majority of the population is more apathetic than ever, despite the kicks given periodically by the professional agitators of the regime. It seems that the sudden discovery of medium range Russian launchers stunned most Cubans, be they revolutionaries or not, and that they are still in shock. It is a fact that for a country that has claimed to be, in the last four years, completely free, sovereign and independent, admitting that foreigners organized, on their own, important strategic bases on their soil must be particularly painful. This, combined with a nearly general mobilization and the vigor of the political police, can easily explain the state of stupor of the island's population.

While in the last few days, the trenches built along the coast are quite bare, the military transports are very active: not only do we constantly see them in the city, but they are spotted in all parts of the countryside. From various sources, we are also hearing that soldiers and militias are continuing to hide, with great caution, very large cement containers in natural caves, or alternatively in man-made excavations that are then covered with earth, sand, and vegetation. It does not seem that they are trying to hide light infantry weapons, or even coastal defense and anti-air canons, since such weapons are absolutely normal for the defense of any country; unless these are part of an “excess” supply of weapons that is put in reserve for the day where the Americans would have imposed a new regime in Cuba, and Fidel's supporters would need to reclaim power.

Among the many rumors that are circulating, there is one, in my view, that presents a certain interest even though it cannot be verified: when the medium range missiles and their accessories were unloaded, the Russians or Eastern Europeans who led the operation did so with great precautions, with some of them wearing asbestos masks and suits, while for the reloading of these same missiles, no such precaution was shown by those leading the operation, who were all simply

wearing shorts and short sleeve shirts. We can speculate, obviously, that the key elements of the missiles – combustible liquids and launching devices – or even nuclear warheads – have remained on the island, and only frames have left. This would explain why, according to the same sources, the Russians so easily agreed to withdraw their famous missiles.

Maybe there is in this case, on the part of certain Cubans who are tired of the regime, a more or less tacit desire to see a serious international inspection of the island's territory. It does seem, for many of my colleagues and myself, that the rumors in question are too diverse and too numerous for us to ignore. It is a fact, in any case, that we can hear, throughout the island, muted explosions that seem to be part of underground works. This is the case, in particular, near my residence which is on the north flank of a hill that is supposedly full of labyrinths like those in the rock of Gibraltar.

The authorities, for their part, are very worried. The visit of the General Secretary of the United Nations [U Thant], and then the one of M. Mikoyan, did not lessen this obvious feeling of concern, nor does the news from the United States incline one to believe that an agreement is now possible between the main opponents: Dr. Fidel Castro and his team do not seem to have a clear conscience, nor are they ready to trick either their enemies or their allies.

Once more, these are only speculations and hypotheses, more or less supported by pieces of information of irregular value, but from which we feel we must draw a “median” that is as reasonable and logical as possible: the activity of the political police and the constant suspicion that we face, us, the “Westerners” and our last free Cuban friends, does not allow us, indeed, to become exposed to accusations of spying which are quite recurrent here.

Even though, since the start of the week, M. Mikoyan and Fidel Castro have been shown side by side several times, public opinion continues to believe that discord persists between both men, as it does between their governments. It is a fact that Dr. Fidel Castro appears constantly worried and even irritated while M. Mikoyan, once he has finished smiling for the photographers, adopts the look of the severe mentor that he wants to project here.

The old guard or the strictly loyal communists – noticeably the Dr. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez – do laud and praise the Soviet first Deputy Chairman, but the public, including the revolutionaries, is far more reticent than they are, when it is not hostile.

The sympathies of the “Fidelistas” are far more with the Chinese, but since the latter cannot do anything for them in practical terms, be it by providing supplies or even more by providing fuel, they have to accept Russia's tutelage, and we can sense that this tutelage is becoming unbearable for the

“men of the Sierra” – those, at least, who have not joined the opposition since their leader officially declared last December that he was a “Marxist-Leninist”.

In terms of the relations between the government and the Western embassies, the situation remains tense and my European colleagues and I have the feeling that the regime is ready, at any moment, to accuse us of the worst crimes and, of course, of spying... That said, the population, even when “engaged” – excluding the “wholehearted” supporters of the regime and the professional agitators – is not normally hostile: I would even mention cases of members of the famous “Committees for the Defense of the Revolution” who were friendly or helpful towards certain Westerners who were labeled as particularly pro-Americans: these are likely some simple “counter-insurance plans” in case a still possible American invasion is successful, but it still remains that such an attitude is not compatible with the spirit of hatred that the official propaganda is trying to instill with the “masses” against all that is “Western,” “capitalist,” “colonialist,” or “imperialist.” If one day we have to face a crowd that is animated by hostile intentions towards us, it will only be, and I am convinced of this, on the basis of precise orders from authorities...

Lacking any serious information on the evolution of M. Mikoyan’s mission or on the eventual removal of the 42 Illyushin 28 that are claimed to be here, I am giving these indications to the Department, through this ‘summary of the general atmosphere,’ in response to the request that was made by its message on 2nd November.¹²

[Source: Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1962, Tome II (1er Juillet-31 Décembre), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1999), pp. 424-27. Translation by Garret J. Martin.]



Document No. 5:

M. Couve de Murville to various French diplomatic posts, Circular Telegram number 9613, 10 November 1962

Very Secret

You will find below some remarks from the Department on the main aspects of the Cuban crisis.

I. *Origins and meaning of the Crisis*

Everyone admits that the Soviets miscalculated. It remains

hard to define their real aim. Many facts are still unknown. We ignore whether the Soviet military reinforcement to Cuba was in response to a Cuban demand or a Soviet initiative. We do not know whether the works were kept hidden until early October and then hurriedly led into the open, or if they were always led without great precaution. We know nothing of the discussions that could have taken place in the USSR, the only hints being the changes in the Soviet high command in the spring of 1962.¹⁴

Considering these inevitable uncertainties and many others, we can put forward the following hypotheses.

- a) The decision to install medium range missiles in Cuba cannot be solely explained by the desire to defend the island. A strong anti-aerial defense, and if need be a naval defense, would have been sufficient for that end.
- b) These missiles, once installed, would have seriously improved the strategic position of the USSR. The United States could have, certainly, destroyed or neutralized them, but in order to do that, they would have needed to resort to force in a very dangerous context.
- c) The Soviet installation in Cuba was not aiming, it seems, to capture an opportunity to launch a devastating war; the missiles did not sufficiently change the balance of power to allow the destruction of the opponent without any retaliation.
- d) The Soviet bases in Cuba seemed to aim, first and foremost, to improve the political and military situation of the USSR, either in view of a great debate with the United States, or for a more precise objective, such as Berlin.
- e) What remains striking is that this initiative, with such high stakes, was led in such a cavalier fashion. One cannot understand, in particular, why no potential maneuver was ever planned, a case where the United States reacted. One cannot understand why the very clear warnings of President Kennedy in September were ignored. One cannot understand why the experience of Berlin, especially during the air corridor affair of February-March 1962, was not put to good use. If, despite all these uncertainties, we try to make a judgment, we can say that the Soviet leaders, through a complete psychological misreading of the situation, tried to gain a trump card for a policy of claims and movement, if not of expansion. That essential fact, hidden by the current amenable words of M. Khrushchev, inspires reflection. Ten years after the death of Stalin, the Soviet Union, while negotiating with the United States and claiming to pursue a policy of peace, took an enormous risk in order to weaken American positions, and with that those of the West as a whole, in view of pursuing

a new initiative, either in Europe, the Americas, or elsewhere. To those who, for a long time, have claimed that the Soviet Union has traded its old military threats with political and economic challenges, the Cuban crisis provided a strong rebuke. The political-economic challenge complements the military threat. It is not a substitute.

II. *The Unfolding of the Crisis*

Some observations can be made already.

- a) The decision of the American government to establish a blockade and to avoid, at least in the initial phase, a direct confrontation with the USSR through a surprise attack against the bases, is inspired by the strategic doctrine of flexible response. The blockade was merely the symbol of American will. Behind the blockade lied the threat of a bombing attack, which became more and more likely as days went by. The two key elements of deterrence were combined in the American attitude in Cuba, that is to say incrementalism and continuity. By taking calculated risks, the American leaders sent a clear 'message' to Moscow. No doubt the current administration will reach conclusions that reinforce its belief that the nuclear game is only possible with a minimum number of actors. Even though it is too early to draw all the lessons from this crisis, we can note in any case that in Cuba, the advantages were on the side of the government which, via a 'conventional' initiative (bombing attack or invasion), would have placed the opponent in a position of choosing between a nuclear response or a collapse. These considerations cannot be systematically applied to other situations or theaters.
- b) The Soviet government clearly showed that, in a situation where the other camp has the initiative and events are moving fast, it loses some of its confidence. Soviet diplomatic action struggled to follow the train of events. So M. [Valerian] Zorin [Soviet permanent representative at the UN] was visibly surprised by the question of M. [Adlai] Stevenson during the Security Council debate. M. Khrushchev contradicted himself in his correspondence with M. Kennedy. He did not consult with Castro. He had not informed his communist allies. More importantly, the Russians proved incapable of 'horse-trading' their withdrawal. The American promise not to invade, regardless of its value, is only a promise, while the missiles are already on the boats. At no time, with the exception of the unexplainable Turkish episode¹⁵, did Moscow try to trade. Berlin was not mentioned. On the 11th of September, however, in the communique

announcing the sending of weapons to Cuba, Berlin had been mentioned several times. It is at this moment that a delay of two months had been granted by M. Khrushchev. All of this indicates that between the 24 and 28 of October, the Soviet leaders improvised when facing the threat of nuclear war. The telegram number 4244 of M. [Geoffroy Chodron] de Courcel [French Ambassador in London], sent on 7th November, provides an interesting detail on this point.¹⁶

- c) Vis-à-vis its allies, the United States government only kept us informed. As the crisis accelerated, it kept us in the loop. It remains that, if as was feared for a while, the USSR had created even minor difficulties in Berlin, the Alliance would have faced far greater strains that it did. It thus appears that political consultation between the fifteen [NATO] members is a tool that does not work well at all.
- d) Vis-à-vis the United Nations, the United States government, while clearly stating that it would not be deterred from its actions, was careful not to hurt the pride either of the organization or of the non-aligned world. It clearly showed that it considered the acting Secretary General [U Thant] a useful tool for communication and dialogue, as long as his action took place within a clearly defined framework. Giving U Thant this both secondary and useful role, and the fact that the Third world delegates may have viewed the Burmese diplomat as their representative in the crisis, helped avoid the United States some embarrassing difficulties with the non-aligned powers.
- e) Combined with the China's invasion of India, the Soviet action in Cuba profoundly shocked the non-aligned world. Castro was treated as dispensable. The USSR revealed how it views smaller countries. These episodes will have profound consequences which do not seem to have been analyzed in Moscow.

III. *Consequences*

- a) The agreement is not complete. The missiles are being sent back to the USSR, under American naval surveillance. Soviet ships going to Cuba are inspected by the Red Cross, acting under United Nations authority. This inspection will likely not last long. As to the installations in Cuba, the Cubans are opposed to their inspection, and we can imagine that M. [Anastas] Mikoyan is butting heads with Castro on this point. The United States will thus maintain their aerial surveillance and their 'quarantine.' New incidents can occur. As a whole, however, the affair is ending with a clear success for the United States; for

the Russians, this is a setback; as for the Cubans, this leaves them in a precarious situation.

- b) The Organization of the American States was strengthened, the Atlantic Alliance was reassured, American prestige has increased, even though the legal basis of the American action was greatly criticized at the beginning.
- c) The 'socialist' camp, on the other hand, faces a new crisis. The dogmatic Chinese, the Albanians and others, are unhappy. The leaders of the European satellite states are relieved, but there again, some criticisms are emerging, especially in Bulgaria. These troubles do not visibly alter M. Khrushchev's position. In fact, he still seems to dispose of a great margin of action to withdraw. The way in which he caved to American will leads one to think that in other crises where the stakes are less high for both parties, M. Khrushchev will also dispose of a certain freedom of action.
- d) Khrushchev's situation in the USSR does not seem weakened for the moment. We noted no signs of discord during the 7th November celebrations. It is true that in the USSR, internal crises only emerge slowly. Without more precise information, we can attribute little value to the explanations according to which Khrushchev became dragged into this adventure reluctantly, or even ignored part of its unfolding. These rumors are too much in the current interests of the First Secretary to be seen as credible. It seems more realistic to us to leave Khrushchev with his responsibilities in this affair and its outcome.
- e) At the current time, the Soviet leaders do not seem to want to start a new crisis. On the 7th November, they spoke moderately on Berlin.¹⁷ In India, they are trying to favor a compromise; there remains the disarmament domain. In the exchange of letters between M. Kennedy and M. Khrushchev¹⁸, they mentioned not only an agreement on banning nuclear tests, but also 'a more general entente relating to other weapons categories,' 'the relations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact,' 'larger questions on European and global security,' 'the problem of disarmament on a global scale and in certain regions where the situation is critical,' and 'the proliferation of nuclear weapons on earth and in space.' M. Khrushchev has underlined that coexistence demanded 'reciprocated concessions.' The Soviet leaders seem to be moving towards new talks.

If we can make a first assessment of these events, we are inclined to think that the Western powers have an interest in not rushing to have these talks. Indeed, it seems that the Russians, during 1962, under-estimated the United States' capacity to retaliate. If, once the crisis

is over, Moscow is offered vast options for negotiation, these illusions might resurface. We must, moreover, be conscious of the role that strategic considerations have played and play for the Soviet leaders. The current period should be used to draw common conclusions from this crisis. Future problems can then be considered, noticeably during the meetings in Paris in mid-December.¹⁹

[Source: Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1962, Tome II (1er Juillet-31 Décembre), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1999), pp. 399-403. Translation by Garret J. Martin.]

Notes

1 Maurice Vaisse, "La France et la Crise de Cuba", *Histoire, économie et société* 13:1 (1994), p.187.

2 See Charles de Gaulle-Roland Margerie meeting, 4 June 1963, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Français, Cabinet du Ministre, Couve De Murville, Vol. 375; Maurice Couve de Murville-Gerhard Schroeder meeting, 12 November 1965, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Français, Cabinet du Ministre, Couve De Murville, Vol. 381.

3 Jean Lacouture. 1986. *De Gaulle: vol. 3 Le Souverain*, Paris: Seuil, 387; Maurice Vaisse. 1993. "Une hirondelle ne fait pas le printemps": La France et la crise de Cuba', in Maurice Vaisse (ed.), *L'Europe et la Crise de Cuba*, Paris: A. Colin, pp.104-5.

4 Dean Acheson was sent by President Kennedy on a secret mission to inform General de Gaulle in advance of the measures that the United States was planning to take towards Cuba.

5 In this letter, President Kennedy explained that the Americans had evidence that the Soviets had built military bases for offensive rockets and added: "I do not need to draw your attention to the possible consequences that this dangerous Soviet initiative ... could have on the situation in Berlin."

6 Bohlen was about to succeed General Gavin as the American Ambassador in Paris.

7 This telegram was forwarded to Washington and New York.

8 This telegram was sent to New York, and via the department to Bonn and London.

9 Mikoyan would arrive in the Cuban capital on 2 November.

10 In this telegram on 30 October, Alphand agreed with the French Ambassador in Moscow as to the likely causes of the Soviet attitude in the outbreak of the Cuban crisis: an attempt to suddenly change the balance of power in order to gain compensation from Washington. M. Alphand then gave his opinion on the mistakes committed by Khrushchev and

the resulting failure: underestimating president Kennedy's character, the United States' determination to maintain bases in the world in the absence of a general disarmament agreement, and of the essentially bilateral nature of Soviet-American confrontation in Cuba. From this, what had been the impact of all this on the authority of the head of the party and the head of the Soviet government?

11 Mikoyan arrived in Havana from New York on 2 November. He would have several meetings with Fidel Castro.

12 Referring to the telegram number 183 sent to Havana, where the Department requested information on the destination planned by the Cubans for the missiles and military material that came from the bases that were being currently dismantled.

13 This circular telegram was sent by courier to the posts in Abidjan, Bangui, Brazzaville, Buenos-Aires, Cotonou, Fort-Lamy (now N'Djamena), Libreville, Luxembourg, New Delhi, Niamey, Nouakchott, Ouagadougou, Rio de Janeiro, Tananarive (now Antananarivo), Tokyo, Yaoundé, and to the French permanent representative to NATO. It was also sent to the posts in Belgrade, Bern, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dakar, The Hague, London, Madrid, Moscow, New York, Oslo, Ottawa, Rabat, Rome, Tunis, Warsaw, Vienna, Washington.

14 On 28th April, a decree from the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet promoted a certain number of high officers and created a title of admiral of the navy, awarded to Admiral Sergei Gorghkov. On 21st May, General Alexei Epichev was named as the head of the central political administration of the Soviet armed forces.

15 Reference to the trade proposed by Khrushchev: the withdrawal of missiles in Turkey in exchange for the withdrawal of those in Cuba.

16 With his telegram number 4244 on the 7th of November, the French Ambassador in London mentioned a meeting between Lord Alec Douglas-Home [British Foreign Secretary] and the Soviet charge d'affaires on the 25th October. The Foreign Secretary told his interlocutor that no proposal from Moscow was likely to be accepted in Washington as long as the decision had not been taken to stop the works in Cuba and to proceed with the dismantling of the installations that had already been set up. The Foreign Office believed that the Soviet diplomat had received instructions to convince the British government to act as a mediator and propose a meeting between Khrushchev and Kennedy. Faced with the attitudes of Douglas-Home, who had stuck to the question of the nuclear weapons in Cuba, his interlocutor had given up on fulfilling his instructions.

17 On 7 November, during a reception in the Kremlin, Khrushchev declared in regard to the international situation: "We live on the basis of mutual concessions. If we want peace, we will have to base peaceful relations on the basis of acceptable mutual concessions." Mentioning the Cuban affair, he had acknowledged: "We were very close to a thermonuclear war." He did not believe that a summit conference was needed for the moment.

18 On 28th October, the letters essentially addressed the Cuban affair.

19 This is a reference to the NATO ministerial session, which is scheduled to take place in Paris on 13-15th December.

Israeli Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis

Documents obtained, translated, and introduced by Guy Laron

As was the case in other key moments of the Cold War in the Third World, during the Cuban Missile Crisis Israel had the status of an anxious onlooker. At first blush, Israel had much in common with other Third World countries. Like them, it was a post-colonial country and a late industrializer. Nevertheless, it was in conflict with the Arab world – a powerful voting bloc in international forums such as the U.N. – and was therefore treated as a pariah by countries such as China and India.¹ It was, however, able to win some influence and recognition in Africa and Latin America due to its extensive foreign aid program. The budget of the Israeli program was miniscule compared to Cold War aid giants such as the US, the Soviet Union, and even China, but it had a large impact. Israel was a development success story, it specialized in semi-arid agriculture and the advisors it sent were considered sturdy, efficient, hard-working and down to earth. For all these reasons, several Third World countries welcomed Israeli technical advisors, and Israel was able to successfully use foreign aid as a vehicle to open new markets and establish diplomatic relations in Africa and Latin America.

This explains why some of the most revealing documents in this short section originated from contacts with Brazilian diplomats. According to historian Edy Kaufman, already “[i]n 1961, the director general of the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture, Itzhak Levi, studied the possibilities of technical assistance to Brazil. Both countries signed the Recife Treaty for technical cooperation, and Israel began with agricultural aid (special cornstalk and other projects).” In the late 1960s Brazil was Israel’s second largest trade partner in Latin America.² The Israeli telegrams, included in this collection, depict a Brazilian government trapped between popular demands for an independent or a neutralist foreign policy, fearful of Cuban activity in Latin America as well as the prospect on armed conflict between Cuba and the US, and wary of demands from the conservative opposition to strengthen ties with the US. The Brazilian attempt to mediate between Cuba and the US during the crisis—which followed nearly three years of efforts to play the middleman between Washington and Havana—was an attempt to have it both ways.³

In contrast to the abundance of information that Israel received from the Brazilians, Israel knew very little about the internal Cuban deliberations in Havana. Despite the fact that Israel was an American ally, Castro seemed to have a soft spot for the Jews, seeing them as the great victims of World War II while maintaining relations with Israel after taking power

in 1959. Despite Cuba’s increasing radicalism and a pro-Arab foreign policy, Havana did not formally break those relations until 1973. When the Cuban Missile Crisis took place, Israel had a resident ambassador in Havana, Dr. Jonathan Prato, but relations between the two countries remained low key and trade ties negligible.⁴ As a result, Prato had no contacts within the Cuban government and virtually his only source of information was the Brazilian ambassador. In short, Israel’s ability to gauge the goings-on in the Caribbean circa-October 1962 was enabled or circumscribed by its aid program: where it succeeded in creating adherents, information was plentiful; when countries shunned Israeli aid, relations remained cool and domestic politics as well as the foreign policies of these countries remained opaque, at least to Israeli eyes.



DOCUMENTS

Report from Cultural Attaché at the Israeli Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, Smeul Benizi,

18 January 1962, Subject: “Brazil – Cuban-Latin American Relations,” MFA 3440\16, ISA

As part of Brazil’s recent drive to become Latin America’s leading country, Brazil is about to propose in the foreign ministers conference which the OAS [Organization of American States] set for 22 January, this year, in Punta del Este, [Uruguay,] a plan for Latin American policy toward Cuba.

It is assumed that Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, Chile and Bolivia would support this proposal.

The Cabinet adopted plan on January 11th and 12th. The foreign minister, Santiago Dantas, presented the proposal during a meeting of Brazilian ambassadors that took place at the ministry.

The details of the proposal are as follows:

[During a meeting of Brazilian ambassadors held at the ministry, the foreign minister, Santiago Dantas, presented the following proposal:]

Cuba would agree to become a neutral country (“like Finland”) and OAS members would work with US and

Cuban officials to create a list of “obligations.” This would ensure Cuba of non-interference in its internal affairs. On the other hand, Cuba would commit to certain things regarding the sources of its weapons and propaganda in the continent. *Viz.* [Cuba] would [commit to] not sign agreements with non-continent countries [i.e. the Soviet Union] and would not try to spread its ideology in the continent. In Brazil’s opinion, the granting of neutral status to Cuba is better than any other proposal that might bring about interference in Cuba’s domestic politics that, in turn, might create a situation of constant lack of trust between Latin American countries.

After hearing foreign minister’s presentation, Cuba’s ambassador to Brazil, Joaquin Hernandez Armas, said that the proposal was “splendid and brilliant” and emblematic of Brazil’s desire to maintain, during the [forthcoming OAS] conference, a position that supports Cuban independence and non-interference in Cuban affairs, “the only formula that can bring peace to this region.”

According to the ambassador, Cuba would fully accept the Brazilian proposal to create a committee that would examine the possibility of a “modus vivendi” with the Cuban government.

Four former Brazilian Foreign Ministers: Jose Carlos de Macedo, Joao Neves de Fontoura, Vincente Paulo Francisco Rao [name partially; illegible], and Horacio Lafer, wrote a memo to the Foreign Minister (for submission to the Prime Minister) proposing that the government together with other countries in Latin America take a position which would isolate Cuba by severing diplomatic relations. [Such a position, the former foreign ministers argued] would not impinge on the non-interference principle. This position should isolate dictatorial Castroist Cuba from the OAS because it was wrong to shirk commitments that had already been taken using the pretext of “neutrality.” It is interesting to note that the Foreign Minister responded by saying that this memo “showed unanimity on the principle of non-interference.”

Best,
Shmuel Benizi,
Cultural attaché

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Cable from Israeli Foreign Ministry (Arad) to Israeli Embassy, Washington, 24 October 1962

The PM-Barbour [Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion—US Ambassador to Israel Walworth Barbour] conversation was devoted to the crisis in Cuba. Barbour did not add much to what you already had heard from the Secretary [of State Dean Rusk]. [Barbour]...did not succeed in discussing issues in US-Israeli relations; he felt the Prime Minister’s concern of the international situation...

The PM told Barbour that with regard to the Cuban Crisis we [Israel] had nothing better to do than pray.

Barbour reiterated the State Department’s instruction asking Syria and Israel to maintain order along their border in view of the [tense international] situation. The PM replied that Israel is trying to maintain peace.

Barbour told me later that he was impressed by the PM’s ability to focus on the crux of the matter...

[Shimshon] Arad [Head, North America Desk, Foreign Ministry]

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Cable from Israeli Embassy, Prague, to Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, 25 October 1962

The Crisis in Cuba is causing public panic. Yesterday until late hours there were long lines in front of the stores. Many products such as oil, sugar, salt, etc. were sold out.

In all workplaces party meetings accepted a resolution supporting Cuba and denouncing the US

On a wall across from the American embassy someone wrote: “1939-Hitler 1962-Kennedy.”

In the American embassy they expect a demonstration in front of their gate.

Ha-Zirut (Interests Office)

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Cable from Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, New York (Komey), to Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, 28 October 1962

I told [Adnan] Kural, the Turkish [representative] about our talk with the Secretary General [U Thant] and his opposition to a Cuba-Turkey deal. Kural thanked me and told me it was a very important piece of news. He [Kural] went to [US Ambassador to the UN Adlai E.] Stevenson and got a promise from him that the US would not agree that Turkey should come up in the [US-Soviet] talks. [Kural] decided against approaching the Secretary General because he did not want to create the impression that Turkey wanted to become a party [to the talks]. Until I talked to him he did not know what the Secretary General's response was to Khrushchev's offer...

