

**USING KGB DOCUMENTS:  
THE SCALI-FEKLISOV CHANNEL  
IN THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS**

**by Alexander Fursenko  
and Timothy Naftali**

From the time that former State Department official Roger Hilsman revealed in 1964 that ABC News television correspondent John Scali had served as an intermediary between the U.S. and Soviet governments at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, scholars have had to consider the role that Scali and his contact, Aleksandr Feklisov (alias Fomin), played in the resolution of the conflict.<sup>1</sup> Until 1989, it was generally assumed that the Kremlin had used Feklisov, a KGB officer based at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, to float a trial balloon at the most dangerous moment of the Cuban Missile Crisis because meaningful communication between the two governments had ground to a halt.

But at a conference of scholars and former officials in Moscow in January 1989, Feklisov argued that Western historians had gotten his role in the crisis all wrong. The Kremlin, he said, had not injected him into

negotiations. The famous proposal for ending the crisis, which Robert Kennedy later recalled as having made his brother "for the first time hopeful that our efforts might possibly be successful," had not come from him, but rather had come out of the blue from Scali. Scali, who was also present in Moscow, vigorously disputed Feklisov's account.<sup>2</sup>

Feklisov's surprising assertion<sup>3</sup> and Scali's immediate rejection of this revisionist history posed three questions for students of the crisis:

a) Did the Soviet government use the KGB to find a way out of the crisis on 26 October 1962?

b) Did Feklisov act on his own or did Scali suggest a settlement for his own government to consider?

c) What effect, if any, did the Scali-Feklisov meetings have on the endgame of the Cuban Missile Crisis?

Materials consulted in the archives of the SVR (Foreign Intelligence Service, the new name for the First Chief Directorate of the KGB), resolve some, though not all, of these questions. Documents on the Scali-Feklisov meetings have been opened as part of a multi-book project on the history of the

superpower intelligence services sponsored by Crown Publishers, Inc.<sup>4</sup>

To understand better what can be learned from these documents, it is helpful to revisit the standard account of the role of the Scali-Feklisov channel in the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

According to the traditional version, Scali received a call at his Washington office from Feklisov on Friday, October 26. Scali had been meeting off and on with this Soviet Embassy official for over a year. From the FBI, which Scali had alerted from the outset about his meetings with Feklisov, the journalist learned that this man was no ordinary diplomat. Aleksandr Feklisov ("Fomin") was the KGB Resident, or chief of station, in Washington. On this particular Friday, with the likelihood of US military action against Cuba seemingly mounting, Feklisov asked for an urgent meeting with Scali. Scali suggested the Occidental Restaurant near the Willard Hotel. The lunch was set for 1:30 p.m.

"When I arrived he was already sitting at the table as usual, facing the door. He seemed tired, haggard and alarmed in contrast to the usual calm, low-key appearance

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**Russian Foreign Ministry Documents  
On the Cuban Missile Crisis**

**Introduction by Raymond L. Garthoff**

Among the new archival materials on the Cuban Missile Crisis recently made available by the Russian government are the first batch of diplomatic documents, a selection of 21 documents totaling 147 pages; extensive translations of these materials (as well as of two other documents released from the former CPSU Central Committee archives) follow this introduction. While certainly welcome, this represents only about twenty percent of a file of 734 pages of Foreign Ministry (MID) documents declassified in the fall of 1991 and in early 1992. Moreover, many documents remain classified. Still, it is an important step forward.

The documents were acquired through the efforts of the author and of the National Security Archive (NSA), a non-governmental, privately-funded research institute based at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. [Ed. note: Shortly before presstime, a second group of declassified Foreign Ministry documents reached NSA; however, these consisted mostly of previously-published Kennedy-Khrushchev correspondence and other materials that were not

previously published but were of lesser import than those already obtained.]

The 21 documents initially released comprise selections from six categories of material. First are three cables from, and one message to, Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr Alekseyev in Havana sent shortly prior to or during the crisis; second are seven cables sent from Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin in Washington and one to him, also all prior to or during the crisis, and one from Soviet official Georgii Zhukov, also sent from Washington; third are one message from Ambassador Valerian Zorin, Soviet representative to the United Nations in New York, and one to him (and to Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily Kuznetsov) from Moscow; fourth are two messages from Foreign Minister Gromyko to Moscow just before the crisis broke; fifth are three messages from Havana to Moscow reporting on First Deputy Prime Minister Anastas Mikoyan's negotiations with Prime Minister Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders as the crisis was being ended; and finally, the sixth is a single message from Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov after his meeting with President Kennedy on 9 January 1963, in effect closing the post-crisis diplomatic negotiations. A few of these have been released earlier, in particular one on Mikoyan's talks with Castro. Nonetheless, they are all of interest and together they make a

substantial addition to our documentary base and some contribution to our understanding of the crisis.

These materials expand on the earlier released messages between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Khrushchev. There are, however, no materials on Foreign Ministry evaluations or other interagency deliberations in Moscow, in contrast to the extensive releases of comparable materials by the United States.

Some of the Foreign Ministry documents have been lightly sanitized, and a number of them are only excerpts, but excisions are not noted except where there is an internal blank space in a paragraph. Documents are not identified by their original designators (such as telegram numbers), nor by their Foreign Ministry archive file locations.

The precrisis reports of Ambassadors Alekseev and Dobrynin help to set the stage, but they do not add much to what has been known. Gromyko's cabled report of his meeting with President Kennedy (detailed in his memoir) is not included, but his account of the discussion of Cuba in his meeting that same evening with Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and a message giving Gromyko's evaluation of the situation on October 19, are included. Both are quite reveal-

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## “DISMAYED BY THE ACTIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION”:

Mikoyan’s talks with Fidel Castro and the Cuban leadership, November 1962

by Vladislav M. Zubok

The talks between Anastas I. Mikoyan, member of the CC CPSU Presidium, and the revolutionary leadership of Cuba in Havana on 3-12 November 1962, were a lesser known, but nonetheless dramatic episode in the story of the Cuban missile crisis, and also marked a watershed in the history of relations between the Soviet superpower and one of its closest non-European allies.

Thanks to declassified documents from U.S. archives, researchers have begun to appreciate the significance and nuances of U.S.-West German, U.S.-Iranian, and other key patron-client relationships that were vital to American conduct during the Cold War. But until very recently, the existence and importance of parallel commitments and influences on Soviet foreign policy were often grossly underestimated. New East-bloc archival evidence, however, has corroborated suspicions that, to take one key example, Walter Ulbricht, the East German

communist leader from 1953 to 1971, was not merely a Soviet puppet, but, since the late 1950s, made his needs and agendas increasingly present in the minds of the Kremlin policy-makers. As Hope Harrison has convincingly shown, there are substantial reasons to analyze Soviet-GDR ties not only as a relationship of submission and subservience, but also as a relationship in which at times “the tail wagged the dog far more than the West realized.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly, new Russian archival documents presented by Kathryn Weathersby have disclosed in new detail how North Korean leader Kim Il Sung was also able to press his militant agenda on an even stronger Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin, with disastrous consequences, in the run-up to the Korean War.<sup>2</sup>

The documents on the Mikoyan-Castro talks from the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVPRF) in Moscow, published in this issue of the *CWHP Bulletin*, reveal that for Nikita Khrushchev and his colleagues in the CC CPSU Presidium (Politburo), the Soviet-Cuban “axis” also acquired a life of its own, beyond the bipolar dimensions of the Cold War. This alliance influenced Kremlin decision-making processes far more than the needs and

requirements of Soviet domestic constituents and forces (elites, bureaucratic services, propaganda and ideology, latent public opinion). In the events leading to the Cuban missile crisis, the considerations stemming from this axis had a part at least as important as the interests and concerns flowing from the dynamic of U.S.-Soviet relations.<sup>3</sup>

The Historic-Documentary Department of the Foreign Ministry had declassified documents on the Soviet-Cuban talks, like many others related to the Cuban missile crisis, in late 1991. But officials of the Department withheld them (in a manner that unfortunately has become a recent pattern), allowing only a few to have a peek at them at their discretion. One of them, Sergei Khrushchev, gives a dramatic, albeit short description of Mikoyan’s visit in his Russian-language book, *Nikita Khrushchev: Crises and Missiles*.<sup>4</sup> Some were also made available to the makers of television documentaries, or published in Russian. Now they have become available to scholars, with copies available for research at the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., and translations of the minutes of the post-crisis Soviet-Cuban talks follow this article.

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## THE “LESSONS” OF THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS FOR WARSAW PACT NUCLEAR OPERATIONS

by Mark Kramer

The role of the Warsaw Pact in the Cuban Missile Crisis was negligible. All evidence suggests that the Soviet Union neither consulted nor even informed its East European allies about the installation of medium-range and tactical nuclear missiles in Cuba before the deployments were revealed by the U.S. government.<sup>1</sup> Nor did the Soviet leadership consult its Warsaw Pact allies about the removal of the missiles. Although the Pact declared a joint military alert on 23 October 1962 (the day after President John F. Kennedy’s televised revelation of the Soviet missile deployments), the alert had no more than a symbolic impact and was carried out solely at Moscow’s behest.<sup>2</sup> The joint alert was formally cancelled on 21 November 1962, the same day that the Soviet Union ended its own unilateral alert (and a day after the U.S. naval

blockade of Cuba was lifted).<sup>3</sup> So peripheral was the alliance to the Soviet Union’s handling of the crisis that it was not until long after the matter had been resolved that the Soviet Prime Minister, Anastas Mikoyan, bothered to inform the East European governments about the Soviet Union’s motives for deploying and withdrawing the missiles.<sup>4</sup>

That the Warsaw Pact was of only marginal significance during the Cuban Missile Crisis hardly comes as a great surprise. In 1962 the Pact was still little more than a paper organization and had not yet acquired a meaningful role in Soviet military strategy.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the crisis was far outside the European theater, and East European leaders had resisted Soviet efforts to extend the alliance’s purview beyond the continent. Despite fears that the showdown over Cuba might spark a NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation in Berlin, the situation in Germany remained calm throughout the crisis.<sup>6</sup> Hence, the standoff in the Caribbean was a matter for the Soviet Union to handle on its own, not a matter for the Warsaw Pact.

Despite the near-irrelevance of the

Warsaw Pact during the crisis, the events of October 1962 did have important effects on the alliance, particularly on the nuclear command-and-control arrangements that were established in the mid-1960s. This article will draw on recent disclosures from the East German, Czechoslovak, Polish, and Hungarian archives to show how the Cuban missile crisis influenced Warsaw Pact nuclear operations. No definitive judgments about this matter are yet possible because the most crucial documents are all in Moscow, and the archival situation in Russia is still highly unsatisfactory.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, enough evidence has emerged from East-Central Europe to permit several tentative conclusions.

The article will begin by briefly reviewing the “lessons” that the Cuban Missile Crisis offered for Soviet nuclear weapons deployments abroad. It will then delineate the command-and-control arrangements that were set up in the mid-1960s for Warsaw Pact nuclear operations, and examine the East European states’ unsuccessful efforts to alter those arrangements. The article

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that he presented.” Thus Scali described in a 1964 television broadcast how this meeting opened. Scali said that Feklisov feared that war would begin soon, and was so concerned that he volunteered a way out of the stalemate.<sup>5</sup>

He asked, according to Scali’s notes, what Scali “thought” of a three-point proposition:

a) The Soviet missiles bases would be dismantled under United Nations supervision.

b) Fidel Castro would promise never to accept offensive weapons of any kind, ever.

c) In return for the above, the United States would pledge not to invade Cuba.<sup>6</sup>

Feklisov was confident that if U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson “pursued this line,” Soviet UN ambassador Valerian Zorin “would be interested.” As if to give some weight to his proposal, Feklisov noted that the Cuban delegate to the UN had already made a similar proposal in a session of the Security Council but that it had been met with silence. Feklisov asked that Scali run this proposal by his contacts at the State Department and then gave the journalist his home telephone number, to be sure he could be reached at any time.<sup>7</sup>

Scali rushed this proposal to the State Department. Roger Hilsman, State’s director of Intelligence and Research, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk were extremely interested in it. Rusk considered this to be the first concrete offer from the Soviet leadership for ending the crisis. The letters already exchanged by Khrushchev and Kennedy had only brought about a hardening of each side’s position. So long as the Soviets refused to discuss removing the missiles, there seemed to be no peaceful way out of the deepening crisis.<sup>8</sup>

Transcripts of the ExComm [Executive Committee of the National Security Council] meeting of October 27<sup>9</sup> confirm that the Kennedy administration interpreted the “offer” from the KGB representative as an elaboration of a more general proposal contained in a private letter from Khrushchev that arrived late in the afternoon of October 26, in which the Soviet leader had written:

We, for our part, will declare that our

ships bound for Cuba are not carrying any armaments. You will declare that the United States will not invade Cuba with its troops and will not support any other forces which might intend to invade Cuba. Then the necessity for the presence of our military specialists will be obviated.<sup>10</sup>

By itself the Khrushchev letter did not promise anything except that future Soviet ships would carry non-military cargoes. But when the letter was coupled with what Scali had relayed from Feklisov, the Kennedy administration believed it had received an acceptable offer from the Kremlin. Rusk instructed Scali to contact Feklisov to make clear that the U.S. found a basis for agreement in his offer.

Sometime between 7:30 and 7:45 p.m. on Friday evening, Scali and Feklisov met at the Statler Hotel, near the Soviet Embassy. In a very brief meeting Scali conveyed his message: He was authorized by the highest authority to say that there were “real possibilities in this [proposal]” and that “the representatives of the USSR and the United States in New York can work this matter out with [UN Secretary General] U Thant and with each other.” Feklisov listened carefully, then repeated the proposal to be sure that he understood the White House’s offer correctly. Unsure of Scali, he asked repeatedly for confirmation that Scali spoke for the White House. Finally, Feklisov added that it was not enough for there to be inspection of the dismantling of Soviet missiles, it would be necessary for UN observers to observe the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the southern United States. This idea went beyond Scali’s instructions, so he demurred.

The situation changed the next day, October 27, which U.S. veterans of the Missile Crisis describe as “Black Saturday.” Just as the ExComm was discussing a formal response to the Khrushchev letter and the Feklisov proposal, a second message arrived from Moscow, which this time immediately publicized the communication. Khrushchev had upped the ante. Now he demanded that the U.S. dismantle its Jupiter missile bases in Turkey before he went ahead with any deal that would strip Cuba of Soviet missiles. Scali was sent to see Feklisov to register the U.S. government’s strong disapproval of the new terms. Although Feklisov defended his government’s new position, the KGB Resi-

dent remained hopeful that the Kremlin would ultimately accept the October 26 proposal as the basis for a resolution of the crisis. Indeed, Kennedy’s response to Khrushchev offered to accept the implicit terms of October 26 and ignored the Turkish issue raised in Khrushchev’s letter of the 27th. The crisis ended the next morning, Sunday, October 28, with the Kremlin’s public announcement of a deal—a withdrawal of Soviet missiles in exchange for a U.S. guarantee not to invade Cuba—that seemed to incorporate much of what John Scali and Aleksandr Feklisov had discussed. Both men were proud of their accomplishment.

KGB records suggest that neither the traditional version nor Feklisov’s revision is entirely accurate. Feklisov’s cables to Moscow from October 26 and October 27 and evidence of how the KGB handled them suggest strongly that the Soviet government did not initiate the proposals that Scali presented to Rusk on the afternoon of October 26.

Feklisov’s cables, moreover, paint a different picture of his relationship with the American journalist. The KGB Resident considered him an intelligence contact, with whom he could exchange political information. In his cable to Moscow on October 26, Feklisov felt he had to introduce Scali to the KGB. “We have been meeting for over a year,” he wrote. This statement, of course, would not have been necessary had Moscow already considered Scali a channel to the U.S. government. In previous cables Feklisov had referred to Scali only using a codename. This was the first time he introduced him and mentioned his position with ABC News.

Feklisov’s cable describing his first meeting with Scali on October 26 is almost a mirror image of the account that Scali gave Rusk. In Feklisov’s version, Scali is the one who is fearful of war. After assuring Feklisov that the U.S. was planning air strikes and an amphibious landing on Cuba in the next 48 hours, Scali asked if the United States attacked Cuba, “would West Berlin be occupied?” Feklisov reported that he had replied defiantly that all heaven and earth might fall upon NATO if the U.S. were to attack Cuba. “At the very least,” he said, “the Soviet Union would occupy West Berlin.” Feklisov added that given the size of Soviet conventional forces on the line dividing East and West Germany, the situation would be very

difficult for the West. And to make matters worse, he expected the crisis to unify the entire Socialist bloc, including China. Perhaps for dramatic effect, Feklisov assured his American interlocutor that the Cubans, and especially Castro, were ready to die like heroes.<sup>11</sup>

Feklisov's report to the KGB Center creates the impression that the direction taken by the discussion depressed Scali even further. "A horrible conflict lies ahead," Scali said after hearing what the Soviet response would be to the use of American military force against Cuba. According to Feklisov, Scali fell into such a state of anxiety that he began to muse about possible ways out of the conflict. "Why couldn't Fidel Castro give a speech saying that he was prepared to dismantle and to remove the missile installations if President Kennedy gave a guarantee not to attack Cuba?" Scali is reported to have asked.<sup>12</sup>

What is most significant about the version that Feklisov cabled to Moscow is that the KGB resident did not take Scali's musings as a formal U.S. offer. Instead of grasping this as a proposal, Feklisov told Scali that what he was saying sounded a lot like something already proposed by the Cubans in the Security Council, which had been ignored by U.S. Ambassador Stevenson. Although Scali responded that he could not recall any American rejection of a similar Cuban proposal, he said he was convinced that such a demarche at this time by Castro would meet with a positive reaction from U.S. civilian and military circles.

Scali's confidence surprised Feklisov, who began to wonder whether indeed Scali might know something about the White House's negotiating strategy. When Feklisov inquired as to exactly who might be interested in this kind of proposal, Scali avoided giving any names. This was as far as he would go. As Scali and Feklisov parted, the KGB officer concluded that despite having taken an interesting turn, the meeting itself had been inconclusive.

It is also significant that in his memoirs, Feklisov does not mention anything about having discussed a political solution with Scali at the first October 26 meeting. In fact, Feklisov categorically denies that he or Scali made any attempts to formulate a way out of the crisis at that time. Here the evidence from the SVR archives contradicts Feklisov's memoirs and suggests that Feklisov has, for

whatever reason, forgotten the balance of his historic conversation with Scali.<sup>13</sup>

The SVR record on the second Scali-Feklisov meeting of October 26 is less controversial. The account that Feklisov cabled to Moscow differs little from what the American journalist reported to the State Department. Feklisov reported that Scali, who had initiated the meeting, laid out a formula that could be the basis for negotiations between Stevenson and Zorin at the UN. The only difference between the Feklisov and Scali accounts is that whereas Feklisov described this as a new American proposal, Scali relayed to the State Department that Feklisov had responded energetically to word of formal U.S. interest in the Soviet proposal first mentioned at the Occidental Restaurant.<sup>14</sup>

After this second meeting with Scali, Feklisov sent a long cable to Moscow, detailing both of his conversations with Scali. In retrospect, it seems odd that at a time when the Kremlin was hungry for any news about U.S. intentions, Feklisov would have waited so long to inform Moscow as to what John Scali was telling him. Feklisov was accustomed to cabling his superiors at all hours. And he had approximately five hours between the end of the lunch and his next discussion with Scali to tell KGB Center that something was going on. In his memoirs, Feklisov has explained this gap by saying that he did not expect anything to come of his discussion with Scali. Indeed, he writes that he did not even bother to mention the meeting to the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoli Dobrynin, until 4 p.m. Then, just as he was in the midst of giving this report to Dobrynin, Feklisov received Scali's request for a second meeting. Not only did Feklisov have to leave the embassy before completing his briefing for Dobrynin but he had to put off cabling Moscow until returning from the Statler Hotel.<sup>15</sup>

There was soon to be as much confusion in Moscow over what Feklisov was doing as in Dobrynin's embassy. The KGB had no warning that its representative in Washington had established, albeit unwittingly, a channel to the Kennedys. When Feklisov's long cable arrived in Moscow at 2:20 p.m., Saturday, October 27 (Moscow time was eight hours ahead of EST), the chief of the First Chief Directorate (FCD), the foreign intelligence division of the KGB, forwarded this telegram directly to the chairman of the KGB, Vladimir Semichastny.<sup>16</sup>

In following the course taken by this important telegram, we see that it could not have played any role in shaping Khrushchev's letter of October 26, which proposed a U.S. guarantee of the territorial integrity of Cuba as a means of resolving the crisis, or even in influencing the letter of October 27 that asserted a parallel between U.S. bases in Turkey and the Soviet missile installations in Cuba.

Feklisov's telegram arrived in Moscow well after (nearly a full day) Khrushchev had sent his letter of October 26 to Kennedy. Because it was not expected that Feklisov would act as a channel for resolving the crisis, this telegram was not given priority treatment. After deciphering and summarizing the telegram, which took the usual hour, the FCD sent the telegram to the Secretariat of the KGB, which was the headquarters staff of the Chairman, Semichastny. Inexplicably, the telegram sat in Semichastny's office for another four hours before the Chairman decided to send it to Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. This delay was so long that by the time the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received a copy of the Feklisov cable, Khrushchev had already sent his second, October 27 letter to Kennedy referring to the Jupiters in Turkey.<sup>17</sup>

The Scali-Feklisov meeting on October 27 looms even less significant in Russian records. Again Khrushchev could not have seen it in time to affect his strategy toward the Americans. Feklisov sent a short report after Scali scolded him for Khrushchev's new position on resolving the missile crisis. This cable did not reach the Chairman of the KGB until 4:40 p.m. on October 28. Semichastny's reaction was to forward the letter to the Foreign Ministry, where it arrived at 7 p.m. Moscow time, an hour after Khrushchev had publicly accepted the Kennedy administration's terms for ending the crisis.<sup>18</sup>

The KGB materials substantiate claims that for the Kremlin the Scali-Feklisov meetings were a sideshow that played no part in the U.S.-Soviet endgame of October 26-28. Although of less consequence in light of this information, it is nevertheless interesting to consider the contradiction between the contemporaneous accounts by Feklisov and Scali of their meetings on October 26. Did Feklisov violate KGB procedure and present a completely unauthorized settlement formula? Or, at the other extreme, did Scali use the KGB

resident to test some ideas that had occurred to him as perhaps the best way of averting nuclear disaster?

The KGB documents suggest that in the heat of discussion, with the fear of war hanging over their heads, Scali and Feklisov fastened on a revival of a formula for ending the crisis that, among others, UN Secretary General U Thant had been suggesting since October 24.<sup>19</sup> Because of the possibility that Feklisov and/or Scali mischaracterized their first meeting on October 26, it may never be possible to resolve the central contradiction between their respective claims. However, the determination of which man actually proposed this plan is less important than the fact that, although the Kremlin was completely in the dark, John F. Kennedy was convinced that Feklisov spoke for the Soviet government, and indeed for Khrushchev personally.

As we now know, President Kennedy decided not to use the Scali-Feklisov channel to settle the crisis. On the night of October 27, JFK sent his brother Robert to Dobrynin to offer a face-saving deal to Khrushchev. In addition to pledging not to invade Cuba, Kennedy offered a secret undertaking to remove Jupiter missiles from Turkey. Nevertheless, the story of the Scali-Feklisov backchannel remains significant as a prime example of how governments can misinterpret each other, especially in the grip of a crisis.

1. *The New York Times* broke the story of John Scali's role in the Cuban missile crisis on 4 August 1964. It was reported that *Look* magazine was about to publish an excerpt from Roger Hilsman's forthcoming book on foreign policymaking in the Kennedy years that named Scali as an intermediary between the U.S. and Soviet governments at the climax of the missile crisis. Just as Hilsman's piece was to appear in print, John Scali discussed his meetings with the Soviet KGB official, "Mr. X," on an ABC news special of 13 August 1964. Transcript, Cuban Missile Crisis Collection, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C. *U.S. News & World Report* carried an article about Hilsman's revelation in its 17 August 1964 issue. Hilsman's excerpt finally appeared in the 25 August 1964 issue of *Look*. A few months later, in its 25 October 1964 edition, *Family Weekly* published Scali's "I Was the Secret Go-Between in the Cuban Crisis." Pierre Salinger, Hilsman and Robert Kennedy all attested to the importance of the Scali channel in autobiographical books: *With Kennedy* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1966), 274-280; *To Move A Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967), 217-223; and *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1969), 90-91. Salinger's *With Kennedy* quoted directly from notes that John Scali had

made after each of his meetings with the KGB officer.

2. The Moscow conference was one of a series of five conferences between 1987 and 1992 involving, at first, U.S. scholars and former officials, who were later joined by Soviet and then Cuban counterparts. The conferences were organized by James G. Blight, initially at Harvard University's Center for Science and International Affairs and later at Brown University's Center for Foreign Policy Development. For the Feklisov-Scali exchange, see Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight, and David A. Welch, eds., *Back to the Brink: Proceedings of the Moscow Conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis, January 27-28, 1989* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), 112-14; 117-18. Feklisov elaborated on his testimony in his memoirs, *Za Okeanom i Na Ostrovye* (Moscow: DEM, 1994), 222-40.

3. It appears that Feklisov first made this assertion to a Russian scholar in 1987. A year later, Georgi Kornienko, who had been the Counsellor in the Soviet Embassy at the time of the Missile Crisis, told Raymond Garthoff that on 26 October 1962 the Embassy had been confused by Feklisov's account of his first meeting with Scali. Neither Kornienko nor the ambassador, Anatoli Dobrynin, was sure whether it had been Scali or Feklisov who had made the proposal. See Garthoff's revised edition of *Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1989), 80-81. A 1988 article by Garthoff was the first published account of the Scali-Feklisov channel to raise doubts as to whether Feklisov had been authorized by the Kremlin to make his proposal. See Raymond L. Garthoff, "Cuban Missile Crisis: The Soviet Story," *Foreign Policy* 72 (Fall 1988).

4. Thus far, Crown has four books under contract. Each book will be written by a team. The Fursenko/Naftali study of the superpowers and Cuba, 1958-1963, will be the first book in the series. It will be followed by a history of Soviet intelligence penetration of the British government by John Costello and Oleg Tsarev; a study of KGB-CIA operations in Berlin by George Bailey, Sergei Kondrashev, and David Murphy; and a history of Soviet intelligence operations in the United States by Alexander Vassiliev and Allen Weinstein.

5. ABC news special of 13 August 1964. Transcript, Cuban Missile Crisis Collection, National Security Archive.

6. Elie Abel, *The Missile Crisis* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1966), 177-79. In their first public accounts, both Scali and Hilsman misremembered the details of the proposal. They had Khrushchev giving the pledge to keep Cuba free of offensive weapons, not Fidel Castro. This flawed version of the "Soviet" proposal gained wide currency when Graham T. Allison featured it in his influential *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 260, 263. For Scali's confidential description on 26 October 1962 of what he had just heard from Feklisov, which confirms Abel's and Salinger's accounts, see "John Scali's notes of first meeting with Soviet embassy counselor and KGB officer Alexandr Fomin, October 26, 1962," Document 43 in Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archive Documents Reader*, (New York: New Press, 1992), 184.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Hilsman, *To Move A Nation*, 217-19.

9. Papers of John F. Kennedy, Presidential Papers, President's Office Files, *Presidential Recordings*, Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings, 27 October 1962, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA.

10. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 26 October 1962, in Chang

and Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis*, 185-88.

11. Feklisov to KGB Center, 26 October 1962, Delo 116, T.1., SVR Archives, Moscow.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Feklisov, *Za Okeanom u Na Ostrovye*, 223-25.

14. Feklisov to KGB Center, 27 October 1962, Delo 116, T.1., SVR Archives; John Scali, Report of 27 October 1962 Meeting, Cuban Missile Crisis Collection, National Security Archive.

15. Feklisov, *Za Okeanom u Na Ostrovye*, 225. There is a problem with Feklisov's chronology. Scali's call actually came later than 4 or 5 p.m.. Unless his meeting with Dobrynin actually occurred three hours later than he said, Feklisov should have had enough time to brief the Soviet ambassador and to send a cable to Moscow. After returning from the second meeting, Feklisov continued to wait before sending Moscow any word on his meetings with Scali. The long cable was not sent until approximately midnight, four hours after Feklisov and Scali parted. At a September 1994 conference in Moscow, entitled "The Caribbean Crisis in the Archives of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Cuba and the United States," Dobrynin and Feklisov argued over the reasons for the delays in sending a KGB cable on the Scali meetings. Feklisov alleged that he waited to give Dobrynin the opportunity to sign the cable; but when the latter stubbornly refused to do so, he sent it anyway. The former Soviet ambassador rejected this account, saying that Feklisov had not needed his signature to send a KGB cable.

16. Spravka on Feklisov's October 26 telegram on Scali, Delo 116, T. 1., SVR Archives.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Spravka on Delivery of Scali report of 27 October 1962, *ibid.*

19. U Thant, "Statement in the Security Council," 24 October 1962, in Andrew W. Cordier and Max Harrelson, eds., *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations, VI: U Thant, 1961-1964* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 237-240.

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## FOREIGN MINISTRY DOCUMENTS

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ing. Gromyko not only had obtained no hint of the American discovery of the missiles, he reported that from all available information, including Soviet intelligence (referred to by the usual circumlocution as information received "through unofficial channels") and from other countries (which would include Cuba), "the acuteness of the anti-Cuban campaign in the United States has somewhat abated," and that under prevailing conditions "a military adventure against Cuba is almost inconceivable." Notwithstanding his own knowledge of the secret missile deployment underway, he even said, "Everything that we know about the position of the USA government on the Cuban question permits the conclusion that the situation in general is completely satisfactory." How did he think the United States would react when it found out about the missiles? And this evaluation followed his meetings with Kennedy and Rusk.

Dobrynin's cables on his meetings with Robert Kennedy on October 23, 27, and 28—or, rather, the excerpts that have been released—help to clarify these important exchanges. Among other things, they make clear that there was not merely a statement by Kennedy, but "an understanding" on withdrawing the American Jupiter missiles in Turkey, but also that it had to be kept in "strict secrecy." The material released does

not, however, include the reports on Dobrynin's delivery to Robert Kennedy on October 29 of a draft *written* agreement, and its sharp rejection in another meeting on October 30.

The reporting on Mikoyan's talks in Cuba, while not complete, does give the main discussions in considerable detail. Incidentally, apart from Mikoyan's efforts to persuade Castro to agree to the withdrawal of Soviet IL-28 bombers from Cuba and his reassurances on Soviet support on other matters, both Mikoyan and Castro discussed aspects of the crisis itself that shed light on earlier Soviet and Cuban thinking and actions. Both, for example, had clearly concluded by October 27 that an American attack on Cuba was imminent—although they drew different conclusions on what the Soviet Union should do about it. While not all statements made in that exchange were necessarily accurate, it is of interest to note that Mikoyan said, in answer to a Cuban question, "speaking frankly, we [the Soviet leaders] had not thought at all about the bases in Turkey" as a tradeoff until the Americans, specifically Walter Lippmann in a newspaper column on October 25, had raised the matter. He also did not disclose to Castro—who had found the idea of a tradeoff repugnant—the secret understanding reached with Kennedy on the withdrawal of the missiles from Turkey.

The reporting on the extensive U.S.-Soviet negotiations in New York from 29 October 1962

to 7 January 1963, by contrast, is completely omitted, apart from Kuznetsov's subsequent final meeting with the president on 9 January 1963. This negotiation settled the issues of dismantling and withdrawal of the missiles, bombers, and warheads, and verification of the withdrawal of missiles and bombers by cooperative measures, but was unable to formulate agreed terms for assurances against a U.S. invasion of Cuba and eventually left it to rest on the presidential statements. Kuznetsov's account of his meeting with Kennedy not only deals with Cuba (including the question of the Soviet military presence remaining there, a diplomatic dialogue on which continued into April 1963) but also with the subject of a nuclear test ban. A test ban was then being discussed in the Kennedy-Khrushchev exchanges, some of which (those messages in November and December 1962 that also dealt with the Cuban crisis) have been declassified and released by the two governments.

It is not my purpose here to try to summarize or even note the many interesting matters on which these documents throw light. The specific points I have raised, as well as my references to some aspects of the subject not dealt with, are only illustrative. These documents, and others that should follow, will undoubtedly add to our understanding. So, too, will the long overdue forthcoming two volumes of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series dealing with Cuba in 1962-63.

**Telegram of Soviet Ambassador to Cuba  
A.I. Alekseev to the USSR Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs (MFA), 7 September 1962**

Recently, the ruling circles of the USA have noticeably activated a policy of provocation against Cuba; military preparations and its political isolation. Nearly every day, the air space and territorial waters of Cuba are violated by American airplanes, submarines and ships trying to establish permanent control over the territory of Cuba and diverting passenger and transport ships bound for Cuba. The landing of counter-revolutionary bands of spies and arms has been increased.

The constant acts of provocation are carried out from the territory of the USA base at Guantanamo, most often in the form of shooting at Cuban patrols. Especially noteworthy among all these provocations are far reaching acts like the August 24 shelling of the hotel in which mainly live Soviet specialists, and also the lies published by the Kennedy Administration about the alleged August 30 attack, in international waters, on an American airplane from two small Cuban ships. In the USA government's announcement, it is noted that in the event of a repeat of "an incident of this type," the armed forces of the United States "will take all necessary retaliatory measures. It is entirely evident

that this carries a great danger for Cuba, since it gives the most reactionary anti-Cuban authorities in the USA an opening at any moment to organize a provocation and unleash aggressive actions against Cuba.

In regard to the above two last actions undertaken by the USA, the government of Cuba came forward with corresponding official declarations signed by Fidel Castro. Both of these declarations were circulated as official documents to the UN. The goal of these declarations is to attract the attention of the appropriate international organizations and all of world public opinion to the provocation and far-reaching acts of the USA, to unmask the aggressive schemes of the United States in relation to Cuba, and to ward them off. In these declarations the government of Cuba precisely makes the point that the anti-Cuban actions and schemes of the USA presents a threat not only to Cuba, but to the whole world.

The series of provocations is now accompanied by a whipped up, broad anti-Cuba campaign in the USA press, striving with all its might to convince the population of the United States of the alleged presence in Cuba of large contingents of Soviet troops and of the fact that Cuba has turned into a military base of "world Communism" which presents a grave threat to the USA and all Latin American countries. Under this pretext, the press, certain American senators and

other public figures demand of the Kennedy administration the revival of the Monroe Doctrine, establishment of a sea and air blockade of Cuba, the bringing into force of the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, and the military occupation of Cuba.

Following the signing in Moscow of the Soviet-Cuban communique in which the agreement of the Soviet government to provide assistance in strengthening its armed forces is noted, Kennedy in a public statement on September 4 pointed to the defensive nature of Cuba's military preparations and noted that Soviet military specialists are in Cuba to teach the Cubans how to use defensive equipment presented by the Soviet Union. Several USA press agencies, commenting on that part of Kennedy's statement, underline the evidence of that the fact the president of the USA obviously preferred an attempt to calm down those circles in the USA which are supporting quick, decisive actions against Cuba. Along with this, in Kennedy's statement there are contained insinuations of purported aggressive Cuban schemes regarding influence on the American continent and a threat to use "all necessary means" to "defend" the continent.

According to certain information, the USA State Department through its ambassadors notified the governments of Latin American countries that they can expect changes in the situation in

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*FOREIGN MINISTRY DOCUMENTS*  
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in the Caribbean basin "if Castro's government does not come to its senses." More probably, in the near future the USA, using the pretext of an allegedly growing threat to the Western hemisphere, will embark on a long process of increasing the pressure on governments of the Latin-American countries and will probably convene a meeting of foreign ministers of the member-countries of the OAS to work out supplementary sanctions against Cuba. One can also assume that the most wildly aggressive powers in the USA (the Pentagon, the Cuban external counter-revolution, and others) will continue to exert pressure on Kennedy in order to realize the most decisive actions against Cuba.

The campaign of anti-Cuban hysteria has been conveyed via American propaganda to Latin American countries too. There the publication of articles and transmissions of radio programs of anti-Cuban and anti-Soviet content is constantly encouraged, while the external Cuban counter-revolution and local reaction put constant pressure on the governments of those countries, conduct loud demonstrations and terrorize individuals and organizations which speak out in defense of the Cuban revolution, and by means of bribery and blackmail get a range of people who have visited Cuba to make anti-Cuban statements, and so forth.

Simultaneously, the USA continues actively to conduct purely military preparations, aimed at repressing possible centers of the national-liberation movement in Latin American, and, given the appropriate circumstances, the Cuban revolution itself. This is shown by such facts as the organization by the United States of schools for instruction in methods of street-fighting and anti-partisan struggle in many Latin American countries (in Panama, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, and others); continuing intensive instruction of Cuban counter-revolutionaries in camps located on the territory of the USA, in Puerto Rico and in several Central American countries; many inspection trips to these bases, schools, and camps by responsible American military officials and the heads of the Cuban counter-revolution, including Miro Cardon; unflagging efforts of the USA aimed at strengthening the unity of the external Cuban counterrevolution and unity in the action of counter-revolutionary organizations active in Cuba itself, etc.

At the same time, the USA is actively continuing to conduct its efforts towards the political isolation of Cuba, particularly in Latin America. The USA is concentrating on putting pressure on the governments of Mexico and Brazil, which continue to express their support for the principle of non-interference and self-determination of peoples. This pressure is applied through economic means, and also by exploiting the domes-

tic reaction. The realization of Kennedy's visit to Mexico, following which he was to have quickly visited Brazil too (this visit was put off to the last months of the year), served the goals of determining the likelihood of attracting these two countries to the anti-Cuban plans of the USA.

Until now none of the attempts of the USA to attract Brazil and Mexico to its anti-Cuban adventures has had any success.

Under pressure from the USA, in a majority of Latin American countries the local authorities are applying the harshest measures aimed at forbidding or tightly limiting visits of any groups or individuals to Cuba, and also their contacts with Cuban delegations in third countries. People who visit Cuba or make contact with Cuban delegations in third countries are subject to arrest, repression, investigations upon return to their homeland. The USA does not lack means for organizing broad and loud provocations against Cuban delegations taking part in international quorums, as took place recently in Finland and Jamaica.

Referring to the decision taken at the meeting at Punta-del-Este about the exclusion of Cuba from the OAS, the USA is undertaking all measures to deny Cuba participation in any organizations connected with the inter-American system. In particular, they recently undertook an attempt to secure the exclusion of Cuba from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The unlawful denial of Cuba's application to join the so-called Latin American Free Trade Association is another example. In response to the American policy towards Cuba of provocation, military threats, and political isolation, the Cuban government is intensifying its efforts on strengthening its own armed forces, struggling with the internal counter-revolution, unmasking before world public opinion the aggressive designs of the USA, and broadening its anti-American propaganda in Latin America. At the end of August, taking into account the activation of provocative actions by the USA and the possible increase in the unleashing of counter-revolutionary bands and manifestations of domestic counter-revolution, preventive arrests were carried out in the country and strengthened control was established over many registered [known] counter-revolutionary elements and the places where they gather.

The Cuban leaders are paying serious attention to the question of strengthening the devotion to the revolution of the cadres of its diplomatic missions, particularly in Latin American countries; they are taking every opportunity, as was the case with their presentation at the Latin American Free Trade Association, to widen the sphere of their activity in Latin America; they are strengthening their connections with the Latin American peoples by inviting to Cuba society delegations and individual Latin American officials; in timely fashion and aggressively, they speak at international organizations, unmasking the aggressive schemes and actions of the USA; they are striving

to take part in any international forums at which there is a possibility to expose the aggressive character of American imperialism; they are strengthening Cuba's ties with African and Asian countries, etc.

The Cuban leadership believes, however, that the main guarantee of the development of the Cuban Revolution under conditions of possible direct American aggression is the readiness of the Soviet government to provide military assistance to Cuba and simultaneously to warn the USA of that fact. From this position, the joint Soviet-Cuban communique about [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara's visit to Moscow was greeted by the Cuban leaders and the vast majority of the Cuban people with great enthusiasm and gratitude. The Cuban leadership and Fidel Castro himself suggest that these warnings will help to prevail those forces in the USA which are warning of the outbreak now of a world conflict, and are staving off a direct attack American attack on Cuba in the near future.

In our opinion, in the near future the ruling circles of the USA will continue to expand the attacks on Cuba by all the above-mentioned means: provocations, the propaganda campaign, military preparations, actions of the domestic counter-revolution, political isolation, and so forth. Their success in drawing the Latin American countries into their aggressive actions will most depend on the positions of the governments of Mexico and Brazil.

We also suggest that the question of direct American actions against Cuba will be decided by the correlation of forces in American ruling circles which have differing approaches to questions of war and peace in the present period, and the struggle between them on these issues.

The mood of the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people is defiant, and regardless of the reality of the threat of intervention, no panic or fear before the threat which is hanging over Cuba is observed in the masses of the people. The American provocations make possible an ever-tighter unity of the Cuban workers and raise the political consciousness of the masses.

Regarding the provocations, the influence of the Soviet Union in Cuba has grown as never before, and our cooperation with the Cuban leaders has been strengthened even more.

In the interest of future productive work with our Cuban friends it would be desirable to receive from you for dispatch to the Cuban leaders information which we have about the plans of the USA government toward Cuba.

7.IX.62 ALEKSEEV

*[Source: Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVP RF), Moscow, copy courtesy of National Security Archive (NSA), Washington, D.C.; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]*

**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to Cuba  
Alekseev to the USSR MFA, 11 September  
1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

In a conversation with me on September 11 of this year, [Cuban Defense Minister] Raoul Castro, noting the publication in the Soviet press of the TASS report, announced that it had been met with great enthusiasm by the Cuban leadership as timely and well-argued. Castro said that this report will be regarded by the whole Cuban people and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in other countries as a reliable shield against the aggressive intrigues of the American imperialists.

Castro also asserts that the thesis put forth in the report allows opponents of direct intervention in the United States itself—including Kennedy—to put up more decisive resistance to pressure from the aggressive forces. Regarding this, he, nonetheless, is allowing a sharp increase in anti-Soviet propaganda in the USA and in countries under its influence.

Raoul Castro believes that N.S. Khrushchev's conversation with [U.S. Secretary of the Interior Stewart] Udall on the Cuban question, during which the government of the USA was warned without any hint of propaganda about all the consequences which could result from its treacherous actions towards Cuba, is even more important. In Castro's opinion, the public announcement, as a consequence of this warning, will force the USA ruling circles to search for new means of strangling the Cuban revolution.

Castro considers as very important the part of the announcement which deals with the American bases around the USSR, and also the USA's Sixth and Seventh fleets in foreign waters and its effort to convince public opinion that this is the inalienable right of the USA.

The use of this line of argument to explain Soviet assistance to Cuba will be very easy for ordinary Latin Americans and for the people of the USA itself to understand.

Raoul Castro asserts that in the course of the developing situation the Americans are trying to isolate Cuba from the Latin American countries and to intensify the small-scale provocations against Cuba allegedly carried out by irresponsible elements of the Cuban counter-revolution, the apparent shelling of populated areas and foreign ships bound for Cuban ports from the sea.

Today's pirate attack on Cuban and English ships in the Caribbean area, in Castro's opinion, is aimed at frightening certain capitalist countries and to give the governments of NATO a pretext to forbid its ships to visit Cuban ports.

According to a dispatch by the Chairman of the Institute for Agricultural Reform C.R. [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez, the crews of Japanese fishing boats who are now in Cuba, citing the danger, posed the question of leaving for their homeland right after the first attack on Havana.

C.R. Rodriguez announced that he had just spoken with Fidel Castro, who optimistically evaluates the developing situation and asserts that the Americans, following N.S. Khrushchev's conversation with Udall and the publication of the TASS dispatch, will have to reject attempts to organize direct aggression against Cuba.

F. Castro, according to Rodriguez, with great enthusiasm greeted these acts as a manifestation of genuine friendship for Cuba from the Soviet government and personally from N.S. Khrushchev, and expressed for this his sincere thanks.

Rodriguez recounted that the TASS declaration had been received with great enthusiasm in the factories, in peoples' estates, establishments and military units, where demonstrations and meetings are spontaneously conducted as a sign of gratitude to the Soviet Union.

Rodriguez believes that the publication of the TASS dispatch increases the authority of the Soviet Union in the eyes of the Cuban and other Latin American peoples and helps those not insignificant elements which are attracted to the unruliness of the revolutionism of our Chinese friends understand the difference between a truly revolutionary policy and a policy of revolutionary phrases.

In Rodriguez' opinion, in Cuba for a long time already Chinese representatives have had no opportunities to cultivate any Cuban leaders, but the publication of the Soviet-Cuban communique and the TASS dispatch once and for all undermines the ground beneath their feet and guarantees the unshakability of Cuban-Soviet friendship.

11.IX.62 ALEKSEEV

[Source: AVPRF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the  
USA Anatoly F. Dobrynin to the USSR  
MFA, 4 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

The meeting in Washington on the question of Cuba between the Foreign Ministers of the

countries of Latin America and [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk which concluded yesterday proceeded, according to information which we received, amidst sharp disagreements. A particularly big conflict arose around the text of the communique. The reception which was scheduled for 6 p.m. yesterday in honor of the participants in the meeting ended in confusion—most of the guests had left, when at 11 p.m. the ministers finally appeared, having been unable to agree on the text of the communique.

The draft of the communique which Rusk proposed was subjected to significant changes, primarily as a result of the criticism from the Mexican, Brazilian and Chilean representatives. There were changes along three main lines, despite the fact that the USA got the "tough measures" it was after.

First, on trade—the USA did not manage to secure recommendations for a total cut-off of trade with Cuba. The three countries mentioned above put up strong resistance to that recommendation, warning, by way of objection, that this would create a precedent which could be used in the future by the USA—in particular against those countries' trade with the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries. Chile, which has the most intensive trade with Cuba, was noteworthy for its insistence on its right to trade with Cuba.

Second, regarding so-called measures of security. The USA tried in the communique to single out the Caribbean Basin region as the most "threatened" by Cuba and in need therefore of its own separate organizational measures. As is known, even on the eve of the meeting plans were put forth for the creation inside the OAS of an independent regional organization for the Caribbean Basin with a membership of 10 countries. However, at the meeting Colombia and Venezuela, in particular, came out against such an organization, even though they were mentioned among the members of such an organization; seeing the opposition to the idea from Brazil, Chile, and Bolivia, [they] feared being isolated from the rest of the countries of South America if they had agreed to be included in an organization of the countries of Central America, the governments of which had long before recommended themselves as lackeys of the USA. For the same reason Mexico refused to participate in such an organization. For a general understanding of Mexico's position, we should note that precisely at her insistence the phrase (the end of the second paragraph of the communique, as transmitted by TASS) about recognition of the principle of non-interference in relations between Latin American countries.

Third, the USA attempt to formulate a point expressing a hope for a quick establishment of a Cuban government in exile also did not receive the necessary support from the biggest Latin American countries.

According to information received from sev-

eral participants in the meeting, Rusk put much pressure on the meeting. The point of the communique about trade with Cuba, which elicited the most disagreement, was accepted only after Rusk, referring to the mood in the USA Congress, threatened to cut off all American assistance to countries which would refuse to accept that point. In addition to this, Rusk and Kennedy informed the participants in the meeting about the unilateral measures which the government of the USA itself is now considering regarding a maximum limitation on the use of ships of various countries in trade with Cuba.

As indicated by certain information which we are now reconfirming, the following measures were named:

1. American ports will be closed to ships of those countries of which even a single ship would bring arms to Cuba. In essence, this is directed entirely against the USSR and socialist countries.