[Michael] Komey [Israeli ambassador to the U.N.]

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Cable from Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem (Lvavi), to Israeli Embassy, Moscow, 30 October 1962

[Soviet ambassador to Israel Mikhail] Bodrov met with the [Israeli] Foreign Minister [Golda Meir] and submitted to her the Soviet announcement on Cuba from the 23rd. During the ensuing conversation, he said that Soviet ships were ordered not to get into the crisis zone. But Khrushchev in his last letter to Kennedy pointed to the need to end the quarantine within a month at the latest... the Soviet government [said Bodrov] appealed to the Israeli government to use its influence to forestall a military holocaust. The minister said that Israel had a well-known position that supported peace negotiations. Israel's influence in the current circumstances was limited. Nevertheless, Israel would do whatever it can as a U.N. member to encourage negotiations and avoid military confrontation...

[Arie] Lvavi [Head of the East European Desk at, Foreign Ministry]

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Telegram from Israeli Embassy, Havana (Prato), to Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, 1 November 1962

Following a conversation that I had with the Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto] who kept in close contact with the [Cuban] President, Prime-Minister and Foreign Minister since the crisis started:

A. The Brazilian government had been making strenuous efforts to convince Castro to accept observers [i.e., inspectors] from the U.N. or any other party which would monitor the dismantlement of the bases. [Brazilian leader João] Goulart's personal envoy [Albino Silva], who reached [Havana] on the 29th went back yesterday to Brazil empty-handed. His mission was also related to domestic Brazilian issues.

B. The [Brazilian] ambassador saw [UN Acting Secretary-General] U Thant and his colleagues after their first meeting with the Cubans on the 30th and found them surprised by Castro's insistence on rejecting the proposal to allow observers [into the island]. In view of his refusal, several other proposals were aired which were not prepared in advance just to keep the negotiations going, but all for naught. The content of the meeting on the 31st was secret and both sides promised not to leak any details.

C. U Thant said that the Americans insisted on sending observers, and the Cubans did not fully understand this fact.

D. On the night between the 27th and the 28th, the President [Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado] called the Brazilian ambassador to tell of an imminent US attack within the next 24 hours and asked for Brazil's intervention. The very same night, the ambassador received a cable from Goulart repeating the same story. Following an instruction to approach the Cubans, he asked them to accept observers as the only alternative to an American invasion, but the Cubans were not willing to agree. The attack did not materialize probably because of Khrushchev's last message to Kennedy on the 29th [sic-28th].

E. The Kennedy-Khrushchev deal irritated Castro. The Foreign Minister [Raul Roa] explicitly said so to the [Brazilian] ambassador and added that they would not agree to any settlement that did not involve Cuba even if the Soviets supported that arrangement. So far for what the ambassador had said. My assessment: Castro's rigid position possibly emanates either from a sense of despair or a feeling of strength. After he understood that the Soviets were unwilling to confront the US over Cuba, he [Castro] was trying to exploit their [i.e. the Soviets'] interest in reaching a compromise and extort them [to give concessions or rewards] by putting forward extreme positions which foil their plans.

F. The points Castro presented as a sufficient guarantee for the security of his country against the US attack were actually demands from Moscow that went behind his back and agreed to dismantle the bases in exchange for the US non-intervention. The fact that [Anastas] Mikoyan was coming showed that the Soviet Union could not allow itself to alienate Castro in its deal with the US This was a propaganda victory for Castro. The game is very dangerous right now because there is no way of telling Castro's response.

[Jonathan] Prato

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, to Israeli Embassy, Havana, 16 November 1962

[Israeli Ambassador to Brazil Arie] Eshel sent a telegram from Rio reporting the following:

I had a meeting today with ambassador [Carlos A.] Bernardes [Brazilian] deputy minister of foreign affairs. I started by expressing our appreciation for Brazil's valiant efforts to mediate in the Cuban crisis and asked him how they saw things. Bernardes said that although the immediate danger of a military confrontation had passed, a formula still needed to be found to tackle Castro's wounded pride and anger over the deal that the US and the Soviet Union made behind his back. The Brazilians are working on an initiative according to which all Latin American countries would agree to create a nuclear free zone including an effective inspection

regime. Such an arrangement would allow Castro to admit inspectors [to Cuba] without losing face.

Bernardes said that their embassy in Havana was unable to lift the veil of secrecy that currently surrounded the discussions between the Soviet and the Cubans. He also said that they planned to pass a resolution at the Security Council declaring Latin America, Africa and the Middle East nuclear free zones but were unable to do so due to French opposition. They now intend to bring this issue before the General Assembly. The Brazilians think that the Americans would be willing to take their bases out of Turkey; a step which would aid in declaring the Middle East a nuclear free zone. I did not respond other than pointing out that we have always been against the introduction of any weapons to the region.

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Telegram from Israeli Embassy, Moscow (Tekoah), to Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, 28 November 1962

Naval British attaché told me that at the height of the crisis the US was making preparations to conquer the island and by his assessment the Soviet Union would not have responded.

[Yosef] Tekoah [Israeli Ambassador to Moscow]

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



A Letter from Arie Meyron, Counselor, the Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, to the Head of the Latin American Desk at the Israeli Foreign Ministry, "Brazil-Cuba"; 7 November 1962

... I am most interested in your query regarding Brazil's initiative to create a nuclear-free-zone in Latin America. It is worth while talking about it because at first blush it seems

that the source of this initiative are domestic issues as well as a quest to gain publicity...

It all started with a declaration by an OAS conference which took place in Washington during early October this year when the danger that the Cuban Communist activity posed for this region was first discussed. As you might remember, Brazil, at that time, supported the declaration made by Dean Rusk while explaining that that support does not impinge upon Cuban sovereignty etc...

Meanwhile events unfolded the way they did and on 23 October 1962 the OAS council convened to approve President Kennedy's declaration regarding a blockade over Cuba. In addition to that decision, several Latin American countries (Argentina, Columbia, Costa-Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Panama) issued a statement saying that they would be willing to help the US blockade over Cuba by sending their navies as well as using other measures.

Although Brazil was not part of that group it did join the 23 October 1962 decision and by doing so put in doubt its former declarations regarding, sovereignty etc. One should note that at that time a certain rumor had spread according to which the Brazilian ambassador to the OAS, who participated in the council meeting on 23 October 1962, allegedly voted for the joint decision although he received no instructions from his government as to how to vote. However this rumor was quickly disproved when the Brazilian ambassador [to the OAS] traveled to Rio a day after the vote [in the OAS council] – they said [at the time] that he was summoned in order to be reprimanded – and explained publicly that he had acted under instructions and in full coordination with the government. Moreover, sources close to the ambassador had explained that he would not have dared voting without instructions from the prime minister and foreign minister. The rumors had been evidently spread because of the contradiction in which Brazil found itself in.

But if we look at the whole affair objectively we will see that there is no contradiction. The Brazilians said what they said in early October when the issue that was discussed had only regional implications. During the next three weeks events developed in a completely different fashion and Cuba became a Cold War issue... In these circumstances Brazil had to stand with the rest of Latin America to support the West. It was no longer a question of different shades of neutral-

ity... That said, Brazil is still looking for ways, essentially for domestic reasons, to sweeten the [bitter] pill and create the impression that there was continuity [in its foreign policy] from early October [up to now]...

[Source: File MFA 3394\19, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Cable from US Desk, Israeli Foreign Ministry, to Israeli Embassy, Washington, 21 December 1962

According all available reports it seems clear that the aim of Robert Kennedy's surprising visit [to Brazil on December 17] was to explain to [Brazilian President João] Goulart, and Brazilians as a whole, what were the implications of the Cuban Missile Crisis for Brazilian foreign policy (i.e. that the Soviets had accepted the fact that Latin-America was an American sphere of influence.) This pulls the rug under the idea of Brazil conducting "an independent foreign policy." American aid money would, from now on, be conditioned upon Brazilian compliance with American wishes.

[Source: MFA 3394\19, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]

Notes

1 Jacob Abadi, *Israel's Quest for Recognition and Acceptance in Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 67-95, 257-285.

2 Edy Kaufman, "Israel's Foreign Policy Implementation in Latin America," in Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson, eds., *Israel in the Third World* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1976), pp. 132-135.

3 See James G. Hershberg's two-part article, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962," in the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and Vol. 6, No. 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67.

4 Allan Metz, "Cuban-Israeli Relations: From the Cuban Revolution to the New World Order," *Cuban Studies* 23 (1993), pp. 113-118.

Documents on Raul Castro's Visit to Eastern Europe, and Cuban-East European Contacts, March-May 1965:

Records from the Polish, Bulgarian, and Czech Archives

Ed. Note: In March-April 1965, Cuban Defense Minister Raúl Modesto Castro visited the Soviet Union and several of the Kremlin's Warsaw Pact allies in Eastern Europe. The journey came at a sensitive moment in both the communist world (and in Cuba's relations with it) and in the broader Cold War. In Moscow, it was still a time of transition following the October 1964 overthrow of Nikita Khrushchev, and this was the most senior Cuban figure to come to meet the new leadership since then.¹ It was also a moment of increasing tension in the Sino-Soviet split: Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin had met with Chinese leader Mao Zedong in February, but their conversations had failed to produce any progress toward overcoming the tensions between Moscow and Beijing, despite the newly emerging threat posed by US military escalation in Vietnam (see below).² As it happened, the deepening split Sino-Soviet schism coincided with a plunge in Sino-Cuban relations, burying Havana's hopes of not only improving their own bilateral relations with Mao but even, perhaps, trying to mediate between Mao and the post-Soviet Khrushchev leadership in Moscow—in early February (just prior to Kosygin's arrival), Ernesto "Che" Guevara had visited Beijing, but had disappointing talks that failed to surmount differences, and unlike his prior visit (in November 1960), he was not received personally by the Chinese Communist Party chief.³ Further complicating the impact of these evident and growing divisions in the communist world, moreover, were the fresh signs of a new military confrontation between the United States and the communist-bloc in Southeast Asia: in the early months of 1965, precisely as Raúl Castro traveled around the Soviet bloc, Washington sharply escalated its involvement in Vietnam, and indicated that steeper hikes were to follow. In particular, in February and March 1965—following communist guerrilla assaults against US forces in Pleiku and intense secret planning and discussions in Washington agreeing on the need to intensify a US military or else risk the collapse of the anti-communist regime in Saigon—the Johnson administration began bombing North Vietnam (i.e., the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) and sending additional troops, beginning with a deployment of Marines to guard the US air base in Danang in northern South Vietnam.⁴ The question of the communist world's response to this building conflict—and whether the new threat could enhance unity between the Soviets and Chinese unity and cooperation or,

conversely, only accentuate their divisions—clearly ranked high on the agenda of meetings between communist party representatives, including Raul Castro, who gathered in Moscow. Besides these various international issues, bilateral Soviet-Cuban discussions also had now perennial subjects to cover—the parlous state of the Cuban economy and the level and nature of Soviet-bloc aid, and the continuing rift between Havana and Moscow over the best means to promote revolution in Latin America (and by extension the Third World), with the Cubans favoring armed guerrilla struggle, after their own triumph and in some respects closer to the more bellicose Chinese line, and the Soviets, more cautiously, preferring political or even parliamentary combat by established communist parties.⁵

Unfortunately, neither the Soviets nor the Cubans have released records on the Soviet-Cuban discussions that took place during Raul Castro's visit to the USSR. However, the CWIHP Bulletin is pleased to present translated records of exchanges with the Cuban defense minister from three of Moscow's Warsaw Pact allies—the Poles, the Bulgarians, and the Czechoslovaks. These records, procured from communist party files in archives in Warsaw, Sofia, and Prague, offer considerable fresh evidence both on Cuba's relations with the Soviet bloc—political, economic, and military—and on Cuban (and East European) views of the international situation at a time of global and communist-world turbulence. They include records of Raul Castro's top-level discussions with communist leaders in Warsaw and Sofia, and then, after his return to Havana in early April, with the visiting Czechoslovak defense minister, whose military delegation also met with Fidel Castro and President Osvaldo Dorticos (records included), as well as a record of a conversation the following month in Prague between senior Cuban communist figure Carlos Rafael Rodríguez and a top Czechoslovak party official. In addition to discussing issues of current import, as perhaps the highest-ranking Cuban to visit Eastern Europe since the fall of 1962, Raúl Castro also reviewed—especially in his conversation with Polish communist leader Władysław Gomułka—the still-quite recent history of the Cuban Missile Crisis, adding his own (still largely missing from the record) perspective on the installation of the missiles (including his own July 1962 trip to Moscow), the crisis itself, and its consequences. Besides offering a snapshot of Cuban-Soviet-bloc relations, they also provide some rare glimpses of Raúl Castro, of one of the more reclusive members of the Cuban

leadership (especially in contrast to Fidel!), who nevertheless has long been recognized as one of the revolutionary regime's most powerful figures—a status confirmed more than four decades after the events recounted here, when he formally succeeded his ailing brother in 2008 as Cuba's president.--J.H.



i. Polish Documents

Minutes from a Conversation between Cde.
Gomułka and Cde. Raul Castro – 20 March 1965

Present

Cdes. J. Cyrankiewicz
Z. Kliszko
M. Spychalski
M. Moczar
G. Korczyński
A. Werblan
J. Czesak

From the Cuban side
Cdes. R. Castro

Carlos Olivares Sanchez – Cuba's ambassador in Moscow

Fernando L. Flores Ibarra – Cuba's ambassador in Warsaw

After exchanging a few remarks on the subject of the destruction in Warsaw and its reconstruction, and about a number of Polish citizens who died in the last war, Cde. R. Castro wishes to express his thanks one more time for the invitation to Poland extended by Cde. [Zenon] Kliszko and states that he highly values cooperation with the Polish delegation, with which he had a few conversations at a meeting in Moscow. Cuba's position is undoubtedly known to us, but he would be willing to inform or explain what may be of interest to us.

Cde. Gomułka

We are delighted with your visit. Cde. Kliszko invited you on behalf of our Political Bureau – he consulted with us on this matter. We advised that he take advantage of this opportunity and invite you. What can be of interest to us? Generally, we know a lot and we are well-informed, even though some mat-

ters were not clear to us. We did not have a clear picture as to your position regarding the controversy [*spór*]⁶ within the international workers' movement. When this dispute manifested itself in the harshest ways, it seemed to us that you were positioning yourselves somewhere in the middle and that you were not declaring yourself clearly. We would readily listen to how this looks now. The position assumed by you in Moscow is uniform with ours, with the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union], and with most parties which participated in the meeting.

I recently read Cde. Fidel Castro's speech to students in Havana. Besides, we published it in our press. This speech was directed against the aggression of the US imperialists towards Vietnam. It was not difficult for us to decipher to whom it was addressed. It contains a sharp criticism of the CPC's [Communist Party of China's; CCP's] position towards Vietnam, as well as its position toward the international workers' movement.

It seems to us that, due to your familiarization with the actual state of affairs, some evolution took place regarding your positions.

The second issue is not quite clear to us: We do not know your ideas as to the prospects of legalizing the Cuban revolution, organizing the organs of the local authority as well as building a party which, as we know, is in the process of being built. You surely must have some ideas regarding these matters. Such matters are hazy, not clear to us. If we may, could you also perhaps say a few words about the economic situation and the prospects with regard to this issue?

Raul Castro

The news about the [Sino-Soviet] divergences [*rozbieżności*]⁷ reached us in 1960. We saw how they were developing and how the polemics were sharpening, how it turned into a heated [*ostrza*]⁸struggle and what damage it caused to the unity of the socialist camp and the international workers' movement. We saw a fractional tendency being developed. We could not assume any position at that time, as not everything was clear to us. Besides, our comrades also had contradictory opinions. Some were leaning to one side while others to another. At that time our main task was the consolidation and protection of our revolution.

We cannot help but appreciate the activities of counter-revolutionaries in the United States of America as well as those in countries of Latin America which are conducting intensive training for counter-revolutionaries. The social base in their countries is very weak for their activities. We also made some efforts in the field of the economy. We now know

that the course towards such an abrupt liquidation of monoculture was a mistake.

It was difficult for us to distinguish [*rozeznać się*]⁹ within the polemics which were conducted; the positions taken by the CPSU and the CPC [CCP] on the same issue were extremely different. We did not possess sufficient knowledge [lit. components or elements] in order to take any position. Given the abovementioned reasons we could not drag the country [i.e., Cuba] into these polemics. We never placed our national interests before the interests of the international workers' movement and the socialist camp. We understood that placing missiles in Cuba was in the interest of the socialist camp as well as that of Cuba. If it were only for Cuba we would have never agreed to it. We agreed to their installation since we believed that it was in the interest of the socialist camp.

One could ask us: How could it have been possible when this [installation of missiles] placed the world at the brink of war?

We agreed in absolute confidence without demanding any detailed definition of its causes. Here we demonstrated a total lack of experience. After signing the agreement with the USSR regarding this issue, Khrushchev was to visit Cuba within 6 months and to disclose, to legalize this fact publicly, as this was to assume an official nature. We had many doubts. I went to Moscow at that time [2-17 July 1962] in order to clear up the matter. We were convinced that we could not hide this fact from foreign intelligence, which was conducting activities on our soil, and that this fact would be known before it was officially announced. I presented these doubts to Khrushchev: What will happen if this comes out? He answered at that time that we had nothing to fear. The Soviet Union is surrounded by US military bases and if Americans start acting up we will send in the entire Baltic fleet to your rescue. We then came to the conclusion that the crux of the matter was surely the bases and thus creation of a pretext for a discussion with the US regarding the liquidation of their bases surrounding the USSR.

The fact of the missile installation could not be hidden, since in order to transport them to certain places roads had to be built. Besides, this was a very visible transport, a line of trucks whose cargo reached 20 meters in length. We demanded that an agreement with regard to this matter be announced officially at an earlier date. We were told not to be afraid. I must say that we were very concerned despite this [assurance]. We know what happened next. Cde. Fidel suddenly found out at breakfast [on 28 October 1962] from the American press about the decision of the USSR to withdraw the missiles as well as about Khrushchev's proposition with

regard to establishing international inspection whose task was to monitor whether everything was withdrawn.

We had already realized a little earlier that the Americans were up to something. Our intelligence informed us about a sudden meeting in Washington and the fact that senators had been brought down by planes and helicopters. We were convinced that this had to do with us. After a meeting we decided to announce mobilization. Everything became clear. We presented the issue before the ambassador of the USSR, [Aleksandr Alekseyev]. After lunch, on the same day [22 October 1962], Fidel decided to announce the mobilization. I wanted to postpone it for a few hours since such a mobilization is very costly, but Fidel did not consent to it and he was right. After a few hours Kennedy gave his speech and this is how a crisis in the Caribbean Gulf [Sea] began. The result of the crisis was such that Khrushchev became the champion of peace, its defender, and we instead became advocates of the thermonuclear war. And how do the guarantees for our security look like on the US side? Kennedy is not alive, and [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk has recently stated that nothing like this exists.

We had never placed and will not place our national interests before general interests; that is, the interests of the socialist camp. We are separated from you by 6 thousand km; we do not have any alliance of a broader nature, or even a bilateral one. Our security is contingent on an oral agreement with a president who is already dead.

A big misunderstanding arose when our nation found out about the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. At that time the necessity arose to reveal before the nation the fact of a divergence between the USSR and us. We said that we would clear up the matter during the international talks. This position of ours was not met with any understanding either, but if we did not do this, it could have been worse. After all we could not cover the sun with one finger.

Since this time we have not had any points of misunderstanding, except perhaps a letter from Khrushchev which alluded to the necessity of stating our position towards the divergence within the international workers' movement. In connection with this, we sent Cde. [President Osvaldo] Dorticos to Moscow [in October 1964], but at the same time Khrushchev was removed from power. This fact was explained to Cde. Dorticos with regards to [Khrushchev's] health; we were not told anything else. We took offence at that; we did not believe it. It would have been better if they had told us that they could not talk at the time and that they would explain later, but not like this. This matter was explained to us at a later time.

We do not want to talk about Khrushchev. We have much respect for him, and we are much indebted to him. He was

our friend. However, he made many mistakes, and because he was directing the party, thus the party also made mistakes. This had been already overcome, but some issues remained as to which we did not persuade the Soviet comrades nor did they persuade us. We will not go into them now. The experience, however, tells us to be cautious and not to trust anyone blindly.

This is what our attitude looks like towards the dispute. We could not be influenced by information flowing from this or that source. We did not take any position due to all these reasons.

In the presence of the existing situation, we began [the talks] with the parties in Latin America where there were also specific divergences; some which were our fault and some which were not. We have our own opinion regarding the process of revolutionary struggle and tactics, but each party has to work out its own policy. The meeting in Havana [of Latin American Communist Parties in late November 1964] had a concise agenda: the exchange of experiences, development of the revolutionary movement, the position with regard to the divergence as well as bilateral relations.

As a result of the meeting we cleared up a series of contentious issues. Some differences still remained as far as some other matters are concerned, but we established norms of mutual relations which would preclude deepening of differences. We also decided to dispatch a delegation [headed by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez] to Moscow and Beijing, which consisted of representatives from nine parties, in order to present our position with regard to the divergence within the international workers' movement.

Our delegation was very well received in Moscow and they agreed with our position. In Beijing, however, as soon as they sat at the table after preliminary niceties, the assaults and accusations began, directed at both present and absent parties. Mao Zedong thought up three "little devils" directed at us: that we are afraid of imperialism, that we are afraid of the People's Republic of China, and that we are afraid of the Cuban people.

He asked Cde. [Rodney] Arismendi, the secretary of Argentina's [*sic*; actually Uruguay's] CP: How many are you in Argentina [*sic*; Uruguay]? One and a half million, he answered. Then, you join us. There will be more of you.

He asked how can parties in Latin America develop without any leadership. The point was not understood. After all, the comrades said, we are working, we are fighting, etc. Yes, yes, but you need leadership. He stated that polemics have to be public, that one can wait for resolving the dispute for eight thousand years, and so on. One could not discuss anything in light of such arguments. In addition, he would shout every now and then that he was a dogmatist.

After this meeting we decided to dispatch our own delegation. Cde. Guevara went there [in February 1965]. Both sides maintained their own point of view. Mao did not receive Cde. Guevara despite the fact that up until this point he received all Cubans who possessed authority to a larger or a lesser degree.¹⁰

This is our own personal experience.

After this, the Albanians published an article in which they called the meeting of the parties from Latin America in Havana the Soviet Union's stratagem. They stated that revisionist parties want to take advantage of the Cuban revolution, but that they were convinced that the Cuban party would not allow itself to be dragged into this.

We did not agree with the nature of the previous meeting in Moscow and we did not intend to go. We decided to go when we were informed about the change. We recognized that our absence could seriously damage the cause of the international workers' movement, and that our absence could be read as if we shared a mutual line with the CCP. These justifications¹¹ influenced the change of our position.

A series of divergences still exist in the relations between the USSR and Cuba, but they are indeed bigger with China. Nobody, until now, could persuade us as to the benefits flowing from the hitherto polemics as well as to the fractional activity. On our continent, we have a series of parties working underground devoting most of their work to fighting the fractional activity.

Here, Raul Castro refers to the details of foreign student demonstrations in front of the US Embassy in Moscow, stating that he sees this incident as a planned provocation.

All these Chinese actions are taking place at a time when North Vietnam is being continuously bombed by the US. In this situation, difficulties are being made for the Soviet Union in sending aid and the refusal to allow passage of the Soviet planes.

All these facts lead to the conclusion that the CCP is assuming erroneous positions. This unhealthy attitude of the Chinese as to polemics points to the fact that it will be very difficult to attain unity. Actually, they do not desire it. One can wait 8-10 thousand years, as long as fractions evolve everywhere and until there are two centers. They desire unconditional surrender of all parties, including the CPSU, and until this takes place, unity is impossible.

We are interested in the active operation of the CPSU. Just as other parties, we cannot help but appreciate the role and the position of the CPSU in the international movement. The new Soviet leadership had already done much good. It had undertaken a series of steps which we highly approve of.

There was once a problem regarding Khrushchev's [proposed] visit to the FRG. At that time [i.e., the summer-

autumn of 1964] we expressed our negative opinion regarding this matter. We also conveyed our remarks with regard to a series of other issues and we will continue to do so.

At the moment the Chinese evoke xenophobia and national hatred through their activities; we saw this among foreign students in Moscow. They strive towards a hegemonic role within the workers' movement. The distance which separates us will increase. On the other hand, a series of steps undertaken by the USSR made us closer to the Soviet Union. This is the situation in which we currently find ourselves.

The divergences could be resolved through a series of conferences. A mutual line of struggle against imperialism will contribute towards overcoming the divergences. The Chinese will not participate in any conferences. We are convinced of that. Due to these considerations we put forth the inexpediency of designating a place and time for the conference, and we suggested the necessity of creating a friendly atmosphere.

We are particularly interested in the parties which are different from us, but which do not take the same position as the CCP. There are such Asian parties with which one can cooperate. There are different opinions and trends within the Vietnamese party.