2. Ships of all countries will not be allowed into ports of the USA and will not be allowed to take on any cargo for the return voyage, if in the past they carried goods to Cuba from the countries of the "Soviet-Chinese" bloc. This refers equally to cargos of military supplies and those of consumer goods.

3. No cargo belonging to the government of the USA (for example, big shipments for "assistance programs) may be carried on foreign ships, if ships of the same owners are used for the shipment of goods to Cuba. This point is directed against "non-communist" countries and allies of the USA, many of whom have now reluctantly given in to American pressure.

4. No American-flag ships or ships the owners of which are American citizens (although ships may sail under a different flag, as is often done) are allowed to ship goods to or from Cuba.

Overall, this is a continuation of the prior unyielding line of the Kennedy Administration towards the tightening up of the economic blockade of Cuba, which is viewed here as one of the most effective means in the struggle with the Castro government and the increase in assistance to him from the Soviet Union.

The first reaction to the meeting in Washington diplomatic circles is summarized as follows: although the USA didn't get everything it wanted, the decisions of the meeting will be used by the Kennedy Administration to the maximum degree for the long-term isolation of Cuba from the countries of Latin America; for the strengthening of all aspects of the struggle against the Castro government. It is revealing that Kennedy today signed a declaration, accepted by the American Congress, to the effect that the USA can use troops in order to "prevent the spread of Cuban Communism to the American continent." At the same time he signed a Congressional bill, giving him the right to call up 150,000 reserves.

4.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the USA Dobrynin to the USSR MFA, 18 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

On October 15-16 a closed briefing (i.e. "instructional meeting") for editors and leading observers of American newspapers, radio, and television was held at the State Department. According to information which we received, the USA policy toward Cuba occupied a major place in the work of the meeting. The essence of the statements of Kennedy, Rusk, Taylor, and Martin (aide to the Secretary of State) on this topic is summarized as follows:

I. "Don't joke about the idea of American intervention in Cuba," because such intervention would unavoidably prompt serious counter-measures from the USSR, if not directly aimed at the USA, then in other regions of the world, particularly in West Berlin; for many years [intervention] would complicate the mutual relations of the USA with the countries of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, and overall would create more problems than it solved.

2. At present Cuba is a political problem, and not a problem of security of the USA; thus, political, economic and other means are needed to solve it, rather than military.

Proceeding from this, the USA intends to achieve the greatest possible political, economic, and moral isolation of Cuba from other Latin American countries and other countries of the "free world," and also hinder the provision of assistance to Cuba from Socialist countries in all possible ways (short of, however, a sea blockade).

All this, in the calculations of the USA government, should cause serious economic and political complications for Cuba and ultimately (not in the coming weeks and months but in the next year or two) lead to the outbreak there of mass dissatisfaction and to huge anti-government demonstrations. The USA's concrete course in this case will depend on the situation.

3. At the present time the USA has no plans to create "a provisional Cuban government in exile," since in view of the mixed nature of the Cuban emigration it would be hardly possible to form a sufficiently authoritative government and in any case such a government, created on foreign territory, could not count on broad popularity

among the population of Cuba itself; in the same way the recognition of an exile government by the United States "would confuse" the issue of the American base at Guantanamo, depriving the USA of the formal right to demand of Castro's government recognition of Cuba's obligations re: the agreement about that base.

4. In spite of all the importance of the Cuba issue, it is not the main issue for the USA. The West Berlin issue at present remains sharpest and most fraught with dangers.

18/X-62 A.DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Foreign Minister A.A. Gromyko to the CC CPSU, 19 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

To the CC CPSU

Everything which we know about the position of the USA government on the Cuban question allows us to conclude that the overall situation is completely satisfactory. This is confirmed by official announcements of American officials, including Kennedy, in his discussion with us on October 18, and all information which reaches us via unofficial channels and from representatives of other countries.

There is reason to believe that the USA is not preparing an intervention in Cuba and has put its money on obstructing Cuba's economic relations with the USSR and other countries, so as to destroy its economy and to cause hunger in the country, and in this way creating dissatisfaction among the population and prompting an uprising against the regime. This is based on a belief that the Soviet Union will not over a long period be able to provide Cuba with everything it needs.

The main reason for this American position is that the Administration and the overall American ruling circles are amazed by the Soviet Union's courage in assisting Cuba. Their reasoning is thus: The Soviet government recognizes the great importance which the Americans place on Cuba and its situation, and how painful that issue is to the USA. But the fact that the USSR, even knowing all that, still provides such aid to Cuba, means that it is fully committed to repulsing any American intervention in Cuba. There is no single opinion as to how and where that rebuff will be given, but that it will be given—they do not doubt.

In these last days the sharpness of the anti-Cuban campaign in the USA has subsided somewhat, while the sharpness of the West Berlin question has stood out all the more. Newspapers bleat about the approaching crisis vis a vis West Berlin, the impending in the very near future signing of the agreement with the GDR, and so on. The goal of such a change in the work of the propaganda machine is to divert somewhat public attention from the Cuba issue. All this is not without the participation of the White House.

Even the rumor to the effect that the Soviet Union has made it known that it can soften its position on the Cuban issue if the West will soften its own position in West Berlin was basically intended to mollify the public vis a vis Cuba.

The wide publication of the results of an election survey conducted here by the Gallup (sic) Institute showing that the vast majority of Americans are against an American intervention in Cuba serves this same goal. In this regard, we have to note that the leadership of the institute in the past traditionally were more sympathetic to Republicans. Therefore, its publication in this case deserves special attention. This was not done without the encouragement of the White House either; in this way a nudge was given to the extremist groups in Congress which support extreme measures.

Also deserving of attention is the fact that Congress has now "gone on recess." This suggests that the pressure on Kennedy from the extreme groups in Congress will be less during the recess.

The position of the USA allies, particularly the British, also played a role. They did not support calls for the unleashing of aggression against Cuba, although they equally approved of other anti-Cuban steps of the USA.

It is not possible, of course, to be completely insured against USA surprises and adventures, even in the Cuba issue; all the same, taking into account the undeniable objective facts and the corresponding official public statements, and also the assurances given to us that the USA has no plans for intervention in Cuba (which undeniably commits them in many respects), it is possible to say that in these conditions a USA military adventure against Cuba is almost impossible to imagine.

19/X-62 A. GROMYKO

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to the CC CPSU, 20 October 1962**

On October 18 a conversation with Rusk took place.

Rusk, continuing my conversation with Kennedy, touched on the Cuba issue. He said, that President Kennedy considers that issue very important, that it carries great significance for the USA, since it concerns the security of the Western hemisphere. As the President said, the USA has no intention of intervening with its own armed forces in Cuba. But the USA proceeds from the fact that everything that is happening in Cuba is of a defensive nature and will not turn Cuba into an attack platform against the USA and the countries of Latin America.

Besides this, Rusk announced, the USA, in defining its position on the Cuban issue, as announced by the President in his conversation with us, proceeds also from the fact that Cuba will not undertake actions aimed at foisting its system and regime on the other countries of Latin America.

The government of the USA places extremely high significance on these two conditions. It would be hoped that neither the first, nor the second, would take place.

As far as the domestic regime on Cuba is concerned, the USA decisively views it as a regime which contradicts the interests of security in the Western hemisphere.

Having heard Rusk out, I said that the Cuban issue had been caused by the hostile policy of the USA towards Cuba. The USA for some reason believes that it must dictate to the Cubans the sort of domestic regime that should exist in Cuba, and the social structure under which the Cubans should live. But on what basis is the USA trying to appropriate for itself the right to dictate to the Cubans how to conduct their internal affairs? There is no such basis, and such a basis cannot be. Cuba belongs to the Cubans, not to Americans.

Perhaps, I declared, Rusk can tell me, whether the principles of the UN Charter in American policy towards Cuba? They're not there. The actions of the USA are in flagrant contradiction with these principles. The USA is undertaking steps to cause hunger in Cuba. The actions which it is undertaking towards this end unmask the USA policy even more clearly. The Cubans, with ever more decisiveness, are speaking out and will continue to speak out in defense of their country and will strengthen its defenses.

The Soviet Union is helping Cuba. It is trying to provide the Cubans with grain, and help to put its economy on a sound footing. This can not present any danger to the USA. Soviet specialists are helping Cuban soldiers to master certain types of defensive weapons. This can't present any threat to the USA either. Overall, so far as the declaration that Cuba may present a threat to the security of the USA and countries of Latin America is concerned, such declarations are evidently intended for naive people. Even Americans themselves don't believe it.

Rusk said that he does not agree that Cuba cannot present a threat to the USA. Cuba without the Soviet Union, he declared, is one thing; a Cuba where "Soviet operators" run things is something different.

The USA government and he, Rusk, are baselessly scaring the American people with "Soviet operators," I answered. The Soviet Union is providing assistance to Cuba in only a few areas, including whatever we can do to strengthen its defensive capability. The Cuban themselves are running everything on Cuba, and the USA knows that perfectly well.

The situation has rapidly worsened, declared Rusk, since July of this year. Before July the situation caused no alarm. But from July, Soviet weapons have flowed into Cuba. So far it seems, according to U.S. Government data, that these are defensive weapons. But it is unclear how the situation will develop in the future.

Besides this, declared Rusk, according to precise data in American possession, the Cuban regime continues to actively carry out subversive work against a number of Latin American countries.

I said that the Cubans should have come to conclusions about their own defense from the intervention on Cuba by the immigrant riff-raff organized by the Americans and financed by them. They came to such a conclusion, deciding to strengthen their own defense capability. July has no significance here. Cuba represented no threat to the USA either before July, or after July.

As far as the declarations regarding subversive work by the Cubans is concerned, I can only say that these declarations are in contradiction with the information which we possess.

All the same, declared Rusk, in July some kind of sudden change took place. And that sudden change significantly complicated the situation.

Regarding the issue of the Cubans' subversive activities, said Rusk, the USA government has irrefutable proof of the assistance provided by them to various subversive groups in Latin America, up until the present day. For the government of the USA there is nothing to discuss. It knows for sure that the Cubans provide such help and are carrying out subversive work against a number of Latin American countries.

Rusk expansively spoke of the "community of interests" of the countries of the Western Hemisphere. Not mentioning the "Monroe Doctrine," he essentially tried to defend it, stressing the solidarity of the countries of the Western Hemisphere and the community of interests of their security.

I said that in the policy of the USA and in Rusk's considerations regarding Cuba the countries somehow get lost, while the discussion is about the hemisphere. But in this hemisphere there are sovereign countries. Each one of them has a right to decide its own internal affairs upon

consideration by its people. Cuba is one of these sovereign states.

Besides that, I declared, if Rusk's reasoning and the entire conception which the USA government defends were to be applied to Europe and to Asia, then no doubt the conclusions which would flow from that would not please the USA. It comes out that the Americans consider themselves to have a right to be in a number of countries of Europe, Asia, and other regions of the world, if sometimes they don't even ask them about this, while certain others can not even respond to an appeal for assistance in providing its own people with bread and strengthening its security in the face of a threat of intervention. With such a conception the Soviet Union cannot agree. It is hoped that the USA government too will more soberly approach the entire Cuban issue and will reject a hostile policy toward Cuba.

If the USA government has some sort of claims toward Cuba, for instance, financial, then it can bring them up with the Cubans at negotiations aimed at settling them, and the Cubans, as is known, are prepared for this.

Yes, declared Rusk, but nonetheless Cuba has violated the peace on the continent, nonetheless, beginning in July, the situation has taken a dangerous turn. The Soviet Union appeared in Cuba. A large quantity of Soviet weapons appeared in Cuba. All this has complicated the situation.

No matter how often Rusk repeats, I declared, the assertion about some sort of turn of events in July, about the danger allegedly emanating from Cuba, in actuality, the situation remains simpler. The Cubans want Cuba to belong to them, and not to the USA.

Maybe Rusk will reject the presence of the USA, the presence of American military bases and numerous military advisers in such countries like Turkey, Pakistan, Japan, not even speaking about such countries as England, Italy, and a number of other countries of Western Europe, and also Asia and Africa. It appears that the USA can have military bases in these countries, conclude with them military agreements, while the Soviet Union can not even provide assistance in support of the Cuban economy and for the strengthening of the defense capability of Cuba.

Rusk said that the Soviet Union is exaggerating the significance of American foreign military bases, believing that the USA has bases even in Pakistan, and practically in Iran. In many countries, on the territory of which, in your opinion, there are American military bases, in actuality there are none. Iran, for example, recently took a big step forward towards the Soviet Union. Overall, the significance of our bases is inflated.

To this statement I answered in such a way, that the USA foreign military bases—this is a subject which is pretty well known, practically

every day American generals and several ministers speak about it.

Regarding Iran, I said to Rusk that we positively view the agreement between the Soviet Union and Iran that foreign missile bases will not be built on Iranian territory. But Rusk will not, apparently, deny that the Iranian Army is led by American military advisers, that Turkey has had such bases for a long time, that the territory of Japan has become an American military base, the territory of England and a number of other countries have been military springboards of the USA for a long time. About the same could be said about many other countries.

Rusk declared that—whether I believe him or not—that's something else, but he categorically asserts that besides the territory of the USA itself, American missiles and atomic weapons are in only three countries.

Here I said: without a doubt, of course, England is among those countries?

Yes, declared Rusk, England is one of them. He didn't name the others.

As far as Japan is concerned, declared Rusk, I categorically assert that neither missiles, nor nuclear weapons of the USA are in Japan. They don't have any of those weapons in South Korea either, if, of course, the actions of North Korea will not make it necessary to change that situation.

In general, declared Rusk, the significance of American foreign military bases is greatly exaggerated, and they don't deserve it. In several countries, in actual fact there are not such bases, while you, Rusk said, believe that there are. In particular, the Scandinavian countries are among those countries.

Responding to that, I said, that in certain countries maybe there are not today, physically, those or other types of weapons. You, Americans, know better. But the USA has military agreements with those countries which include an obligation to let these types of American weapons into the country at any time. This is hardly different from the practical existence of American military bases in such countries, especially considering that certain types of weapons may at the present time be delivered very quickly.

Rusk did not respond to that statement, and overall it was evident that precisely that is the situation in several of the participants in the military blocs of the Western powers.

And so, I declared, the Americans have no grounds to reproach Cuba and the Cubans for steps of a purely defensive character, and, moreover, to conduct toward Cuba a hostile and aggressive policy. Cuba simply wants to be independent. That which the Cubans do to strengthen their country and its independence—that doesn't present a danger to anyone, all the more to such a great power like the USA. Any assertions about the existence of such a danger are just absurd.

Rusk said that the USA is interested in Cuba just as the Soviet Union was interested in Hungary

in 1956.

I deflected this effort to introduce an analogy and I briefly pointed out the groundlessness of such an analogy.

Rusk said that he did not agree with our interpretation of the question and rejection of the analogy.

He then began to speak on the subject of the policy of the Soviet Union after the Second World War, partly trying to tie these musings with the Cuban issue and partly with the issue of American foreign military bases.

He said that "in the Stalinist period" the Soviet Union conducted a foreign policy which forced the USA to create its bases overseas and to deploy its forces there. He gave an alleged example—Korea and the Korean peninsula. He said, that before the events in Korea the USA in fact did not have a single division up to strength. At that time the USA practically did not have a battleworthy army available. But the situation changed because of the Korean War. Before this there was such a thing as the Berlin Blockade, which also played a definite role in the change in the American policy. All this is reflected, said Rusk, in the armament program.

He again began to speak about the influence of the "Stalinist policy" on the policy and actions of the Western powers. The Western powers, including the USA, cannot but take that into account even now.

Responding to these statements of Rusk, I stressed that the Secretary of State of the USA had drawn an extremely depressing and one-sided picture of the foreign policy of the USSR in the postwar period, including during the Stalin period. No doubt Rusk, like other U.S. officials, will not deny a great historical fact: besides the fact that the army of the Soviet Union routed the Hitlerite army and as a powerful avalanche moved into Western Europe, it was not used contrary to the alliance agreements and had stopped following the defeat of Hitler's Germany. And in that situation, if the Soviet Union, the Soviet government, had had expansionist intentions, it could have occupied all of Western Europe. But the Soviet Union had not done that and had not started to do it. That already by itself is an eloquent answer to the attempt to cast doubt on the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and on its actions in the postwar period.

You know, I declared to Rusk, that our CC and the Soviet government, at the initiative of N.S. Khrushchev, have taken a number of foreign policy steps which earlier had not been taken. You are familiar, no doubt, with that which has been done in the foreign policy of the USSR regarding the condemnation of Stalin's Cult of Personality. You know, in particular, about the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, which was evaluated positively throughout the world and which helped to make possible an improvement of the situation in central Europe. But we cat-

egorically reject any attempts to generalize or to draw conclusions about Soviet foreign policy in the postwar period, which USA government officials make with the intent, apparently, of whitewashing its own policy, in this case towards Cuba.

Rusk did not challenge the declaration regarding the capability of the Soviet army to occupy all of Europe, if the Soviet Union had striven for that after the rout of Hitler's Germany. Nor did he challenge the significance of the foreign policy steps of the Soviet Union introduced after the condemnation of the cult of personality of Stalin. More to the point, he let it be understood that in general he shares these thoughts, although he did not make any direct comments.

However, he at this point started to talk about the fact that the USA, at the end of the war, and also in the first postwar period to the greatest extent conducted itself well. It, declared Rusk, had not tried to use the advantage which it had at that time vis a vis its monopoly possession of the atomic bomb.

I let him know that that, apparently, had not been so much because the United States had wanted to conduct itself well, as that the atomic bomb at that time could not play a decisive role in the serious standoff of the leading powers.

Rusk did not challenge this declaration, but all the same expressed the thought that the USA had had an advantage at that time in its possession of the atomic bomb and that it had not even tried to use it politically.

In this connection he brought up the Baruch Plan, saying that he was wondering why the Soviet Union had not associated itself with the Baruch Plan.

I gave an appropriate answer and briefly set forth our position. I stressed the point that the Baruch Plan was a one-sided plan, advantageous only to the USA, that it had not even envisioned the destruction of nuclear weapons, rather, under a screen of allegedly international control had left this weapon at the practical disposal of the USA, and even on the territory of the USA.

Rusk did not go into details and limited himself to the above comments about the Baruch Plan.

Suddenly Rusk jumped to the issue of the Communist ideology and the influence of the Soviet Union on other countries. He tried to assert that the main reason of all the complications in international affairs is that the Soviet Union by some or other means influences the situation in other countries, inspires dissatisfaction with the existing regimes and so on. He also complained because the USA does not assert such influence and cannot assert it, since it does not enter into its political plans. Vis a vis this reasoning he again returned to Cuba, but basically repeated what he had said earlier. He ended his argument by commenting again that July had brought a change for the worse to the events in

Cuba, and that that greatly alarms the USA government and Americans.

Rusk further said, wouldn't it be possible to consider the issue of increasing the number of Security Council member-countries from 11 to 13, that is, in other words, increasing the number of non-permanent members from six to eight. From his comments it was clear that he was talking about a change in the membership of the UN and introducing into the membership corresponding changes.

I said that the step Rusk had mentioned was impossible to implement, simply because the PRC—one of the permanent members of the Security Council—is not participating in the work of the UN because of the policy of the U.S. Government. Without the PRC, I declared, we will not agree even to consider that issue.

Rusk in fact did not challenge our declaration, understanding that the step he had recommended was not realistic in view of our objections. Here he noted that China, evidently has more than a few problems, including internal, economic ones.

In response I said that they have certain difficulties, but the food situation had now significantly improved and was not as difficult as it was portrayed by certain organs of the American press.

Rusk touched on the question of the Chinese-Indian border conflict. He asked what is going on there and why did the argument arise?

I said, that the argument, as is well known to Rusk, was caused by mutual territorial claims in the border region. The Soviet government believes that the sooner the sides come to an agreement on a mutually acceptable basis, the better. I let Rusk know that our discussion of this issue apparently would hardly help the matter.

Rusk agreed that yes, of course, this was an issue between the two countries—the PRC and India—but that nonetheless there is some old agreed boundary, which, considering everything, is the correct border line.

Evidently, Rusk's own goal was to let us know that the government of the USA looks favorably on the Indian position. But he spoke about that as if offhandedly, obviously not wanting to create the impression that the USA was greatly interested in that issue. He also jokingly observed that the Chinese-Indian border conflict is, excuse me, the only issue on which the positions of the PRC and Taiwan correspond.

With this, the conversation, which had continued with some difficulty for about two hours, ended. Further there was a conversation on the German Question, the contents of which are submitted separately.

A short general evaluation of this conversation with Rusk: Rusk tried again to stress, obviously at Kennedy's behest, that the USA gives great importance to the Cuban issue and considers it the most painful for the USA. He only in

passing touched on Kennedy's declaration, made in the conversation with us, about the fact that the USA has no intentions to intervene in Cuba (with a reservation regarding the threat to the security of the USA and the countries of Latin America). Rusk's reasoning revolved mostly around a circle of questions related to Soviet assistance to Cuba, primarily arms.

By Rusk's behavior it was possible to observe how painfully the American leaders are suffering the fact that the Soviet Union decisively has stood on the side of Cuba, and that the Cubans are conducting themselves bravely and confidently. Kennedy managed to hide his feelings better. But he too, when he spoke about Cuba, formulated his ideas with emphasis, slowly, obviously weighing every word. It is characteristic that Rusk, during our entire conversation with Kennedy, sat absolutely silently, and red "like a crab." In the conversation with him later he couldn't hide his feelings very well.

20.X.62 A. GROMYKO

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the  
USA Dobrynin to the USSR MFA,  
22 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

TOP PRIORITY

At 6 in the evening Washington time Secretary of State Rusk invited me to his place.

Rusk said that he had a commission from the president to send via me a personal presidential message to N.S. Khrushchev /to be sent separately/, and also to provide for information the text of the president's address to the American people, which he intends to deliver at 7 this evening on radio and television /transmitted by TASS/.

Rusk warned then that at this time he has instructions not to answer any questions on the text of both documents and not to comment on them.

"These documents, he added, speak for themselves."

Rusk was told that the actions of the USA government cannot be justified by the absolutely unconvincing motives which are not grounded in the factual situation and to which the president refers, and that these actions have a downright

provocative character, and that all responsibility for possible grave consequences of the aforementioned actions of the United States will be entirely on the American administration.

I also expressed surprise that neither the president nor Rusk found it necessary to have an open talk on all the questions raised in the address, with A.A. Gromyko, with whom they met only a few days ago, while now the USA administration is seeking with artificial means to create a grave crisis. The Soviet Union fears no threats and is prepared to meet them in an appropriate way, if the voice of reason would not triumph in the governing circles of the USA.

Rusk did not respond. He was clearly in a nervous and agitated mood, even though he tried to conceal it. At that the meeting came to an end. Then almost all ambassadors /except socialist/ were summoned to the State Department, and they have been given, by groups, the text of the president's address with corresponding commentaries by the senior officials of the State Department.

Before I left, Rusk noted that there is no plan, so far, to publish the personal letter of Kennedy to N.S. Khrushchev, but overall this cannot be excluded.

22.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Vladislav M. Zubok.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Alekseev to the USSR MFA, 22 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

Regarding the threats of the USA toward Cuba, we remain in constant contact with Fidel Castro and Raoul Castro.

The Cuban command gave an order for full mobilization of the army and occupation of defensive positions. Besides telegraphic dispatches of information agencies and Kennedy's speeches, our friends have no other information.

We will quickly inform you of all new facts.

We are taking steps to ensure security and the organization of a duty roster in Soviet institutions.

Please issue an order to the radio center to listen to us around the clock.

22.X.62 ALEKSEEV

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the USA Dobrynin to the USSR MFA, 23 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

Following Kennedy's speech on the Cuban issue yesterday, a broad campaign was deployed here, called forth in order to impart to the developing situation even more extraordinariness and seriousness than was done in Kennedy's speech itself.

In a briefing conducted by the USA Ministry of Defense yesterday evening, [Secretary of Defense Robert S.] McNamara categorically declared that the USA will not stop short of sinking Soviet ships which are bringing "offensive types" of weapons to Cuba, if those ships will refuse to obey the demands of American warships.

It is reported that the President's official proclamation about the introduction into force of measures to assert a quarantine on the delivery to Cuba of offensive types of weapons will be published before the end of the day today or tomorrow morning after the formal agreement with other members of the Organization of American States. For the practical implementation of the quarantine in the area of Cuba, there has been assembled, according to the reports of military observers, around 450 military ships, more than 1,200 airplanes and around 200 thousand soldiers.

Almost without interruption, the commentaries which are broadcast on radio and television—and also the commentaries which appeared in today's morning newspapers—are directed towards supercharging the atmosphere and predictions of an early "test of force," as soon as the first Soviet ship approaches Cuba (we broadcast similar commentaries via TASS).

An analysis of the public statements which Kennedy has made, his message to N.S. Khrushchev, and also the statements of officials who are close to the White House and the State allow us to make, as it is presented to us, a preliminary conclusion that the measures which have been undertaken by the Kennedy Administration in regard to Cuba are the product of a range of domestic and foreign policy considerations, the most important of which, apparently, are the following.

I. To try to "take up the gauntlet" of that challenge which Kennedy believes has been

thrown down by the Soviet Union to the USA in the form of military deliveries to Cuba. Regarding this, insofar as up to now a direct military attack by the USA on Cuba is not on the table (the President, as is known, also persistently stressed this during the meeting with A.A. Gromyko), Kennedy evidently is counting on the Soviet Union in this case not responding with military actions directly against the USA itself or by delivering a blow to their positions in West Berlin. As a result, in Kennedy's thinking, the United States will succeed in establishing at least in part the correlation of forces which existed in the world before July, that is before the announcement of our military deliveries to Cuba, which delivered a serious blow to the USA's positions as the leader of the capitalist world and even more constrained their freedom of action on issues like the one in West Berlin.

Kennedy apparently believes that a further demonstration by the United States of indecisiveness and lack of will to risk a war with the Soviet Union for the sake of its positions would unavoidably lead to an even quicker and more serious undermining of their positions around the globe.

2. That which Kennedy said yesterday in his appeal to the American people and the complex of measures which were announced in this connection by the USA government in fact touch not only upon Cuba alone or our deliveries of weapons to it, or even our missiles for Cuba. More to the point, it is a decision connected with a certain risk and determined by a whiff of adventurism, to try to bring to a stop now the development of events in the whole world, which are generally disadvantageous to the USA.

In this regard, some information which we have just received by confidential means and which we are now reconfirming, may be interesting. According to this information, prior to the President's decision a hot discussion was conducted recently in the government regarding the future foreign policy course of the USA following the appearance of information about the deliveries of Soviet missiles to Cuba. [Attorney General] R. Kennedy, McNamara, Rusk, Chief of the CIA [John] McCone, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff asserted that since Vienna the status quo in the world had changed, and had changed not to the benefit of the USA, as a result of the well-known development of the Cuban events, in particular the open deliveries of Soviet weapons to Cuba. The issue is not the weapons themselves, insofar as they do not have much significance from a purely military point of view, rather it is that great political loss which the Kennedy government suffered in the eyes of the whole world and particularly of its American allies and neighbors when it (the USA government) turned out to be not in a position—for the first time in the history of the USA—to prevent "the penetration and establishment of influence" by another great power, the USSR, in the Western

Hemisphere itself. What then of the obligations of the USA in other parts of the world? And all this is happening at a moment—as asserted by representatives of the military brass—when America for the time being still has an advantage over the Soviet Union in nuclear missiles, an advantage which is gradually being liquidated by the successes of Soviet weapons, and now also by the creation of a missile base in Cuba in direct proximity with the USA. This means, the American chiefs of staff maintain, that time is not waiting, if the Kennedy government really intends to prevent a further disadvantageous development of events.

In Berlin also, the USA is constantly on the defensive, which does not add to the Administration's prestige. The latest meetings with A.A. Gromyko (this argument was attributed to Rusk) strengthened the President's and Rusk's belief that the Soviet Union seriously intends to sign a peace treaty with the GDR, with all the consequences that will flow from that for the USA. This, almost unavoidably will bring about a crisis at the end of the year, since the USA will not withdraw its forces from West Berlin. Wouldn't it be better then to try to force the Soviet Union to retreat by "striking a blow on the Cuban issue ["—no close quotation mark—ed.], which gives more benefits to the USA than the Berlin question, if the moods of public opinion and geographic and military-strategic factors are taken into account[?]. Precisely on the Cuban issue it is best for President Kennedy to take a firm position and to "demonstrate his character." This approximately was the basic argument of those government representatives who support a more hard-line course of action (several of them speculated also that the President maintains the opinion that the Soviet government apparently does not particularly believe in the President's steadfastness following the failure of last year's incursion in Cuba). It follows, evidently, to recognize that the supporters of this course for the time being have taken the upper hand in the USA government.

3. Having created the extraordinary situation around Cuba, the Kennedy administration is hoping that in that situation it will be able quickly to get from its NATO allies and from the Latin American countries support for its course towards the full isolation of Cuba from the "free world," and the ultimate overthrow of the current government of Cuba. In this regard it should be noted that although the West European and Latin American diplomats express alarm about the possible consequences of realizing in practice the announced "quarantine" of Cuba, they express, as a rule, confidence that their governments under current conditions will not be able to deviate from support for the USA. In particular, it became known to us that the Chilean representative in the Organization of American States received an instruction to support the USA proposals this

time. Brazil and Mexico are also departing from their previous positions after having been subject to strong pressure from the USA, which is asserting that the Soviet missiles now threaten the Latin American countries too. The decision of the Organization of American States which was just accepted (transmitted via TASS) in fact in support of the course of action of the USA shows that the Kennedy administration is succeeding in binding the governments of these countries to its will under conditions of the prewar psychosis which has now been created in the USA. We should, it's true, note that Brazil, Mexico and Bolivia abstained from the vote on the paragraph which envisaged the application of force.

4. On the domestic political plane, Kennedy obviously is counting on his last step to pull the rug out from under the legs of the Republicans, whose leadership in recent days officially announced that they consider the Cuban issue a fundamental issue of the election campaign, having in essence accused the administration of inactivity on that issue.

However, it is necessary to stress that the events connected with Kennedy's announcement yesterday obviously have overtaken the significance of electoral considerations and that these considerations now are moving to the background.

Overall, the impression is being created that, reserving a certain possibility not to let the matter lead to an open military confrontation—this can be seen in his proclamation in general form by the readiness which he expressed to continue "peace negotiations" with the Soviet side on settling controversial issues, including the Cuban issue and several other questions—Kennedy at the same time consciously and sufficiently provocatively is aiming towards an abrupt aggravation of relations with the Soviet Union in accord with the above-mentioned considerations.

In this regard it is as if this time he is ready to go pretty far in a test of strength with the Soviet Union, hoping that in the location of the conflict (Cuba) which was chosen by him, the President, the USA has a greater chance than the USSR, and that in the final analysis the Soviet government will refuse to increase the military power of Cuba, not wishing to let a major war break out. Under these conditions it is seen as expedient, while observing the necessary precautions, to at the same time review certain steps which would demonstrate the resolve of the USSR to give an appropriate rebuff to the USA and which would make the USA vulnerable to the possibility of actions which we may take in response. In particular, as it seems to us, it would be possible to review the question of hinting to Kennedy in no uncertain terms about the possibility of reprisals against the Western powers in West Berlin (as a first step, the organization of a blockade of ground routes, leaving out for the time being air routes so as not to give grounds for a quick confrontation).

Besides this, taking into account the future development of events and as a means of putting extra pressure on the USA government, it is possible that it would make sense to undertake such measures as, for instance, calling back from the USA Soviet theatrical collectives and Soviet students (sending for them a special airplane), which should show to the Americans the seriousness of our intentions in regard to the events in Cuba.

However, in our opinion it is not necessary to hurry on all the above measures, since an extreme aggravation of the situation, it goes without saying, would not be in our interests. It would make sense to use also the desire of neutral states, and not only them, to find a way to settle the current conflict. Such moods are clearly felt not only at the UN, but also among the diplomatic corps here.

Overall, here in Washington the tension around this situation continues to grow. It seems as if the Americans themselves are beginning to worry a lot, anticipating the arrival in Cuba of the first Soviet ship (many people are expressing this question directly to the Embassy) and how this first "test of strength" will end. This atmosphere of tense waiting entered a new phase with the publication just now of the President's official proclamation which announces the entering into force of the ban on delivering "offensive weapons" to Cuba as of 14 hours [2 p.m.] (Greenwich Mean Time) on 24 October.

23.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the  
USA Dobrynin to the USSR MFA,  
24 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

Late in the evening of October 23, R. Kennedy came to visit me. He was in an obviously excited condition and his speech was rich in repetitions and digressions. R. Kennedy said approximately the following.

I came on my own personal initiative without any assignment from the President. I considered it necessary to do this in order to clarify what exactly led to the current, extremely serious development of events. Most important is the fact that the personal relations between the President and the Soviet premier have suffered heavy damage. President Kennedy feels deceived and these

feelings found their own reflection in his appeal to the American people.

From the very beginning, continued R. Kennedy, the Soviet side—N.S. Khrushchev, the Soviet government in its pronouncements and the Soviet ambassador during confidential meetings - have stressed the defensive nature of the weapons which are being delivered to Cuba. You, for instance, said R. Kennedy to me, told me about the exclusively defensive goals of the delivery of Soviet weapons, in particular, the missile weapons, during our meeting at the beginning of September. I understood you then as saying that we were talking only about /and in the future, too/ missiles of a relatively small range of action for the defense of Cuba itself and the approaches to it, but not about long range missiles which could strike practically the entire territory of the USA. I told this to the President, who accepted it with satisfaction as the position of the Soviet government. There was a TASS declaration in the name of the Soviet government in which it was clearly stated that all military deliveries to Cuba are intended exclusively for defensive goals. The President and the government of the USA understood this as the true position of the USSR.

With even greater feelings of trust we took the corresponding declarations /public and confidential/ of the head of the Soviet government, who, despite the big disagreements and frequent aggravations in relations between our countries, the President has always trusted on a personal level. The message which had been sent by N.S. Khrushchev via the Soviet ambassador and [Kennedy adviser Theodore] Sorensen, about the fact that during the election campaign in the USA the Soviet side would not do anything to complicate the international situation and worsen relations between our countries, had made a great impression on the President.

All this led to the fact that the President believed everything which was said from the Soviet side, and in essence staked on that card his own political fate, having publicly announced to the USA, that the arms deliveries to Cuba carry a purely defensive character, although a number of Republicans have asserted to the contrary. And then the President suddenly receives trustworthy information to the effect that in Cuba, contrary to everything which had been said by the Soviet representatives, including the latest assurances, made very recently by A. A. Gromyko during his meeting with the President, there had appeared Soviet missiles with a range of action which cover almost the entire territory of the USA. Is this weapon really for the defensive purposes about which you, Mr. Ambassador, A. A. Gromyko, the Soviet government and N.S. Khrushchev had spoken?

The President felt himself deceived, and deceived intentionally. He is convinced of that even now. It was for him a great disappointment,

or, speaking directly, a heavy blow to everything in which he had believed and which he had strived to preserve in personal relations with the head of the Soviet government: mutual trust in each other's personal assurances. As a result, the reaction which had found its reflection in the President's declaration and the extremely serious current events which are connected with it and which can still lead no one knows where.

Stressing with great determination that I reject his assertions about some sort of "deception" as entirely not corresponding to reality and as presenting the actions and motives of the Soviet side in a perverted light, I asked R. Kennedy why the President - if he had some sort of doubts - had not negotiated directly and openly with A. A. Gromyko, with whom there had been a meeting just a few days ago, but rather had begun actions, the seriousness of the consequences of which for the entire world are entirely unforeseeable. Before setting off on that dangerous path, fraught with a direct military confrontation between our countries, why not use, for instance, the confidential channels which we have and appeal directly to the head of the Soviet government.

R. Kennedy said the President had decided not to address A. A. Gromyko about this for the following two reasons: first, everything which the Soviet minister had set forth had, evidently according to the instructions of the Soviet government, been expressed in very harsh tones, so a discussion with him hardly could have been of much use; second, he had once again asserted the defensive character of the deliveries of Soviet weapons, although the President at that moment knew that this is not so, that they had deceived him again. As far as the confidential channel is concerned, what sense would that have made, if on the highest level - the level of the Minister of Foreign Affairs - precisely the same is said, although the facts are directly contradictory[?] To that same point, added R. Kennedy, long ago I myself in fact received the same sort of assurances from the Soviet ambassador, however, all that subsequently turned out to be entirely not so.

- Tell me, - R. Kennedy said to me further - [do] you, as the Soviet ambassador, have from your government information about the presence now in Cuba of around half a dozen (here he corrected himself, saying that that number may not be entirely accurate, but the fact remains a fact) missiles, capable of reaching almost any point in the United States?

In my turn I asked R. Kennedy why I should believe his information, when he himself does not want to recognize or respect that which the other side is saying to him. To that same point, even the President himself in his speech in fact had spoken only about some emplacements for missiles, which they allegedly had "observed," but not about the missiles themselves.

- There, you see - R. Kennedy quickly put forth, - what would have been the point of us

contacting you via the confidential channel, if, as it appears, even the Ambassador, who has, as far as we know, the full trust of his government, does not know that long-range missiles which can strike the USA, rather than defensive missiles which are capable of defending Cuba from any sort of attack on the approaches to it, have already been provided to Cuba[?] It comes out that when you and I spoke earlier, you also did not have reliable information, although the conversation was about the defensive character of those weapons deliveries, including the future deliveries to Cuba, and everything about this was passed on to the President.

I categorically responded to R. Kennedy's thoughts about the information which I had received from the government, stressing that this was exclusively within the competence of the Soviet government. Simultaneously, his thoughts of "deception" were rejected again. Further, in calm but firm tones I set forth in detail our position on the Cuban issue, taking into account the Soviet government's latest announcement on Cuba, N.S. Khrushchev's letter in response to the President, and also other speeches and conversations of N.S. Khrushchev.

I particularly stressed the circumstance that, as far as is known to me, the head of the Soviet government values the warm relations with the President. N.S. Khrushchev recently spoke about that in particular in a conversation with [U.S.] Ambassador [to Moscow Foy] Kohler. I hope that the President also maintains the same point of view, - I added. On the relationships between the heads of our governments, on which history has placed special responsibility for the fate of the world, a lot really does depend; in particular, whether there will be peace or war. The Soviet government acts only in the interests of preserving and strengthening peace and calls on the United States government to act this way too. Stressing again the basic principles of our policy on which we will insist without any compromises (in the spirit of our declaration and N.S. Khrushchev's response letter), I simultaneously expressed the hope that the USA government show prudence and refrain from taking any actions which can lead to catastrophic consequences for peace in the whole world.

R. Kennedy, after repeating what he had already said about the President's moods (around this time he cooled down a bit and spoke in calmer tones), said that the President also values his relations with N.S. Khrushchev. As far as the future course of actions is concerned, then he, R. Kennedy, can not add anything to that which had been said by the President himself, who stressed all the seriousness of the situation and understands with what sort of dangerous consequences all this may be connected, but he can not act in any other way.

I once again set forth to him our position in the above-mentioned spirit.

Saying goodbye, already at the door of the Embassy, R. Kennedy as if by the way asked what sorts of orders the captains of the Soviet ships bound for Cuba have, in light of President Kennedy's speech yesterday and the declaration which he had just signed about the inadmissibility of bringing offensive weapons to Cuba.

I answered R. Kennedy with what I knew about the instructions which had been given earlier to the captains: not to obey any unlawful demands to stop or be searched on the open sea, as a violation of international norms of freedom of navigation. This order, as far as I know, has not been changed.

R. Kennedy, having waved his hand, said: I don't know how all this will end, for we intend to stop your ships. He left right after this.

Overall, his visit left a somewhat strange impression. He had not spoken about the future and paths toward a settlement of the conflict, making instead a "psychological" excursion, as if he was trying to justify the actions of his brother, the President, and put the responsibility for his hasty decision, in the correctness of which they and he, evidently, are not entirely confident, on us.

We think that in the interests of the affair it would be useful, using this opportunity to pass on to the President, through R. Kennedy, with whom I could meet again, in confidential form N.S. Khrushchev's thoughts on this matter, concerning not only the issues which R. Kennedy had touched on, but a wider circle of issues in light of the events which are going on now.

24.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Report to CPSU Central Committee From  
Department of Agitation and Propaganda,  
24 October 1962**

CC CPSU

The State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting of the Council of Ministers of the USSR asks permission, in light of the aggressive American actions against Cuba, to increase from October 25 of this year the amount of radio broadcasts from Moscow to Cuba up to 10 hours per day. At the present time these transmissions are conducted every day for two hours.

On questions relating to the strengthening of radio broadcasting to Cuba, the State Committee consulted with Comrade Puerta, the leader of Cuban Radio, who is now present in Moscow.

The State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting also reports that the USA, starting October 23 of this year, organized round-

the-clock broadcasts to Cuba—24 hours in Spanish and 12 hours in Russian.

We support the suggestion of the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting of the Council of Ministers about increasing the radio transmissions from Moscow to Cuba.

It is possible to increase Soviet radio transmission to Cuba partly on the basis of a redistribution of radio transmitters, which relay programs from Moscow to foreign countries, and also by using certain radio stations, which work on the jamming of foreign radio transmissions. At the present time, one third of the entire Soviet radio transmitting capability is used to jam foreign broadcasts to the USSR. The Ministry of Communications of the USSR has no reserve radio stations.

We request agreement.

Deputy Head, Department of Agitation and Propaganda for Allied Republics, CC CPSU

(signed) (A. Egorov)

Instructor of the Department

(signed) (V. Murav'ev)

24 October 1962

*Handwritten at bottom of page:*

I report to the State Committee for Radio and Television Broadcasting (Comrade Kharlamov) Nov. 24 that from Nov. 25 the amount of radio broadcasts to Cuba will be increased.

(signed) A. Egorov

(signed) Murav'ev

[Source: F. 5, Op. 33, D. 206, L. 133, Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD), the former CPSU CC archives, Moscow; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Report to CPSU Central Committee From  
Defense Minister Rodion Malinovskii  
and A. Epishev, 24 October 1962**

Secret

Copy No. 1

CC CPSU

We report on work undertaken in connection with the announcement of the Soviet government about the aggressive actions of American imperialism against the Cuban republic.

The Ministry of Defense, fulfilling the Council of Ministers decision of 23 October 1962, has taken supplementary measures to support the

Armed Forces at the highest state of military readiness. Commanders and military councils of military regions, groups of troops, Air Defense districts and fleets are ordered to delay the discharge of soldiers, sailors and sergeants in the last year of service, troops of the strategic rocket forces, Air Defense forces, and the submarine fleet; to cancel all leaves, and to increase military readiness and vigilance in all units and on every ship.

At the present time commanders of the Armed Forces together with local party organs work on explaining to military men the Declaration of the Soviet government. In detachments, on ships, in military schools and in military institutions the Declaration of the USSR government was listened to collectively on the radio, talks, meetings and gatherings are taking place, where members of military councils, commanders and heads of political organs speak. In the country's Air Defense units, Secretaries of the Sakhalin regional CPSU committee (comrade Evstratov), the Khabarovsk provincial committee (comrade comrade Klepikov), Berezovsk City Party Committee (comrade Uglov) spoke. In the military regions special leaflets with the text of the Declaration of the Soviet government were published and transferred by air to far-away detachments and garrisons.

All servicemen passionately approve of the policies of the USSR government, support additional measures which it has undertaken and which are aimed at maintaining the troops in the state of maximum military readiness. At the same time Soviet soldiers express readiness to fulfill without delay every order of the Motherland aimed at the crushing defeat of the American aggressors.

Captain Padalko and Captain Sorkov, pilots of the Second Independent Air Defense Army, and senior technical lieutenants Aziamov and Ovcharov declared: "At this alarming hour we are at the highest state of military readiness. If the American adventurists unleash a war, they will be dealt the most powerful crippling blow. In response to the ugly provocation of the warmonger, we will strengthen even more our vigilance and military preparedness, we will fulfill without delay any order of the Soviet government."

The announcement of the Soviet Government received broad support among soldiers, sergeants and sailors due to be discharged from the Armed Forces. They all declare that they will serve as much as required in the interests of the strengthening of the preparedness of the troops.

Private Kovalenko (415th Air Force Combat Air Wing), prematurely released into the reserves, returned to his base, gave back his documents and announced, "At such a troubling time, my responsibility is to be at my military post, and to defend the interests of the Motherland with a weapon in my hands."

Many senior soldiers, striving with all their

strength and knowledge to the increase in military readiness, declare their willingness to remain for additional service. After a meeting of the 15th Division of the Moscow District Air Defense Forces 20 soldiers reported with a request to enlist for additional service. Following the example of Communists Sergeant Kaplin and Junior Sergeant Afanas'ev, 18 soldiers who had been discharged from the 345th anti-aircraft detachment of the Bakinsk District Air Defense Forces requested permission to remain in the army.

After the declaration of the Soviet government, at the bases and on the ships there was a strengthened desire of individual soldiers to defend Cuba as volunteers. On just one day in the 78th motorized infantry training division of the Ural Military District, 1240 requests to be sent to the Cuban Republic were received. At a meeting of the 300 and 302nd detachment (sic) of the Second Independent Air Defense Army of the Air Defense Forces the decision was made about the readiness of the entire unit to leave for Cuba.

In response to the directions of the Soviet government relating to the aggressive actions of the American government, military personnel heighten their vigilance and increase their personal responsibility for the maintenance of military readiness. In the 3rd Corps of the Air Defense Forces of the Moscow Military District, soldiers work at night in fulfillment of daytime norms. In the 201st anti-aircraft detachment of the Ural Military District there has been a significant reduction in the time required for maintenance work on military equipment.

As an expression of the unprecedented trust of the individuals of the Armed Forces in the CPSU there is a strengthened desire among front-line soldiers to join the ranks of the Party and the Komsomol. Following the declaration of the Government of the USSR, the number of applications to join the Party and the Komsomol grew.

During the explanation of the declaration of the Soviet Government, no sorts of negative manifestations were noted.

We are reporting for your information.

(signed) R. MALINOVSKII

(signed) A. EPISHEV

24 October 1962

[Source: *F. 5, Op. 47, D. 400, Ll. 69-71, TsKhSD; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.*]

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**Telegram from the Soviet representative to the United Nations, Valerian Zorin, to the USSR MFA, 25 October 1962**

Top Secret

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#### CIPHERED TELEGRAM

On 25 October in the Security Council, Stevenson, speaking first, read out Kennedy's answer to U Thant's appeal, in which Kennedy welcomes U Thant's initiative and directs Stevenson quickly to consider with U Thant the issue of conducting negotiations towards a settlement to the situation which has been created in the Caribbean Sea region /the text of Kennedy's response was transmitted via teletype/.

From our side we made public Comr. N.S. Khrushchev's response to U Thant on his appeal, which was transmitted to U Thant before the opening of the session.

During the meeting and after it, representatives of many African and Asian countries approached us, noting the exceedingly important significance for the preservation of peace in the Caribbean Sea region and in the whole world of the message from the head of the Soviet government.

Stevenson's speech at today's session, regardless of his attempts to assert once again that Cuba has at its disposal an offensive weapon, and that this creates a danger for the Western hemisphere, had in essence a defensive character. He made a declaration as if the USA had not sought a pretext to raise the Cuban issue, that the USA did not object to deliveries to Cuba of a defensive weapon, and that everything which they are trying so hard to do is to implement "limited" actions. Being in no position to disprove our accusations of a violation by the USA of the UN Charter, Stevenson declared that the USA could not slow down implementation of the planned measures in expectation of a Soviet veto in the Security Council. He said further that the USA had come to the Security Council even before the Organization of the American States had started to work and had given its approval for the "quarantine" measures. Stevenson tried to present the matter as if he was talking not about unilateral measures of the USA, but about the agreed actions of the Organization of American States.