We are very concerned about the situation in Vietnam, since the imperialists are attacking it by using new elements. We are divided. The Chinese talk so much about a paper tiger, but they have an example in Vietnam of what this paper tiger looks like. Not only are they not doing anything themselves, but they are also impeding the USSR from providing aid. Perhaps the Soviet aid deprives the Chinese of yet another argument in the quarrel. What will happen if the imperialists start a limited aggression against us?

The U2 planes are still flying over Cuba. We are not using missiles against them in accordance with the agreement with the USSR. The American imperialists are incessantly organizing provocations against us. From the time of the crisis we counted five thousand provocations of a different sort. Recently they seriously wounded our soldier. He was shot through a small window in a fortification with a precision rifle. We moved our fortification on the border with Guantanamo by 50m, thus creating a 500-meter dense belt. The aggressors set out into this territory by one or in groups of a few; they busy themselves and go back. Our country is small, we cannot push up-country, as in the end we would fall into the sea.

The aggressiveness of the enemy intensifies with the degree of the increase of divergences within the international workers' movement and within the socialist camp. We debated this matter, we conducted a detailed analysis of the enemy's capabilities and we concluded that we need to revise our plans. We accepted the fact that we could become an object of a local

war and the territory of the retaliation of imperialism. We decided to make preparations for such a possibility. These are very expensive undertakings. The majority of facilities have to be built and hidden underground. Even though our country is small we cannot be strong everywhere. In order to carry out the designed program we were forced to stop a series of works in other fields. The condition, which they are giving us, is to entirely cut off relations with the socialist camp. Such a condition precludes all conversations.

There is still one more brigade of Soviet soldiers in Cuba. We asked that it not be withdrawn since this may cause mistaken calculations on the part of the imperialists, and this could lead to who knows where [*Nie wiadomo dokąd*]. This brigade serves as a symbolic force, but it is important psychologically. The USSR consented. I am talking about all this in order to facilitate the understanding of our position.

We did not sign the treaty banning exercises using nuclear weapons since the US base exists on our soil. As to the agreement itself, we received it positively.

This is how our cause and our position present themselves.

W. Gomułka

In most matters our views are convergent. Perhaps we see some matters differently, e.g. the issue of the missiles. It is difficult for us to know all the details of this issue. In my opinion two factors were decisive: contradictions which arose within the socialist camp as well as the policy which was conducted by Khrushchev.

You trusted Khrushchev's policy. They perhaps did not want to specify a series of details. Nevertheless, the issue was clear from the very beginning. American imperialism is capable of conducting a war with Cuba by way of conventional weapons, it does not have to use nuclear weapons. It is clear that the socialist camp and the USSR cannot defend Cuba in any other way but by using nuclear weapons. This is clear and you are aware of this. If a conflict is meant to be, then it will be a nuclear conflict, there is no other way.

In my opinion, Khrushchev conducted a policy which was not thought-out and which was all-out [*va-bank*], and when his scheme was not working out, then he had to withdraw. Besides, there was no other way. If one makes a mistake, then one needs to do one's best in order to minimize the consequences. The withdrawal did not strengthen, but weakened the socialist camp. But what could be done if not doing one's best to turn around this setback to one's benefit and to that of the socialist camp? The evidence that this is a peaceful policy of the USSR was enhanced by influences within the world opinion. Everyone is aware today that if this fact¹² did not exist then things would be better.

It is not, as you say, that you subordinate your policy to the interests of the socialist camp. The party and the government of a country are responsible for that country's policy. I am convinced that if there were no divergences then one would not even have the Soviet propositions regarding the missiles. Here, perhaps, exists the seed of Cuba's misunderstanding of the situation. Cde. Fidel and the leadership resented the fact that the withdrawal of the missiles took place without any consultation. This is correct. One can feel resentful or feel offended by the fact that Khrushchev did not consult with you prior to that, but on the other hand, this attests to the assessment of the situation by the Soviet comrades. The situation at the time was very tense. There was a problem: to go into a nuclear war or not? One should not exclude the fact that such a situation may arise, but as long as one can avoid it then one should avoid it. One day, history will assess this and it will educe pros and cons. One must say that Fidel was against the missiles' withdrawal and that he adheres to this position even today. In a real situation, Cuba would have to be the first one to face the consequences of nuclear repression. The US is capable of attacking Cuba by way of conventional weapons, thereby destroying it.

Cuba's position towards the dispute and [its] certain tendencies towards supporting these or other Chinese arguments were contingent on this missile issue. If the Chinese reasoned according to the categories of Fidel and the Cuban leadership, then perhaps their position could have been right. But they reason according to other categories. We also had some illusion as to our Chinese comrades. Nevertheless, we tried to understand them and to get to the core of their argument by following the principles of proletarian internationalism. Afterwards, based on the evidence, we concluded that the Chinese comrades are subordinating their international policy to that of their narrowly understood national interests, or more specifically, to their great-power tendencies. We do not deny their position as a great power country. We repeatedly stated that China is a grand country and that they deserve this position. The means and methods chosen for this goal are typical of all nationalistic countries. We also did not praise the arguments which were used in the polemics between the CPSU and the CPC, and in our publications and speeches we did not use them. We stated at our congress what we think of the policy conducted by them. It seems to us that our assessment is correct. Besides, this confirms a series of later events.

During the visit in Moscow, on the occasion of the October Revolution [in November 1964], we talked twice to Chinese comrades and, while over there, we also presented twice the situation in Vietnam as a central issue which required an agreement and establishing some kind of a line of action. There is no decisive answer on the part of the socialist

camp with regard to the aggressive undertakings of imperialism and to the bombing.

Our Chinese comrades did not take up this problem. They did not want to discuss this subject. It became clear to us that the existing situation suits them. Besides, this is in accord with the line of an interview which Mao Zedong gave to [American writer Edgar] Snow.¹³ It seemed as if in the interview Mao Zedong was inviting Americans to take aggressive actions by stating that the People's Republic of China will not undertake any steps that would involve it in the Vietnam conflict and that they would react only then when they are attacked and when the Chinese border is crossed. He even invites the US imperialism towards the People's Republic of Vietnam by stating that if they took the entire North Vietnam, then they would have 30 million Vietnamese conducting war against them. This interview is very interesting. I am not sure if the comrades had read it (R. answers that he did not read it). It is worth reading. This testifies to the fact that the situation which exists in Vietnam suits the CPC. That is why the Chinese position is not a surprise to us. The comrades are undoubtedly familiar with the conversation between Mao and Kosygin [on 11 February 1965]. In this conversation Mao clearly states: you take care of Europe and do not poke your nose into Asia. Given this, there is nothing peculiar about the fact that they refused to agree to let the Soviet planes fly to Vietnam. Neither the Chinese party nor the Chinese government want to take a single step which would give the US an excuse to attack them.

Imperialism cannot help but decipher the policy which attacks the Soviet Union for not providing aid in the situation when one himself does not do anything. One can draw various conclusions from such a policy.

The party as well as the government of China are afraid of US imperialism. The basic premise of the Chinese policy is not to let US imperialism attack China directly. They have the right to be afraid of this, but what type of steps are they taking against this? It is a great conciliation towards US imperialism. Even the official Chinese statements regarding the incident in the Gulf of Tonkin corroborate this. The first one was already mild, and in the recent ones the expression that "they would give aid" even disappeared. How to explain this? They say more and more that the Vietnamese nation does not need help and that it will take care of itself. It is so strong that it will conquer American imperialism on its own. And how could they protect themselves against imperialism? Only through a unity with the USSR and the socialist camp. Not only are they not thinking about it, but they are doing everything in order not to create any impressions that they would go for such a unity. One of the examples of this is the student demonstrations in front of the US embassy in Moscow, in

front of the USSR embassy in Beijing, as well as the return of 4 students to Beijing. This was an act of outright provocation. After all, there is a British diplomatic post in China. England is in solidarity with the US in its actions against Vietnam due to its own interests. They could have made such a demonstration in Beijing, and to vent all their hatred. But not only did they not do anything in their own country, but they also created provocation in Moscow. And this when? At a time when they are aware of the USSR's official request for help, and after the refusal for the passage of the Soviet planes. It is clear that they want to turn the world opinion and that of their own nation in a different direction; that is to portray the USSR as a partner of the US, and themselves as the only advocates of the struggle against imperialism. We had intelligence that these 4 students got on the plane in a normal manner in Moscow, and in Beijing one of them had forgotten his part and started climbing down the steps. They quickly dragged him inside and got him out on the stretcher along with others. These may be amusing facts, but they testify to what methods Chinese propaganda is clinging to.

We had certain illusions, but also many reservations, as to the policy conducted by Khrushchev. We expressed this repeatedly and we did not hold it inside. We also think today that what Khrushchev was doing gave the Chinese excellent reasons, but he was right on one thing, and that is, that currently no agreement is possible with them. Later events proved this thesis. At the time when the Chinese party went for the aggressive and street polemics, it was already being guided by the policy which is being conducted today in a different situation. One could say a lot on this topic. Why are they conducting such a policy? There may be many reasons. One should see it as certain means of pressuring the US in the fight for their interests as a great power. "The conflict in Vietnam can be resolved only when we, the Chinese, agree to it." This is some kind of a trump card. And this is how they present the issue. This is how it currently looks.

We talked with [North Vietnamese Prime Minister] V.*[sic]*; P.] V. Dong during the visit in Moscow [in November 1964]. At the time he suggested that we look for a way, that we take advantage of our capabilities towards the facilitation and acceleration of a political solution with regard to the Vietnam problem. Not so long ago there were good possibilities for such a solution of this issue, and as we see it, the US would have gone for it. Today, the [North] Vietnamese government, being under the influence of the Chinese position, refuses a political solution. In other words, it is counting on a military solution. We talked with him by stating that if they see a possibility of co-opting the South Vietnamese Army, then perhaps one could count on such a solution. However, if the US and the South Vietnamese government can organize an

army of half a million and not allow a massive crossing to the other side, then one cannot dream of some military solution.

They now put forth such conditions that one can only hold talks if the Americans withdraw, and when they do withdraw, then the talks can occur only with the National Liberation Front and not with the North Vietnamese government. This is an unconditional demand for capitulation. If one wants to do so, then one needs to place the enemy in such a situation that one has to destroy and crush the enemy as was done with Hitler in Berlin in order to be able to place conditions for absolute capitulation. I am not inclined to believe that this fight suits the United States. We have several grounds on which to base our assumption that they would readily withdraw while saving face. In these conditions, however, they cannot do so. As for now they are conducting a policy of harassment, exacerbating the situation and bombing North Vietnam. It is a dead-end street that they are stepping into. It is difficult to conjecture that they would act in a manner as to strive for a world conflict. But this can last for a few years. This is not a trifle. The bombings may be meaningless from a military point of view, but they will exhaust the country economically. From a strategic point of view this has a full justification. If this were to last for 2-4 years, then one could easily imagine the consequences, as not only a military problem, but also an economic problem would arise. After all the economy of this country is relatively weak. Vietnamese comrades said themselves that before the liberation they were eating rice once a day and now they eat it twice a day. This is a great progress. This is an important issue, as people have to eat, and this in turn requires developing the economy.

I am afraid that our Vietnamese comrades may miss the current opportunity. I am, afraid that in 2-3 years there will be such a situation in which they will have no choice but to agree to a worse conditions [for a deal]. This would be in accord with the Chinese line since one would be able to attack the USSR for not wanting to help, for conducting a revisionist policy, and so on. This is at times a catchy slogan especially at a time when people are badly off. When Khrushchev withdrew the missiles such slogans were also catchy in your country. A great nation comes and it says: "Here are the guilty ones; we had already been saying this for a few years, we demonstrated even in Moscow, and they beat our students."

The Albanians are already writing that the United States informed the USSR that they would be bombing North Vietnam. Indeed, this occurred. The Soviet Union was informed about this an hour before. This was to signify that they were not starting a war. The Albanians did not write, however, that the Chinese had also been informed about this. The Albanians did not know that the USSR had been informed; the Chinese told them. They did not say, however,

that a British charge d'affaires in Beijing [Donald Hopson] also informed the Chinese at the same time. The British Ambassador in Warsaw [Sir George Clutton] told us about this referring to an Albanian letter [newspaper].¹⁴ The notification was simultaneous in Moscow and in Beijing.

The Chinese want something to bargain with. What I am saying here may seem brutal, far away from the principles of the proletarian internationalism and Marxism-Leninism, but this is what it is. This is how I see them.

We understand the policy of Cuba. Some time ago we had put forth before the Soviet Union that one had to indispensably come into an understanding with the Chinese and to establish a mutual line and in this way protect Cuba. What will we do if imperialism attacks your country? We do not have any strategy for such an eventuality. If we presented this issue to the Chinese today, they would refuse all discussions. I don't know if an attack would not be in their interest. What to do then? Start a nuclear war? Such a situation already existed and it was decided that "No." How can one work out a mutual strategy without China? Two systems exist and one should think and plan according to these categories. If one country is attacked, this means that the entire system is being attacked. The Chinese do not want to think of it by following such a framework. Many communists do not understand this. In my opinion, many communists in Cuba also did not, and still do not, understand this. We are in a difficult situation. We cannot even publicly state that China does not allow the passage for the planes and they know about this.

We are divided by a large precipice; we have no chances for unity. How will this further develop? Much depends on the position of the entire communist movement. If such a situation arose in which out of 81 parties, 80 or 79 parties would come to the conference while 2 or 3 parties, including China, would not participate, this would force the CPC into changing their tactics. Politics is not a free-art type of issue, it has to be adjusted to the situation. The Chinese do not understand. These are wise and experienced people. They have a large tradition of statehood. They think that as long as they can continue this line, they will do so.

There is no point to play at prophesizing. I agree with what you say, and that is, that a joint conference with the Chinese is not realistic. This is an opposite pole of their policy.

I understand you. I read the most recent speech by Fidel Castro in which he states that one has to give all the assistance to Vietnam. This statement suits the Chinese (the surprise of R. Castro). Well, only a small group of people knows at whom it is directed, right? As a matter of fact, the Chinese are saying the same thing on the outside. I would not exclude the fact that some day the US would try to encroach on China's terri-

tory with its bombs, perhaps by mistake, I don't know. Even if it were only for the purpose of examining their reaction.

Mao says that a war would unite us and that it would create conditions conducive to unity. Such statements are not serious. They do not suit the situation. This is a fatality. One can avoid the war, but in order to do this one needs unity.

We realize that your country is like an outpost. What is decisive in your country? How do we see this based on our own experiences? Of course, it is difficult to compare. These are different countries and different conditions; nevertheless fundamental and mutual matters exist. Armed forces are very important to the fight against the internal, and also external, counterrevolution. But no less decisive issue is creating such conditions in which one could not, under any circumstances, restore a capitalist system.

I read somewhere about an estimate that Cuba, based on its own climactic and other conditions, is able to feed 50 million people. The essential matter is to improve the economy. For Cuba to help improve the well-being of its own people, thereby becoming an example for the entire Latin America in this respect, would mean projecting the revolution. This is more than any propaganda. A people which connect their well-being with a revolution will not go back to an old [system] under any circumstances.

Looking at your conditions, this is not comparable, even despite the fact that although we are not most advanced relative to our neighbors, there is no possibility in our country to go back to capitalism under any conditions. There are no people, there is no one worker, who would say that a factory which was either made into a public property or built by him is to be returned to private hands. Each country should conduct such a policy that would take advantage of its reserves to the maximum. Such a course of industrialization during the first years, while neglecting agriculture, was false. One also has to industrialize a country. The main issue, however, is agriculture, and it is good that Cuba is following such a line. We know how much of an effort this takes, but perhaps it will be faster given your conditions. It seems to me that unless appeasing the need of the people is not resolved, then there will be opportunities for a counterrevolution. Discontent grows precisely on such grounds. A revolution can only be carried out under a great emotional impulse, but even under such emotionalism which characterizes Cubans and in general the nations of Latin America, it is not an inexhaustible source. Life is difficult and often ungrateful. One needs fuel for enthusiasm and when it goes out then the enthusiasm is exhausted.

In 1960 a Cde. [name whited out—Blas Roca?] came to visit us. In a conversation with him I put forth a suggestion that Cuba must hold elections, and that it has all the chances

for a big victory. It could even let in some bourgeoisie party. The 22 [*sic*; 26] July Movement can join in a united front with the Communist Party and go together into elections. It will undoubtedly receive 90% of votes. One can work out a plan and guarantee Fidel Castro's rule, e.g. following the example of a president in the US. One has to legalize the revolution. It is necessary both for the people and for external necessities. The Cuban revolution had not yet been legalized. Currently the conditions are worse. Today you would not gain 90% of votes.

At the time, Cde. [name excised] answered that this was not necessary, and that in your country, as well as in other countries in Latin America, there is no parliamentary tradition, that there were still bribes, corruption, and that these were complex issues, etc. This was our first conversation with someone from your side.

Clearly, each party decides on its own as to its policy and it learns from its own mistakes. We are also not copying anyone indiscriminately. After all it is known that every country has its own specificity. Nevertheless, this poses a problem and the strengthening of a revolution, internally and externally, is not without any meaning.

I was not able to catch one thing that Cde. Castro was talking about, namely, on what are the current divergences with the CPSU contingent?

R. Castro

I personally agree with most of your views. I consider the meeting very useful. In addition, your experiences offer a great help to us. Our party is still young and immature, although the CP had existed for 30 years.

Gomułka

When an old party comes to power it then confronts entirely new problems. Of all things that are valuable within it, only one remains, namely a valuable discipline.

R. Castro

I consider continuing this type of contacts, either in Warsaw or in Havana, as indispensable.

One word regarding the missile withdrawal. We do not consent with the manner of their withdrawal. We do not agree to any concessions, no matter what. Khrushchev explained that there was no time. He has done much to patch it up, especially during Fidel Castro's visit in the USSR [in May 1963]. After all, we could have been copied on all the correspondence that was going to the US. The point here is not

that we want to impose our prestige. When we were confronted with a world crisis, our own dignity did not matter. What I said had to do with the method of action.

In a letter to the US, Khrushchev proposes an international inspection in Cuba. This is not right not only because we were not asked for our opinion, but also because this would be a precedent which would be very dangerous for us. If he had written that the inspection was previously agreed to upon consultation with Cuba, then everything would be fine.

Gomułka

I do not have any reservations on this issue.

R. Castro

The Americans reacted to our refusal in such a way that they conducted their own inspection from the air. This is why there are all these U2 planes. All our reservations are with regard to a group of methods with which we do not agree.

The connection between October [1962] and the divergences, as well as a bow to China, are not a childish offence, but a mistake. And as you said yourself, we are learning from our mistakes. The Chinese reactions taught us to see how things look like in reality. I agree that there were, and still are, comrades in Cuba who either had or still have a different opinion. It may be that perhaps they had undergone an evolution after recent events. It is good, however, that when a party makes a decision then everyone is in agreement.

I do not want to take your precious time. I regret that we cannot discuss longer.

W. Gomułka

The point here is not our time, but the fact that your program does not allow it.

R. Castro

We will further discuss with comrades and Cde. Kliszko during the trip. I will explain in conversations what you had inquired about.



From a Conversation between the 2nd Secretary of the UPSR,¹⁵ Cde. Raul Castro Ruz, and a member of the PB CC PUWP, Cde. Zenon Kliszko, on 22 March 1965

During a trip by plane from Orneto to Katowice, Cdes. Raul Castro and Zenon Kliszko conducted a conversation, with regard to, among other things, the following topics:

1. Assessment of the position of the Italian Communist Party

Cde. R. Castro informed the others about conducting a series of discussions with a delegation of the CP Italy in Moscow and about a departure of a delegation of the CP of Italy to Havana at the invitation of the Cuban Party which was soon to take place. He asked about the assessment of the Italian policy from the side of the PUWP, for which he received an answer that the program of this party is not clear for the Polish side, particularly with regard to the question of establishing a uniform workers' party. Both interlocutors agreed that unity can be solely hewn [*wykuta*]¹⁶ based on the activity of the lower organizations on the subject of concrete problems. Cde. R. Castro stated that the justification [*argumentacja*] of the CP of Italy with regard to internal matters is devoid of substance and that with regard to the conference of 81 communist and workers' parties, this party, which albeit bases [its actions] on other assumptions, nevertheless takes the same position as that of the CCP.

2. Assessment of the position of the Romanian Workers' Party

Cde. R. Castro was very interested in knowing who would become the new First Secretary of the Romanian Workers' Party [after the death of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej on 19 March 1965] and he was asking how a new Romanian policy would be shaped under new conditions. Both interlocutors agreed that in recent years the RWP¹⁷ had been employing a policy characterized by nationalism. Cde. Z. Kliszko said that this became evident mainly with regard to the issues of economic cooperation within the framework of CEMA.¹⁸ In connection with this, Cde. Z. Kliszko emphasized the fact that sometimes the need arises when one has to give up one's narrowly understood interests in the name of unity and the mutual welfare of the camp as a whole. In this context he

recalled a vote of the Polish delegation in the UN against the project of denuclearizing Latin America which was aimed at manifesting a position of solidarity with Cuba, even though Poland was the first champion of the idea of denuclearization.

3. The UPSR and Other Communist Parties in Asia

The Cuban comrades are now convinced that the CPC will not participate in any meeting aimed at the consolidation of the international movement. They are, however, adhering to the position that one should not isolate oneself from other Asian parties which did not participate in the last meeting in Moscow. From the conversations, which were conducted by the Cuban delegation with other Asian parties, i.e. Vietnam, Korea, at the meeting in Moscow on the occasion of the October Revolution, one could get an idea that their point of view with regard to the situation as a whole was not exactly in line with the position of the CPC.

4. The Matter of a Former Member of the National Leadership UPSR – J. Ordoqui

Cde. R. Castro, on his own initiative, explained the situation of the suspension of the activities of J[oaquín]. Ordoqui, a former member of the Nationwide Leadership of the UPSR and the former vice-president of the Armed Forces. Ordoqui was arrested under the accusation of cooperating with the American intelligence.

While in Mexico during the dictatorship of Batista, Ordoqui established very close relations with a traitor, Marcos Rodriguez, who turned in to the police a group of young revolutionaries from the former so-called Revolutionary Directorate who were participants in an armed attack on the presidential palace in Havana in 1957.

This fact was used by American intelligence to conduct sabotage which resulted in the subsequent recruitment of Ordoqui. The Mexican intelligence was also said to be involved in this issue. The activity of Ordoqui made it impossible for many years to institute an inquiry against the traitor. After the former had been arrested, Ordoqui made the inquiry difficult. When, after a long inquiry, Rodriguez admitted to the crime, which he committed, he also revealed the fact that both Ordoqui and his wife (E. Garcia Buchaca, a member of the leadership of the former Popular Socialist Party and a former secretary of the Cuban Council of Culture). This forced the Cuban leaders to undertake special cautionary steps. The meetings of the War Council had not been called for a long time due to this incident, and only members of the Secretariat were notified, with the consent of the National

Leadership of the UPSR, with regard to the matters which directly affected the nation's security. This caused very serious complications and it created an ambiguous and unclear situation for many comrades. It was also at that time that the Cuban leadership acquired evidence in Mexico which testified to the ties of Ordoqui with foreign intelligence. Under these conditions a decision had been made to arrest Ordoqui and to institute an inquiry against him at the meeting of the leadership of the USPR. Two comrades, who are from the leadership of the former Popular Socialist Party and who have our utmost confidence, are conducting this inquiry. Ordoqui has not confessed to his guilt to this day, even though he is not capable of refuting evidence presented to him such as: a tape of a conversation which he had with Cuba's minister of construction, O. Cienfuegos, with Cde. Khrushchev still in 1962, and personal files prepared by Batista's police which included a description of the method of recruiting him to cooperate with [American] intelligence. According to Cde. R. Castro, Ordoqui would have confessed to his guilt if his life were spared. Other comrades from the leadership, however, rejected such a suggestion through the justification that adopting different criteria towards members of the former Popular Socialist Party would evoke very unfavorable comments in society. Ordoqui's case is complicated by the fact that it was suitably used by reactionary elements in Latin America and, in the US [it stirred up] an interest with regard to the weakening of confidence within the Cuban leadership.

Drafted by R. Czyżycki
Prepared in 5 copies



From a Conversation between the 2nd Secretary of the UPSR,¹⁹ Cde. Raul Castro Ruz, and a member of the PB CC PUWP, Cde. Zenon Kliszko, on 23 March 1965

The conversation took place on the initiative of Cde. R. Castro, who wished to return to certain matters which were not exhaustively discussed during the meeting in the CC PUWP with the participation of the 1st Secretary of the CC PUWP, Cde. Władysław Gomułka.

1. First of all, Cde. R. Castro asks that copies of notes prepared by the Polish side from the abovementioned meeting be delivered to him. He justified his request mainly by wanting to have at his disposal the identical

versions of the notes taken by both sides. Cde. R. Castro asked that the materials be handed to him directly or through Cuba's ambassador in Moscow, C[arlos]. Illivares [Olivares] Sanchez, through the ambassador [Edmund Pszczolkowski] of the PPR [Polish People's Republic] in Moscow between 2 and 5 of April this year (Cde. R. Castro returns to Cuba via Moscow). The guest also asked for possibly supplementing the notes with other materials related to the matters discussed during the meeting and which the Polish side would be interested in putting forth to the Cuban side.