In our speech we showed the lack of foundation of all of these assertions by Stevenson, stressing that, as the discussion in the Security Council had confirmed, the USA had no sort of justifications for the aggressive actions which it had undertaken, which had created a threat of thermonuclear war. We pointed out that the aggressive path down which the USA had set had met a rebuff from the side of the peoples and the majority of UN members. Precisely this has now prompted the USA to give its agreement to enter into negotiations. We ridiculed the maneuver which Stevenson had made at the session in showing the photographs which had been fabricated by American intelligence which had been assigned the role

of "irrefutable" evidence of the presence in Cuba of nuclear-missile arms. We classified this maneuver as an attempt to deflect the Security Council away from the essence of the case, particularly from the aggressive actions of the USA, which had violated the UN Charter and which had created a threat to peace.

In response to Stevenson's attempts to pose to us questions about whether we are placing nuclear weapons in Cuba we referred to the corresponding situation in the TASS announcement of 11 September /the texts of our speeches were transmitted by teletype/.

The attempts of the USA representative to turn the Council into a tribune for base propaganda met no support from other members of the Council.

The representative of the UAR, [Gen. Mahmoud] Riad, and the representative of Ghana, [Alex] Quaison-Sackey, noted the important significance of U Thant's appeal and the responses of Comrade N.S. Khrushchev and Kennedy, stressing that as a result of that exchange of messages a new situation had been created in the Council. Riad and Quaison-Sackey proposed suspending the session so as to allow all the interested sides, with the participation of U Thant, to conduct the necessary negotiations, having in mind that the Council sessions will be resumed depending on the result and process of the negotiations.

That proposal was supported by the Chilean representative, [Daniel] Schweitzer.

The proposal of the UAR and Ghana was accepted without objections by the Security Council. When the adopted decision was announced, I, as the Chairman of the Council, stressed that the Security Council could be convened by the Chairman of the Council depending on the course of the negotiations. In this way, no votes were taken on any of the proposed resolutions /ours, the American proposal, and the neutral one/, and they remained in the Security Council file.

We received your <sup>X/</sup> [word deleted—ed.] after it had already basically been decided that in relation to the start of negotiations between the interested sides consideration of the issue in the Security Council is not ending, and that the issue remains on the Security Council agenda, moreover, the Council sessions may be resume at any time depending on the course of the negotiations between the interested sides. At the present time, as we understand it, it would be premature to raise the issue at the XVIIth session of the General Assembly, insofar as the issue as before is on the Security Council agenda and we will always have the possibility to demand that it be raised in the Assembly if the possible new consideration by the Security Council will end without result.

After the session U Thant informed us that he intends to begin negotiations with us, the Cubans, and the Americans tomorrow, 26 October. He will meet with each delegation individu-

ally. We will report our thoughts about this meeting in supplementary fashion.

25.X.62 V. ZORIN

x/ Having in mind "Your telegram"

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the USA Dobrynin to the USSR MFA, 27 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

During the entire day of 26 October in broadcasts of American radio, television, and in press reports, in accord with instructions from above, it is being ever more firmly asserted that in Cuba the construction of missile bases is being continued under a forced tempo, and that the missiles themselves are being brought to operational readiness.

Toward the end of the day, the State Department representative White and the Secretary to the President for questions of the press, [Pierre] Salinger, made official declarations about that. /

An analogous declaration was made in the name of the Organization of American States, which, evidently, is aimed at giving that fact extra "legal force"/. In their declarations there is made a pretty clear hint to the effect that the mentioned "fact" gives the USA government "a foundation" to take further, more serious measures against Cuba.

At the same time, among journalists who are close to the White House, State Department and Pentagon conversations about the possibility of implementing at the earliest possible time a mass overflight of American aviation in the area where the missile platforms are deployed, with a possible commando raid, have received wide circulation. Several of them in this regard express the opinion that an ultimatum to the Cuban government itself to disassemble the missile platforms in a very short time might precede such an overflight. As before, the real possibility of an imminent incursion in Cuba is being asserted, but the theme of a bombardment of the missile bases has now moved to the fore.

The wide circulation and the certain orientation of similar conversations under conditions when, practically speaking, censorship has been introduced on reports concerning Cuba, and when constant instruction of journalists is going on, leads to the thought that these conversations are inspired by the government itself.

Facilitating the circulation of these types of moods and rumors, the USA government, evidently, is trying to show its determination to achieve at any price the liquidation of the missile emplacements in Cuba with the aim of putting on that issue the maximum pressure on us and on Cuba.

At the same time it is not possible to exclude that the general American plan of actions really may include the implementation of such an overflight, especially if the adventurist moods of certain members of the circle which is close to the President are taken into account. In this regard we should note that judging by certain information, disagreements about participation in the negotiations in the UN are now growing in the USA government, since this is connected with dragging out the time and a weakening of the acuteness of the moment, and means that the difficulty of taking "decisive measures" against Cuba unavoidably would grow.

27.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff]

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**For Dobrynin's 27 October 1962 Cable of His Meeting with Robert F. Kennedy, see accompanying box**

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**Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko's Instructions to the USSR Ambassador to the USA, 28 October 1962**

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CIPHERED TELEGRAM

**ANATOMY OF A CONTROVERSY:**

**Anatoly F. Dobrynin's Meeting With Robert F. Kennedy, Saturday, 27 October 1962**

**by Jim Hershberg**

If the Cuban Missile Crisis was the most dangerous passage of the Cold War, the most dangerous moment of the Cuban Missile Crisis was the evening of Saturday, 27 October 1962, when the resolution of the crisis—war or peace—appeared to hang in the balance. While Soviet ships had not attempted to break the U.S. naval blockade of Cuba, Soviet nuclear missile bases remained on the island and were rapidly becoming operational, and pressure on President Kennedy to order an air strike or invasion was mounting, especially after an American U-2 reconnaissance plane was shot down over Cuba that Saturday afternoon and its pilot killed. Hopes that a satisfactory resolution to the crisis could be reached between Washington and Moscow had dimmed, moreover, when a letter from Soviet

leader Nikita S. Khrushchev arrived Saturday morning demanding that the United States agree to remove its Jupiter missiles from Turkey in exchange for a Soviet removal of missiles from Cuba. The letter struck U.S. officials as an ominous hardening of the Soviet position from the previous day's letter from Khrushchev, which had omitted any mention of American missiles in Turkey but had instead implied that Washington's pledge not to invade Cuba would be sufficient to obviate the need for Soviet nuclear protection of Castro's revolution.

On Saturday evening, after a day of tense discussions within the "ExComm" or Executive Committee of senior advisers, President Kennedy decided on a dual strategy—a formal letter to Khrushchev accepting the implicit terms of his October 26 letter (a U.S. non-invasion pledge in exchange for the verifiable departure of Soviet nuclear missiles), coupled with private assurances to Khrushchev that the United States would speedily take out its missiles from Turkey, but only on the basis of a secret understanding, not as an open agreement that would appear to the public, and to NATO allies, as a concession to

blackmail. The U.S. president elected to transmit this sensitive message through his brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, who met in his office at the Justice Department with Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin.

That meeting has long been recognized as a turning point in the crisis, but several aspects of it have been shrouded in mystery and confusion. One concerned the issue of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey: U.S. officials maintained that neither John nor Robert Kennedy promised to withdraw the Jupiters as a quid pro quo, or concession, in exchange for the removal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba, or as part of an explicit agreement, deal, or pledge, but had merely informed Dobrynin that Kennedy had planned to take out the American missiles in any event. This was the version of events depicted in the first published account of the RFK-Dobrynin meeting by one of the participants, in Robert F. Kennedy's *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, posthumously published in 1969, a year after he was assassinated while seeking the Democratic nomination for president. While *Thirteen Days* depicted RFK as rejecting any firm agreement to

*continued on page 77*

## EXTRAORDINARY

## WASHINGTON

## SOVIET AMBASSADOR

Quickly get in touch with R. Kennedy and tell him that you passed on to N.S. Khrushchev the contents of your conversation with him. N.S. Khrushchev sent the following urgent response.

The thoughts which R. Kennedy expressed at the instruction of the President finds understanding in Moscow. Today, an answer will be given by radio to the President's message of October 27, and that response will be the most favorable. The main thing which disturbs the President, precisely the issue of the dismantling under international control of the rocket bases in Cuba—meets no objection and will be explained in detail in N.S. Khrushchev's message.

Telegraph upon implementation.

[handwritten]  
(A. Gromyko)

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff]

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**Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the  
USA Dobrynin to USSR MFA,  
28 October 1962**

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## CIPHERED TELEGRAM

R. Kennedy, with whom I met, listened very attentively to N.S. Khrushchev's response. Expressing thanks for the report, he said that he would quickly return to the White House in order to inform the President about the "important response" of the head of the Soviet government. "This is a great relief," R. Kennedy added further, and it was evident that he expressed his words somehow involuntarily. "I," said R. Kennedy, "today will finally be able to see my kids, for I have been entirely absent from home."

According to everything it was evident that R. Kennedy with satisfaction, it is necessary to say, really with great relief met the report about N.S. Khrushchev's response.

In parting, R. Kennedy once again requested that strict secrecy be maintained about the agreement with Turkey. "Especially so that the correspondents don't find out. At our place for the time being even Salinger does not know about it" (It was not entirely clear why he considered it

necessary to mention his name, but he did it).

I responded that in the Embassy no one besides me knows about the conversation with him yesterday. R. Kennedy said that in addition to the current correspondence and future exchange of opinions via diplomatic channels, on important questions he will maintain contact with me directly, avoiding any intermediaries.

Before departing, R. Kennedy once again gave thanks for N.S. Khrushchev's quick and effective response.

Your instructions arrived here 1.5 hours after the announcement via radio about the essence of N.S. Khrushchev's response. I explained to R. Kennedy that the tardiness was caused by a delay of telegrams at the telegraph station.

28.X.62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko's  
Instructions to the USSR representative at  
the United Nations, 28 October 1962**

In relation to the information which you received about U Thant's conversations with the Cuban representative [Garcia] Inchaustegi, you must be guided by the following:

First. You must declare to U Thant that orders have been given to the Soviet officers in Cuba to take down the emplacements which the Americans characterize as offensive weapons. Declare also that by itself, it goes without saying that any type of work related to the creation of such emplacements has already ceased.

Second. Also inform U Thant about the Soviet government's agreement to his proposal that representatives of the International Red Cross be allowed to visit the Soviet ships bound for Cuba in order to confirm that on them there are none of the types of weapons about which the President and government of the USA show concern, calling them offensive weapons. In this regard it is intended that the stated representatives will be conveyed to both Soviet ships and to the ships of neutral countries. You must inform U Thant, for his personal information, that on those Soviet ships which at the present time are bound for Cuba, there are no weapons at all.

Stress that the Soviet government has taken all these steps so as not to step on the negotiations, which have begun on U Thant's initiative, between him and the representatives of the USSR, USA, and Cuba, aimed at liquidating the dangerous situation which has developed.

As far as the issue of the possibility of U Thant's journey to Cuba with a group of aides and experts is concerned, it goes without saying that

the answer should be given by the Government of Cuba.

Tell U Thant that in our opinion, his journey to Cuba with a group of accompanying officials would have a positive significance.

Telegraph upon implementation.

[handwritten]

28. X [illegible initials, presumably  
Gromyko's]

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

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**Coded telegram from Soviet official Georgy  
Zhukov, 1 November 1962**

TOP SECRET  
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## CIPHERED TELEGRAM

I am reporting about a meeting with [White House press secretary Pierre] Salinger on 31 October.

I. Salinger requested that I pass on to N.S. Khrushchev that Kennedy is thankful to him for the decision which he made to dismantle and remove the missiles, and expresses his confidence that the agreement which was reached, built on mutual trust, will open the way to the resolution of other ripe problems. "The President does not want to portray the matter as if we won a victory over the USSR," said Salinger. His version for the press is exactly reflected in [New York Times correspondent James] Reston's article of 29 October. Kennedy declared to the members of the government that it makes no sense to try to use the situation that developed to Khrushchev's detriment. In this spirit, Rusk conducted talks with 50 of the most prominent and trusted observers in the USA and allied countries.

2. Kennedy, in Salinger's words, is now extremely preoccupied with somehow disarming his adversaries, who are asserting that he has once again "fallen into a trap..." "We must, he said, no matter what, publish evidence that the missiles have been dismantled and taken away. Let it be representatives of the UN or of the Red Cross, let it be observation photos taken from the air, it is all the same to us. In this regard we are not demanding access to the missiles themselves, they really are secret. We must publish evidence that they are no longer on the launching pads and that they have been taken away.

3. Kennedy, in Salinger's words, as in the past is under strong pressure from the "right-wingers," who are condemning him for the fact that he, for the first time in the history of the

Western hemisphere has given a guarantee for the permanent preservation of a "Communist preserve" by the shores of the USA. In order to deflect these attacks, Kennedy must receive evidence to the effect that Castro has no "offensive" weapons.

4. Kennedy, as Salinger asserts, believes that achieving a resolution to the Cuban crisis "will open a completely new epoch in Soviet-American relations," when mutual trust will become the "basis of everything." One of the first issues to be resolved can and must be the issue of a test ban.

5. Regarding a meeting between Kennedy and Khrushchev, before the Cuban crisis a majority of members of the government spoke out against such a contact, although it had been publicly stated that Kennedy will meet with Khrushchev if he comes to the General Assembly. Kennedy himself had doubted that this meeting will bring any sort of positive results.

"Now, - said Salinger - the situation has changed. The Cuban crisis showed that the issues on which the improvement of Soviet-American relations depends must be resolved urgently. Therefore, it is will be necessary to review the position in relation to a meeting in light of the results of the settlement of the crisis. We were too close to war for it to be possible to forget about this and to allow ourselves to delay even longer in reaching a resolution to the problems which have become urgent. However, the President still does not have a prepared decision about the expediency of a meeting and about the issues which should be considered. We still have to think about that."

6. Salinger, like other interlocutors in Washington, avoided touching on the German question. He mentioned in passing only that "even in respect to Berlin we have always stressed our respect for the opposing point of view."

7. Salinger stressed that even with all the "shortcomings" of Kennedy and Khrushchev's Vienna meeting, it had given a positive result, at least insofar as on the basis of the agreement that had been achieved there the Laos problem had been settled, which prompted confidence that it is possible to develop our relations on the basis of trust. For precisely this reason Kennedy had withdrawn the forces from Thailand.

"The Cuban crisis undermined this development of relations, but Khrushchev's wise decision may put the development of Soviet-American relations onto a basis of mutual trust," said Salinger.

8. Salinger asked me to pass on to N.S. Khrushchev his personal thanks for the hospitality which had been given to him in Moscow.

XI.I.62 G. ZHUKOV

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]

#### NEW RUSSIAN LAW AND THE ARCHIVAL SITUATION

On 25 January 1995 the Russian parliament passed a "Federal Law on Information, Information Systems, and the Protection of Information." It was signed into law by Russian President Boris Yeltsin on 20 February 1995 and was published in *Sobranie Zakonodatel'stva Rossiskoi Federatsii* 8 (20 February 1995), pp. 1213-1225.

The lengthy, 25-article law covers a wide range of topics, and much of it has no direct bearing on the archives. In a few places, however, especially Article 13 ("Guarantees of the Provision of Information"), the law does have a direct--and, unfortunately, highly negative--bearing on the archives. Points 1 and 2 of Article 13, which entitle "organs of state authority" to restrict access to "information resources pertaining to the activities of these organs," effectively leave the individual state ministries and agencies with full discretion over their own archives.

This provision may be consistent with legislation passed in the spring of 1994, but it runs counter to suggestions that the archival holdings of the various ministries and state agencies be gradually transferred to the auspices of the State Archival Service of Russia (Rosarkhiv). It also seems to run counter to the decree that Yeltsin issued last September, which was published in the previous issue of the CWIHP *Bulletin* (Fall 1994, pp. 89, 100).

It is difficult to say how strictly the law will be enforced, but it seems to be one further indication that the proponents of archival openness are losing ground, at least for now.

--Mark Kramer

#### CONTROVERSY

*continued from page 75*

withdraw the Jupiters, this was also the first *public* indication that the issue had even been privately discussed.

With Dobrynin obviously unable to publish his own version—he remained Moscow's ambassador in Washington until 1986, and Soviet diplomats were not in the habit of publishing tell-all exposés prior to glasnost—the first important Soviet account of the event to emerge was contained in the tape-recorded memoirs of deposed Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, which were smuggled to the West and published in 1970 (after Khrushchev's death, additional installments saw print in the West in 1974 and 1990). The account of the RFK-Dobrynin meeting in *Khrushchev Remembers*, in the form of a paraphrase from memory of Dobrynin's report, did not directly touch upon the secret discussions concerning the Jupiters, but did raise eyebrows with its claim that Robert F. Kennedy had fretted to Dobrynin that if his brother did not approve an attack on Cuba soon, the American military might "overthrow him and seize power." The second volume of Khrushchev's memoirs (*Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*), published posthumously in 1974, touched only briefly on the Robert Kennedy-Dobrynin meeting, but included the flat statement (on p. 512) that "President Kennedy said that in exchange for the withdrawal of our missiles, he would remove American missiles from Turkey and Italy," although he described this "pledge" as "symbolic" since the rockets "were already obsolete."

Over the years, many scholars of the Cuban Missile Crisis came strongly to suspect that Robert Kennedy had, in fact, relayed a pledge from his brother to take out the Jupiters from Turkey in exchange for the Soviet removal of nuclear missiles from Cuba, so long as Moscow kept the swap secret; yet senior former Kennedy Administration officials, such as then-National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy and then-Secretary of State Dean Rusk, continued to insist that RFK had passed on no more than an informal assurance rather than an explicit promise or agreement.

The first authoritative admission on the U.S. side that the Jupiters had actually been part of a "deal" came at a conference in Moscow in January 1989, after glasnost had led Soviet (and then Cuban) former officials to participate in international scholarly efforts to reconstruct and assess the history of the crisis. At that meeting, former Kennedy speechwriter Theodore Sorensen (and the uncredited editor of *Thirteen Days*) admitted, after prodding from Dobrynin, that he had taken it upon himself to edit out a "very explicit" reference to the inclusion of the Jupiters in the final deal to settle the crisis.

Now Dobrynin's original, contemporaneous, and dramatic cable of the meeting, alluded to

in some accounts by Soviets (such as Anatoly Gromyko, son of the late foreign minister) with special access, has been declassified and is available at the archives of the Russian Foreign Ministry. It is reprinted in translation below, along with relevant excerpts from the other publications mentioned above. The Dobrynin cable's first publication in English, a copy obtained by the Japanese television network NHK, came last year in an appendix to *We All Lost the Cold War*, a study by Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Stein, whose commentary is also excerpted.

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### Robert F. Kennedy's (edited) Description

I telephoned Ambassador Dobrynin about 7:15 P.M. and asked him to come to the Department of Justice. We met in my office at 7:45. I told him first that we knew that work was continuing on the missile bases in Cuba and that in the last few days it had been expedited. I said that in the last few hours we had learned that our reconnaissance planes flying over Cuba had been fired upon and that one of our U-2s had been shot down and the pilot killed. That for us was a most serious turn of events.

President Kennedy did not want a military conflict. He had done everything possible to avoid a military engagement with Cuba and with the Soviet Union, but now they had forced our hand. Because of the deception of the Soviet Union, our photographic reconnaissance planes would have to continue to fly over Cuba, and if the Cubans or Soviets shot at these planes, then we would have to shoot back. This would inevitably lead to further incidents and to escalation of the conflict, the implications of which were very grave indeed.

He said the Cubans resented the fact that we were violating Cuban air space. I replied that if we had not violated Cuban air space, we would still be believing what Khrushchev had said—that there would be no missiles placed in Cuba. In any case, I said, this matter was far more serious than the air space of Cuba—it involved the peoples of both of our countries and, in fact, people all over the globe.

The Soviet Union had secretly established missile bases in Cuba while at the same time proclaiming privately and publicly that this would never be done. We had to have a commitment by tomorrow that those bases would be removed. I was not giving them an ultimatum but a statement of fact. He should understand that if they did not remove those bases, we would remove them. President Kennedy had great respect for the Ambassador's country and the courage of its people. Perhaps his country might feel it necessary to take retaliatory action; but before that was over, there would be not only dead Americans but dead Russians as well.

He asked me what offer the United States was making, and I told him of the letter that President Kennedy had just transmitted to Khrushchev. He raised the question of our removing the missiles from Turkey. I said that there could be no quid pro quo or any arrangement made under this kind of threat or pressure, and that in the last analysis this was a decision that would have to be made by NATO. However, I said, President Kennedy had been anxious to remove those missiles from Italy and Turkey for a long period of time. He had ordered their removal some time ago, and it was our judgment that, within a short time after this crisis was over, those missiles would be gone.

I said President Kennedy wished to have peaceful relations between our two countries. He wished to resolve the problems that confronted us in Europe and Southeast Asia. He wished to move forward on the control of nuclear weapons. However, we could make progress on these matters only when the crisis was behind us. Time was running out. We had only a few more hours—we needed an answer immediately from the Soviet Union. I said we must have it the next day.

I returned to the White House....

[Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: New American Library, 1969), 107-109.]

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### Khrushchev's Description

The climax came after five or six days, when our ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, reported that the President's brother, Robert Kennedy, had come to see him on an unofficial visit. Dobrynin's report went something like this:

"Robert Kennedy looked exhausted. One could see from his eyes that he had not slept for days. He himself said that he had not been home for six days and nights. 'The President is in a grave situation,' Robert Kennedy said, 'and does not know how to get out of it. We are under very severe stress. In fact we are under pressure from our military to use force against Cuba. Probably at this very moment the President is sitting down to write a message to Chairman Khrushchev. We want to ask you, Mr. Dobrynin, to pass President Kennedy's message to Chairman Khrushchev through unofficial channels. President Kennedy implores Chairman Khrushchev to accept his offer and to take into consideration the peculiarities of the American system. Even though the President himself is very much against starting a war over Cuba, an irreversible chain of events could occur against his will. That is why the President is appealing directly to Chairman Khrushchev for his help in liquidating this conflict. If the situation continues much longer, the President is not sure that the military will not overthrow him and seize

power. The American army could get out of control.'"

[*Khrushchev Remembers*, intro., commentary, and notes by Edward Crankshaw, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970; citation from paperback edition, New York: Bantam, 1971), pp. 551-52]

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### Sorensen's "Confession":

...the president [Kennedy] recognized that, for Chairman Khrushchev to withdraw the missiles from Cuba, it would be undoubtedly helpful to him if he could say at the same time to his colleagues on the Presidium, "And we have been assured that the missiles will be coming out of Turkey." And so, after the ExComm meeting [on the evening of 27 October 1962], as I'm sure almost all of you know, a small group met in President Kennedy's office, and he instructed Robert Kennedy—at the suggestion of Secretary of State [Dean] Rusk—to deliver the letter to Ambassador Dobrynin for referral to Chairman Khrushchev, but to add orally what was not in the letter: that the missiles would come out of Turkey.

Ambassador Dobrynin felt that Robert Kennedy's book did not adequately express that the "deal" on the Turkish missiles was part of the resolution of the crisis. And here I have a confession to make to my colleagues on the American side, as well as to others who are present. I was the editor of Robert Kennedy's book. It was, in fact, a diary of those thirteen days. And his diary was very explicit that this was part of the deal; but at that time it was still a secret even on the American side, except for the six of us who had been present at that meeting. So I took it upon myself to edit that out of his diaries, and that is why the Ambassador is somewhat justified in saying that the diaries are not as explicit as his conversation.

[Sorensen comments, in Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight, and David A. Welch, eds., *Back to the Brink: Proceedings of the Moscow Conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis, January 27-28, 1989* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), pp. 92-93]

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### Accounts of Former U.S. Officials:

#### McGeorge Bundy:

... Later [on Saturday], accepting a proposal from Dean Rusk, [John F.] Kennedy instructed his brother to tell Ambassador Dobrynin that while

there could be no bargain over the missiles that had been supplied to Turkey, the president himself was determined to have them removed and would attend to the matter once the present crisis was resolved—as long as no one in Moscow called that action part of a bargain. [p. 406]

...The other part of the oral message [to Dobrynin] was proposed by Dean Rusk; that we should tell Khrushchev that while there could be no deal over the Turkish missiles, the president was determined to get them out and would do so once the Cuban crisis was resolved. The proposal was quickly supported by the rest of us [in addition to Bundy and Rusk, those present included President Kennedy, McNamara, RFK, George Ball, Roswell Gilpatrick, Llewellyn Thompson, and Theodore Sorensen]. Concerned as we all were by the cost of a public bargain struck under pressure at the apparent expense of the Turks, and aware as we were from the day's discussion that for some, even in our own closest councils, even this unilateral private assurance might appear to betray an ally, we agreed without hesitation that no one not in the room was to be informed of this additional message. Robert Kennedy was instructed to make it plain to Dobrynin that the same secrecy must be observed on the other side, and that any Soviet reference to our assurance would simply make it null and void. [pp. 432-44]

...There was no leak. As far as as I know, none of the nine of us told anyone else what had happened. We denied in every forum that there was any deal, and in the narrowest sense what we said was usually true, as far as it went. When the orders were passed that the Jupiters must come out, we gave the plausible and accurate—if incomplete—explanation that the missile crisis had convinced the president once and for all that he did not want those missiles there.... [p. 434]

[from McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988)]

#### Dean Rusk:

Even though Soviet ships had turned around, time was running out. We made this very clear to Khrushchev. Earlier in the week Bobby Kennedy told Ambassador Dobrynin that if the missile were not withdrawn immediately, the crisis would move into a different and dangerous military phase. In his book *Khrushchev Remembers*, Khrushchev states that Robert Kennedy told Dobrynin that the military might take over. Khrushchev either genuinely misunderstood or deliberately misused Bobby's statement. Obviously there was never any threat of a military takeover in this country. We wondered about Khrushchev's situation, even whether some Soviet general or member of the Politburo would put

a pistol to Khrushchev's head and say, "Mr. Chairman, launch those missiles or we'll blow your head off!"

...In framing a response [to Khrushchev's second letter of Saturday, October 27], the president, Bundy, McNamara, Bobby Kennedy, and I met in the Oval Office, where after some discussion I suggested that since the Jupiters in Turkey were coming out in any event, we should inform the Russians of this so that this irrelevant question would not complicate the solution of the missile sites in Cuba. We agreed that Bobby should inform Ambassador Dobrynin orally. Shortly after we returned to our offices, I telephoned Bobby to underline that he should pass this along to Dobrynin only as information, not a public pledge. Bobby told me that he was then sitting with Dobrynin and had already talked with him. Bobby later told me that Dobrynin called this message "very important information."

[Dean Rusk as told to Richard Rusk, *As I Saw It* (New York: Norton & Co., 1990), pp. 238-240]

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#### Dobrynin's Cable to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962:

TOP SECRET  
Making Copies Prohibited  
Copy No. 1

#### CIPHERED TELEGRAM

Late tonight R. Kennedy invited me to come see him. We talked alone.

The Cuban crisis, R. Kennedy began, continues to quickly worsen. We have just received a report that an unarmed American plane was shot down while carrying out a reconnaissance flight over Cuba. The military is demanding that the President arm such planes and respond to fire with fire. The USA government will have to do this.

I interrupted R. Kennedy and asked him, what right American planes had to fly over Cuba at all, crudely violating its sovereignty and accepted international norms? How would the USA have reacted if foreign planes appeared over its territory?

"We have a resolution of the Organization of American states that gives us the right to such overflights," R. Kennedy quickly replied.

I told him that the Soviet Union, like all peace-loving countries, resolutely rejects such a "right" or, to be more exact, this kind of true lawlessness, when people who don't like the social-political situation in a country try to impose their will on it—a small state where the

people themselves established and maintained [their system]. "The OAS resolution is a direct violation of the UN Charter," I added, "and you, as the Attorney General of the USA, the highest American legal entity, should certainly know that."

R. Kennedy said that he realized that we had different approaches to these problems and it was not likely that we could convince each other. But now the matter is not in these differences, since time is of the essence. "I want," R. Kennedy stressed, "to lay out the current alarming situation the way the president sees it. He wants N.S. Khrushchev to know this. This is the thrust of the situation now."

"Because of the plane that was shot down, there is now strong pressure on the president to give an order to respond with fire if fired upon when American reconnaissance planes are flying over Cuba. The USA can't stop these flights, because this is the only way we can quickly get information about the state of construction of the missile bases in Cuba, which we believe pose a very serious threat to our national security. But if we start to fire in response—a chain reaction will quickly start that will be very hard to stop. The same thing in regard to the essence of the issue of the missile bases in Cuba. The USA government is determined to get rid of those bases—up to, in the extreme case, of bombing them, since, I repeat, they pose a great threat to the security of the USA. But in response to the bombing of these bases, in the course of which Soviet specialists might suffer, the Soviet government will undoubtedly respond with the same against us, somewhere in Europe. A real war will begin, in which millions of Americans and Russians will die. We want to avoid that any way we can, I'm sure that the government of the USSR has the same wish. However, taking time to find a way out [of the situation] is very risky (here R. Kennedy mentioned as if in passing that there are many unreasonable heads among the generals, and not only among the generals, who are 'itching for a fight'). The situation might get out of control, with irreversible consequences."

"In this regard," R. Kennedy said, "the president considers that a suitable basis for regulating the entire Cuban conflict might be the letter N.S. Khrushchev sent on October 26 and the letter in response from the President, which was sent off today to N.S. Khrushchev through the US Embassy in Moscow. The most important thing for us," R. Kennedy stressed, "is to get as soon as possible the agreement of the Soviet government to halt further work on the construction of the missile bases in Cuba and take measures under international control that would make it impossible to use these weapons. In exchange the government of the USA is ready, in addition to repealing all measures on the "quarantine," to give the assurances that there will not be any invasion of Cuba and that other countries of the

Western Hemisphere are ready to give the same assurances—the US government is certain of this.”

“And what about Turkey?” I asked R. Kennedy.

“If that is the only obstacle to achieving the regulation I mentioned earlier, then the president doesn’t see any unsurmountable difficulties in resolving this issue,” replied R. Kennedy. “The greatest difficulty for the president is the public discussion of the issue of Turkey. Formally the deployment of missile bases in Turkey was done by a special decision of the NATO Council. To announce now a unilateral decision by the president of the USA to withdraw missile bases from Turkey—this would damage the entire structure of NATO and the US position as the leader of NATO, where, as the Soviet government knows very well, there are many arguments. In short, if such a decision were announced now it would seriously tear apart NATO.”

“However, President Kennedy is ready to come to agree on that question with N.S. Khrushchev, too. I think that in order to withdraw these bases from Turkey,” R. Kennedy said, “we need 4-5 months. This is the minimal amount of time necessary for the US government to do this, taking into account the procedures that exist within the NATO framework. On the whole Turkey issue,” R. Kennedy added, “if Premier N.S. Khrushchev agrees with what I’ve said, we can continue to exchange opinions between him and the president, using him, R. Kennedy and the Soviet ambassador. “However, the president can’t say anything public in this regard about Turkey,” R. Kennedy said again. R. Kennedy then warned that his comments about Turkey are extremely confidential; besides him and his brother, only 2-3 people know about it in Washington.

“That’s all that he asked me to pass on to N.S. Khrushchev,” R. Kennedy said in conclusion. “The president also asked N.S. Khrushchev to give him an answer (through the Soviet ambassador and R. Kennedy) if possible within the next day (Sunday) on these thoughts in order to have a business-like, clear answer in principle. [He asked him] not to get into a wordy discussion, which might drag things out. The current serious situation, unfortunately, is such that there is very little time to resolve this whole issue. Unfortunately, events are developing too quickly. The request for a reply tomorrow,” stressed R. Kennedy, “is just that—a request, and not an ultimatum. The president hopes that the head of the Soviet government will understand him correctly.”

I noted that it went without saying that the Soviet government would not accept any ultimatums and it was good that the American government realized that. I also reminded him of N.S. Khrushchev’s appeal in his last letter to the president to demonstrate state wisdom in resolv-

ing this question. Then I told R. Kennedy that the president’s thoughts would be brought to the attention of the head of the Soviet government. I also said that I would contact him as soon as there was a reply. In this regard, R. Kennedy gave me a number of a direct telephone line to the White House.

In the course of the conversation, R. Kennedy noted that he knew about the conversation that television commentator Scali had yesterday with an Embassy adviser on possible ways to regulate the Cuban conflict [one-and-a-half lines whited out]

I should say that during our meeting R. Kennedy was very upset; in any case, I’ve never seen him like this before. True, about twice he tried to return to the topic of “deception,” (that he talked about so persistently during our previous meeting), but he did so in passing and without any edge to it. He didn’t even try to get into fights on various subjects, as he usually does, and only persistently returned to one topic: time is of the essence and we shouldn’t miss the chance.

After meeting with me he immediately went to see the president, with whom, as R. Kennedy said, he spends almost all his time now.

27/X-62 A. DOBRYNIN

[Source: Russian Foreign Ministry archives, translation from copy provided by NHK, in *Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, We All Lost the Cold War (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), appendix, pp. 523-526, with minor revisions.*]

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**Lebow and Stein comment,  
We All Lost the Cold War (excerpt):**

The cable testifies to the concern of John and Robert Kennedy that military action would trigger runaway escalation. Robert Kennedy told Dobrynin of his government’s determination to ensure the removal of the Soviet missiles in Cuba, and his belief that the Soviet Union “will undoubtedly respond with the same against us, somewhere in Europe.” Such an admission seems illogical if the administration was using the threat of force to compel the Soviet Union to withdraw its missiles from Cuba. It significantly raised the expected cost to the United States of an attack against the missiles, thereby weakening the credibility of the American threat. To maintain or enhance that credibility, Kennedy would have had to discount the probability of Soviet retaliation to Dobrynin. That nobody in the government was certain of Khrushchev’s response makes Kennedy’s statement all the more remarkable.

It is possible that Dobrynin misquoted Robert Kennedy. However, the Soviet ambassador was a careful and responsible diplomat. At the

very least, Kennedy suggested that he thought that Soviet retaliation was likely. Such an admission was still damaging to compellence. It seems likely that Kennedy was trying to establish the basis for a more cooperative approach to crisis resolution. His brother, he made clear, was under enormous pressure from a coterie of generals and civilian officials who were “itching for a fight.” This also was a remarkable admission for the attorney general to make. The pressure on the president to attack Cuba, as Kennedy explained at the beginning of the meeting, had been greatly intensified by the destruction of an unarmed American reconnaissance plane. The president did not want to use force, in part because he recognized the terrible consequences of escalation, and was therefore requesting Soviet assistance to make it unnecessary.

This interpretation is supported by the president’s willingness to remove the Jupiter missiles as a *quid pro quo* for the withdrawal of missiles in Cuba, and his brother’s frank confession that the only obstacle to dismantling the Jupiters were political. “Public discussion” of a missile exchange would damage the United States’ position in NATO. For this reason, Kennedy revealed, “besides himself and his brother, only 2-3 people know about it in Washington.” Khrushchev would have to cooperate with the administration to keep the American concession a secret.

Most extraordinary of all is the apparent agreement between Dobrynin and Kennedy to treat Kennedy’s de facto ultimatum as “a request, and not an ultimatum.” This was a deliberate attempt to defuse as much as possible the hostility that Kennedy’s request for an answer by the next day was likely to provoke in Moscow. So too was Dobrynin’s next sentence: “I noted that it went without saying that the Soviet government would not accept any ultimatum and it was good that the American government realized that.”

Prior meetings between Dobrynin and Kennedy had sometimes degenerated into shouting matches. On this occasion, Dobrynin indicates, the attorney general kept his emotions in check and took the ambassador into his confidence in an attempt to cooperate on the resolution of the crisis. This two-pronged strategy succeeded where compellence alone might have failed. It gave Khrushchev positive incentives to remove the Soviet missiles and reduced the emotional cost to him of the withdrawal. He responded as Kennedy and Dobrynin had hoped.

## CASTRO'S SPEECH

*continued from page 1*

a portion of the speech, and made it available to us for publication.<sup>1</sup> That portion concerns the Missile Crisis, which Cubans call the October Crisis. The statement not only constitutes President Castro's most extensive remarks about the 1962 confrontation, but also provides his reflection on the episode only five years after it occurred.<sup>2</sup> This document is usefully read in conjunction with notes taken by the Soviet ambassador to Cuba, Aleksandr Alekseev, during meetings immediately after the crisis between Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan and Cuba's principal leaders. Translated excerpts from both documents are printed below. Taken together, the documents provide a deeper understanding of the nature and roots of the Cuban-Soviet relationship between the crisis and the August 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Those six years were the defining moments of both the Cuban revolution and the remaining 23 years of the Cuban-Soviet relationship. It is notable, then, that just eight months prior to the 1968 invasion, Castro provided his party's leadership with such an extensive review of Cuban-Soviet ties, starting with the Missile Crisis. To appreciate the significance of this speech, it is necessary first to review Cuba's perspective on the Missile Crisis.

### Cuba's Perspective on the Crisis

Until recent years, Cuba had been largely excluded from or marginalized in analyses of the Cuban Missile Crisis. It was seen as no more than the stage on which the U.S.-Soviet confrontation brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. But new information about Cuba's role indicates that a full appreciation of the event can only be gained by examining Cuba's goals and fears prior to the crisis and its actions during the crisis.<sup>3</sup>

Early in his speech, Castro asserted that when a Soviet delegation (headed by the Uzbek party chief Sharif Rashidov) proposed the installation of ballistic missiles in Cuba in May 1962,

We saw it as a means of strengthening the socialist community...and if we were proposing that the entire socialist com-

munity be prepared to go to war to defend any socialist country, then we had absolutely no right to raise any questions about something that could represent a potential danger.

Subsequently (and earlier, in his meetings with Mikoyan), the Cuban leader has said that he understood the missiles also could be an immediate deterrent to a U.S. invasion. But here he presented the idea that Cuba would be on the front line of the struggle between East and West.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to 1962, Cuba had sought admission to the Warsaw Pact, but had been rebuffed. Castro's rationale for accepting the missiles provided a formulation that would enable Cuba to claim *de facto* membership in the Pact. It was placing itself in harm's way for the benefit of socialist countries, and so it had the right to expect reciprocal protection from the Pact in the event of an attack.

By May 1962, Cuba expected and feared a U.S. military invasion. Cuban leaders reasoned first that the Kennedy Administration would not be content to accept blithely the outcome of the failed 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. They viewed Cuba's January 1962 suspension from the Organization of American States as a justification for and prelude to an invasion.<sup>5</sup> Importantly, their fears were reinforced by the development of a major U.S. covert action, codenamed Operation Mongoose, and other American military preparations.<sup>6</sup> Approved by President John Kennedy at the end of November 1961, Operation Mongoose became the largest CIA operation until Afghanistan. Though the program was never fully implemented, the United States did train and support thousands of Cuban exiles, many of whom engaged in repeated acts of sabotage on the island, including the destruction of factories, the burning of fields, the contamination of sugar exports, and the re-supply of counter-revolutionaries in the Escambray Mountains.<sup>7</sup> Cuban intelligence had infiltrated the exile groups and had captured several of the saboteurs. While Cuba was not privy to the closely held Mongoose planning documents, it had a reasonably accurate picture of the extent of the operation.<sup>8</sup>

This was the context in which the Cuban leaders accepted the Soviet proposal to install missiles. Castro acknowledged that he placed great faith in what he perceived to

be the Soviet's sophisticated knowledge of military matters. Still, he quarreled with the Soviet leaders over the political aspects of Operation Anadyr (the Soviet code name for the missile emplacement). He sought a public announcement of the decision prior to the completed installation of missiles for two reasons. First, he judged that such a statement would itself have a deterrent effect against a U.S. invasion, by effectively committing the Soviet Union to Cuba's defense. Second, publication of the Cuban-Soviet agreement would strengthen Cuba's "moral" defense in the United Nations and in the forum of international public opinion. Keeping the operation secret, he argued in 1968, required

the resort to lies which in effect meant to waive a basic right and a principle.... Cuba is a sovereign, independent country, and has a right to own the weapons that it deems necessary, and the USSR to send them there, in the same light that the United States has felt that it has the right to make agreements with dozens of countries and to send them weapons that they see fit, without the Soviet Union ever considering that it had a right to intercede. From the very outset it was a capitulation, an erosion of our sovereignty....<sup>9</sup>

While the world breathed a sigh of relief when Premier Nikita Khrushchev announced on 28 October 1962 that the Soviets would dismantle and remove the missiles in exchange for a U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba, Castro was enraged. "We were profoundly incensed," he reported to the Central Committee in 1968. The basis and acuteness of Cuba's anger are evident in the conversations Castro had with Mikoyan in early November 1962, immediately after Khrushchev's decision.

First, there was the matter of consultation. Cuba learned about the Soviet decision at the same moment the United States did, by hearing Khrushchev's announcement on Radio Moscow on the morning of October 28. Mikoyan argued to Castro on November 3 that there had been no time to consult with the Cuban leader, especially in light of a letter Castro had sent to Khrushchev on October 27 (it was written on October 26, completed in the early hours of October 27, and was received in the Kremlin very late on

the 27th). In that letter, the Cuban leader predicted that U.S. military strikes, and conceivably an invasion, were likely to occur in the next 24 to 72 hours (that is, possibly 10-12 hours after the Kremlin received the letter). In order to protect Cuba, Mikoyan contended, the Soviet Union had to act swiftly, without consulting Cuba. But, Castro retorted, the formula worked out between Kennedy and Khrushchev seemed to be based on a secret letter the Soviet leader had sent to the U.S. president on October 26, prior to receiving the Cuban leader's assessment.<sup>10</sup> Cuba thus felt aggrieved at being ignored.

Second, Castro was angry over the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement itself. Why, he demanded of Mikoyan, did the Soviets not extract anything more substantial from the United States that would increase Cuban security and defend Cuba's honor? On October 28, the Cuban leader had articulated five points that he stated should have been the basis of an agreement, including a cessation of U.S. overflights and a withdrawal from Guantanamo Naval Base.<sup>11</sup> At a minimum he expected that the Soviets could have forced the United States to meet with Cuba to discuss the five points face to face. That would have at least recognized Cuban sovereignty. Instead, the Soviets seemed oblivious to Cuban sovereignty, even agreeing to an internationally sponsored inspection of the dismantling of the missiles on Cuban soil without first asking Cuba's permission.

Third, there was the issue of Cuba's vulnerability, which had several elements. The Cuban leadership interpreted the agreement as a Soviet capitulation to U.S. threats, and correctly understood at the time what was made explicit only twenty years later: that the Soviet Union was unwilling ultimately to put itself at risk to protect Cuba.<sup>12</sup> "We realized," Castro said to the Central Committee, "how alone we would be in the event of a war." In the same vein, he described the Soviet decision to remove all but 3,000 of its 42,000 military personnel from Cuba as "a freely granted concession to top off the concession of the withdrawal of the strategic missiles."

The Cubans saw the Soviet soldiers more as a deterrent to potential U.S. aggression—a kind of tripwire that would involve the Soviet Union in a Cuban-U.S. conflict—than as a necessary military support. Cuba had more than 100,000 soldiers under arms

and an even greater number in militias. But Cuban leaders did want to retain other weaponry that the United States was demanding the Soviet Union withdraw. Most important were IL-28 bombers, which were obsolete but capable of carrying a nuclear payload. Castro explained in 1968 that

they were useful planes; it is possible that had we possessed IL-28s, the Central American bases [from which Cuban exiles were launching Mongoose attacks] might not have been organized, not because we would have bombed the bases, but because of their fear that we might.

Mikoyan recognized their importance. On November 5, Mikoyan told the Cuban leadership that "Americans are trying to make broader the list of weapons for evacuation. Such attempts have already been made, but we'll not allow them to do so."<sup>13</sup>

"To hell with the imperialists!" Castro approvingly recalled Mikoyan saying, if they added more demands. Nevertheless, Castro lamented in 1968, "some 24, or at most 48 hours later...Mikoyan arrived bearing the sad news that the IL-28 planes would also have to be returned."<sup>14</sup> (Castro's memory may be in error here: according to the declassified Soviet records of the Mikoyan-Castro conversations, Mikoyan conveyed Moscow's decision to withdraw the bomber's, to Castro's evident fury, in a meeting on November 12.<sup>15</sup>) From the Cuban perspective, Cuba was even more vulnerable than before the Missile Crisis because the hollowness of Soviet protection was exposed and key weaponry was being taken away.

Castro also was concerned that the U.S.-Soviet accord would weaken Cuba internally and encourage counter-revolution and perhaps challenges to his leadership. He remarked to Mikoyan on 3 November 1962:

All of this seemed to our people to be a step backward, a retreat. It turns out that we must accept inspections, accept the U.S. right to determine what kinds of weapons we can use....Cuba is a young developing country. Our people are very impulsive. The moral factor has a special significance in our country. We were afraid that these decisions could provoke a breach in the people's unity....

Finally, Cuba perceived it was nothing more than a pawn in Soviet calculations. Castro's comments to Mikoyan about this confuse the sequence of events, but the source of the anger and disillusionment is clear. He said on November 3:

And suddenly came the report of the American agency UPI that "the Soviet premier has given orders to Soviet personnel to dismantle missile launchers and return them to the USSR." Our people could not believe that report. It caused deep confusion. People didn't understand the way that the issue was structured—the possibility of removing missile armaments from Cuba if the U.S. liquidated its bases in Turkey.

In 1992, the Cuban leader intimated that this initial confusion hardened into anger during his six-week trip to the Soviet Union, in early 1963, after Khrushchev inadvertently informed Castro that there had been a secret understanding between the United States and Soviet Union for the removal of U.S. missiles from Turkey. This seemed to confirm his suspicion that the protection of Cuba was merely a pretext for the Soviet goal of enhancing its own security.<sup>16</sup> Here were the seeds of true discontent.

The lessons were clear to Castro, and these were what he attempted to convey to the Central Committee in 1968. The Soviet Union, which casually trampled on Cuban sovereignty and negotiated away Cuba's security, could not be trusted to look after Cuba's "national interests." Consequently, Cuba had to be vigilant in protecting itself and in maintaining its independence.

### **Significance of the January 1968 Speech**

Castro's 12-hour speech came at the conclusion of the first meeting of the Central Committee since the Cuban Communist Party was founded in October 1965. The main purpose of the session was to conduct a "trial" of 37 members of the party, who were labelled the "micro-faction." Though the designation "micro" was intended to diminish their importance, there was little doubt that the attack against them was filled with high drama and potentially high stakes for the Cuban revolution.

The meeting began on January 23, and

was presided over by Raoul Castro, the Minister of the Armed Forces and the party's second secretary. All of the proceedings, except Fidel Castro's speech, were prominently reprinted in the Cuban Communist Party newspaper *Granma*.<sup>17</sup>

Most prominent among the 37 was Anibal Escalante, who was well known in Cuba. The leader of the Popular Socialist Party (which was the communist party) before 1959, he also headed the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations in 1961, which was the party created to mesh Castro's July 26th Movement, the Revolutionary Directorate, and the Popular Socialist Party into one unit. What made the attack on Escalante and his cohorts especially dramatic was that they were charged with adhering to criticisms of the Cuban Communist Party that had been voiced by Moscow-oriented communist parties in Latin America. Moreover, they were accused of meeting with officials of the Soviet embassy in Havana, of providing these officials (one of whom was allegedly the KGB station chief) with false information about Cuba, and of encouraging the Soviet Union to apply economic sanctions against Cuba. In effect, their purge could be interpreted as a direct rebuff to the Soviet Union.