2. Relations between the UPSR and the PUWP

The divergences which Cde. R. Castro referred to during the meeting in the CC PUWP were mainly related to the old leadership of the CPSU. They mostly resulted from the development of the Caribbean Crisis. Due to the development of this crisis, the Cuban leadership concluded that each new step in the field of inter-party relations must be the result of an independent thought process based on concrete facts and evidence; a result of comprehensive discussions. The recently conducted talks with Soviet comrades allowed for the discovery of an existing convergent position of both parties with regard to a series of essential matters. Some other problems remained to be discussed. They are, however, not fundamental matters.

The Cuban leaders conclude that the current leadership of the CPSU is assuming a more cautious and proper position with regard to the controversy [spór]²⁰ within the international movement.

3. The Issue of the Legalization of the Cuban Revolution

The Cuban specificity contributed to the fact that the leadership of the UPSR does not have to²¹ attach such great importance to the issue of elections. According to Cde. R. Castro, one should not talk about the legalization of the revolution, since it is a legal act if the situation as a whole is taken into consideration. It is true, however, that the lack of firm local authority is palpable, thereby causing additional troubles for the revolution. Such a situation will possibly change only after the process of establishing a new party has been completed. A typical thing is that if the consolidation of revolutionary forces in Cuba had materialized in the years 1959-1960, it would have to be carried out based on a multi-party system. The solution of this matter at the end of 1960 and 1961 made possible for the attainment of integration on the basis of the existence of one party.

4. The Situation in Vietnam

Cde. R. Castro inquired:

- a) About the Polish assessment of the situation in Vietnam,
- b) Whether one should not interpret the bombing of North Vietnam by American imperialism as evidence of losing control over the situation in the South,
- c) Whether the Polish side believes that the US would withdraw from Vietnam if it could do so with saving face,
- d) Whether and, possibly how, will the PPR react to the situation in Vietnam.

Cde. R. Castro agreed that the lack of readiness of both sides regarding a political solution of the problems must lead to a complicated situation and to the intensification of the danger of deepening the feeling of impunity on the side of the US imperialism, which, in the face of the above, could aim at expanding further military actions in this region. He listened to the opinion regarding serious and negative consequences, psychological and economic (with all implications resulting from it), which would have to result in long-lasting military actions against North Vietnam. The guest also listened with interest to the fact that the PPR has reasons to believe that the US would withdraw from Vietnam if it were possible to do so with saving face. At the same time, he seemed to agree with the view that the setback of the US in South Vietnam is more of a political, and not military, nature as well as that the US's material resources are too great and it has too many broad interests in South-East Asia for it to withdraw from Vietnam in the role of the defeated.

Cde. R. Castro confirmed the fact that the excerpt of the last speech of Fidel Castro, in which he talked about comprehensive aid which Cuba would give to Vietnam had it been neighbors with this country, was directed against the PRC.

5. Cuba and the Current Situation in Latin America

Cde. R. Castro expressed apprehension that the current developments in the Vietnam crisis may develop into a dangerous precedent for Cuba due to the following reasons:

Latin America is a fighting continent. The struggle assumed a particularly harsh [*ostry*]²² character in Venezuela due to the increase of a revolutionary wave, the extent of the influences of the [communist] party as well as thanks to the moods in the army (avoiding fighting with the guerillas). One should not exclude the fact that as soon as the fight assumes a more severe character, the US can use repressions against Cuba, just as they are doing currently against North Vietnam.

In order to illustrate to what degree the situation in Venezuela has become complicated, Cde. R. Castro presented a maneuver of US imperialism; that it is striving to persuade the Venezuelan government to sound out the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations with the USSR, thereby certainly aiming to show that the CPSU is, in some way, cutting itself off from the activity of the Venezuelan party. The leadership of the CPSU, however, did a proper thing by consulting with the comrades from the CP of Venezuela regarding the matter. As a result, the Soviet government will not establish relations with Venezuela.

The guest announced that Cuba was providing aid to the Venezuelan comrades. The guerillas were trained in Cuba and the Cuban comrades were sending weapons to Venezuela. As a result of carelessness of the Venezuelan guerrillas, part of these weapons found itself in the hands of the Venezuelan authorities. This fact served as a base for putting forth a well-known accusation against Cuba. However, these weapons were, in their entirety, American, and were introduced in great quantities into Cuba's territory by American intelligence. Cuba, Cde. R. Castro stated, will never withdraw its moral support for the Venezuelan guerillas.

6. The position of the PUWP with regard to the conference of 81 parties

Cde. R. Castro asked, once more, for the explicitness of the position of the PUWP regarding this matter. Following the reply of Cde. Z. Kliszko, the guest stated that the positions of both parties on this subject are in agreement.

7. The attitude of the socialist camp towards Cuba

Cde. R. Castro asked what exactly Cde. W. Gomułka had in mind when, during the meeting in the CC PUWP, when he talked about the lack of a mutually-worked-out policy of the socialist camp regarding Cuba's defense.

The answer was that the lack of a mutual political position between the CPSU and the CPC, which is due to divergences, is reflected unfavorably not only in Vietnam, but also in the Caribbean.



At the end of the conversation, Cde. R. Castro expressed interest in continuing this type of honest exchange of opinions.

Drafted by R. Czyżycki
Prepared in 5 copies



The Statement of the 2nd Secretary of the UPSR,²³ Cde. Raul Castro Ruz pertaining to Cuba's Minister of Industry, Ernesto Guevara

In one of the conversations between a member of the PB CC PUWP, Cde. Z. Kliszko, and Cde. R. Castro, a referral was made to the position assumed by the Minister of Industry in Cuba, Ernesto Guevara, at the economic seminar of Afro-Asian countries in Algeria in February this year. Cde. R. Castro stated that he was not prepared to discuss the essence of the issue (the extent of aid from socialist countries to developing countries), but he stated that:

- Cde. Guevara had recently spent a long time outside of the country and the position taken [lit. presented] by him should be treated as [his] personal view;
- One should search for some kind of a solution regarding world [lit. international] prices which are unfair [detrimental]²⁴ to the developing countries. However, the propositions of E. Guevara are too extreme;
- The Algerian Seminar was not the right forum for a discussion of the matters raised by E. Guevara;
- E. Guevara is an unusually valued member of the UPSR leadership and he commands general respect. He is, however, marked by obstinacy, which was a cause of serious discussions within the Cuban leadership;
- One of the biggest merits of the UPSR leadership is freedom of discussion and an unrestricted atmosphere which enables one to state his individual views. However, a decision that was once made is observed without exception by all comrades who comprise the Nationwide Leadership of the UPSR.

Drafted by R. Czyżycki
Prepared in 5 copies



II. Bulgarian Document

Minutes of T. Zhivkov – R. Castro
Conversation, Sofia, 26 March 1965

MEETING

Of comrade Todor Zhivkov – First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and comrade Raul Castro Ruz – Second Secretary of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution, Deputy Prime-Minister of the Revolutionary government and Minister of the Armed Forces of Cuba

Sofia, Friday, 26 March 1965
9:30 a.m.

T. Zhivkov: On behalf of the Central Committee of our party, on behalf of the Politburo and the government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, I most warmly welcome comrade Raul Castro in our country as our highly valued guest, comrade and brother.

In the tour that Raul Castro will make in the country he will see and feel the great love that our people cherish towards the heroic people of Cuba, how popular the Cuban revolution and Cuba's leaders are in Bulgaria, how large the authority of comrade Fidel Castro is in Bulgaria.

Raul Castro: On behalf of the leaders of our country I would like to express our gratitude for the attention paid to me by inviting the current delegation. As far as I am concerned, this visit is an longstanding obligation of mine which I had to perform.

When we were at the meeting in Moscow, we received invitations from the Polish and Hungarian parties. We wanted to make a visit and exchange opinions with the leaders of these parties. This seems clear judging by the fact that the time we have at our disposal here, in Bulgaria, is limited. It has been exactly one month today since I left my country. The situation in the world does not allow a person to be outside his country for long.

One way or another, as comrade [Bulgarian Defense Minister Gen. Dobri] Djurov pointed out in Moscow, this should be treated as the first part of my visit. On another convenient occasion I will have to come back to Bulgaria again so that I can make a tour of the country and see more things. Obviously the program that has been worked out now aims

at enabling me to see many things. It is also our will to see as many things as possible in your country.

As far as our visit to exchange opinions with the Bulgarian Communist Party is concerned, I will try to make it in the most concise form, so that I can save the Bulgarian comrades time. I take into consideration the great number of your engagements and the little time you have at your disposal. I'm not aware of the exact nature of the questions that would interest you regarding our country. But it seems clear that we can exchange thoughts on the current situation of the international communist movement with regard to the new conditions created in Vietnam now.

Our country's stand on the international communist movement is, to a certain extent, known. I don't know whether the comrades would like me to elaborate more on it. It is evident that our party is interested in our Bulgarian comrades' opinion on these issues. I suppose that the Bulgarian party's stand coincides with that of the Cuban party.

T. Zhivkov: We would be extremely glad to listen to some information on the situation in Cuba.

How would you like us to proceed? Probably we could first of all state our opinion.

Raul Castro: All right.

T. Zhivkov: So the floor is given to me first. I will briefly want to dwell on some problems concerning our internal development.

[...]

Raul Castro: The Chinese have still said nothing on the Romanian problem.

T. Zhivkov: No, they would not say anything. The Chinese are seriously courting the Romanians now. Indicative of this is the fact that the leader of their delegation at [former Romanian communist party leader **Gheorghe**] Gheorghiu-Dej's funeral was Chou-Enlai [Zhou Enlai].

We must admit that the contemporary Romanian leaders, as well as the previous ones headed by Gheorghiu-Dej, do not fully share the Chinese views. We can say that regarding the principles of international development they firmly stand on the basis of the Moscow declaration. Yet now they follow a policy of cooperation and balance with all. Americans, Frenchmen and Englishmen mean the same to them as we do. Of course, these are the tendencies.

On the whole, our relations with Romania are normal. Yet practically they aren't. [excitement]

[...]

As you know, the Chinese accuse us of being modern revisionists. We find it difficult to say exactly what our revisionism is like.

[...]

Maybe we have put less effort into the country's defense, maybe we sit idle and that's why we're revisionists? Of course, all of this is not true. Both the Turks and the Greeks know our army is better equipped than theirs.

Maybe we do not help the national liberation movements? This is the biggest slander directed towards our country. We cannot respond to it, cannot disprove it. But the Algerian friends and /Ahmed/ Ben Bella know well whether or not we have offered support to them. The headquarters for supplying the Algerian army was in Bulgaria. It was our organization that was in charge of procurement for the Algerian army. As far as the supply with clothing etc. is concerned, we created an organization in a capitalist country, I think it was Switzerland, that bought the goods and materials we couldn't get from the socialist countries, for the Algerian army.

Let them ask in the Congo about the arms that Bulgaria supplies for the national liberation movement in that country. Let them ask the same in Cyprus, the South African Republic etc. It goes without saying that Vietnam has also had supplies from us. Although Bulgaria is a small country, with limited resources, there isn't a single place in the world where the opportunity has arisen and we haven't responded by helping with weapons and staff. Our partisan leaders even are in Venezuela.

There is a special organization in our country now that tackles these issues and whenever the people rise up we offer help on the spur of the moment. And I must admit that thanks to our party's great underground experience, we have had almost no failures when transferring arms. The first ship with arms to arrive in Algeria during the blockade was a Bulgarian one. As soon as the events in Cyprus started, they asked us for arms. The people of Cyprus armed themselves with our own, Bulgarian arms. Not only with ours, of course.

Ivan Mihajlov: It is more convenient to get arms from us instead of the Soviet Union. But we do not make declarations on these issues.

T. Zhivkov: We would not say anything on this matter, and it's not necessary to talk.

So, we find it difficult to see what comprises our "revisionist views."

But we are worried about what's going on now in the international communist movement, in the socialist countries. We discussed these issues in the Politburo and in the Central Committee after the Moscow meeting and we came to the

conclusion that the existing discord cannot be overcome. Yet we do have to make efforts.

Mitko Grigorov: Especially to weaken the Chinese influence on the other parties.

T. Zhivkov: Of course, the international communist movement will not yield to and take the Chinese stand, this is impossible, but there are and will be difficulties. The international communist movement, which has a rich experience and tradition, is diverse and cannot be characterized by a single political platform as the Chinese leaders propose. What is most important and most dangerous in our opinion is not the ideological dispute, although it is of great importance. But our government relations are complicated. Secondly, we make it possible for the American imperialists to become even more aggressive.

[...]

Now, after being granted this loan we can say we are relying on our own efforts and abuse the Soviet Union for interfering in our internal affairs. /laughter/. The Soviet Union is interfering in our internal affairs because we are going to build more than 100 big plants with its help during this five-year period!

We regard our relations with Cuba as improving. But, how shall I put it, sometimes our relations with Cuba are dependent on certain bodies which frequently view things from their own viewpoint, have a quite constricted outlook. So that probably at a summit meeting in the future we will be able to clarify some issues and to better determine the directions and rate of our cooperation.

Excuse me for having spoken too much. But I had not made any preliminary notes.

Raul Castro: You took up the whole time, so that none is left for me now.

T. Zhivkov: We seemed to be quite impudent. We invited you, yet we did the talking, not even listening to all that you had to say.

Raul Castro: In this respect you resemble the Cubans quite a lot.

T. Zhivkov: If comrade Fidel Castro can deliver a speech for 4 to 5 hours, why couldn't I make a two-hour speech? (Laughter.)

In the past our party used to have great public speakers, traditions in public speaking. We had public speakers that would start speaking in the morning and continue in the

afternoon. There is a comrade of ours who is still alive but is ill now. Once he started speaking, fainted, was poured with water, raised to his feet and continued speaking. (Laughter.)

Raul Castro: The Soviet comrades are much more patient than the Chinese who were famous for their patience. This fact becomes evident exactly in these disputes in the international communist movement. Hence we can say that our relations with the Soviet Union are the same as are our relations with the other socialist countries.

Many times we have declared in public that we agree to argue with the Americans, of course, on the basis of a preliminary program, on an equal footing. If they want to establish diplomatic and trade relations we also agree on the same basis—on that of total equality. The Americans say that they will be closer to us if we break our ties with the socialist community countries. Our response is that they would have to wait for 10 thousand years and moreover we have no intentions of making deviations from the road we're following. It is clear that this will take up a lot of time, since the Americans find it difficult to recognize the first socialist country in America.

Regarding the problems of the international communist movement. We are very concerned about North Vietnam. We are convinced that if there were no differences and splitting in the socialist community, these facts wouldn't exist. This means killing a small people like the Vietnamese. The aggressiveness of the Americans is increasing, that's what concerns us. This is a precedent and we are worried about the way the problem will be solved. My personal opinion is, since I haven't taken my party's opinion, that the problem cannot be solved by wanting South Vietnam to fight against imperialism. This is my personal opinion and I think that if our people and party are in a similar situation, if the outcome is such that South Vietnam should stop the struggle so that it won't be attacked, we would rather be attacked but let South Vietnam continue the struggle. I say that because we have to see ourselves in Vietnam's mirror, because the outcome depends on the way the problem will be solved.

We welcome the agreement on the partial test-ban of nuclear weapons, yet we did not sign the agreement because we do not approve of not importing nuclear weapons into Latin America. We are already victims of such attacks from all American military bases, and there is a base²⁵ in which there might be nuclear weapons. There probably are such weapons there because there are nuclear submarines there. That is why we cannot sign such an agreement while there are such weapons on our territory. Yet we welcome all these efforts.

On the other hand the war in Latin America continues, in Venezuela, Columbia, Guatemala, and Honduras. There

are greater or lesser difficulties in some places, the extent to which the communists participate in some places is different, yet the struggle continues. Our party thinks that there are conditions for a revolutionary, armed struggle; there is a revolutionary situation in Latin America—in Mexico, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Chile and all other Latin American countries. We think that the only way to seize power is via armed struggle, the massive struggle of the people, the way things are now in Venezuela. That is how we think, but every party has the right to solve these problems. We don't think and do not delude ourselves that the bourgeoisie with the imperialists together in these countries will easily give up power. The bourgeoisie and the imperialists together did their best to win the elections. It is evident that if the Unidad Popular had won, there would have been a coup d'état. Nevertheless we considered the line of struggle in these four countries, including Chile, appropriate.

For instance, [Brazilian communist party leader Luis Carlos] Prestes assured us that a *coup d'état* was impossible in Brazil. We told him we thought the same, we even told him that a coup d'état was possible in the USA, although they have other methods there^{3/4}they kill one president and put another one in his place. Less than six months had passed after we talked with Prestes before a coup d'état took place. This surprised the party, it was not prepared for the coup d'état. And Venezuela is the most important party now in Latin America. Imperialism cannot do the same things in Venezuela as it did in Vietnam – send some people there and rely on puppet governments. Because Venezuela's present army would not like to fight against the partisans, as was the case in Cuba. Because what happens then is the following^{3/4}when a military unit is sent there to fight, the general remains in a given town while the soldiers are in another, so that nobody reaches the partisans in order to fight them. It is clear that the National Liberation Front had no support among the peasants in the beginning.

Let us recall the fact that after the ex-dictator [Romulo] Betancourt yielded power, he won the elections relying on the peasants and lost the elections because the peasants, living in hope of an agricultural reform, promised by Betancourt, did not support him. Moreover, the persecution and repressions of the government against the peasants makes them unite with the partisan movement. This is the way things were in our country. When we arrived in Cuba there were not objective conditions for us to win the peasants, it was not until one year had passed that such conditions were created—when the struggle became more acute.

The authority of the party of Venezuela in Latin America is great. Although some accused it of adventurism not long ago, it is the party that has the greatest support. It has pen-

etrated most deeply into Venezuela's armed forces; it has full control of the students. And thus the struggle in Venezuela is developing.

We provide the appropriate assistance with regard to our own situation. There are about 40,000 people in the Venezuelan army. Their number is insufficient even to guard the petroleum shelves in Venezuela. It is an enormous country^{3/4}800,000 km, one of the richest countries in Latin America. Recently, petroleum fields have been discovered there that can satisfy the world's needs for 40 years. They even have a well-developed heavy industry, metallurgy, plants that were created in [former Venezuelan President Gen. Marcos Perez] Jimenez's time so that he could plunder [the country's wealth]. Now these plants are closed, they do not function. Now they have a great capacity for energy production. Yet nothing is used. There are mountains of ore, for which there is no need to go underground, they only have to be loaded. Every ton of ore that the imperialists take from Venezuela is bought at a very low price.

The imperialists, the monopolists, have a plan to use these riches. They have an Alliance for Progress in Latin America and send their overstock there. This practically means that there would be less bread today, more tomorrow. Even only what the Americans plunder in Venezuela is enough to cover what they give to the Alliance for Progress.

We also have an organization to help other countries, of which comrade T. Zhivkov already spoke, but having in mind your experience, we have made some mistakes in this respect. We prepared partisans and the enemy knew that. We have a full right to do this but they are preparing counter-revolutionaries against us in all these countries. To tell you in private, we sent a huge quantity of weapons at a convenient time to Venezuela, but it was not from the socialist countries. These were weapons left in Cuba and we sent them into Venezuela. The weapons were American-made. Hence they were left at the wrong address. We have hundreds of tons of weapons that we have thus leased.

The struggle in Venezuela is becoming more acute. We have not discussed this issue in the party, but having in mind the latest events in Vietnam, I think that when the struggle in Venezuela becomes more acute, they same thing that is happening now in North Vietnam, will happen to us. Undoubtedly, if that happens, we will not want the Venezuelans to stop the fight but on the contrary, to intensify the struggle. That is why we are even more interested in the way the problem is solved in South and North Vietnam.

Under the chairmanship of comrade Fidel, the main General Staff leaders, some members of our party's secretariat started checking our defense plans, our defense strategy somewhere around the middle of last year. We started analyzing the

extent to which an enemy attack was possible and reached the following conclusion.

Regarding the counter-revolution³⁴the internal one and the one that has been exported from Cuba. In spite of the existence of 1,000 dens where it could be prepared, a counter-revolution would be crushed, since our country is an island and it would be difficult for the contra revolutionaries to come to our country without the interference and support of the USA. The pirate attacks against us will continue. With our security organs we have been fighting with greater success. Attacks, such as the ones at Playa Giron [Bay of Pigs] are possible. We have an army that can repulse such an attack or a number of simultaneous attacks with the help of the Soviet Union, of Bulgaria and some other socialist countries. We must admit that when the attack at Playa Giron took place [in April 1961], the tanks had just arrived and we didn't have people to use them. There were tankers and artillerymen, who learned how to maneuver with these weapons on their way from Havana to Playa Giron. We relied on the experienced leadership of comrade Fidel. We won there because of the heroism of the workers and peasants who fought there. The fact that many lives were lost there was not in vain. We took a whole brigade as captives but we suffered heavy losses. Attacks such as those at Playa Giron are not possible now. An American invasion against us I think is possible but very difficult.

These days some imperialist circles speak of repressions, similar to those in North Vietnam, without being afraid of the outbreak of another war. We came to the conclusion that this is the most dangerous thing for us and began to take measures in our plans, each of which costs 30 million pesos. We had to stop construction of many sites, roads etc. We possess an enormous quantity of anti-aircraft missiles whose maximum altitude is above 1,000 meters. The latter fact is difficulty for us, since we are a small, long island. Their planes fly at low altitudes, take off from their different military bases, including Miami—shoot and leave. Some planes throw flammable materials, which can cover the plantations and on the next day everything will be burning. They have missiles. We had to make a big purchase for such an anti-aircraft defense [system]. The Soviet Union gave us a large quantity of anti-aircraft missiles, but we have to add three batteries to each group of such missiles, so that the anti-aircraft defense can act. We wanted to purchase anti-aircraft artillery from Czechoslovakia, but we couldn't. However, we managed to buy some quantities from China. A few months later exactly this incident in the gulf took place after which we started preparing our defense more intensely.²⁶ You already know how the process developed, under what pretext they bombarded us and they may reach the canals.²⁷

This can happen in Cuba at any moment, we expect it to happen. We should be very patient in this respect. From the October [1962] crisis onwards, till February this year, there have been about 5,000 provocations of various nature against Cuba,.

For instance, one or two airplanes are circulating above Cuba's territory. We cannot take them down due to various considerations; they fly at a low altitude. The Yankees think they have the right to inspect our country. This is a consequence of Khrushchev's declaration that each territory should be inspected but we cannot allow our country to be inspected. The Yankees say they have the right to fly over our country in order to check whether it has nuclear weapons. You can imagine what this could mean to a country's defense³⁴to have airplanes fly over the country and inspect it. Of course, we could take these airplanes down and thus not allow them to make such inspections, but Khrushchev has told us not to do it, otherwise he wouldn't give us anti-aircraft defense. We have to reach an agreement as to whether or not we can take down these airplanes. This should happen at an appropriate moment.

Hundreds of provocations take place monthly. Lately they have taken the form of people hiding near the border at the Guantanamo Base and shooting at our border guards. Two of our people have been wounded and one has been killed. We withdrew our border posts 500 meters to the inside of the country; we built defense fortifications, so that the Americans would not be able to see the border soldiers. Yet they have recently started very dangerous provocations: they pass the border and travel in our territory. For instance they enter our territory through customs and set it on fire, while the posts are 500 meters to the inside of the country.

We have thousands of provocations of this sort and every time when we condemn these provocations, the Yankees say that we have instigated them.

The Yankees pass near the border and approach our posts at other places as well. Earlier only two or three people did that sort of thing while now it is done by 15 to 20 people. Those provocations have become more frequent after the events that took place in Vietnam. We do not take measures to respond to their firing. The time will come when the Yankee entering our territory will approach our posts. Our country is small, narrow and if we continue to retreat we will have to jump in the ocean. It is evident that our patience has its limits. We know we have the duty to avoid complications in the international relations, we all know what these provocations mean. At some places we let trained dogs kill people.

All the points I've made so far make us think lately that what has happened in Vietnam could happen to us as well,

which disturbs us a lot. We will have the necessary patience, we will do our best to avoid increasing the international tension, but it is clear that everything has its limits.

You probably know what it means to build socialism in a small, poor country suffering so-called repressive measures. This is the case with North Vietnam that is bombarded in different places, under different pretexts. I informed the Bulgarian Communist Party about these things.

[...]

At present the situation in the country is normal although we do not underestimate the enemy's activity. Our coastline is 2,500 meters long. People can reach our coast even with submarines. There are 250,000 people in Cuba who do not agree with the revolution's principles. They have been given the opportunity to leave the country. These are usually parasites, ex-bourgeois.

We have had success in agriculture in several respects. There is no longer food rationing. We are already experienced; we do not make as many mistakes. Thousands of agricultural specialists are being qualified. We consider the prospects to be very good in the latter respect.

Regarding the state of the international communist movement and relations with other parties.