Why, then, would Fidel Castro's speech

on the history of Cuban-Soviet relations, which was quite critical of the Soviet Union, be kept secret when the micro-faction trial itself had been made so public? (Indeed, despite our repeated requests, the bulk of the speech is still secret, and the only portion that has been declassified is the portion pertaining to the missile crisis.) Recent interviews we conducted in Havana with former officials make clear that there were three motives for keeping the speech from the public.

First, there was a concern that the United States would interpret such direct Cuban criticism of the Soviet Union as a visible sign of rupture between Cuba and its benefactor. Cuban leaders, quite mindful of the 1965 Dominican Republic invasion, did not want to encourage U.S. hawks to attempt military attacks against the island. The micro-faction trial, after all, focused on allegedly errant individuals and avoided implicating the Soviet Union directly.

Cuban leaders were also worried about internal disunity. On the one hand, they did not want to encourage the Cuban public to seize on the speech as a sign that Cuba disavowed all aspects of Soviet socialism. There was considerable cultural ferment in Cuba at the time, and Cuban leaders were feeling besieged by increasing criticism from

the artistic community.<sup>18</sup> This was also a period when Havana was awash in graffiti and juvenile vandalism, which leaders associated with a growing "hippie" movement.

On the other hand, Castro apparently believed he had to "educate" the Central Committee about the errors of the micro-faction, and demonstrate to party leaders that the purge was warranted. He could not be certain how popular Escalante was with the members of the Central Committee, because it was such a nascent and diverse group. He thus sought to avoid party disunity by convincing the leaders that the purge was necessary to protect Cuban nationalism, which was the ultimate source of legitimacy. Castro did this, one former official remarked, by explaining that "the platform of the micro-faction would in fact turn us into a Soviet satellite." This not only would have subverted Cuban national identity, but would have been a grave error, because—as he argues in the section of the speech on the Missile Crisis—the Soviet Union was untrustworthy.

Third, by keeping the speech secret, Castro sent a message to the Soviet Union that while Cuba profoundly disagreed with it over several issues, there was still the possibility of accommodation. Had the Cuban head of state made his criticisms public, it

## FIDEL CASTRO, GLASNOST, AND THE CARIBBEAN CRISIS

by Georgy Shakhnazarov

In October 1987, Harvard University hosted a symposium on the Caribbean Crisis (or Cuban Missile Crisis) in which Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Theodore Sorensen, and other prominent veterans of the Kennedy Administration took part; I was one of three Soviets who also participated, along with Fyodor Burlatsky and Sergo Mikoyan. At the conclusion of that interesting discussion it was agreed to advance a step further the historical study that had been jointly launched.<sup>1</sup>

The next "round" of this study was held in Moscow in January 1989.<sup>2</sup> The Soviet Political Science Association and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations invited U.S. former officials and scholars, and on the Soviet side A. Gromyko, A. Dobrynin, A. Alexeev, O. Troyanovsky,

S. Khrushchev, E. Primakov and many other people who were involved in the events of 1962 to attend the conference.

The Moscow conference turned out to be particularly interesting thanks to the participation of an authoritative Cuban delegation led by Sergio del Valle, a member of the Cuban government who in 1962 had been the Cuban army chief of staff. This article describes how this unprecedented Cuban involvement in an East-West historical investigation became possible, and Fidel Castro's personal role in that decision. On 7 November 1987, only a few weeks after the Harvard discussions, the Soviet Union celebrated the 70th anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution. Foreign delegations were led by the "first persons," and Fidel Castro was among them. At that time I was a deputy chairman of the CPSU Central Committee department responsible for relations with Cuba, and I had an opportunity to talk with the Cuban leader several times in his residence, the mansion at the Leninskie Gory.

During our meetings, I told him about our discussions with the Americans, and asked him if he thought it would be a good idea for the Cubans to join the process in order to present the maximum amount of reliable information about this dramatic episode in Cuban and world history.

Fidel thought for a moment, stroking his beard with a familiar gesture. Then he said: "It is not only a good idea, but it is a necessity. There are so many myths and puzzles about those events. We would be able to help, to give information about the events in which we were immediate participants. But nobody has invited us."

Then I requested an invitation for the Cubans to the Moscow conference. Fidel promised to send a delegation and he delivered on his word. More than that. He positively responded to the idea to hold a "third round" in Cuba, and indeed a conference was held, with Fidel's active participation, in Havana in January 1992.<sup>3</sup>

*continued on page 87*

would have been far more difficult to overcome the tensions with the Soviet Union.

These tensions were reaching their peak in January 1968. In a public speech on January 2, the Cuban leader blamed the Soviet Union for an inadequate delivery of fuel that he asserted would require a stricter rationing of gasoline.<sup>19</sup> What the Soviets had done was to increase supplies only modestly from the previous year, and well below what the Cubans needed to pursue their ambitious plan of producing a ten million ton sugar harvest by 1970. This plan was an element in their goal of achieving some independence from the Soviet Union.

The Soviet action came after Premier Alexsei Kosygin visited Cuba in July 1967, on his way back to Moscow from a summit meeting in New Jersey with President Lyndon Johnson. The Castro-Kosygin meeting reportedly was quite tense, in part because Cuba disagreed with Soviet aspirations for a detente with the United States. It is likely, also, that Kosygin approvingly conveyed a U.S. message that Cuba should desist from supporting revolutionary guerrilla movements in Latin America.<sup>20</sup>

Cuba's support for these movements had been a source of friction between the two countries for most of the period after the Missile Crisis. It raised several problems for the Soviet Union. One was ideological, and in this context it is worth noting that Cuban affairs in the CPSU Central Committee were handled in part by the department responsible for ideology. The Soviet Union believed that socialism could evolve peacefully in Latin America, and would come about through united front alliances spearheaded by the established communist parties. It was critical in their view to appreciate that Latin America was not ripe for revolution, because it had an underdeveloped proletariat. To be sure, there were some differences within the Soviet leadership about whether any support should be given to guerrilla movements, and there were differences even among the Latin American communist parties about the support that should be granted to movements within their respective countries. In the mid-1960s, for example, the Venezuelan Communist Party developed a close alliance with the main guerrilla movement there. The Argentine Party, in contrast, was firmly opposed to support for any guerrilla movements.

Still, Cuba posed a frontal ideological

challenge because it claimed to be the model for developing socialism in Latin America, and the Cuban proletariat was less advanced than that in some other countries. Moreover, the Cuban revolution had succeeded largely without the support of the Popular Socialist Party. To some extent the ideological problem could be obscured by treating Cuba as an exception, especially during the period that it was not ruled by a communist party. But the issue became more critical after October 1965, when the Cuban Communist Party was formally established as the ruling party.

That came three months before a major international meeting of revolutionaries in Havana, the Tricontinental Conference. Until then, Soviets believed they had papered over its differences with Cuba on the matter of armed struggle by resolving at a December 1964 meeting of Latin American communist parties that while armed struggle was a valid means of achieving socialism, the appropriate means were to be assessed by each communist party. Cuba, moreover, agreed to deal only with the established communist parties in Latin America.<sup>21</sup>

Then the Tricontinental Conference upset the fragile peace. While it was fully endorsed by the Soviet Union, which hoped the conference would undermine China's influence with revolutionary movements (and which it apparently did), the Soviets were taken aback by the barely veiled criticisms of its allegedly weak support for North Vietnam. The conference also created a new organization, headquartered in Havana, to support armed revolutionary activity throughout the world, and the organization's executive secretariat had only three representatives from communist parties—Cuba, North Vietnam and North Korea, all of whom were critical of the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup> In a call for armed struggle in every Latin American country, Castro concluded the conference by fervently criticizing the Latin American communist parties:

if there is less of resolutions and possibilities and dilemmas and it is understood once and for all that sooner or later all or almost all people will have to take up arms to liberate themselves, then the hour of liberation for this continent will be advanced.<sup>23</sup>

Castro reinforced these views in subse-

quent months, in speeches critical of the Soviet model of socialism and world revolution, and supporting Ché Guevara's November 1966 expedition to Bolivia, which was opposed by the Bolivian Communist Party.<sup>24</sup> Guevara had left Cuba in 1965, but he sent a message to the Tricontinental Conference in which he declared that through "liberation struggles" in Latin America, "the Cuban Revolution will today have a task of much greater relevance: creating a Second or a Third Vietnam...."<sup>25</sup> In August 1967, at the first meeting of the Organization for Latin American Solidarity—which was created by the Tricontinental Conference—Cuba arranged for nearly all of the delegations to be dominated by non-communist revolutionary movements. Later in the year, it pointedly chose to absent itself from a Soviet-organized preparatory meeting of world communist parties in Budapest.<sup>26</sup>

The trial of the micro-faction thus came at what seemed to be a critical juncture for Cuba in its relationship with the Soviet Union. In March 1968, Castro focused his revolutionary fervor on Cuba itself, and asserted that the masses had become complacent, believing "that we were defended." But "the only truly revolutionary attitude," he exhorted, "was always to depend on ourselves." He then announced that he was eliminating the private ownership of small businesses: "we did not make a Revolution here to establish the right to trade."<sup>27</sup>

Was this a prelude to a fundamental break with the Soviet Union? In fact, by May 1968 Cuba had actually begun a rapprochement with the Soviet Union, which was evident in a softer tone in Castro's speeches about international affairs. Then in August, Cuba refused to condemn the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. While communist parties in many countries roundly criticized the Soviet Union, Castro excoriated the Czech Communist Party for moving its country "toward a counterrevolutionary situation, toward capitalism and into the arms of imperialism."<sup>28</sup> Though it came several days after the invasion, and carefully avoided endorsing the invasion, Castro's speech was viewed in Moscow as a welcome contrast to the widespread reproach the Soviet Union was receiving. In 1969, Soviet trade with Cuba began to increase dramatically, and within four years Cuba became a member of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), the Soviet-domi-

nated trading bloc of socialist countries.

The January 1968 speech, then, appears to have given the Cuban leadership the freedom to choose a closer relationship with the Soviet Union. By asserting Cuban independence, Castro could accept the kind of ties that would have appeared to make Cuba less independent.

It is impossible to know whether this sort of calculation prompted his speech. In January 1968, the Cuban leadership may not have had a clear sense of where they were taking their country. The internal debate during the following two or three months—which undoubtedly engendered the March closure of small businesses—proved to be critical for the future direction of the Cuban revolution.

With hindsight, it seems that Cuba had few options left. It had experienced a major rift with China by 1966. The October 1967 death of Guevara in Bolivia convinced several Cuban leaders that armed struggle was not going to be a viable means of building revolutionary alliances in Latin America. While the Soviet Union continued to trade with Cuba despite its fierce independence, Kossygin's visit may have been a warning to Castro that the Soviet Union would not give Cuba any more rope with which to wander away from the fold. Indeed, Soviet technicians were recalled during the spring of 1968.<sup>29</sup>

These factors thus impelled Cuba toward a rapprochement with the Soviet Union, and the decision to do so coincided with the micro-faction trial and Castro's speech. In choosing to join the fold, Cuba would try to do it on its own terms, determined to protect its sovereignty and to be the principal guardian of its national interest. That determination clearly grew out of its experiences during the Missile Crisis and in the prior five years of tense relations with the Soviet Union. It is in understanding these terms with which Cuba established its ties to the Soviet Union that the January 1968 speech makes an important contribution to the history of the Cold War.

1. The full text of the Missile Crisis portion of the speech will be published in James G. Blight and Philip Brenner, *The October Crisis: Fidel Castro, Nuclear Missiles, and Cuban-Soviet Relations* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, forthcoming).

2. At the time, Castro was First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba and Commander-in-Chief of the Cuban Armed Forces. He was referred to as Commander Castro. Today he is also President of

Cuba.

3. Much of the information has been derived from two major conferences—held in Moscow in 1989 and in Havana in 1992—which brought together former policymakers and scholars from the United States, Soviet Union and Cuba, and included President Castro, as well as from documents declassified through the efforts of the National Security Archive. See James G. Blight and David A. Welch, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reexamine the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2d ed. (New York: Noonday Press of Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1990). James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink* (New York: Pantheon, 1993); *Back to the Brink: Proceedings of the Moscow Conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis, January 27-28, 1989*, eds., Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight and David A. Welch, CSIA Occasional Paper No. 9 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992); Philip Brenner, "Thirteen Days: Cuba's Perspective on the Missile Crisis," in James A. Nathan, ed., *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992); Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (New York: The New Press, 1992).

4. This formulation was the same he provided in an interview five months after the crisis. See Claude Julien, "Sept Heures avec M. Fidel Castro," *Le Monde*, 22 and 23 March 1963.

5. Indeed, the Soviets similarly assessed the suspension. See Blight and Welch, *On the Brink* (2d ed.), 238.

6. On pre-crisis U.S. military planning and covert actions against Cuba, see James G. Hershberg, "Before 'The Missiles of October': Did Kennedy Plan a Military Strike Against Cuba?" in Nathan, ed., *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited*, 237-80. Notably, former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara observed in 1989 that were he a Cuban leader in 1962, he would likely have assessed that U.S. actions portended an invasion. See Allyn, Blight, and Welch, *Back to the Brink*, 7. McNamara argued, though, that despite Cuba's reasonable conclusion, the United States never intended a military invasion.

7. Operation Mongoose was devised as a total plan for low intensity conflict. It also included propaganda operations through an off-shore radio station and economic pressure that was implemented through the formal establishment of the U.S. embargo in February 1962. Gen. Edward Lansdale, the operational chief of the project, had proposed a very detailed plan of action that foresaw U.S. pressure leading to a general uprising that would ultimately require a direct U.S. military invasion. See Chang and Kornbluh, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962*, Documents 5 and 7.

8. Fabian Escalante Font, *Cuba: la guerra secreta de la CIA* (Havana: Editorial Capitán San Luis, 1993).

9. Castro made a similar case in 1992. See Blight, Allyn and Welch, *Cuba on the Brink*, 205-210. Notably, President Kennedy understood the matter of secrecy in the same light, asserting that whoever revealed the missiles first would be able to set the terms of debate. See Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 382. Also see McGeorge Bundy and Theodore Sorensen's comments in Allyn, Blight and Welch, *Back to the Brink*, 20-21.

10. The Castro-Khrushchev correspondence was reprinted in *Problems of Communism*, Special Edition, Spring 1992, 37-45, and in Blight, Allyn, and Welch, *Cuba on the Brink*, 474-491.

11. *Revolucion*, 29 October 1962.

12. Jorge I. Domínguez, *To Make the World Safe for*

*Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 108; Cole Blasier, *The Giant's Rival: The USSR and Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983), 126.

13. See record of Mikoyan-Castro conversation, 5 November 1962, Russian Foreign Ministry archives.

14. The correspondence between Kennedy and Khrushchev over the removal of the IL-28s is reprinted in *Problems of Communism*, Special Edition, Spring 1992, 77-96. Also in this issue see: Philip Brenner, "Kennedy and Khrushchev on Cuba: Two Stages, Three Parties."

15. For an English translation of the November 12 minutes, and of Mikoyan's ciphered telegram to Moscow summarizing it, see Gen. Anatoli I. Gribkov and Gen. William Y. Smith, *Operation ANADYR: U.S. and Soviet Generals Recount the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chicago: Edition Q, 1994), 189-99.

16. Blight, Allyn, and Welch, *Cuba on the Brink*, 224-225.

17. *Granma*, International Edition (English), 4 and 11 February 1968.

18. Lourdes Casal, "Cultural Policy and Writers in Cuba," in Philip Brenner, William M. LeoGrande, Donna Rich, and Daniel Siegel, eds., *The Cuba Reader: The Making of a Revolutionary Society*, (New York: Grove Press, 1989), 508-509.

19. *Granma*, International Edition (English), 7 January 1968, 2-3.

20. Yuri Pavlov, *Soviet-Cuban Alliance: 1959-1991* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 88.

21. D. Bruce Jackson, *Castro, the Kremlin and Communism in Latin America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 28-29; Jacques Lévesque, *The USSR and the Cuban Revolution: Soviet Ideological and Strategic Perspectives, 1959-77*, trans. Deanna Drendel Leboeuf (New York: Praeger, 1978), 102-104.

22. Lévesque, *The USSR and the Cuban Revolution*, 119-121.

23. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, "The Tricontinental Conference of African, Asian and Latin American Peoples," A Staff Study, 89th Cong., 2nd Sess., 7 June 1966, p. 93.

24. For exemplary speeches, see Martin Kenner and James Petras, eds. *Fidel Castro Speaks* (New York: Grove Press, 1969), 171-213. On Guevara's problems with the Bolivian Communist Party, see *El Diario del Ché en Bolivia* (Havana: Editora Política, 1987), esp. the introduction by Fidel Castro, xvii-xviii, and 47, 51, 53, 337.

25. John Gerassi, ed., *Venceremos! The Speeches and Writings of Ernesto Che Guevara* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 420.

26. Lévesque, *The USSR and the Cuban Revolution*, 130-131.

27. Kenner and Petras, eds., *Fidel Castro Speaks*, 233, 277.

28. *Granma* International Edition (English), 25 August 1968.

29. Domínguez, *To Make the World Safe for Revolution*, 75.

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**The October Crisis:**

**Excerpts of a Speech by Fidel Castro**  
**[Translated from Spanish by the Cuban**  
**Council of State]**

**MEETING OF THE**  
**CENTRAL COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CUBA**  
**PALACE OF THE REVOLUTION**  
**HAVANA**  
**JANUARY 26, 1968**  
**YEAR OF THE HEROIC GUERRILLA**

MORNING SESSION

COMMANDER FIDEL CASTRO: In the early hours of [this] morning we stopped while on the topic of the reply sent to the Soviet Government in response to their letter attempting to find justifications in alleged alarms, and purporting insinuations of a nuclear strike in the sense that we had advised the USSR to attack the United States.<sup>1</sup>

These issues were made perfectly clear in that letter. Later there was another long letter containing the same points of view, and though couched in more diplomatic terms, so to speak, answering each of the items in Khrushchev's letter one by one.<sup>2</sup>

At that time, we also received Mikoyan's visit. Mikoyan's visit was also taken down....No, Mikoyan's visit was not taken down in shorthand; there were notes on Mikoyan's visit. U Thant's visit was the one that was taken down in shorthand. It is a real pity that the discussions with Mikoyan were not taken down in shorthand, because they were bitter; some of the incidents in the meeting were anecdotal.

Initially, after we explained to him our standpoints, we had him clarify what was going to happen with the IL-28 planes, and he vouched that no, the IL-28s would not leave Cuba. Then, if I remember correctly, I asked him, "But what if they demand their withdrawal, what will you do?" He answered, "then to hell with the imperialists, to hell with the imperialists!"

Then some 24, or at most 48 hours later, he arrived at the meeting—those famous meetings at the Palace of the Revolution—Mikoyan arrived bearing the sad news that the IL-28 planes would also have to be returned.<sup>3</sup>

That was really unpleasant, but the situation was such that, with the missiles withdrawn, we were on the verge of another problem over the planes. It would have made sense to have had it out over the missiles, but not over the IL-28 planes—they were useful planes: it is possible that had we possessed IL-28s, the Central American bases might not have been organized, not because we would have bombed the bases, but of their fear that we might. What we were most concerned about then was avoiding a new impact on public opinion as regards a new blow, a new

concession.

We recall perfectly well how we assumed the always unpleasant initiative of making a statement—at my suggestion—that would create the right atmosphere, trying to justify the action by saying that the planes were obsolete, etc. All of which was done in consideration for public opinion, to protect the people from the trauma of another blow of that nature, since we were seriously concerned—and, in our view, rightly so given those circumstances—over the pernicious effects of a chain of such blows on the confidence and the consciousness of the people. And, I repeat, given that under the circumstances we were profoundly incensed, we saw that action as a mistake, in our opinion there had been a series of mistakes, but the extent of our overall confidence, and that deposited in the Soviet Union and its policies, was still considerable.

So the planes went too. Together with the planes—and that is something that they had requested, the issue of the missiles—they requested the withdrawal of the Soviet mechanized infantry brigades stationed in Cuba. Let me add here, in case anyone is unaware of it, that at the time of the missile issue, there were over 40,000 Soviet troops stationed in Cuba. The imperialists must also have known that, but they never declared the amount, they limited themselves to speculative figures, which revealed their interest in reducing the amount, perhaps due to possible effects on public opinion.

In fact, anyone who reads Kennedy's statements, his demands, will notice that he did not include those divisions, which were not offensive or strategic weapons, or anything of the sort. We must note that the withdrawal of the mechanized brigades was a freely granted concession to top off the concession of the withdrawal of the strategic missiles.

We argued heatedly, firmly, were against this. He said that it would not be carried out immediately but gradually, and we reiterated that we were against it and insisted on our opposition. I am explaining all this for the sake of subsequent issues, so that you can understand how all this fits into the history of our relations with the Soviet Union. We flatly rejected the inspection issue. That was something we would never agree to. We told him what we thought about that gross, insolent arbitrary measure, contrary to all principles, of taking upon themselves the faculty of deciding on matters under our jurisdiction. And when it was remarked that the agreement would fall flat—an agreement that we were completely at odds with—we said that we could not care less and that there would simply be no inspection.

That gave rise to endless arguing and counter-arguing, and they actually found themselves in a very difficult situation. I think that at this point Raul made a joke that caused quite a commotion in the atmosphere of that meeting. I think it was when we were discussing expedients. Do you

remember exactly? Was it the Red Cross thing?

CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ: He went to the extreme of proposing that the international vessel be brought to Mariel, saying that because it was an international vessel it would no longer be Cuban territory, and the UN supervisors could be on board the vessel and could supervise the operation. It was then that Raul woke up and said, "Look, why don't you dress them up in sailor suits?" (LAUGHTER), referring to the international supervisors.

COMMANDER RAUL CASTRO: These people think that I said that because I had been dozing; I actually woke up at that point and came out with that, have them bring those people on their vessel, dressed up as Soviet sailors, but leaving us out of the whole mess. It is true that I was falling asleep, but I was not that far gone.

COMMANDER FIDEL CASTRO: That was it.

COMMANDER FIDEL CASTRO: We had problems with the translators and there were occasions when some of the things we said were badly translated and there was even one point when poor Mikoyan got furious. It was over some phrase or other.

Anyway, those deliberations—as well as some of the others—were characterized by total and complete disagreement. Needless to say, we have the highest opinion of Mikoyan as an individual, as a person, and he was always favorably inclined toward Cuba, he was Cuba's friend, and I think he still is a friend of Cuba; I mean, he did quite a bit for us. That is why he always received from us a certain deferential treatment.

It was during those days that it gradually became evident that we were totally correct—as was, unfortunately, so often the case throughout that whole process—about the imperialists' attitude vis-a-vis the concessions. This could be seen as low-flying aircraft increased their constant and unnecessary daily flights over our bases, military facilities, airports, anti-aircraft batteries, more and more frequently; they harbored the hope, after the October [Cuban Missile] Crisis, of demoralizing the Revolution and they fell on us, hammer and tongs, with all their arsenal of propaganda and with everything that might demoralize our people and our army.

We had agreed not to shoot; we agreed to revoke the order to fire on the planes while the talks were under way; but made it clear that we did not consider those talks conclusive at all. I believe we were totally right on that; had we acted differently, we would still have their aircraft flying low over us and—as we would sometimes say—we would not even be able to play baseball here.

The demoralizing effect began to manifest itself in the fact that the anti-aircraft gunners and the crews at the air bases had begun to draw caricatures reflecting their mood and their situa-

tion, in which they depicted the planes flying above them, the Yanquis sticking their tongues out at them, and their planes and guns covered with cobwebs. And we realized once again to what extent the men who were supposed to be very experienced in struggling against the imperialists were actually totally oblivious to imperialist mentality, revolutionary mentality, our people's mentality, and the ultra-demoralizing effects of such a passive—more than passive, cowardly—attitude.

So we warned Mikoyan that we were going to open fire on the low-flying planes. We even did him that favor, since they still had the ground-to-air missiles and we were interested in preserving them. We visited some emplacements and asked that they be moved given that they were not going to shoot and we did not want them destroyed, because we were planning to open fire on the planes.