We completely share T. Zhivkov's opinion regarding Yugoslavia. We have some experience and we are willing to gain more. At the end of 1959 when we knew that the enemy was preparing an attack against Cuba we wanted to buy weapons from wherever possible. We were still not buying weapons from the socialist countries. We bought rifles from Belgium, but the imperialist circles interfered and the supply failed. We started buying from Italy. The imperialist forces interfered and the purchase was stopped. We sent a delegation to Yugoslavia to buy mine-throwers. The people there said: this is a small deal for you, while as far as we are concerned, it will cause us great problems with the Americans, so that the deal is not worthwhile. Moreover, there were some attacks issued in their theoretical journals, but we hadn't interfered in them since we had thought that it would not be to the benefit of the communist movement.

Regarding Romania. We share the opinion that was expressed here. We have just withdrawn all our students that were in Romania. That was not only due to the fact that they had been attacked and beaten at a demonstration in front of the US Embassy. I think that the demonstration was even not permitted by the authorities. That was also not due to the fact that the students had been refused the hall that they had been traditionally given to celebrate their anniversary. That was a political measure undertaken by

our party, taking into consideration exactly the Romanian Party's political opinions. We would not like our students, although they are a small group, to be brought up in the spirit of the Romanian Party.

Our delegation, which was in Moscow on 7 November [1964], met with the Romanian delegation led by comrade...

²⁸ When the differences and discord in the international communist movement were discussed, the Romanian delegation took a stand as if they were the founders of Marxism-Leninism, that is of the extreme left wing. Comrade... [name missing in record—trans.] posed the question that these problems should be solved and the Soviet Union should be respected. They said it was a matter of prestige, of ideological prestige. On the one hand, they lend a hand to the Chinese, by severely attacking the Soviet Union and having ever closer their relations with the Western capitalist world. The Chinese' contradictions become obvious^{3/4}they accuse all parties that do not think the same way as they do of revisionist views. But the Romanians have not told us anything in this respect yet.

Recently there was a meeting of the Latin American communist parties in Havana. We discussed our differences, closed ranks. This meeting was very good in all its aspects. A 9-member delegation that insisted on stopping the disputes in public was sent to Moscow. Our comrades from the CPSU understood these issues well and agreed with us. The delegation then went to China with the same aims. The situation there was ironic from the very beginning to the end when the issues were discussed. Rather, [the Cuban delegation heard] criticism against all parties and hysteric fits by Mao Zedong who said: I am a partisan, a fighter. Ironic phrases regarding the other parties were abundant. There were many cases of tactlessness and insults. For instance, regarding the party of Uruguay he asked: What is the number of your population? Uruguay has 2.5 million inhabitants, but comrade /Rodney/ Arismendi said: we are 1.5 million. Mao Zedong said: You can join some other people. You do not deserve to live on your own. He said the public discussion²⁹ had to continue. We insist on stopping the public discussion. Although there was one delegate from our country among these 9 delegates, some things against our party were also said. The mission completely failed.

Later on, we sent a 3-member delegation on behalf of our party to discuss these issues again. They supported their own stand, we^{3/4}ours.

Regarding trade relations^{3/4}we have good relations with them [the Chinese] and they are kept in a good state. We needed anti-aircraft defense and some other things, which we wanted to buy from them. They gave them to us for nothing. Afterwards, the Albanian press published an elaborate article, attacking all Latin American parties as revisionist.

We have had personal contacts with the Chinese party; we have had talks regarding the problem of the international communist movement. We are convinced that they would not agree to a conference; they disagree with unity in general. We have observed other things and opinions in our relations with them. It is clear we can draw our conclusions on these issues. We were not able to do that earlier. The direction that the discussion itself had taken, the insults etc. that appeared everywhere, the untruthfulness of many facts. All this made it seem to us, on the one hand, that everything is really that way, on the other³/₄ that not everything is the way it seems to be. On this basis we were not able to make a concrete, correct analysis. Now we are witnessing the attack against the American Embassy, the aim of which is to challenge the Soviet Union. Many Cuban students participated in this demonstration. I have direct information from them. Chinese and some Vietnamese students have invited Cuban students to sign a letter³/₄ a protest and to send it to the Soviet government. We know of all the incidents that happened in the Soviet hospitals. We saw how the Beijing newspapers, radio etc. started spreading these things, the way each of them grasped them. We have been informed about the obstacles created by the Chinese to the quick arrival of Soviet airplanes with arms for Vietnam. The Soviet comrades never deal with this question, to go and spread propaganda [disinformation] in the way the Chinese do. Fidel Castro's last speech mentioned something about that. If they would like to argue with us on these issues, we will argue with them as many times as they want.

On the other hand, we see that the new leaders of the CPSU behave more predictably. They do their best to overcome these difficulties. It is clear that they are no longer victims of Khrushchev's typical earlier ferocity. There are a lot more facts such as these that contribute to bringing us closer, to strengthening our relations. We have always told the Soviet comrades that there are certain differences between us and that we cannot argue on these issues. But Cuba will never take a stand against the Soviet Union. The Soviet party has never exerted pressure on us, with the exception of one of Khrushchev's last letters in which there is only a hint that our party should act in a specific way. But this is only a hint. We wanted to clarify our positions on these issues. We sent a delegation, led by comrade [Osvaldo] Dorticos, but it arrived [in Moscow in mid-October 1964] on the day after Khrushchev was ousted. Since then our relations have been improving. We are extremely grateful to the Soviet party, to the Soviet government. When we do not agree on some issues, we go to settle the issue with them. Our people know that quite well. It knows that the revolution may continue thanks to the help of the socialist countries, but above all thanks to the support

or help of the Soviet Union. We must admit that they were extremely patient with us.

[...]

Todor Zhivkov: The information you gave us is very interesting to us, even some of the problems you posed are worth thinking over. But we must emphasize that our views on international problems, on the problems relating to the unity of the socialist countries, of the international communist movement coincide.

As far as the situation in your country is concerned, we are aware of the difficulties, the difficult conditions in which you work and that is why I will once again take advantage of this meeting to declare that we will be on your side now, tomorrow, under any conditions and circumstances, even if a war becomes necessary, if a defense of Cuba is necessary. This is not a disputable question in our country, this is a firm stand.

Raul Castro: We already know of your decision.

Todor Zhivkov: You should never doubt that we will always be together with you, even under the most difficult circumstances. We do not doubt the fact that it is hard for you not to yield to these provocations. Even if these provocations were not present, it would have been surprising if they weren't there.

[Source: Records of the Polish United Workers Party Central Committee [KC PZPR], Sygnaatura 237/XXII/1399, Archiwum Akt Nowych [AAN; Archive of Modern Acts], Warsaw, Poland. Obtained by the National Security Archive and translated for CWIHP by Margaret K. Gnoinska.]



III. Czechoslovak Documents

Documents on Czechoslovak Military Delegation
Trip to Cuba, 30 March- 9 April 1965

Presidium of the CPCZ Central Committee

5490/7

Sequence No.: 20

On the issue:

Information about a friendly visit of the Czechoslovak military delegation in Cua

From 30.3-9.4 [30 March - 9 April] 1965,
a delegation of the Czechoslovak
Peoples Army visited Cuba; the
delegation submits a brief report
about the stay and talks with leading
representatives of Cuba.

Submitting: C. B. Lomsky
16th April 1965
Number of sheets: 14



*This material must be returned to the office of the 1st Secretary of
the CPCZ CC within one month.*

Adopted resolution

Attention of: c. B. Lomsky



ATTACHMENT I

Attachment I

Draft of the resolution

Attachment III

The report

Attachment IV

1. Report of important conversations in connection with the visit
2. Report of talks with the Deputy Chairman of the Cuban Revolutionary Government and Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces Raul Castro

File No. P 5490/ 7

R e s o l u t i o n

on the issue
Information about a friendly visit of the Czechoslovak military
delegation in Cuba
(c. B. Lomsky)

R e s o l v e d :

The CPCZ CC Presidium accepts the information of c.
Lomsky about the friendly visit of the Cs. military delegation
in Cuba.



5490/ 7

ATTACHMENT III

Report about the friendly visit of the Cs. military delegation
in Cuba

Based on the CPCZ CC Presidium's resolution from 10th
November 1964, a Cs. military delegation, headed by Minister
of National Defense, Army General Bohumir Lomsky, visited
Cuba after several invitations from the Deputy Chairman
of the Government and Minister of Revolutionary Armed
Forces, Commander Raul Castro Ruz.

The visit occurred at the time of heightened acts of aggres-
sion of the USA against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam,
and thus it was regarded as highly important in Cuba. It
contributed to strengthening of Cs.-Cuban friendship and to
strengthening of the friendship in arms of our armies.

The time of the visit can be divided into two stages:

I. Stage – before arrival of Raul Castro from a trip in
Europe and a visit of the Cuban provinces
outside of Havana.

II. Stage – after return of Raul Castro, and the stay in
Havana

The delegation held a number of cordial and unofficial
meetings with troops of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed
Forces and with workers. The delegation met with: represen-
tatives of the Joint Staff and the Ministry of the Revolutionary
Armed Forces [MINFAR], commanders of the Eastern Army
in the Oriente province, sailors, members of the 78th Division,

pilots at the air force bases at Holquin and St. Antonio de los Banos, and with members of a military vocational school of armed forces.

During the visit, the delegation met with number of Soviet [military] advisors and with the main advisor General Colonel Shkadov.

A general draft is in effect in Cuban armed forces for the first year. The Army is the only highly organized force in Cuba – it is underpinning the Government. A tendency of its growth is apparent; discipline, organization, and order are improving. There is a great effort to master the new equipment. Armaments – Soviet and Czechoslovak.

Apparent shortage of educated cadres. They have 1,800 in training in the USSR. Officers trained in the CSSR hold important positions of regiment commanders, lieutenants and higher. They like to remember the CSSR. Many commanders yearn for training in the CSSR.

The delegation met workers in

- Cardenas – in a sugar refinery, in a shipyard,
- Havana - in a tobacco factory,
- St. Cruz del Norte – in a sugar plant with sugar cane cutters, as well as in
- Playa Giron – with sailor youth.

The delegation visited the party leadership in the Oriente province.

Revolutionary enthusiasm and a resolve to fulfill the key goals:

- harvest of 5 million tons of sugar by May 5, 1965;
- master 6th grade education (2 hours a day);

set by the government at the time is apparent everywhere. The main goals will be achieved but other results will be less remarkable.

Talks were held during the visit with:

- a) First Deputy of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Juan Almeida,
- b) President Osvaldo Dorticos, in presence of Raul Castro,
- c) Chairman of the Cuban Revolutionary Government, Fidel Castro (in the Ambassador's residence).

Ambassador's report of the talks – see Attachment IV/1.

Before the departure, Fidel Castro authorized an important discussion with Raul Castro and the Joint Chief of Staff Sergio de Valle. C. Langer's report – see the Attachment IV/2. The friendly visit accomplished its objective.

According to the CPCZ CC resolution of November 10, 1964, Raul Castro with a delegation of the Revolutionary

Armed Forces was invited to visit the CSSR at the time of the III. National Spartakiade. He preliminarily agreed.



ATTACHMENT IV

Record of important talks in connection with the visit of c. B. Lomsky

A meeting of the Cs. delegation's leader was initially affected by Raul Castro's absence, since until his arrival, the talks remained at the level of the 1st Deputy Juan Almeida who takes over the function of Minister of Armed Forces in the absence of Raul Castro. It was explained that Raul Castro was still absent because he took part, as Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of the LSSR [United Party of the (Cuban) Socialist Revolution; PURSC], in the Moscow consultations of communist parties, and then visited a number of socialist countries. Following his return to Havana, a number of significant acts took place as a culmination of the Cs. military delegation's visit (handover of a battle standard to the military school of Antonio Maceo, a visit with the President of the Republic [Osvaldo Dorticos], a reception in the Ambassador's residence in presence of Fidel and Raul Castro and of other representatives of the LSSR and CRG [Cuban Revolutionary Government]).

During these days, talks took place that can be summarized as follows:

1. A visit at the Joint Staff in the absence of Raul Castro

During the visit, impressions of the delegation's stay were shared, which was followed by a friendly conversation with members of the Minfar [Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces] Joint Staff, during which opinions on military questions, armaments, and Cs. armament shipments were informally exchanged. 1st Deputy J. Almeida mentioned that just before arrival of the delegation, the CRG submitted to the Ambassador a request for a shipment of 100 pieces of 30 mm anti-aircraft cannons. The Cuban side emphasized that the current situation warranted strengthening of the anti-aircraft defense. There was no concrete discussion about conditions for delivery of these weapons, especially payment conditions. At a dinner with the Joint Staff, where R. Castro was not present, C. Langer asked Almeida about delivery conditions but the Cuban side did not specify these conditions, and did not do so later either. The delegation did not revisit the issue. However, it obviously is an important question that

will have to be answered, so that we could consider shipment of these weapons under the most favorable conditions within our capabilities. Since the first request in September 1964, this issue is still unresolved and will require close attention.

2. The delegation's visit with the Republic's President Dorticos

The conversation was very cordial, even though rather official. C. Minister Lomsky informed the Republic's President on behalf of the delegation about the stay of the delegation and its impressions and findings. He passed on greetings of the leading representatives of the CPCZ and the Government, above all of c. [Antonin] Novotny, which greetings c. Dorticos returned. Information mutually interesting to both parties was shared. It was information regarding the economic development of the both countries, and various current political issues in connection with the USA aggression in Vietnam, West German militarism and its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, and the Moscow consultations of communist parties and their results. Both sides emphasized the need for unity of the ICM [International Communist Movement] and joint actions of socialist countries against imperialism and aggression. The Cuban side pointed out that the situation in Vietnam creates a precedent that could be repeated in other places, namely in Cuba, if the aggressors are not decisively condemned by countries of the socialist camp, which is partially hampered by a disarray among countries of the socialist camp, especially the current policy of the Chinese leadership. The cordial manner of the talks, in which Raul Castro took part as well, reflects a very friendly atmosphere formed around the visit of c. Minister Lomsky and the military delegation.

3. A visit of Fidel Castro at a reception in the Ambassador's residence

The most important meeting was that of Fidel Castro at the Ambassador's residence. This visit is so important because the Cuban Prime Minister did not visit a residence of any titular of socialist camp countries under similar conditions for the last 2 - 3 years, with the exception of the 15th anniversary of the PRC [in October 1964—ed.]. The visit in the Cs. Ambassador's residence on the occasion of a reception in recognition of the military delegation also underscores the situation that is developing after Cuba's participation at the Moscow meeting of communist parties.

C. Minister Lomsky had a very cordial conversation with Fidel Castro during the visit. He used this opportunity to criticize the approach of the PRR [People's Republic of Romania] who is entirely neutral on the issue of relations with Beijing and whose policy towards the USSR, socialist camp countries,

and western countries is sure to raise suspicion. The PRR has gone as far as Yugoslavia, if not farther - and [he said] that he "didn't like Yugoslavia." He emphasized that Cuba's strong friendship with socialist camp countries did not keep her from having her own policy, appropriate for the objective conditions. Regarding this, he pointed out the current development in Latin America where inflation and economic difficulties are increasing exponentially and making the situation much worse. It turns out that the policy of the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and the Alliance for Progress is a complete failure. That destabilizes the situation in Central America and in majority of other LA [Latin American] countries where revolutionary struggle is again intensifying. National liberation and revolutionary forces made serious mistakes in Brazil (especially its CP), also [Cheddi] Jagan in British Guyana, and others. The big problem is that revolutionary movements advertise ahead their agenda and objectives, instead of confronting imperialism with hard reality. He pointed out the need for the correct tactics. Algiers can serve as an example because it has not yet nationalized French oil concessions. It is all right to continue with such a policy as long as consolidation of the revolution requires it, which is the first priority. He has exchanged opinions about it with [Algerian President] Ben Bella. The group around [Leonel] Brizzola, who unlike [former Brazilian President João] Goulart always showed revolutionary decisiveness, is considered an authentic revolutionary force in Brazil.³⁰ The last guerilla activity in Brazil is his accomplishment, with which Cuba is helping him within its limited capabilities. It appears that the development in Chile could also lead either to adoption of truly revolutionary reforms or to a new, even deeper crisis.³¹

Imperialism has considerable difficulty in Africa with national liberation movements in Congo, Angola, Mozambique, etc. The fight intensifies with the help of Algeria and the UAR [Egypt]. Cuba also may provide some assistance - for example, it intends to be active in Congo due to the fact that the [Cuban] population has experience and is ethnically tied to Africa. The fight will be long in Africa, and Congo in particular appears to be a key position, which has to be conquered, albeit in a long and exhausting struggle. Impressions and experiences of the Cs. delegation from the stay in Cuba were shared in the conversation. Economic issues were discussed in detail: sugar harvest, questions regarding the JSSR [unknown Czech acronym, possibly Yugoslavia—trans.]³² and unity of the ICM [International Communist Movement], and other topical international issues. In the spirit of his last speeches at the University of Havana from the 10th March and his speech in commemoration of 13th March, Fidel Castro sharply criticized Beijing's approach to the issue of the ICM and help to Vietnam. Regarding the last speech

of [US President Lyndon] Johnson, he believes that the USA probably does not want a direct conflict, especially a nuclear one with the USSR, but seeks to establish negotiating positions in order to save its prestige and position in Vietnam and Southeast Asia.³³ Beijing's approach prevents effective assistance of the socialist camp countries, and also blocks the possibility of negotiations. Beijing's conduct is unprincipled and inconsistent. Its objective is to damage the Soviet prestige and to promote at all costs its own selfish interests. He stressed that Beijing undermines the unity of the ICM only to assume a leading role. It is willing to sacrifice everything to this goal - even Cuba, which it does not care about and whose very existence it is also willing to sacrifice in its efforts to achieve hegemony in the ICM. However, he [Fidel Castro] believes that even in the PRC, there are reasonable people who disagree with this narrow nationalistic policy, whose main protagonist is Mao Zedong. He believes that after his departure, these factions will be more able to gain prominence.

On the other hand, he emphasized the wide and selfless assistance provided by the USSR, without which the revolutionary and socialist Cuba could not even exist. He mentioned that the USSR has and always had a very friendly attitude towards and understanding for the situation and needs of the Cuban revolution. Relations and cooperation with the USSR are continuously improving and developing. After the departure of Khrushchev, the new Soviet leadership shows full interest in the development of the situation in Cuba and its economic and other needs. It appears to him that the current political leadership of the USSR, particularly [Leonid I.] Brezhnev and [Alexei N.] Kosygin, applies a sophisticated and scientific approach to tackling important issues. Their approach to issues such as the unity of the ICM is much more constructive. He stressed that once 4 million tons [of sugar—ed.] was harvested in the last days, there was a real possibility of reaching 6 million tons harvested this year. Cuba will preferentially develop agricultural production. The value of other production beside sugar may exceed the value of today's sugar production by 1970. They will particularly focus on increasing citrus and livestock production for export.

We stated in the conversation that we shared their opinion, particularly regarding the need for unity of the ICM and for help to Vietnam. Last declarations of the Cs. government and positions of the CPCZ CC on the results of the Moscow consultations of communist parties were mentioned, as well as the issue of the upcoming talks about a long-term agreement on further economic cooperation between the CSSR and Cuba. Fidel Castro expressed interest in these issues and he expects that negotiations can be successfully concluded as soon as possible. Finally he asked that greetings be passed on

his behalf to c. Novotny, Cs. government, CPCZ and to all Cs. people.

In a conversation with the Soviet ambassador, after Fidel Castro left, we could state with confidence that we shared high appreciation of the importance of Fidel's visit. [Aleksandr] Alexeyev also praised the current conduct and policy of the Prime Minister, which are gaining a considerable prestige in Latin America and elsewhere for the revolutionary leadership. He said that he never had serious doubts about Fidel Castro's opinion on the issue of ICM unity and the Chinese position. This situation now became even more clear. While Raul Castro has always openly held the Marxist-Leninist line, Fidel, on the other hand, has a profound view of the situation and main problems, which allows him to find solutions appropriate to the situation, conditions, and status of Cuba whose political and economic consolidation are still undergoing significant progress.



5490/7
IV/2

Record of Talks with the Deputy Chairman of the Cuban Revolutionary Government and Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Commander Raul Castro, 9 April 1965

On 9 April 1965, Cde. Raul Castro asked for a meeting with the Minister of National Defense of the CSSR Cde. Army General B[ohumir]. Lomsky, and with the Joint Director of the Main Technical Administration of the Ministry of Foreign Trade Cde. eng. F. Langer. The talks took place in the villa where the Cs. delegation was staying, in the morning from 8:50 till 9:45.

Present were:

for the Cuban side: Cde. Com. Raul Castro,
Deputy Chairman of the Government and Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces
Cde. Sergio de Valle, Joint Chief of Staff

Cde. Manolo Lopez, Chief of the Department for Procurement of Armaments for the Cuban Peoples Army;

for the Cs. side:

Cde. Army General B. Lomsky, Minister of National Defense

Cde. Pčolka, Cs. Ambassador in Havana

Cde. F. Langer, Joint Director of the Main Technical Administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA-MTA)

Cde. Colonel Kriz, Cs. Military Attaché in Havana

Minister Raul Castro opened the talks with an extensive presentation about the military situation in Cuba. He informed Cde. Lomsky that in the beginning of 1964, a thorough analysis of the military situation in Cuba was done under the leadership of the CRG [Cuban Revolutionary Government] Chairman Fidel Castro. A conclusion followed from this analysis that internal danger has been eliminated, and contra-revolutionary and anti-government groups operating directly in Cuba have been broken up and practically destroyed. The analysis at the same time stated that external danger still fully persisted, that is, the danger from the USA and their minions, the danger of direct aggression.

At that, Cuba is not a member of the Warsaw Pact and does not have a bilateral treaty with the USSR either; there is only a "moral obligation of the USSR to help Cuba in case of an attack," which follows from several declarations of the USSR government about this matter. Another guarantee is Kennedy's statement that Cuba will not be attacked. However, the value of such a guarantee from the USA is undermined by the fact that Kennedy is dead and some members of the USA government reject such a commitment, and beside that, the USA is known to willfully violate even written promises, let alone the oral ones.

Based on the above analysis, they evaluated the strategy of the country's defense, revised operational plans, and carried out number of changes. They decided to concentrate forces into individual strategic locations instead of dispersing them throughout the whole territory, as was done before. Considering that they are within reach of not only tactical but also intercept air forces of the USA, they decided to station critical equipment in underground bunkers. The cost of this plan is about 30 million pesos. A number of civilian construction projects, some of them under construction, had to be stopped in order to free the necessary resources. Due to Cuba's dependency on imports of fuel for its air force and military equipment, they are also building, for instance, large underground storage facilities for fuel.

They have built quite good anti-aircraft defense. Beside modern equipped air force, they also have surface-to-air missiles; however, these weapons are effective especially from 1000 meters up.

Since the USA focused on airspace violations and attacks from lower altitudes, their anti-aircraft defense was augmented last year against low-flying aircraft. At the same time,

measures to defend the missile batteries against low-flying aircraft had to be taken.

All these measures are very, very expensive. They are taking them while fully aware that even their completion cannot guarantee Cuba a permanent capability to resist, to repel permanently any aggression from the USA or their minions. However, they want any aggressors to find out that Cuba is a tough one to beat.

At the same time, they are even now getting ready for a possible insurgency on the territory that the enemy would conquer (armories, organizations). According to their opinion, events in the DRV [Democratic of Vietnam, i.e., North Vietnam] fully confirm that this approach is correct. They think that things can start happening in Cuba in a similar way. First an attack under some pretense, and the USA is a master in finding pretenses, then many more attacks without any reason.

That's why, after the first events in Vietnam, they were speeding up all projects – that was also the reason why they in 1964 asked the USSR and the CSSR for anti-aircraft weapons, and later they turned to the PRC with a similar request.

They originally approached the CSSR with a plea for a shipment of 200 pieces of 30 mm double cannons. C. Raul Castro then said they were offered 100 pieces of refurbished cannons against an immediate payment in Cuban goods, and he also noted that the first shipment of cannons in this quality was for a discounted price. They are, of course, aware that at the time, a payment in convertible currencies was expected. Therefore, they could not accept the offer at that time and were content with anti-aircraft cannons from the USSR and the PRC. The current situation, however (especially the situation in the DRV), is forcing them to ask for 30 mm cannons again. A review revealed that they would need 100 pieces of these weapons. However, they don't want them for free; they would not want and even consider it right that the CSSR should wait 15 years for a repayment.

C. Castro said they were aware that they were very much in debt to us because thanks to our kindness, payments in convertible currencies were changed to payments in Cuban goods. He said he was ashamed that they were not able to fulfill their obligations better. The above-mentioned shipments, including ammunition and priced the same as the first shipments, would cost about 6 million pesos, and they could start making payments from 1966 by 1 million pesos a year in goods.

In his response, Cde. Lomsky assured Cde. Raul Castro that he would pass the submitted request to the Cs. Government, and explained that we shared like brothers with the Cuban army even the first shipments of these cannons, and if the now requested cannons are delivered, the Cuban army will

have more of them than the Cs. army. That was why we could not have offered more than 100 pieces; we were taking these from the counts allotted for our own troops; we even had to reduce numbers of these cannons for our own units below the originally planned numbers.

Cde. Lomsky further pointed out that the CSSR was the first to help Cuba with weapons, regardless of possible consequences in relations of many countries with the CSSR. That is, I think, [Cde. Lomsky said,] the strongest evidence that it was a truly selfless help from the CSSR. He also said that, for instance, the requested 30 mm cannons were not delivered to any other country. The weapons considered for delivery to Cuba are practically new and will only have to be checked, not refurbished. However, it is more complicated with ammunition, which is not available and will have to be manufactured, which will require purchasing raw materials.

However, we fully understand the requests of the Cuban Revolutionary Government, and will pass them to the Cs. Government, along with a full explanation.

On Cde. Minister Castro's remark that the refurbished cannons were sold at a discount in the past, Cde. Langer explained that this time, a delivery of practically new cannons is being considered, as Cde. Lomsky mentioned, that were only checked before shipment. These are, therefore, weapons in the same quality as those that were sold for full price before. Of course, if refurbished cannons are delivered, their price would be adjusted accordingly.

Cde. Langer also said that our government at that time did not assess the delivery from the credit point of view. It followed from previous, quite open talks about these questions, which let us assume that should the Cuban side ask for credit, it would also state its repayment capabilities, much like Cde. Raul Castro conveyed the CRG's request today. The original request was assessed like number of other requests in return for immediate repayment, which were negotiated and realized in the past.

As for the future, Cde. Langer conveyed a request that important questions, above all payment conditions, be openly discussed from the very beginning, so that the capabilities of the Cuban side can be considered during talks. That will expedite negotiations and solutions of all problems.

In his response to Cde. Langer, Cde. Castro then talked about other questions, like training of officers, sending study groups to the CSSR to gain experience, which he would not have time to discuss.

C. Minister Lomsky then repeated an invitation for c. Castro and his military delegation to visit the CSSR, and expressed an opinion that the visit should occur as soon as possible, so that other issues regarding development of relations between the armies can be discussed.

Then the whole party left for the airport.

The talks were conducted in open, comradely manner, and ended very cordially.

[Source: Czech National Archive, Prague, CPCz CC collection. Obtained by James Hershberg and translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.]



Memorandum of Conversation between senior Cuban communist Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) official Vladimir Koucky, Prague, 25 May 1965

05/25/1965

For Information
5781/ 7

Record of a conversation of c. V. Koucky with c. Carlos R. Rodriguez, member of the national leadership of the Unified Party of Socialist Revolution of Cuba.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez first said he was pleased to be able to talk with comrade Koucky confidentially and to contribute to the elimination of misunderstandings that could possibly arise because the reasons were not explained for Cuba's positions on issues of the international communist movement, and for speeches and statements of some leading Cuban comrades. At that he emphasized that Fidel Castro was happy to accept an invitation for a UPSR delegation to visit Czechoslovakia, because he as well is very much interested in better and more frequent relations of our two parties. He also keenly agreed with c. Koucky's remark that due to extensive economic and state cooperation of our two countries, contact between the parties is insufficient.

He further said that the UPSR strives for better contacts with fraternal parties. In August of last year, a Korean [Workers'] party [KWP] delegation was in Cuba and a delegation of the Italian Communist Party [PCI] is there now. In order to improve relations with fraternal parties and to inform the UPSR leadership better, the apparatus of the UPSR national leadership will be augmented by a Secretariat for International Affairs. The head of this international department will be the current Minister of Construction c. Osmany

Cienfuegos, who since student years had sympathized with the youth of the Popular Socialist Party [PSP]. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez fully trusts Osmany Cienfuegos and will help him in every way. The need to build this department is felt more and more urgently. Absence of such a work group is the reason why leading comrades are poorly informed about important issues of relations among parties and of international politics. In addition, Carlos Rafael believes that establishment of this department will be the next step to implementation of the principle of collective leadership of the UPSR.

Efforts to apply this Leninist principle to the party life began to develop promisingly by late 1961. The case of Anibal Escalante, who was dismissed from the leadership of the UPSR for sectarian methods [in March 1962], was a serious setback. Fidel Castro has since been very suspicious. He is convinced that the Communists are old friends of his, but he also knows that this friendship is not personal but is based on politics. To wit, the investigation of Anibal Escalante's activities revealed that the Unified Socialist Party was developing cooperation with Raul Castro and Ernesto Guevara, without Fidel's knowledge, already in the mountains of Sierra Maestra. This finding greatly strengthened Fidel's distrust.

Around Fidel Castro, there is a group of capable and honest people who are loyal to him uncritically. They are not communists, but "fidelists". Fidel takes a purely personal position on many problems. Non-critical closest personnel and Fidel's popularity sometimes become a negative factor.

Fidel takes sometimes measures, with which, for example, even the organizational secretary of the National UPSR Administration [Emilio] Aragonés disagrees, who is otherwise unconditionally loyal to Fidel. He [Fidel] interferes with the competence of personnel who are responsible for assigned sections. It happened very often for example at the Institute for Agricultural Reform [INRA], whose President was until recently Carlos Rafael [Rodriguez]. Differences and disagreements were thus happening between him and Fidel, which some people were taking advantage of. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez therefore offered his resignation to Fidel three times.

Comrade Koucky commented that the report of Rodriguez leaving the Institute for Agricultural Reform was not immediately clear to us. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez explained the untenable situation in the management of this important office, which was created by Fidel's interventions. He said he believed that Fidel really always wanted to take full control of agriculture. The only obstacle was that he did not want to offend Carlos Rafael. Carlos Rafael combined his last resignation with a suggestion that Fidel himself takes over the management of the Institute for Agricultural Reform, which indeed happened.

To Comrade Koucky's question whether Anibal Escalante remains now in Cuba, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez said that Anibal Escalante asked for an approval of his return to Cuba. He returned on the occasion of the death of his brother, Cesar Escalante, who was in charge of ideological work within the national leadership of the UPSR. Personally, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez believes that Anibal Escalante should not stay in Cuba. His presence will revive bitterness of many middle party cadres, who were previously members of the Popular Socialist Party, and in connection with criticism of Anibal Escalante were removed along with him. (Carlos Rafael did not mention that Anibal Escalante would be put in a position of responsibility in the State Bank, as it follows from some reports.)

To c. Koucky's question what he thought about the case of Joaquín Ordoqui, Carlos Rafael replied that this was a complex and not yet fully clarified issue. There is evidence that a number of matters has been leaked to an imperialist agency. Almost all of these cases are from the time of Anibal's stay in Mexico. Moreover, it was found that only Ordoqui knew about some of the things that were leaked. Ordoqui denies guilt, but does not react well; responds in an unclear, unconvincing manner. He is 65 years [old] today. He demands vigorously a public discussion about his case. However, such a discussion will be very dangerous. Personally, Carlos Rafael believes that Ordoqui's guilt will not be proved but neither does he prove his innocence. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez referred to the whole thing as "very ugly matters." (Note: the wife of J. Ordoqui c. Buchaca, accused along with him, was formerly the wife of Carlos Rafael Rodriguez.)

Carlos Rafael further said that the Ordoqui case was water to the mill of anti-communist elements.

Carlos Rafael then mentioned that the situation in the party leadership and among middle-rank cadres is improving. By contrast, the influence of counter-revolutionary elements still persists in the state administration and especially in some ministries. Part of the followers of pro-Chinese views came from there. The Chinese attacks and slanders against the USSR were a platform for these elements from which to spread their anti-Sovietism with impunity.

Even many honest people sympathized or still sympathize with the Communist Party of China. As contradictions in the international communist movement develop, these honest and mostly young people lose illusions and their feelings about China are cooling down. (For example, today's sugar plants minister and former deputy of Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara in the Ministry of Industry Borges is one of those people.) The Chinese, however, use various ways and let their people speak at meetings. For example, one large meeting in Beijing featured a Haitian immigrant, or rather a man who

posed as one. It is definitely an Asian; even his physiognomy is typical of an Asian, not of a Latin American.

When asked about Minister of Communications [Faure] Chomon [Mediavilla]'s current attitude, c. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez replied that still from his college times, Chomon is literally surrounded by a group of negative people with whom he is closely linked. Chomon has a revolutionary past; he participated as one of the commanders in the second guerilla section in [the Sierra] Escambray [mountains], and led terrorist actions against the people of the Batista regime in Havana. Carlos Rafael believes that it is possible to influence Chomon because he understands many things well. He talks especially well about the Soviet Union, where he was an ambassador. However, it is necessarily to keep him away from the group that influences him. His positive development would surely accelerate under the conditions of collective leadership.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez then returned several times to shortcomings in the application of Leninist norms in the inner life of the UPSR. He said it was initially very difficult for him to work, and he could not adapt to Fidel's style for a long time. It is true that Fidel's perseverance and his extraordinary ability can correct many mistakes but it cannot prevent undisciplined acts of some individuals. He mentioned Che Guevara as an example.

To c. Koucky's remark that Guevara's Algerian speech was incomprehensible to us, and left a very uncomfortable impression, Carlos Rafael said that [Cuban] President [Osvaldo] Dorticos and he were also very surprised. Raul Castro, who was in Moscow [in March 1965], emphatically rejected this speech. Fidel Castro said that he agrees with some parts of the speech, however, neither the form of the speech nor the place where Guevara delivered it was appropriate.

In this context, c. Koucky noted that the CPCZ must work on two tasks simultaneously: to help nations that are liberating themselves, but first and foremost to fulfill its duty to its own working class. Socialism must be reflected in practice by increasing production and living standards because only that has a meaning for workers. Only then can an example of a socialist state be attractive for workers in advanced capitalist countries.

Carlos Rafael replied that he fully understands the complexity of our problems. Collective leadership would certainly help to eliminate errors like Guevara's speech in Algiers.

When asked how Guevara's absence in May Day celebrations in Havana is explained, and what Guevara is doing now, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez said that Guevara does not want to go back to the Ministry anymore or to lead any administrative or economic department. However, they are not sure how to arrange his departure.

There are also other kinds of difficulties with him. Guevara is a Cuban national and a member of the Cuban government. As such, he was involved in Argentine affairs too much. On his own, he organized in Argentina (his homeland) guerrilla units, which were easily destroyed. He also sent there with this mission [Jorge Ricardo] Masset[ti], his personal protégé and former director of Prensa Latina, Massetti (who is known as a former Peronist).

The Ministry of Industry is currently managed by a group of young professionals. They are fully aware of the depth of and relations among economic problems. Thanks to the Soviet ambassador, they found out that in Cuba, there is \$200 million worth of various uninstalled and partial or complete investments, delivered from socialist countries. Che Guevara was simply doing whatever he wanted. It will take a long time to correct the consequences. That task will be even more difficult because the level of the Unified Party of Socialist Revolution cannot be compared with levels of for instance the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

However, Carlos Rafael said that despite all these difficulties, the first positive results are already appearing. Sugar production this year will reach almost 6 million tons. On the other hand, however, a decrease in world prices of sugar will have an impact. Also, volume of industrial production will not increase in 1965.

Carlos Rafael did not give even an approximate date when the founding congress of the UPSR of Cuba would convene. He again expressed hope that the visit of the Cuban party delegation in Czechoslovakia would be very beneficial. Fidel Castro's visit in the CSSR would be beneficial as well. However, it is absolutely necessary to act directly with Fidel, without any diplomatic protocol.

At the end of the conversation, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez responded positively to the question of c. Koucky whether he was satisfied with the course of talks, and with our economic experts.

[Source: Czech National Archives, Prague, Kuba files, CPCz CC collection; obtained by James Hershberg, translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.]

Notes

1 Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos had actually been in the Soviet capital when the Kremlin coup occurred, but he was not able to meet those who had ousted Khrushchev, or even learn fully what had occurred, before he left the city.

2 Sino-Soviet tensions at this juncture, and the February 1965 Kosygin-Mao conversations in particular, see Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); and Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns*

in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967 (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 2009).

3 See Yinghong Cheng, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9:3 (Summer 2007): 78-114., esp. pp. 78-79, 102-107.

4 For the best study in recent years on this often-told story, see Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

5 On Soviet-Cuban relations during this period, see, e.g., James G. Blight and Philip Brenner, *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba's Struggle with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis* (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

6 *Spór* can have the following meanings: contestation, dispute, controversy, quarrel, and altercation. The *spór* refers to the Sino-Soviet split or rift.

7 *Rozbieżności* could also mean disagreements and clashes.

8 *Ostra* also means sharp, caustic, severe and harsh.

9 *Rozeznąć się* could also refer to recognize, discern, or discriminate.

10 [On this episode, see Yinghong Cheng, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9:3 (Summer 2007): 78-114.—ed.]

11 More natural way to say this could perhaps be: "On these grounds we decided to change our position."

12 "This fact" appears to refer either to the Sino-Soviet rift or the occurrence of the Cuba Missile Crisis.

13 [For a report of his 9 January 1965 interview, see Edgar Snow, "Interview with Mao," *The New Republic*, 26 February 1965]

14 *Pismo* can mean both a letter and a newspaper in Polish--*transl.*

15 PRUS - Partido Unido de la Revolucion Socialista: the United Party of Socialist Revolution (UPSR)

16 Perhaps *hammered out* would be a better word here.

17 RPR I - Rumunska Partia Robotnicza: the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP).

18 RWPG – Rada Wzajemnej Pomocy Gospodarczej: Council for Economic Mutual Assistance (CEMA).

19 PRUS - Partido Unido de la Revolucion Socialista: the United Party of Socialist Revolution (UPSR).

20 This word can also mean contestation, quarrel, dispute, or altercation--trans.

21 The text here is incomplete. The word here could be either *może* (can) or *musi* (must, have to). It is most likely that the word is *musi* (must, have to)--trans.

22 *Ostry* also means sharp, acute, and severe--trans.

23 PRUS - Partido Unido de la Revolucion Socialista: the United Party of Socialist Revolution (UPSR)

24 *Krzywdzące* can mean both detrimental and unfair.

25 An apparent reference to the US naval base at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba.

26 It is unclear to which incident Raul Castro is here referring, though he may have been alluding to the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident.

27 It is not clear what "canals" Raul Castro meant here--trans.

28 The name is missing at the shorthand record; however, the Romanian delegation was led by Prime Minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer.

29 Reference is to Sino-Soviet differences.

30 Ed. note: Castro refers here to Brazilian President João Goulart, who was deposed in a military coup in late March/early April 1964, and to his brother-in-law Leonel Brizzola, the governor of Rio Grande do Sul province whom US officials considered a dangerous leftist with communist connections and tendencies.

31 Ed. note: Possibly a reference to the 7 March 1965 Chilean parliamentary elections, won by the Christian Democratic Party.

32 [Unknown Czech acronym; could be Yugoslavia but the usual acronym does not match--trans.]

33 Ed. note: A reference to Lyndon B. Johnson's 7 April 1965 address at Johns Hopkins University, known as his "Peace Without Conquest" speech.

“A Mystery Wrapped in a Riddle and Kept in a Sphinx”: New Evidence on Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin’s Trip to Cuba, June 1967, and the Turn in Relations between Cuba and the Soviet Bloc, 1967-68

Introduction by Philip Brenner¹

The mysteries of Soviet Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin’s visit to Cuba from 26-30 June 1967 and the ensuing crisis in Soviet-Cuban relations in 1968 are a little less opaque as a result of the documents that follow, though there remain inconsistencies. Most important, it is clear that the main purpose of Kosygin’s trip was to deliver a stern message to the Cuban leadership that the Soviets would no longer tolerate Cuba’s support for armed struggle against recognized governments in Latin America and Africa.

This was not a minor difference of opinion between Cuba and the Soviet Union. Each viewed the other country’s position as a threat to its fundamental interests. The Soviet goal was “peaceful coexistence,” which would provide the leadership with a domestic justification for directing resources to internal development instead of military spending while enabling the military to claim an enhanced status as protectors of a superpower with equal standing to that of the United States. Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and Kosygin believed that achieving the goal required not causing any trouble for the United States in its “backyard.”

President Lyndon B. Johnson in effect told Kosygin as much in their summit at Glassboro State College in New Jersey, the day before Kosygin went to Havana. Johnson summarized his meeting with the Soviet prime minister in a telephone conversation that very evening with former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, saying he told Kosygin that in Latin America

there were 6 or 7 hot spots, that they are using Soviet material—Cuba was—that we caught a bunch of them the other day in Venezuela, that they were giving us hell in the Dominican Republic and Haiti and Bolivia and half a dozen places, that this is a very serious matter, Soviet equipment, Castro-trained people....He ought to realize that we thought this was very serious and we were going to have to take action.²

Notably, according to Kosygin’s own report to Communist Party Secretaries in Budapest two weeks later (see Document No. 2), he raised the matter of Cuba sending Soviet arms to guerrillas in Latin America.

For the Cuban leaders, supporting revolutionary movements was a strategy of survival in the face of the continuing threat it perceived from the United States and their certainty after the 1962 missile crisis that the Soviet Union would not defend Cuba in the event of a US attack.³ They believed, in Che Guevara’s famous phrase, that creating “two, three, many Vietnams” would overextend the United States and diminish its will to engage Cuba in a protracted guerrilla war. At the same time, if the struggles were successful, Cuba would have helped to build a network of like-minded third world countries with which it could trade and engage in south-south development, thereby reducing its dependence on the Soviet Union. Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro viewed “peaceful coexistence” as nothing less than capitulation to US imperialism.

The documents do not quite capture the tension in the meetings between Kosygin and the Cubans, though there are hints throughout. At one point in his Budapest report, Kosygin notes he told Castro that “conducting revolution in the countries of Latin America through expediting there a few people is adventurous”—a term that was used to justify the October 1964 ouster of former CPSU leader Nikita Khrushchev. Castro responded sarcastically, “So was the Cuban revolution [adventurous,] too?” adding that “Che Guevara is fighting in Bolivia and has successes. Most of the communist parties in Latin America are not parties... but Marxist clubs.” Kosygin’s blood must have been boiling, because this was precisely the posture he was sent to Cuba to re-adjust. But he remarks coldly, “I have not heard that he [Che] had been invited by the Bolivians.”

Kosygin’s meaning was clear to Castro. The “Bolivians” to whom the Soviet leader was referring was Mario Monge, head of Bolivia’s communist party. Monge had complained to the Soviets about Che’s expedition. Che in effect had challenged Monge’s claim to be the principal leader of leftist groups in Bolivia, and an endorsement would have violated orders he had received from Moscow. Indeed, it is evident from Castro’s “necessary introduction” to Che’s *Bolivian Diary*, that the Cuban leader believed Monge was responsible for Che’s death by revealing his location to the Central Intelligence Agency or Bolivian military.⁴

Castro certainly recalled his conversation with Kosygin when Che was killed three months later, and he likely believed the Soviets had approved Monge’s treachery. [Ed. note: By

late 1967, after a brief improvement following Kosygin's visit, Soviet-Cuban ties had plummeted again. As senior Cuban communist Carlos Rafael Rodríguez explained in late November 1967 to a Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) official (see Document No. 3), Fidel Castro had been angered a month earlier when *Pravda*, the Kremlin mouthpiece, ran articles by Chilean and Argentine communist leaders implicitly critical of Cuba's militant stand supporting violent revolution in Latin America, for it termed proletarian communist parties as more effective than guerrilla groups; in response, Castro had abruptly lowered the level of Cuba's delegation to the celebrations in Moscow of the 40th anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, and it was the only party not to make a congratulatory address at the gathering.⁵ Rodríguez also noted some disappointment among Cubans at the tepid reaction to Che's death in some sectors of the Soviet bloc, including Czechoslovakia.—[J.H.]

The conversation with Kosygin, combined with the subsequent downturn in relations, may have led Castro to believe, as well, that the Soviets would try to oust him. Indeed, that was the essence of the charges against the so-called micro-faction, a group within the recently created Cuban Communist Party whose leaders came from the Popular Socialist Party, the communist party in pre-1959 Cuba, including PSP head Aníbal Escalante. In late January 1968 Defense Minister Raúl Castro, the second secretary of the Cuban Communist Party, presided over a trial that purged the micro-faction and sent a signal to Moscow that Havana would resist Moscow's pressure.⁶ (The charges against the alleged "micro faction" were laid out at an emergency meeting of the Cuban Communist Party—for East German reports, see Document Nos. 4 and 5.)

Another irritating way in which Cuba had displayed its independence from Soviet strictures was its response to the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War in June 1967. The Soviets broke diplomatic relations with Israel and demanded that the other countries in the Soviet bloc follow suit. All did, except Romania. Cuba also maintained diplomatic relations with Israel, and Kosygin's visit came two weeks after the war ended. The Middle East was an important subject in the meetings.

In part, Cuba's action served to highlight its independence from the Soviet Union. Cuban sources leaked a story while Kosygin was in Havana that the Russians had pressed Castro to break relations with Israel. Castro's reply: first the Russians must break relations with the United States.⁷ Castro reportedly also had an emotional affinity with Israel. Both countries placed an emphasis on educating its population and developing advanced medical systems. Castro also may have seen a parallel between Israel's situation—surrounded by enemies—and Cuba's own circumstances.⁸

The deep schism in the Soviet-Cuban relationship during this period nearly came to a breaking point in 1968. Even as Brezhnev attempted to dismiss the tension in his April 1968 report (see Document No. 6), Cuba continued to reject Soviet admonitions about both domestic and foreign policy. As the report from the East German Communist Party's International Committee observes disparagingly, Castro's purge of the "micro-faction" was accompanied by an "anti-Soviet, and petit-bourgeoisie-adventurist political line of the Cuban leadership." According to conventional wisdom, the break was avoided by Castro's supposed capitulation in his August 1968 speech in response to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. (On the subsequent more positive tone in Cuba's relations with the Soviet bloc, see the records of a November 1968 East German delegation to Havana—Document Nos. 8 and 9.)

In fact, far from being an endorsement of the Soviet invasion as the speech is often misinterpreted to be, it lays down exactly the kind of challenge to the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries for which Kosygin criticizes Cuba in his report to the Communist Party General Secretaries. Castro first acknowledges in his speech that "the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak state was violated ... Not the slightest trace of legality exists. Frankly, none whatever." The necessity of the intervention, he said, "can only be explained from a political point of view"—i.e., the need to maintain the unity of the socialist camp.⁹ Having established what he considered the only valid justification for the invasion, he then throws down the gauntlet:

We ask ourselves: Will the Warsaw Pact divisions also be sent to Vietnam if the Yankee imperialists step up their aggression against that country if the people of Vietnam request that aid? Will they send the divisions of the Warsaw Pact to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea if the Yankee imperialists attack that country? Will they send the divisions of the Warsaw Pact to Cuba if the Yankee imperialists attack our country, or even in the case of the threat of a Yankee imperialist attack on our country, if our country requests it?¹⁰

Of course, these were rhetorical questions with an implied accusation. Castro knew that the answers were "no." In reading Kosygin's report, we now know that the Soviet leadership also must have understood Castro's remarks to be as much denunciation as endorsement. Indeed, the Soviet Union did not reward Cuba with a significant increase in aid following Castro's speech. It was not until the 1970 ten-ton Cuban sugar harvest failed, and Cuba had no choice but to humble

itself, that the Soviet Union embraced Cuba and began a process of bringing it into the Soviet trading bloc.



DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT No. 1

A Report from the Mexican Embassy in Havana, 4 July 1967

Air Mail—Confidential

Embassy of Mexico in Cuba
Number 559

Re: Visit of Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin from 26-30 June 1967

Havana, 4 July 1967

Secretary of Foreign Relations, Mexico City

On the 26th of last month [June], in a way surprising to the public and without prior notice of any kind, Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin arrived in this city, after his visit to the United Nations Headquarters in New York and his interview with President Johnson in New Jersey. He was received at the airport by President Osvaldo Dorticos, Premier Fidel Castro, the Minister of Armed Forces Raul Castro, two or three more officials of the Government and of the Communist Party and [Raul] Castro's wife, Vilma Espín,¹¹ president of the Federation of Cuban Women. Her attendance may have been a response to the wish that a lady be present during the reception to pay attention to Mr. Kosygin's daughter, who formed part of his delegation.

To repeat Churchill's statement, it could be said about the Soviet leader's visit that it was a mystery wrapped in a secret and kept in a sphinx. Nothing, indeed, has emerged up to now concerning what was discussed with the leaders of the Cuban Government and Communist Party, and although rumors and conjectures are heard in the streets, nothing is concretely known about the matters raised or discussed.

On the other hand, the cold attitude of the Cuban authorities and local press toward the important person, the apparent ignorance about his daughter's stay in Havana, a certain tense formality that could be seen in Dr. Castro Ruz when they took photos of him and the visitor, have all stirred

up suspicions that the encounter was not entirely favorable to the Cuban leader.

Not only among Western diplomatic circles, but also in those of the socialist world, it is believed that the matters discussed in perhaps a not very cordial way between the Russian and Cuban statesmen were the following:

First—the position assumed by the Cuban Government and Communist Party in relation to Latin America, where they promote a guerrilla movement against the governments of various countries. In this regard, Kosygin expressed the total disapproval of his government with what Cuba had done, and warned Mr. Castro of the risks of persisting in such a policy for relations in Moscow and Havana. Perhaps the Soviet Union would rather maintain cordial relations in the political and commercial arena with Latin American countries than arouse their enmity and endanger commercial exchange with them.

Second—the Middle East and Vietnam. Kosygin said to Mr. Castro that the position adopted by Cuba in relation to problems in the Middle East and Vietnam is disagreeable to the Soviet Union, since it goes to extremes to urge that the Kremlin not accept it. By seeming more Catholic than the Pope, Castro is possibly seeking to acquire prestige among the forces of the so-called Third World and become its leader, a very inopportune situation for the Soviet Union, presently quite worried about situations that they face in the case of China and Vietnam, Cambodia, etc. in southeast Asia.

Third—internal administration of Cuba. The Russian leader warned Mr. Castro of the serious concerns of his government about the chaotic state of affairs into which the communist administration of Cuba had put the country, and the obvious waste of aid that the Soviet Union had given it. In this respect, it is worth noting that although a commercial agreement exists between the two nations concerning sugar, of course favorable to the Soviet Union, the latter felt obligated to lend help to the government of Havana to keep it moving, though in precarious conditions the [Soviet] national economic machinery exceeds the advantages that its commercial treaties allow it to attain.

Fourth—political operation in Cuba. Mr. Kosygin expressed to Mr. Castro that his government fears that the constant repression and violence employed against enemies of his regime and even persons innocent of any possible political charge will end up provoking a violent popular reaction and even the defection of part of the army, among whom signs of restlessness are already cause for concern, as the Cuban people suffer more and more from the horrific shortage of all kinds of nutritional items, clothing, etc.

The views and conjectures above do not rest on a firm base, however, they are a general expression of the ideas and judgments awakened in the minds of Western diplomats and of communist countries by the strange reception and circumstances that motivated Mr. Kosygin's trip.

Cuban government officials remain discreet and cautious when talking about the meaning and importance of the Soviet leader's visit. It is possible, however, that Premier Castro might allude to it during his speech to be given in Santiago de Cuba on July 26. Until then, the island will continue to be in an environment of uncertainty and expectation.

To bid farewell to the visitor, we as chiefs of mission were invited to the airport and were able to observe a demonstration by workers and students along the road that connects the airport to the city with a few thousand people. This demonstration was the only act of public importance carried out in honor of Mr. Kosygin.

Lastly, and because it is of interest, I wish to state that this morning the representative of the Associated Press in Cuba, Mr. Miller, came to visit me, and told me that when he wanted to notify his organization of the visit, his message was rejected by Western Union on Friday morning, but surprisingly that same afternoon, governmental authorization for his dispatch was granted. The fact is important since Mr. Miller noticed the coldness of Mr. Kosygin's reception and the almost mysterious circumstances in which his trip took shape. It should be asked, then, why the Cuban censor opposed the dispatch of the cable on Friday morning, then accepted it unchanged in the afternoon. He either did this on his own impulse, or perhaps received instructions from higher up to proceed in such a manner. These are questions with difficult answers, but ones that give way to new issues.

I hereby take the opportunity to reiterate to you assurances of my most attentive and distinguished consideration.

EFFECTIVE SUFFRAGE, NO RE-ELECTION.

The Ambassador Fernando Pámanes Escobedo

[Source: Source: *Archivo de Concentraciones (Mexico City), Mexican Foreign Relations Secretariat, File folder: 3056-1, Informes Políticos-Embajada de México en Cuba. Original document included in National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book by Kate Doyle, "Double Dealing: Mexico's Foreign Policy Toward Cuba" (posted 2 March 2003). Translated for CWIHP by Christopher Dunlap.]*



DOCUMENT No. 2

Kosygin's Report on Trip to Cuba to Meeting of Communist Party First Secretaries, Budapest, Hungary, 12 July 1967

Secret

Copy No. 1
Minutes

from a conference of the Communist and Workers' parties and chiefs of governments of the socialist countries on the situation in the Middle East
(Budapest, 11-12 July 1967)

The conference was held on 11 July, from 3 to 9 p.m. and on 12 July from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
The reporting group met on 12 July, from 8:30 to 10:00.

The conference was convened on the initiative of the Soviet Union.
Rumania was not invited to the conference.

[excerpt from July 12:]

Information by com. Kosygin

[Kosygin first reported on conversations with Charles De Gaulle in Paris and with Lyndon Johnson in Glassboro.]

A visit in Cuba

I got an instruction from the Politburo to go to Cuba. Before my departure from Moscow the Politburo discusses the situation in Cuba. We decided to send a letter to Fidel Castro on behalf of the Politburo. In that letter we expressed surprise and disapproval for a number of his actions. It was quite a detailed letter. It dealt with all international problems and relations with the socialist countries, set out our position. We expressed our surprise at a political wavering of Cuba that could weaken its situation. We argued that we could not agree with its policy of exporting revolution to the countries of Latin America. We also said that if this would complicate the situation and lead to a military conflict—they take responsibility on themselves.

At the airport I was met by Fidel and [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos. The meeting looked very bleak. They greeted me coldly. From outside our arrival looked like some private visit.

In the car Fidel was explaining me that they on purpose were not doing an official greeting. I responded: very good, I am glad, we have come here to talk and I am grateful that it was done without an official protocol. It seems that he was satisfied. Right after our arrival (we arrived from New York towards the evening) Fidel asked: What do you want to do now? Maybe we will go to see the city. It was evening, raining, but we drove to sightsee Havana—Dorticos, Fidel and me. I must say that Havana looks very poorly. Somehow frayed, houses not painted, plasters falling apart. Fidel suggested: and now we go to a cattle insemination station. And so, throughout the whole night, almost to 4 a.m. we traveled about Cuba. He showed me everything.

I was satisfied. They are doing a huge work. People work—enthusiasts, not “slipshod workers.” In the past they had had 7 million cattle. From that cattle there was neither meat, nor milk (2 liters of milk per cow daily). To milk a cow they had to tie its head by huge horns; milking had been done by men, as the cow was half-wild, kicking. Since some time they have bet on rational husbandry. They bought breeding bulls. Now they already have 500 thousand of young cattle, get new races of cattle, cows are giving already 20 liters of milk per day. In a word, they have wonderfully set about this question.

The economic situation in Cuba is very complex. There is a rationing system with very low norms of rice, butter, meat (30 decagrams weekly), which in general are not sold in total. Lack of milk. Even bananas are being rationed. Children get 2 bananas per week. A lack of industrial products, allocation of fabrics 8 m per person annually, shoes—1 pair annually, but even this cannot be bought. In normal commercial sale is only sugar and white bread (from our flour, we deliver it in sufficient quantities). Stores are virtually empty, everywhere queues, though Fidel gave instructions that on the day of our arrival there should be no queues. In Havana the mood is gloomy, only the students are cheering.

The next day we held a meeting. The whole Politburo of the Cuban party came in. Fidel suggested that I begin. I gave information on the situation in the Middle East, on Vietnam, on the economic situation of the Soviet Union and came up to the question of our mutual relations. When I began to talking about the content of our letter and motivate it (the letter has a purely party-line character), Fidel asked: why have you come here, once you sent a letter? I answered: to explain particular issues, as the letter had been sent long ago. When I expanded on thoughts contained in the letter and dealt with all problems of their policy, Fidel started to

get nervous. He ordered a break, but by that time I almost had finished my talk.

Fidel suddenly suggested: Let's go sight-seeing the country. I responded I had not come for an excursion, but to talk. Dorticos supported me. Then Fidel said to me: too many people participate in this conversation from your side. While from our side it was only me and two comrades, and from their side about 15 people. Nevertheless, I said: all right, if you think that we are too many, I will remain alone. Then he said; “from our side it is also too many.” Apparently that is what he wanted. He ordered a recess for two hours, and in the evening we gathered in a different composition. From their side there were only three comrades: Fidel, Dorticos and Raul [Castro]. From our side also three: me, an interpreter, and a comrade from the ministry of foreign affairs. Only in this conversation Fidel started to talk in more detail on some questions. So did I.

First of all I raised the question of policy with regard to Latin America. Fidel said: you don't accept our policy toward the countries of Latin America. I responded: yes, we don't accept. And the controversy began. I said to Fidel: conducting revolution in the countries of Latin America through expediting there a few people is adventurous. Fidel responded: “So was the Cuban revolution too?” He added that Che Guevara is fighting in Bolivia and has successes. Most of the communist parties in Latin America are not parties—said Fidel—but Marxist clubs. He was particularly angry at Venezuela. He called them traitors, saying that communist parties have become bureaucratized, lost their revolutionary character and interest in leading their nations to a revolution. We believe—he said—in a military coup and in the formation of people-revolutionary parties, which in Bolivia are created by Che Guevara. I responded: I have not heard that he had been invited by the Bolivians. Fidel said he had been invited. I expressed my opinion on the communist parties in those countries. Fidel disagreed with me. But all the time (we chatted the whole night) he was repeatedly raising this subject.

Then he took up our letter and said: you have said here that if we continue taking such position and conduct such activity in other countries, there will be conflicts and you will not take responsibility on yourselves. Thus, you learned that we were under threat and you sent out to us such letter to wash your hands of this matter.

He was saying all of this in a quite abrasive tune. The following day I said to him: Comrade Fidel (there were three of them), yesterday you offended our country and our party. We cannot accept it and you should recall your words. Otherwise, why should we need this cooperation. We support you, we help you politically and materially, and you offend us. On what basis? You have no proof to support your charges.

Fidel got excited: yes, I do have the document!

Show it to me—I demanded. He pulled out a cable sent by the Cuban ambassador in Moscow [perhaps Carlos Olivares Sanchez—ed.]. The ambassador writes that on the basis reliable information in his possession (he gave an informer in Moscow, but Fidel would not reveal his name to me), there is prepared an intervention against Cuba and the Soviet Union knows about it, but doesn't communicate it to Cuba.

And here those two documents coincide—our letter and a cable from the Cuban ambassador. Fidel thought, that that is why we had sent our letter to have an excuse in case of intervention.

That cable was an absolute provocation from their ambassador. And so I told him: it is not an ambassador, it is a provocateur. It's good that I have learned from you about this document. Fidel responded: he could not lie, since this information came from high circles in Moscow. I replied: a week ago I was in Moscow and I know all state documents. I am officially telling you that this is a provocation.

I asked for the name of that informer, the more so that the ambassador wrote that his informer was someone close to the Soviet leadership and holding an important position. Fidel refused to reveal the name. He said he would ask him and if he agrees, then he will give his name. I repeated once again: I officially state that your ambassador is a provocateur.

Here you see how cautiously one should treat different information transmitted by third persons.

The Cubans became visibly cheerful. They were convinced that the cable from their ambassador was correct and was correlated with our letter. The mood changed at once. They began to be more interested in our policy, our successes, problems, began talking about their economic situation, etc. Thus, after a sharp exchange of views, everything began to go well.

For the Cubans, the main question right now is agriculture. Before the evening we went to look at grubbing out the jungle. They have our tractors working at it—250 KM, tied together. They work day and night. They clear up at a time 50-60 meters of brushwood and bushes, they are followed by French bulldozers, and then again tractors with discs, which cut the roots, etc. The work goes on day and night. They chose the right people—enthusiasts.

They created tens and tens of citrus plantations—lemons, mangos, and also of coffee and bean plants. They also created orchards. They estimate that in 1970 they will have at least 1 million tons of citrus fruits. They still don't think what they are going to do with all this. They lack processing plants, they are not going to sell such quantities. They have many new pastures. Thus, there is going on a huge work and with great enthusiasm.

However, there are also minuses to it. The whole work is based on students. Even colleges have some, consecutively scheduled breaks in teaching. Students have two months of vacation in a year, which they devote to work. Women in ages 20-30 years old are mobilized from towns for voluntary work on the reconstruction of villages in the span of 2-3 years.

One should say, that Fidel is met everywhere with such enthusiasm, that they are ready to kiss him. Everybody says of him well, approach him, worry that he doesn't look well, advise him to get a rest, etc. All have pistols: a revolutionary mood—all in uniforms, even agronomists. Fidel also carries a gun, only Dorticos is not armed. After all, this is normal. In Russia in the first years after the revolution we were wearing arms too. The Spanish like arms very much, they would feel bad if they didn't have it on them. They are treating it like a toy.

And thus, after all these journeys around the country, talks, we got together once again. Then Fidel put forward his grudges.

He explained to us why he maintains diplomatic relations with Spain, Portugal, has not broken relations with Israel. He said: So many (countries) have broken diplomatic relations with us, that almost nobody is left.

A serious problem for them is a permanent emigration to the US Already 400 thousand people have left Cuba, and 200 thousand are still waiting to leave. These departures are not being restrained. It is mostly intelligentsia that is leaving, and in the recent period also skilled workers. Fidel was expressing dissatisfaction about some socialist countries, among them Poland, that she is grabbing him sugar markets. They produce over 6 million tons of sugar. The Czechs have built a shoe factory in Cuba, which is idle, because they lack skins. Also idle is refrigerator plant, since they lack metals, etc. We should think of injecting some live stream into the Cuban economy. The Cubans will return. They worry that they are in debt, but they will develop agricultural production and will return for sure.

I reproached Fidel for coming out against the socialist camp. He promised not to do it openly either against the socialist countries, or the Soviet Union. They will be approaching to these questions more prudently, trying to prevent such divergences among us.

With regard to our letter he said: as we have exchanged opinions in detail on questions dealt with in your letter and have explained some problems, we will not respond to this letter. We will assume that the matter has been closed by our conversation.

I have to say that Raul was trying to help us and somehow smooth the situation. Towards the end of the visit there were no more tension.

They have recalled their ambassador in Moscow. Now they are selecting another candidate, a trusted man, a CC member.

Fidel has stated that he accepts all our wishes of military nature, they will permit to build in Cuba our observatory stations for rockets, cosmic vehicles, etc.

Johnson told me in the course of our conversation that he was worried because our arms find their way from Cuba to other countries in Latin America. He said that our rifles and motor boats had gotten into American hands. I responded I am not acquainted with this matter. I told Fidel about this. He responded: these are not Soviet arms, but the ones produced on Soviet licenses in one of the socialist countries (Czechoslovakia). Americans captures several Cubans and in this way got these weapons.

Fidel asked to convey greetings for de Gaulle. I did this in my talk with de Gaulle. He told me: they follow the situation in Cuba, have good relations. He thanked for a gift sent by Fidel. And continued talking for a few more minutes about Cuba. I argued with de Gaulle that that is important for us to have in this area of the world a socialist country, which would reflect some European problems. De Gaulle was laughing.

I am glad, that I could talk frankly with Fidel. The talks were sharp but amicable, party-like, friendly and have ended very well. We got a very friendly farewell. The whole of Havana took to the streets. Present were all official personalities. The farewell, from the point of official protocol was very well organized.

Tito: (Chairman); All comrades are probably in agreement that com. Kosygin's information has been very precious for us. On behalf of all of us I thank you very much.

[Source: KC PZPR XIA/13, AAN, Warsaw. Obtained for CWIHP by James Hershberg and translated for CWIHP by Jan Chowaniec.]



DOCUMENT No. 3

Memorandum of Conversation between
Czechoslovak Communist Party official Vladimir
Koucky and Cuban Communist Party official Carlos
Rafael Rodriguez, Prague, 24 November 1967

For Information

3477/9

TOP SECRET!

Record of a conversation of c. Vladimir Koucky with a member of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CP of Cuba, c. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez (November 24, 1967)

At the very beginning of his visit with c. V. Koucky, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez indicated that he had also other worries than his health. After c. [Soviet Premier Alexei] Kosygin's visit in Havana [in late June 1967], relations with the Soviet Union began to improve rapidly, but later deteriorated again, which was reflected in composition of the delegation to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Moscow [earlier in November 1967]. According to Carlos Rafael, [Fidel] Castro holds c. Kosygin in very high esteem for his honest and firm attitude. This was indeed apparent in the fact that much more attention was given to c. Kosygin's departure from Havana than to his arrival.

Therefore, it was initially decided that the President of the Republic of Cuba c. Osvaldo Dorticos would lead the delegation to the celebrations. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez was to join the delegation in Europe. The situation changed when the Moscow Pravda published articles of comrades [Chilean communist Luis] Corvalan and [Argentine communist Rudolfo] Ghioldi, in which the line of Cuba's CP was indirectly criticized. Minister of Health Machado Ventura, MD, was then appointed as the head of the delegation, and Carlos Rafael was told that he was not to participate in the celebrations. Carlos Rafael expressed regret that he was not in the homeland; he thought that he would have been able to persuade Fidel not to change the delegation.

Comrade Koucky pointed out that not only the level of the delegation, but also the fact that the head of the Cuban delegation did not speak at the celebrations of an important anniversary, gave the capitalist press an opportunity to write about a deep rift between Cuba and the socialist countries, especially the USSR. The attitude of the delegation put all participants in the celebrations in Moscow in a very awkward situation.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez did not respond directly to this remark. He said, however, that we certainly know that the

leadership of Cuban CP is not homogeneous, and there are also people who do not realize the importance of friendship with the USSR, and some might not even wish it. It is reflected in Cuban press as well, and for instance the chief editor of "Granma", [Isidoro] Malmierca [Peoli], was removed due to a questionable stance of the magazine on the importance of the USSR.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez also expressed the view that both sides should suspend polemics between Cuba and Communist parties. The Cuban side wants that.

That's why it currently does not publish principles governing the build up of the economy. It wants to avoid controversy about problems that Cuba is solving in a completely different way than other socialist countries. For this reason, economic and party workers are being instructed internally. Comrade Koucky responded that we have a sincere interest in Cuban friends being able to avoid mistakes and errors that we and other fraternal countries had to overcome. In this sense, Cuban economic theories cause considerable concern

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez then recalled this year's visits by representatives of the Italian Communist Party [PCI] in Cuba. He said that Italian comrades had many meetings with Cuban leaders, saw many things up close, and their whole stay was focused on a fruitful exchange of views. He believes that such informal discussions and contacts between important parties can be very beneficial. At the same time, he offered for consideration a possible visit of comrade Koucky to Cuba.

Carlos Rafael also spoke how he himself strives to clarify views on fundamental questions, and said that for instance on issues such as [Régis] Debray's brochures "Revolution in the Revolution?", which was published in Cuba, he prepared a memorandum for the party leadership, in which he pointed out the erroneous views Debray expressed.¹² He believes that his intervention was not entirely without effect.

As for the Communist Party of Cuba's relations with other fraternal parties of the Latin American continent, he said that they worsened in many ways, mainly due to a lack of understanding. Lack of contacts does not help either because views are often spread that do not contribute constructively to the common cause, and can even be exploited by some people.

Similarly, in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the CP of Cuba, especially in the Committee on International Relations, there is a group of young people who lack erudition or experience and are damaging the relations of the Cuba's CP with the Soviet Union, the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union], and other fraternal parties. However, these people will be removed.

Carlos Rafael then expressed the view that European communist parties and maybe even the CPCZ are not objectively informed of developments in Cuba. He said that since Prague

is an important crossroads, many people are passing through, and not all of them inform objectively. He was pointing it out already when in Prague during the XIII. Congress.¹³

As an example, he mentioned false information about the relationship of the Cuban leadership with China. Only 4 members of the Cuban government were at the reception held at the Chinese Embassy in Havana, and none of the leaders came. Of course, the Chinese invited many people and achieved a great turnout. But these were only insignificant people. Despite this, one Embassy of a socialist country - Carlos Rafael said that it was not ours - considered the reception as evidence of deepening Cuban-Chinese relations. The Consul of the Soviet Embassy himself allegedly refuted such a view.

The result of distorted information is the more reserved attitude on our [Czechoslovak] side, which was reflected, according to Carlos Rafael, after Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara's death [in Bolivia in October 1967]. Our press did not pay enough attention to this tragic event, which had to be received negatively in Havana.

Comrade Koucky noted that a telegram of condolence was approved and sent to him, and a report was published about it. It is common practice in cases involving similar events, and it reflects the mindset of our readers. Carlos Rafael said that Cuban officials considered our attention to the death of Che Guevara to be inadequate, and he himself did, too. He said that during the recent stopover in Prague, c. [Frantisek] Penc welcomed him and failed to console him, even though it was their first meeting shortly after Guevara's death.

Carlos Rafael further complained about the "poorly reasoned article" (published in the Reporter), which could not benefit anyone.

Comrade Koucky remarked that neither the character of the article nor that of the journal is indicative of the official view. He also said that our workers have an on going keen interest in events of the national liberation movement and in problems of the international communist movement, are asking about Cuba's position, and we have to explain.

To that Carlos Rafael replied that the response to Guevara's death was much more vivid in the Western press than in ours. He mentioned the Italian press as an example. To the remark that our press has a different mission and character, Carlos Rafael said that, for example, the Bulgarian press devoted much more space to the event than ours. He said that especially appreciated was the personal condolence of c. [Soviet leader Leonid I.] Brezhnev to the widow of Ernesto Guevara.

Carlos Rafael also indicated that there is a discontent over our relations with the Communist Party of Venezuela, with whom the CP of Cuba has deep divisions.

Comrade Koucky noted that we have had these relations with the CP of Venezuela even at the time when its leaders, such as c. [Eduardo] Gallegos Mancera, were enthusiastic supporters of the Cuban position. We thought this was the affair of only Venezuelan comrades. If the CP of Venezuela now holds a different opinion, and decided to change its position, we consider it again its inalienable right.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez countered that people like c. Gallegos Mancera swayed the Cuban side to interfere with development in Venezuela; they promised a fight, received a lot of help, but did not fulfill promises; instead began attacking Fidel Castro when he stood up for those who continued to fight.

In the next part of the interview in connection with the development of Cuba's views on the issues of the international communist movement, Carlos Rafael sought to defend Cuba's rejection of convening the World Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, and its absence in the preparations for it. He referred at that to [Uruguayan communist party head] c. [Rodney] Arismendi. Carlos Rafael did not reply to c. Koucky's remark that he was surprised because he talked with Arismendi and knew his views.

Unlike during the last meeting, Carlos Rafael was reserved. He did not even mention the latest development in the CP of Cuba, and did not indicate, whom Fidel Castro meant by the alleged "micro fraction" that he spoke in the closing speech at the OLAS [Organization of Latin American Solidarity] conference [in Havana in August 1967].

The meeting took place on Friday, November 24, and the interview lasted two hours.

[Source: Czech National Archives, Prague, Kuba files, CPCz collection. Obtained by James Hershberg and translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.]



DOCUMENT No. 4

Socialist Unity Party of Germany Central Committee (SED CC) Department of International Relations, "Position on the publications about the Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba [CPC]," 31 January 1968

1. On 29 and 30 January 1968 the central organ of the Cuban CP, "Granma," published the speech given by Comrade Raoul [Raúl] Castro, second secretary of the CC of the CPC, at the 3rd meeting of the CC (24-

26 January 1968). Additional publications have been announced.

In this speech, comrades from the CPSU, the SED, and the CPCz were directly attacked in connection with the measures of the CC against a "micro faction" and openly accused of conspiracy against the Cuban party leadership and of collaboration with the penalized Cuban comrades.

The accused comrades of the "micro faction" who are to take responsibility before a revolutionary tribunal have, according to the report of Comrade Raul Castro, criticized the policy of the CPC, specifically Fidel Castro's attitude and his ideological-political ideas. They argued for a close connection with the CPSU, for cooperation with the fraternal parties and the international communist movement, and demanded a sound policy of socialist construction in Cuba. In doing so they evidently attempted to create a faction within the party. For the most part we are dealing with officials and members of the former socialist people's party [PSP].

This undisguised and up to now most intense attack against the CPSU, our party, and other fraternal parties, presented by these party-internal measures of the CPC, is a provocation against the unity of the international communist movement. It is aimed at discrediting our parties in front of world public opinion, to undermine the trust in their credibility, honesty, and righteousness in the relations to the fraternal parties, and thus to influence the preparations of the Budapest conference in a negative way.

It is being openly demonstrated that any opinion that deviates from the views of the Cuban party leadership or any attempt at a Marxist critique of its attitude is to be qualified as counter-revolutionary and persecuted criminally. Thus anti-Soviet and anti-Marxist behavior are being elevated to the official state attitude.

[...]

[Source: Bundesarchiv Berlin, DY 30, IV A 2/20/265. Obtained for CWIHP by Piero Gleijeses and translated for CWIHP by Christian Ostermann.]



DOCUMENT No. 5

SED CC Department of International Relations, "Information on the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party and on the Attacks of the Cuban Communist Party against the Socialist Unity Party of Germany," 31 January 1968

I. The 3rd Plenum of the Cuban Communist Party took place in Havana on 24-26 January 1968. During the Plenum the decision of the Politburo of the CC was announced not to participate in the consultative meeting in Budapest. Fidel Castro held a 12-hour long speech, which has not yet been published.

The main subject of the 3rd Plenum of the CC was the uncovering of a so-called micro faction within the party. The Second Secretary of the CP of Cuba and head of the Commission for the Armed Forces and Security Questions, Comrade Raoul [Raúl] Castro, dealt with this issue in an extensive presentation. The head of this "micro facto" is said to be Anibal Escalante, who previously belonged to the Politburo of the Socialist People's Party [PSP] and afterwards had been the Organization Secretary of the "United Revolutionary Organizations of Cuba" (ORI) until 1962. Escalante was expelled from the party in 1962 as a "sectarian."

36 former members of the Socialist People's Party also belong to the Anibal Escalante group. According to Western news they were sentenced to long prison sentences.

The group is basically accused of the following crimes:

- It spread the claim "that a strong anti-Soviet current existed in the leadership of the CP of Cuba which hurt the Cuban revolution and that the USSR was the country that should exercise dominance" (Quotes from the speech of Raoul Castro).
- "They welcomed the departure of Cmdte Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara Serna as they were of the opinion that Cmdte Guevara was one of the most vehement opponents of Soviet policy and a proponent of Chinese positions."
- "They were of the opinion that the small bourgeoisie was the predominant force within the policy of the revolution."
- They accused the leadership of an "incipient rapprochement with the capitalist countries," which "seriously harmed the trade relations between our country and those of the socialist camp."
- Some of the groups [sic!] were of the opinion that thanks to the wise policy of the USSR not only war was avoided

with the withdrawal of the missiles and the letter by Nikita Khrushchev but it was guaranteed for a long time that the imperialist would not attack."

- They opposed the armed struggle in general, using the lack of objective or subjective conditions as a pretext. They were of the opinion that war, such as it is being waged in Venezuela, was adventurous."
- [...]

IV. Assessment

1. The 3rd Plenum of the CC of the Communist Party of Cuba served the consolidation and the expansion of the un-Marxist, anti-Soviet, and petit-bourgeois-adventurist political line of the Cuban leadership internally and externally.
2. It is being openly demonstrated that any opinion that deviates from the views of the Cuban party leadership or any attempt at a Marxist critique of its views is to be qualified as counter-revolutionary and persecuted as a crime. Thus anti-Soviet, anti-Marxist behavior is de facto elevated to the official state view in Cuba. The internal opposition evidently reaches beyond the 36 identified persons. It has apparently taken on considerable range.
3. The tendency already evident in the actions of Cuban leaders thus far to implement a policy independent of the international communist movement and in its general line antagonistic is newly and openly demonstrated at the 3rd plenum of the CC of the CP of Cuba.
4. These measures are the sharpest public attacks yet against the CPSU, the SED, and other fraternal parties. They are a continuation of the anti-Marxist and nationalist line which was developed at the three-continent [tri-continental] conference and the "International Intellectual Congress" in Havana as well as in the attacks on the fraternal parties of Latin America.

The severe splittist provocation of the 3rd Plenum of the CC of the CP of Cuba is aimed directly against the consultative meeting in Budapest and the successful preparation of the world conference. The CPSU and the SED are to be discredited before world public opinion. This intention is unequivocally evident in the fact that the accusations were not—as is customary between fraternal parties—resolved internally but instantly and massively by the method of surprise brought into the public.

V. Conclusions

1. The Cuban ambassador in the GDR is to be invited by the head of the International relations Department of the [SED] CC for a discussion. It should be attempted to convey to the CC of the CP of Cuba the deep sense of reservation of the SED CC over these actions. The SED CC expects a correction in the form of a public confirmation of the flawless and correct behavior of the GDR citizens who were named in the report to the CC of the CP of Cuba. This is necessary to guarantee the proper work of GDR citizens in Cuba in the interest of both countries. With guarantees that such incidents would not be repeated the completion of the printing press is not possible [handwritten correction to “put into question”]. The CC of the CP of Cuba is requested to hand over to the SED CC the materials allegedly incriminating the GDR citizens.

2. It is necessary to consult with the comrades in the CPSU leadership immediately.

3. The fraternal [communist] parties of the CSSR [Czechoslovakia], Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Korea, Vietnam, France, Italy, Spain, Finland, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Columbia,, and Venezuela are to be given internal information.

[...]

[Source: Bundesarchiv Berlin, DY 30, IV A 2/20/265. Obtained for CWIHP by Piero Gleijeses and translated for CWIHP by Christian Ostermann.]



DOCUMENT No. 6

Communist Party of the Soviet Union General Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev, “About Current Problems of the International Situation and the Struggle of the CPSU for the Cohesion of the world Communist Movement,” secret speech to the CPSU CC Plenum, 9 April 1968 (Rxcerpt on Cuba)

Comrades! The December plenum has already paid attention to the fact that there are aspects of the international policy of Cuban leaders with which we cannot agree. The [CPSU] Politburo considers it necessary to inform the plenum that in recent times the actions of the Cuban leadership

have aggravated Soviet-Cuban relations even further. One has to say, that special conceptions on questions of the building of communism, ways of development of the world revolutionary process, which are currently actively counter-posed to the views of the CPSU and other fraternal parties, were advanced by Fidel Castro several years ago. Thus, he has advanced the idea about the possibility of implementing the construction of socialist and even communist society on an expedited tempo, basing oneself merely on revolutionary enthusiasm.

In foreign policy terms, Castro adopted the course to “push” revolution in the countries of Africa and, especially, of Latin America. In accordance with this [course], [they] have advanced the motto of “many Vietnams,”¹⁴ in other words, creation of the cauldrons of war in many regions of the world. In fact, Castro comes out against any constructive steps and proposals of socialist states aimed at the relaxation of international tensions. In connection with this, [they] are keeping quiet about or openly criticizing our most important foreign policy activities, sharply limiting cooperation with us in international organizations.

The Politburo more than once undertook different steps in order to overcome negative manifestations in the policy of the Cuban leadership. The CC CPSU devotes much attention to helping the Cuban revolution to follow the truly socialist path.

You know, comrades, about the great support which the USSR and other socialist countries give Cuba in strengthening its defense capability, in developing [its] economy, in preparing cadres for the Cuban economy.

Maintaining appropriate tact, we have strived to help Cuban comrades also in making them understand the fallacy of their conceptions. In conversations with Fidel Castro, Dorticos, Raul Castro, and other Cuban leaders, we said many times that direct interference by Cuba in internal affairs of Latin American countries, the sending of armed groups there, aggravates the danger of the invasion [of Cuba], eases the maneuvers of the imperialists in hammering together an anti-Cuba front. Our representatives stressed that the most weighty contribution by Cuba in the revolutionary movement of Latin America and the task of spreading socialist ideas there, would be the successful construction of socialism in Cuba itself, her successes in the development of the economy and further cultural advance.

An important moment in Soviet-Cuban relations was the letter by the CC CPSU addressed to the CC of the Communist Party of Cuba from 23 June 1967. This letter, in particular, said, “In the conditions when Cuba, on many international problems, has begun to adopt a position different from other socialist countries, the question arises before us: How we and other friends of Cuba should struggle for

the strengthening of its [i.e., Cuba's] international position, how to counteract the ploys of the imperialist forces which are striving to isolate your country, to compromise its foreign policy in the eyes of the world public, including progressive circles of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We don't want to hide from you that in our efforts to hammer together a wide front of states and democratic forces in support of Cuba against the anti-Cuban actions by the USA, we more and more often have to face difficulties. We are forced to hear that Cuba itself aggravates its own situation. It is not pleasant for us to say that, but Cuba's own interests in our conviction require [that we tell you] this."

We, of course, understood that such a frank conversation may not be to comrade Fidel Comrade Castro's liking. But we considered it necessary to explain our principled position to separate ourselves from the policy which is going against the interests of peace and socialism.

In June 1967, in accordance with the decision of the Politburo, there was a trip by c. A.N. Kosygin to Cuba. Then [i.e., at that time], in the course of the conversations, all main questions of Soviet-Cuban relations were discussed. What is more, Cuban comrades seemingly leaned to the understanding of the necessity of putting an end to the aggravation of relations with the Soviet Union.

However, subsequent actions by the Cuban leadership in a different direction. In Cuba, [they] did not stop the criticism of the main tenets of the economic policy and foreign policy course determined by the 23rd Congress of the CPSU [in March-April 1966]. CC of the Cuban ComParty [Communist Party] did not even send an official greeting to CC CPSU in connection with the 50th anniversary of [the 1917] October [Bolshevik Revolution].

This was followed by events connected to the January plenum of the CC CP Cuba. This plenum devoted to the censure of the so-called "micro-faction" of Anibal Escalante, was in reality turned into a platform for unfriendly statements against our party, against com-parties [communist parties] of Czechoslovakia, GDR, and many parties of Latin America. The materials of the plenum publicly put in doubt the friendly and internationalist policy of the USSR in relation to Cuba, contain thinly-veiled reproach addressed to the Soviet Union, hints about some sort of "interference" by the USSR in the internal affairs of Cuba.

In February of this year, our ministry of external trade received a memorandum from the government trade delegation of Cuba about Soviet-Cuban trade relations. Written a sharp tone, this memorandum advances an absurd accusation against the Soviet Union in "constraining" the development of the Cuban economy. It contains a demand to increase Soviet supplies to Cuba of various categories of goods:

fuel, metallurgical products, fertilizers, agricultural machines, building materials, etc. Moreover, difficulties with which the Cuban comrades are faced in the implementations of plans of expanding the production of sugar are unambiguously ascribed to the fact that allegedly the Soviet Union "insufficiently" meets the requests of the Cuban side. Here you can already see a direct calculation to put the blame for the difficult economic situation of Cuba on the Soviet Union.

In response to the Cuban memorandum, we sent a letter in which, on the basis of facts, [we] showed that the reproaches of the Cuban side to not have any basis. Having remarked that our policy in relation to Cuba has always been built on the basis of internationalism, fraternity, and comradely cooperation, we pointed out that the extent of Soviet supplies to Cuba should be considered in connection with our real capabilities and our obligations in relation to other socialist countries. Inasmuch as the questions raised in the memorandum go far beyond the framework of trade relations, we invited c. Castro (or c. Dorticos) to come to the USSR for the discussion of these questions.

In his letter of response, Fidel Castro in reality repeated the claims contained in the memorandum and in a sharp form rejected the proposal to discuss the aforementioned questions at a high level.

As you see, comrades, there are many difficulties between Cuba and the Soviet Union. One should think, however, that one should not hurry with final conclusions. Emotions are a bad advisor in politics. The interests of the Cuban people, [and] socialist development of Cuba are dear to the Soviet Union. It would be incorrect to condition the support of the victories of the Cuban revolution, of the task of socialism in this country [i.e., Cuba—trans.], on even very serious mistakes and twists of the Cuban leaders. One should take into consideration that the strengthening of positions of socialism in Cuba has great significance for the development of the revolutionary movement in Latin America.

Realizing very well that successful cooperation and real mutual understanding between parties and countries, [and the] liquidation of the difficulties that have arisen [between us], are possible only on the basis of mutual efforts, we will strive towards turning the Soviet-Cuban relations for the better. For this, it seems, it would be useful to hold a meeting of our party-government delegations. Of course, we have no intention to adjust our policy to the pseudo-revolutionary Cuban conceptions. And if we come to such negotiations, we will base ourselves on our principled Marxist-Leninist line. (applause)

[Source: *Russian State Archive on Modern History (RGANI)*, Moscow, fond 2, opis 3, delo 95, ll. 64-69. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Sergey Radchenko.]



DOCUMENT No. 7

Comment by Defense Minister Marshal Andrei Gretchko to CPSU CC, 10 April 1968

[...]

As is known, on a series of military-political questions, a special position is also advanced by the leaders of Cuba, who, in the sphere of foreign policy, show clear elements of political adventurism.

We provide all-sided aid to Cuba, including considerable military aid. Thousands of Soviet military specialists, i.e., officers, sergeants, and soldiers, are stationed in Cuba, protecting its security, training its forces. However, all of this does not meet with appropriate recognition on the part of the Cuban leaders.

Our officers, sergeants, soldiers, despite the anti-Soviet splittist activity of the leaders of Cuba, steadfastly and self-sacrificingly carry out their service, honestly carry out their duty, of envoys of the Soviet country.

[Source: *RGANI*, fond 2, opis 3, delo 94, l. 6. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Sergey Radchenko.]



DOCUMENT No. 8

“Note on the Final Talk with the CP Cuba Delegation on 21 November 1968,” 27 November 1968

On the part of the Cuban delegation Gen. S. Hart was missing in the discussion.

The conversation began at first with a brief exchange of opinions about the provocation carried out by the Venezuelan government against a Cuban ship. Comrade [SED Politburo Member Paul] Verner expressed full support for the Cuban note and the attitude of the Cuban government. Afterwards he responded to the question by Comrade Castro about his impressions from the trip. He expressed his thanks for the well-organized trip, which allowed for a comprehensive

overview over the entire and enormous development of the country. It became particularly clear that great strides were being made specifically in the area of agriculture. Comrade Verner asked that the delegation's gratitude be conveyed to the leaderships of the provincial committees. [...]

Comrade [perhaps Harry—ed.] Tisch emphasized that the impressions gained by the delegation throughout the country deepened the conviction that the unity in the common struggle had to be deepened and strengthened. It was important that we close ranks more closely.

Comrade Verner underlined that it was particularly important to strengthen the relations between the socialist countries and to strengthen the entire socialist community. Specifically it was important to strengthen the international communist movement.

In the international arena, several new problems had emerged which had to be analyzed and mastered. That was particularly the case with regard to the necessity to develop and implement a common strategy of the communist parties against the global strategy of imperialism.

There were also new problems in the development of socialism and in the struggle against state-monopolistic capitalism. In particular it was necessary to carry out the struggle against revisionism in the international workers movement.

For these reasons and several others already mentioned our party favors holding a world council of communist and workers' parties. The decisive point is to demonstrate the unity of all anti-imperialist forces and their closing of ranks on a global scale.

Comrade Castro explained that the division of the international communist movement was an unfortunate occurrence which had weakened the movement. The countries that were directly confronted with imperialism were particularly affected, they were hurt the most by the schism. It was necessary to counter the global strategy of Imperialism with a global strategy of the revolutionary forces. Imperialism had managed to penetrate Yugoslavia and to turn the League of Communists of Yugoslavia into its puppet. That had already borne fruit, and specifically this policy had caused a great deal of harm in the CSSR [Czechoslovakia]. The Yugoslavs had the most contacts with West German imperialism and with NATO. They had played up the problem of protection against an alleged [potential] aggression by the Soviet Union and dramatized the problems after the events in the CSSR. For all practical purposes they have slid into the imperialist camp. Never before had they gone as far as in the context of the events in the CSSR. The events in the CSSR had unfolded in the exact same manner save for the intervention by the socialist countries.

The problem is how we get to unity. That is not easy. The differences in opinions have sharpened. Various types of resentments have formed which can only be eliminated with difficulty. There's a lack of unified thought. It is surely necessary to analyze the experiences in this area and to draw conclusions in order to advance to the common goals. Surely none of the communist parties were entirely correct in their stance, and everybody carried a certain degree of responsibility for the development of the international communist movement. Everybody had the duty to fight, even if it was difficult. The Communist Party of Cuba favors a common strategy against imperialism. It was important to increase the fighting spirit of the parties, although, as Comrade Castro emphasized, the Cuban CP was not in fact a bellicose party. It was far away from adventurism and only interested in supporting truly revolutionary spirit. It on the other hand opposed all tendencies of revolutionary impatience, that is, it opposed adventurist tendencies as well as excessive conciliation [*Versoehnlertum*] and reformism. It was critical to act realistically, decisively, and firmly, to consider the realities [of the situation] and correctly assess the dangers. In doing so it is important to proceed in a very principled manner within the communist movement. It was particularly important to deepen the consciousness within the revolutionary movement. The changing situation constantly posed new problems. The number of the parties has increased. And the experiences of the international communist movement have become more complex. But all share the class consciousness, the revolutionary spirit, and the anti-imperialist fighting spirit. The forms and methods differ from country to country. But they are not the basic problem. The basic problem are the common objectives, the construction of a communist society, the transformation of society, the fights against exploitation, the fight against the oppression of peoples, and the struggle against imperialist domination. These basic objectives cannot be separated from the struggle for peace. Peace is the duty of the peoples. It forms the same common line and is part of the determined policy of the revolutionary forces. This determination necessarily harbors certain risks. The Cuban CP desires peace, but not at any price.

Comrade Verner interjected that as a matter of course the fight for peace could not be separated from the struggle against imperialism.

Fidel Castro elaborated that the struggle for peace could not be separated from the struggle for the revolution. Therefore certain risks had to be taken. Sometimes concessions were necessary, sometimes they were not possible. During the events in the CSSR two positions were evident. One was the lax position of *laissez-faire* and the other the determined position, even if certain risks had to be taken.

Certainly the intervention of the socialist countries had heightened tensions in a certain sense and the imperialist forces were very angry because developments had not gone their way. They now speak a more aggressive language.

The situation had shown that with regard to certain decisions, which are also associated with difficulties, one should not overestimate but also not underestimate imperialism.

Comrade Verner emphasized that although imperialism had become more aggressive, it had not become stronger. With the growth of our successes its aggressiveness had even increased. [...]

Comrade Verner declared that the views of Comrade Castro essentially coincided with those of our party. The problem was that we had a joint point of view, one we also shared with other countries. The task of the parties which had a correct and positive point of view was to fight against false, revisionist, and other faulty assumptions. That in particular could be clarified at a consultation of the communist and workers' parties. Therefore we have to participate in it, this will help to have the correct positions prevail. [handwritten corrected from "The more we are part of it, the better it is for our correct positions to prevail."]

Comrade Tisch interjected that the struggle of revolutionary Cuba was very much present in our country and had made a great impression. Numerous brigades in the socialist enterprises carried the name of Comrade Castro a[nd] o[ther] Cuban revolutionaries. In the context of holding our 7th [SED] Party Plenum the question emerged with our people why no representatives of the CP Cuba had participated in our party plenum. We have understood that some have not attended our party plenum but we could not sufficiently explain the absence of the Cuban comrades.

Comrade Castro declared that the CP Cuba had no problems with the SED. There had been a few incidents after the 7th SED Party Plenum which had been unpleasant but were cleared up now.

Party plenums always come with headaches for us. In the past they turned into centers of polemics. There were two options: either one participated in them out of courtesy, or one elaborated one's problems and considerations and got into conflicts and contradictions with other parties which did not help joint cooperation. One can argue about what is better, either to participate and raise problems or to participate out of courtesy. Our experiences have shown that participation in such party plenums always led to frictions with other parties. This general attitude of the communist party of Cuba has nothing to do with its attitude toward the SED specifically. No one can doubt the solidarity of Cuba with the GDR.

For example the assumption of diplomatic relations with the GDR was associated with abandoning certain economic

interests on the part of Cuba. Opening relations with Algeria led to certain decline in relations with Morocco, which had been one of Cuba's most important sugar buyers. Cuba does not waver in its principled policy.

Comrade Verner interjected that we appreciated Cuba's attitude vis-à-vis the GDR very much.

Comrade Castro continued that his party's attitude towards the SED party plenum had been the same one they had taken towards other party plenums. The Cuban comrades appreciate the special situation of the policy of the GDR. They do not criticize us, even if we do not agree in some questions. They understand especially the GDR's attitude towards West German imperialism.

The disagreements which Cuba had with the Soviet Union should not cause a negative impact on relations with the GDR.

The great measure of empathy with the GDR results in particular from the similarities of the situation in which both countries find themselves. The Cuban party is quite capable of differentiating in this respect. Not all the socialist countries took the same attitude as the GDR, which is steadfast and firm in the questions of its struggle. This attitude especially was also particularly evident in connection with the events in the CSSR. The arguments with the "Micro Faction" had caused a certain degree of estrangement within the SED and also within the CPSU. In those days a certain critical atmosphere came about. The Central Committee plenum of the Cuban CP did not accuse the GDR technical personnel; instead the accusations were directed at the respective Cubans. They attempted intrigues and subversion against the party leadership, and they influenced the technicians from other countries who had been informed by them in a misleading fashion. If the Cuban party leadership had intended to criticize the fraternal parties it would have addressed them directly.

Comrade Verner emphasized that this matter between our parties had meanwhile been resolved and was not impairing our relations, even though we had to take the treatment of this issue on the part of Cuba as an attack against our party and in fact viewed is as such.

Comrade Castro stated that his party, moreover, did not have internal documents attacking other parties. The Hungarian party had done such a thing and had circulated internal documents within its ranks that had been directed against the Cuban CP. This was worse than public criticism. He preferred public criticism. But the best thing is when it is not necessary to criticize at all.

[Verner invites a Cuban delegation to visit the GDR in 1969.]

Comrade Castro explained that there were still certain tensions with the Soviet Union at this time but recently relations had improved. Both party and state leaderships wanted to overcome the differences, which surely was in everyone's interest.

[Discussion of the final communique follows.]

[Source: Bundesarchiv Berlin, DY 30, IV A 2/20/265. Obtained for CWIHP by Piero Gleijeses and translated for CWIHP by Christian Ostermann.]



DOCUMENT No. 9

SED CC Department of International Relations,
"Note on a Conversation with Com. Carlos Rafael
Rodriguez on 22 November 1968 at the Havana
Airport," 25 November 1968

Gen. Rodriguez took Com. [Egon] Winkelmann [Deputy Director of International Relations, SED CC] aside and asked if the delegation was satisfied with the communique. [Winkelmann responded that] the communique was good given current circumstances even if the delegation had expected that for example the role of the Soviet Union and the necessity of the common struggle of the communist parties against imperialism would have been mentioned. Gen. Rodriguez responded: "We are delighted by the communique. It is significant particularly for our people as it demonstrates after all that we are moving closer to the socialist countries." Fidel Castro had explained the position towards the Soviet Union, he continued, in the ring [the meaning of ring is unclear—trans.] of Havana. Cuba was interested in an improvement of relations. That's after all why the foreign trade minister and other delegations had gone to the USSR. In response to the question whether Cuba would send a delegation to the USSR at the highest level in the foreseeable future, Gen. Rodriguez responded that they expected that a high[-level] Soviet delegation would come to Cuba since Fidel Castro had already been to the USSR several times. The timing was still uncertain. Gen. Rodriguez emphasized in this context that he very much appreciated our position towards the Soviet Union; the Cuban CP leadership had also been impressed by Khrushchev—except for the matter of the missiles—because he had done a lot for Cuba; even today the Cuban CP considered the USSR as an important guarantor for the maintenance of peace.

Questioned how the Cuban CP felt about future participation in party plenums of fraternal parties, Gen. Rodriguez said that this question was difficult to answer. Up to now they had not attended as they feared strong attacks by the fraternal parties of Latin America. At the last party plenum of the Bulgarian CP, e.g., Cuba had been attacked vehemently from this direction. As the relations with the socialist countries improved a change of the situation would certainly be possible, he contended.

[Rodriguez complains about Bulgarian newspaper attacks on Che Guevara and considers the GDR delegation visit a big step in the rapprochement between both parties.]

[Source: *Bundesarchiv Berlin, DY 30, IV A 2/20/265. Obtained by Piero Gleijeses and translated for CWIHP by Christian Ostermann.*]

Notes

1 Philip Brenner is a professor of international relations and affiliate professor of history at American University. He is the co-author (with James G. Blight) of *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba's Struggle with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis* (2002), and co-editor of *A Contemporary Cuba Reader* (2007). He is a member of the advisory board of the National Security Archive.

2 "Telephone Conversation between President Johnson and Former President Eisenhower," June 25, 1967; U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, Vol. XIV, *Soviet Union* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000), Document No. 237.

3 James G. Blight and Philip Brenner, *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba's Struggle with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), pp. 85-87.

4 Ernesto Guevara, *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, ed. Mary Waters (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1994).

5 Ed. note: Specifically, Rodriguez was referring to articles in *Pravda* on 25 October 1967 by Rudolfo Ghioldi, a senior official of the Argentine Communist Party, and two days later by Chilean Communist Luis Corvalan. For an analysis, see, e.g., R. Salloch, "Old Principles and the Future of Unity," Radio Free Europe/Radio

Liberty Background Report, 15 November 1967, box 133, folder 5, report 47, RFE/RL collection, Open Society Archives, Prague, accessed on-line. The translation of the Czechoslovak record of the 24 November 1967 conversation between Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and CPCz official Vladimir Koucky was received after Philip Brenner had submitted his introduction.

6 Blight and Brenner, *Sad and Luminous Days*, pp. 133-137. On this episode, see also Jorge I. Domínguez, *To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 72-77—ed.

7 Yoram Shapira and Edy Kaufman, "Cuba's Israel Policy: The Shift to the Soviet Line," *Cuban Studies*, Volume 8, No. 9, January 1978, pp. 24-25; Maurice Halperin, *The Taming of Fidel Castro* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), p. 247.

8 Halperin, *Taming of Fidel Castro*, p. 245. For an examination of similarities between Cuba and Israel, see Philip Brenner and Edy Kaufman, "The Tail Without a Dog," *Davar* (Tel Aviv), June 10, 1992. See also the selection of Israeli documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis, translated and introduced by Guy Laron, elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

9 Fidel Castro, "Radio and Television Address to the Cuban People," August 23, 1968. Quoted in *Granma*, August 25, 1968, p. 2. For Castro's 23 August 1968 speech, see also Blight and Brenner, *Sad and Luminous Days*, Appendix C (pp. 215-245)—ed.

10 Castro Speech, August 23, 1968, p. 4.

11 Though the text reads "Vilma Kapín," I cannot find any other source which refers to her by this name, although Espín seems widely accepted.

12 Ed. note: a reference to Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967).

13 Ed. note: this refers to the 13th Congress of the CPCz on 31 May-4 June 1966; Rodriguez co-headed the Cuban delegation. I thank Mark Kramer for supplying this information.

14 Brezhnev here apparently alludes to Che Guevara's article, published in 1967, calling for the creation of "two, three, many Vietnams" to struggle for revolution in Asia, Africa, and Latin America—ed.