We recall those days because of the bitter decisions that had to be made.

1. [Ed. note: Castro is here alluding to his exchange of correspondence with Khrushchev of 26-31 October 1962 (esp. Castro's letters of October 26 and 31 and Khrushchev's letter of October 30), first released by the Cuban government and published in the Cuban Communist Party newspaper *Granma* on 23 November 1990, and published as an appendix to 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, 474-91.)

2. [Ed. note: It is not clear what lengthy letter Castro is referring to here, or whether it has been made available to researchers: a lengthy letter reviewing the crisis and its impact on Soviet-Cuban relations, dated 31 January 1963, from Khrushchev to Castro was released at the 1992 Havana conference.]

3. Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan arrived in Havana on 2 November 1962. The first meeting with the Cuban leader was on November 3. By the account here, Mikoyan notified the Cubans on about November 5 or 6 that the IL-28s would be removed. Declassified contemporary documents, however, including Kennedy-Khrushchev correspondence and Castro-Mikoyan conversation minutes, suggest that Mikoyan informed Castro about Moscow's acquiescence to Kennedy's demand to remove the IL-28s only on November 12.

4. It is not clear to what Castro is referring. Central American bases were used for training Cuban exiles in 1960 and 1961, and for launching the Bay of Pigs invasion. There is evidence that plans also were made for creating a Nicaraguan and Costa Rican base, but there is not clear evidence on whether they were used. See Fabian Escalante Font, *Cuba: la guerra secreta de la CIA* (Havana: Editorial Capitán San Luis, 1993), 180; Warren Hinckle and William Turner, *Deadly Secrets* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992), 165-166.

5. In fact, U.S. estimates were never more than half of that number. See Dino A. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball: The Inside Story of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Random House, 1991), 308. Also see "'Soviet Military Buildup in Cuba,' 21 October, 1962," in Mary S. McAuliffe, ed., *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962* (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1992; HRP 92-9), 258.

6. In 1968, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez had ministerial rank and was involved in foreign commerce. He had been an official of the Cuban communist party (which was called the Popular Socialist Party) before the 1959 revolution, and had served in the government of Fulgencio Batista (as part of a popular front) in 1944, and headed the Institute for Agrarian Reform from 1962-64. In the 1970s he became a Vice President of Cuba and a member of the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party.

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### CASTRO AND GLASNOST

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After discussing all the logistical and organizational problems related to the project, the Cuban leader began to recall those troubled days of October 1962 when the fate of the humanity was played out in the game between Moscow, Washington, and Havana. And even though Castro repeatedly spoke on this topic later, that conversation contained a series of statements and judgments that shed some light on the development and outcome of the 1962 crisis, and on Fidel Castro's perspective on it:

#### "I Know Something About The Caribbean Crisis"

(Notes from a conversation with Fidel Castro, 5 November 1987)

#### Some Details and Specifics of the Crisis Situation.

In October [1962] the American planes began low flights above the Soviet launching sites for the nuclear intermediate range missiles and the anti-aircraft launchers. At that time the anti-aircraft missiles had the range of more than 1,000 meters. Paired ground-to-air launchers were used for protection of those anti-aircraft launchers, but they could not provide effective protection. We gave an order to add hundreds of additional anti-aircraft launchers to protect those launchers. Additional launchers were in the Cuban hands. That way we wanted to protect the Soviet nuclear and anti-aircraft missiles that were deployed in Cuba. Low overflights by the American planes represented a real threat of an unexpected attack on those objects. At my meeting with the Commander-in-chief of the Soviet forces in Cuba [Gen. I. A. Pliyev] I raised the question of the serious danger that the American overflights represented. That meeting occurred on the 25th or the 26th. I told him that the Cuban side could not allow the American planes to fly at such low altitudes over the Cuban territory any more. I even sent a letter [dated October 26] to Khrushchev about that. In that letter I told the Soviet leader about my concern with the situation that had developed. I said that we should not allow the Americans to deliver a first strike at the Soviet objects in the Cuban territory, we should not allow the repetition of the events that led to the World War II. At that time the crisis situation already existed.

On the day when the American planes appeared again, we gave orders to all Cuban anti-aircraft batteries to fire. The planes were driven off by the defensive fire. However, not a single plane had been shot down. Later on the same day

[October 27] a spying plane, U-2, appeared in the air above the island. We don't know any details, but it happened so that the plane was shot down by a Soviet anti-aircraft missile over the eastern part of the country.

I don't know in what manner they reported that to Khrushchev and to the General Staff of the Soviet armed forces, however, I doubt that the order to shoot down the plane was given by the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet troops in Cuba [Pliyev]; that decision was most probably made by the commander of the anti-aircraft missiles, or even by a commander of one of the batteries. Khrushchev, however, accused us of shooting down that plane in his letter.

To be sincere, it was possible that we were to blame since we opened fire at the American planes first, because we were so decisively against the American overflights. But the biggest mistake probably was that you, having installed those missiles, still allowed the Americans to fly over the launching sites. Those overflights were nothing else but preparation for a sudden American invasion of Cuba. I cannot blame the Soviet comrade who shot the U-2 for what he did because I understand his psychological condition very well. He saw that the Cubans opened fire at the American planes, and he decided to fire a missile at the U-2. I heard that many years later he was decorated for that act.

It is interesting that the former Soviet Ambassador in Cuba, [Aleksandr] Alekseev, wrote in his memoirs that I was trying to avoid the collision. For the sake of historical objectivity I must say that that was not so. In my letter to Khrushchev after we had deployed the anti-aircraft batteries and mobilized our people to repel the aggression I expressed my hope that we would be able to preserve peace. I wanted to show Khrushchev that I was not in an aggressive mood. At the same time I wanted to inform him about my concern with the possibility of an American first strike, not even excluding a possibility of a nuclear strike against Cuba.

At the same time I suggested to the Soviet Commander-in-Chief in Cuba [Pliyev] to disperse the nuclear warheads, so that they would not have been completely destroyed in case of an American attack. And he agreed with me.

One more question concerned the public statements made by the Soviet leadership and the coverage of the events in the organs of mass media. I sent two emissaries to Moscow [on 27 August-2 September 1962—ed.]—I think they were Che Gevara and [Emilio] Aragones—who had to propose that Khrushchev make public the military agreement between the USSR and Cuba. Publicly the Soviet leaders claimed that there were no offensive weapons in Cuba. I insisted that we should not allow the Americans to speculate with the public opinion, that we should make the agreement public. However, Khrushchev declined.

The American leaders, Kennedy in particular, reacted to the Soviet statements very negatively. They thought they were deceived.

We, however, never denied the presence of the Soviet missiles in Cuba. In all their public statements Cuban representatives stated that the question of presence of weapons in Cuba was a sovereign business of the Cuban people, that we had the right to use any kind of weapons for the defense of the revolution. We believed that those statements of the Soviet leaders did harm to the prestige of the Soviet Union in the eyes of the general public, since at the same time you allowed U-2 flights over the Cuban territory that took pictures of the missiles stationed there.

At that time the question of the withdrawal of the Soviet missiles had not been raised yet. However, the aggravation of the situation forced Khrushchev to make that decision. We, on our part, thought that Khrushchev had rushed, having made that decision without any consultation with us. We believe that the inclusion of the Cuban side in the negotiations would have made it possible to get bigger concessions from the Americans, possibly including the issue of the American base in Guantanamo. Such rush resulted in the fact that we found out about the Soviet-American agreement from the radio. Moreover, the first statement said that American missiles would be withdrawn only from Turkey; in the second the mentioning of Turkey was dropped.

When I visited the Soviet Union in 1963, Khrushchev read several letters to me. The American letters were signed by Thompson, but the real author was Robert Kennedy. In Khrushchev's response he spoke about the missiles in Turkey and Italy. There were certain threats in Kennedy's letter. In particular, he wrote that if the Russians did not accept their proposals, something would have happened. In response to that Khrushchev stated that something would have happened indeed if the Americans undertook any actions against Cuba in disregard of the agreement, and that that something would have been incredible in its scale. That meant that if the Americans had dared to violate the agreement, a war would have begun.

Probably Khrushchev did not anticipate that the interpreter who read the originals would have mentioned Italy, but the original letter mentioned the withdrawal of missiles from Turkey and Italy. Later I asked the Soviet side to give explanations of that issue, but they told me that the agreement mentioned only Turkey.

We couldn't help being disappointed by the fact that even though the Soviet part of the agreement talked only about the missiles in Cuba and did not mention other types of weapons, particularly IL-28 planes, subsequently they had been withdrawn on the American demand. When Mikoyan came to Cuba, he confirmed to us that the agreement only provided for the withdrawal of the Soviet missiles. I asked him what would

happen if the Americans demanded a withdrawal of the planes and the Soviet troops. He told me then: "To hell with Americans!"

However, in 24 hours the Soviet planes and the majority of the troops were withdrawn from Cuba. We asked why that had been done. The troops had been withdrawn without any compensation from the American side! If the Soviet Union was willing to give us assistance in our defense, why did they agree to withdraw the troops, we were asking. At that time there were six regiments with 42,000 military personnel in Cuba. Khrushchev had withdrawn the troops from Cuba even though it was not required by the Soviet-American agreement. We disagreed with such a decision. In the end, as a concession to us the decision was made to keep one brigade in Cuba. The Americans knew about that brigade from the very beginning, but they did not discuss it.

Many years later, in 1979, before the Non-aligned Conference [in Havana in September 1979] American Senator [Frank] Church announced that a Soviet brigade was deployed in Cuba. Then our Soviet comrades suggested that we rename it into a training center. We were against it. However, before we had a chance to send our response, a [Soviet] statement had been made that denied the American Senator's claim and said that there was a Soviet military training center in Cuba.

At the time of the crisis President Kennedy was under a great pressure, but he defended the official Soviet position. However, when he was shown the photos of the Soviet missiles in Cuba, he had to agree that the Soviets lied to him.

On the question of nuclear warheads in Cuba I can tell you that one day during the crisis I was invited to a meeting at the quarters of the Soviet Commander-in-Chief in Cuba at which all the commanders of different units reported on their readiness. Among them was the commander of the missile forces, who reported that the missiles had been in full combat readiness.

Soon after the Reagan administration came to power an American emissary, Vernon Walters, came to Cuba. We talked extensively about all aspects of our relations, and in particular, he raised the question of the October crisis. Trying to show how informed he was, he said that, according to his sources, nuclear warheads had not yet reached Cuba by the time of the crisis. I don't know why he said that, but according to the Soviet military, the nuclear missiles were ready for a fight.

I don't know what Khrushchev was striving for, but it seems to me that his assurances about the defense of Cuba being his main goal notwithstanding, Khrushchev was setting strategic goals for himself. I asked Soviet comrades about that many times, but nobody could give me an answer. Personally, I believe that along with his love for Cuba Khrushchev wanted to fix the strategic

parity in the cheapest way. When the Soviet comrades proposed to us to deploy the nuclear missiles in Cuba I did not like the idea, but not because of the military risk; because from the political point of view we would have been seen as a Soviet military base in Latin America. We were ready to accept the risk of an American military invasion of Cuba in order to avoid the political harm to the prestige of the Cuban revolution. But at the same time we understood that the Soviet Union needed that measure to ensure their own security. We knew that we had suffered a big political damage at the very time when we were dreaming about a revolution in all Latin America, but we were ready to make sacrifices for the Soviet Union.

I cannot take the credit for the resolution of the crisis. More likely, I believe, the major role belongs to Khrushchev who caused that crisis by his stubbornness, and then resolved it. I did not know what was the real correlation of forces at that time, how many missiles did Khrushchev have. Khrushchev told me that after the missiles would have been deployed in Cuba, Kennedy would have to swallow it, and that later the Soviet leader was going to introduce the Fleet in the Baltic Sea (probably a mistake in the notes—should say “introduce the Baltic Sea Fleet”). I thought that Khrushchev’s actions were too risky. I believe that it was possible to achieve the same goals without deploying the missiles in Cuba. To defend Cuba it would have been sufficient to send six regiments of Soviet troops there, because the Americans would have never dared to open military activities against the Soviet troops.

Now I understand that the actions undertaken by Khrushchev were risky, if not to say irresponsible. Khrushchev should have carried out a policy like the one Gorbachev is carrying out now. However, we understand that at that time the Soviet Union did not reach the parity which it has now. I am not criticizing Khrushchev for pursuing strategic goals, but the choice of the timing and the means for achieving the goals was not good.

When I [Shakhnazarov] said that Americans had to and did abide by the agreement reached during the Caribbean crisis throughout the whole period after the crisis, Castro responded: yes, indeed, it was so. That is why I don’t think I have a right to criticize Khrushchev. He had his own considerations. And it really doesn’t make much sense to replay the history guessing what could have happened if...

Fidel Castro supported the idea of publishing memoirs of the participants of those events and added that he would be willing to take part in the discussions of the subject himself. “I know something about the Cuban crisis,” he said with a smile.

1. The organization and results of the 1987 Cambridge conference are described in James G. Blight and David A. Welch, *On the Brink: Americans and Soviets Reex-*

*amine the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989; Noonday Press of Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1990).

2. On the 1989 Moscow conference, see Blight and Welch, *On the Brink* (1990 ed.).

3. On the 1992 Havana conference, 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).

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## MIKOYAN’S TALKS

*continued from page 59*

The documents lend credence to the reminiscences of the historic participants—Nikita Khrushchev, Fidel Castro, former Soviet Ambassador in Cuba Aleksandr Alekseev.<sup>5</sup> They reveal that the fraternity between Cuba and the USSR was badly fractured. While the Kremlin leadership, faced with a severe danger, preferred geostrategic pragmatism to ideological commitments, the Cuban revolutionaries sprung up in fierce defense of their national sovereignty and revolutionary “legitimacy.” From the Soviet perspective, that of a superpower, the most important fact was that Castro had, in his letter to Khrushchev of October 26, advocated a preemptive nuclear strike against the United States if it invaded Cuba.<sup>6</sup> This notion, considered dangerous and irresponsible in Moscow, became an excuse completely to exclude Cuba from the U.S.-Soviet secret talks to resolve the crisis. Some of the Soviet leaders, gathered at the height of the crisis on 27 October 1962 at Novo-Ogarevo governmental dacha near Moscow, may even have feared that the Cubans, like Ulbricht, could push them all over the brink.<sup>7</sup> John J. McCloy, a representative of the Kennedy Administration, told Mikoyan, in New York on November 1, that “he was reassured by the presence of Russian officers [in Cuba during the crisis]. The Cubans could open fire without thinking ... But the Russians would think first.”<sup>8</sup> Khrushchev himself was forced to explain to Kennedy that the Cuban leaders were “young, expansive people—in a word, Spaniards.”<sup>9</sup>

Mikoyan’s trip was triggered by Alekseev’s cables from Havana. The Soviet ambassador alerted the Soviet leadership that Moscow’s actions had endangered Soviet-Cuban friendship. Khrushchev was particularly upset to learn that a rapprochement

was in progress between Cuba and the People’s Republic of China.<sup>10</sup> The continuing pressure of the United States for more Soviet concessions indeed corroborated this impression.

Mikoyan was Khrushchev’s closest friend and most loyal ally. As had his predecessor—Stalin dispatched Mikoyan on a delicate mission to Mao in January 1949—Khrushchev frequently used Mikoyan as a troubleshooter and personal diplomatic emissary: to Hungary (October 1956), to West Germany (March 1958), to the United States (January 1959), and to talk to the anti-Khrushchev demonstrators during the Novocherkassk riots in south Russia (June 1962). Important from the Cuban viewpoint, Mikoyan had been the last in the Soviet leadership who belonged to the “old guard” of the Bolshevik revolutionaries. He had known all great revolutionaries of the century, from Lenin to Mao Zedong. And he was the first to embrace the Cuban revolution after his trip to Cuba in February 1960, at a time when the Kremlin still felt ambiguous about the Cuban revolution and its young, non-Marxist leaders. Castro, for all his anger, let Mikoyan know on November 3 that he remembered his role. Khrushchev sometimes said, Castro joked, that “there is a Cuban in the CC CPSU. And that this Cuban is Mikoyan.”

What both sides felt and understood during the talks was no less important than their “formal” written content. For the third time, since the Stalin-Tito split (1948) and the Sino-Soviet quarrel (since October 1959), there was an open conflict of perspectives and interests between the USSR and another communist regime. And both sides were fully aware of this. Fidel Castro said (as quoted to Mikoyan by Ernesto “Che” Guevara): “The United States wanted to destroy us physically, but the Soviet Union has destroyed us de jure [*iuridicheskii*; juridically, legally] with Khrushchev’s letter”<sup>11</sup> it is not clear whether this comment referred to Khrushchev’s letter of October 27, with its offer to swap Soviet missiles in Cuba for U.S. missiles in Turkey, or his letter to Kennedy of October 28, agreeing without consulting Castro beforehand to withdraw the Soviet missiles from Cuba under UN inspection. But in any case, both actions enraged and offended Castro, who reminded Mikoyan, on November 4, that after the Spanish-American war (1898), when

the United States “liberated” Cuba from colonial rule, Washington also did not invite Cubans to a peace conference and Congress passed the Platt Amendment (1901), which denied Cuba an independent foreign policy.<sup>12</sup>

On November 3, in a one-to-one meeting with Fidel (Alekseev interpreted), Mikoyan absorbed Castro’s first angry assault and lived up to his thankless mission. When he left Moscow, Ashken Tumanian, his wife of forty years, was dying in the Kremlin hospital. He learned about her death during the first, tensest conversation with Castro.<sup>13</sup>

Only on the second day of talks, November 4, did Mikoyan fully present the Soviet side’s arguments. He defended Khrushchev’s claim that the outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis was not a surrender to Washington’s demands, but a Soviet-Cuban “victory,” because a military attack against Cuba was prevented without slipping into a nuclear war. To win over the furious Castro, Moscow’s messenger was ready to stay in Cuba for an indefinite time. “If my arguments would seem insufficiently convincing for you,” he said, “tell me about it, I will think how to get my point across to you, I will try to bring new arguments.” Mikoyan’s lengthy arguments and explanations on November 4 and the afternoon of November 5 finally elicited an expression of gratitude from Castro and an emotional, if grudging, declaration of “unshakeable” respect for and “complete trust” in the Soviet Union.

But the Cuban leader and his comrades were soon infuriated anew when, only minutes later, Mikoyan tried to convince them to accept a United Nations inspection of the dismantling of the strategic missiles based in Cuba—or at least their loading onto Soviet ships in Cuban ports—arguing that such a process would strengthen the sympathetic position of UN Secretary-General U Thant and remove any pretext to continue the American blockade. Castro, acutely aware that Khrushchev had accepted the principle of a UN inspection without informing him, bought none of it. “A unilateral inspection,” he told Mikoyan, “would affect monstrously the moral spirit of our people.” Saying he spoke for the whole Cuban people, Castro firmly rejected any international inspection of Cuba—unless a comparable inspection took place in the United States—and told Mikoyan that if such a position endangered peace, Cuba could defend itself without the

Soviet Union’s help. “Come what may,” he concluded. “We have the right to defend our dignity.” Mikoyan could only plead plaintively that he didn’t “understand such a sharp reaction,” and failed to convince Castro or his colleagues to soften their adamant rejection of inspection then or in a second meeting that evening which Castro skipped, leaving others in the leadership, notably Ché, to denounce bitterly the Soviet stand.

Still another tense moment in the talks came on November 12 after Khrushchev, yielding to Kennedy’s pressure, made a new concession to the United States—agreeing to withdraw from Cuba Soviet-made IL-28 medium-range bombers in exchange for the lifting of the U.S. naval blockade of Cuba. Unlike the missiles, the bombers had been transferred into Cuban ownership, and Khrushchev took pains to “clear” this new deal with Castro before expressing his “great satisfaction” to Kennedy.<sup>14</sup> For Mikoyan, this second mission was no less difficult than the previous one. Castro interrupted the Soviet interlocutor with questions full of scorn and skepticism or just stopped listening altogether. At one point, after hearing Mikoyan’s lengthy defense of the IL-28 concession, he agitatedly cut off his visitor’s speech with the words: “Why are these arguments being cited? You should say outright what the Soviet government wants.”<sup>15</sup>

The sequence of Mikoyan’s arguments allows us to look into mentality of the Kremlin leaders. Beneath the veneer of ideological phraseology lay the hard core pragmatism of superpower statesmen who had tested the waters of globalism and reached its limits. Argument number one was that the survival of the Cuban regime in an area where the correlation of forces was so adverse constituted “a great success of Marxist-Leninist theory.”<sup>16</sup> Mikoyan stopped short of telling the Cubans that understanding between Kennedy and Khrushchev was the *sine qua non* for the survival of the Cuban revolution. But he admitted that the American proximity to Cuba and the U.S. Navy’s huge preponderance otherwise would have ensured Cuba’s subservient place within Washington’s sphere of influence. “Communications between us and Cuba are over-extended. We cannot use our Air Force and Navy in case of [a U.S.] blockade of Cuba.” [November 4] “If Cuba were located in place of Greece, we would have shown them.” [November 5] “You were born like

heroes, before a revolutionary situation in Latin America became ripe, and the camp of socialism has not yet grown to full capabilities to come to your rescue.” [November 5]

In spite of the U.S. geostrategic preponderance, Mikoyan said that Kennedy “took a step in our direction,” because his pledge of non-intervention against Cuba “is a concession on their part.”<sup>17</sup> Until this episode, the Kennedy Administration had argued that Cuba for the United States was analogous to Hungary for the USSR—part of its security zone.<sup>18</sup> Mikoyan’s words make one think that this comparison had also been important in Kremlin thinking: while the USSR crushed the Hungarian revolt in 1956, defending its zone, the United States had not *yet* managed to do the same to the Cuban revolution.

Mikoyan’s next argument revealed Moscow’s fervent desire to preserve its credentials as the center of the world revolutionary movement, particularly in the face of the challenge from Beijing. Mikoyan pressed the analogy between Khrushchev’s settlement of the Cuban Missile Crisis and Lenin’s defense of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918), “an infamous peace” between revolutionary Russia and Kaiser Germany aimed at saving the Bolshevik regime at all costs. In fact, the dialogue between Mikoyan and the Cuban leaders revealed two starkly different perspectives: between the Kremlin’s unwillingness to challenge frontally American hegemony in the Western hemisphere, and Havana’s determination to blow this hegemony to pieces through a revolutionary offensive.

Castro and particularly Ché Guevara linked the future of the Cuban revolution to the growth of the international revolutionary movement in Latin America. In a passionate outburst on November 5, with Fidel Castro absent, Ché told Mikoyan that Latin American communists and revolutionaries were “baffled by the actions of the Soviet Union.” The developments especially frustrated Ché, he explained, because, “We are deeply convinced in the possibility of seizing power in a number of Latin American countries, and practice shows that it is possible not only to seize, but to maintain power in a number of countries, given specific [Cuban] experience and the assistance of socialist countries, first of all the Soviet Union.” But, he lamented, the Soviet “bargaining” with the United States and its “open retreat” before American demands had led to de facto rec-

ognition of all Latin America as a U.S. sphere of influence, and discouraged nationalistic “petit bourgeoisie” from allying with radical forces against the omnipotent Gringos from *El Norte*. “It seems to me,” concluded Che, “... that one should expect a decline of the revolutionary movement in Latin America.” He also stressed that in the Soviet handling of the missile crisis had already produced “a crack” in the “unity of the socialist camp.” Both he and Mikoyan knew that this meant factional splits in many radical groupings in Latin America and a shift of some of them to the PRC’s wing.

In response, Mikoyan reminded the Cubans of Nikolai Bukharin, a young Bolshevik (“although he was repressed, I think he was a good person”) who in 1918 also preferred to promote world revolution even at a risk of sacrificing Soviet power in Russia. “We practically had no armed forces, but those comrades [like Bukharin] wanted to die heroically, reject Soviet power.” “Study Lenin,” he lectured the Cubans. “One cannot live in shame, but one should not allow the enemy to destroy oneself. There is an outcome in the art of diplomacy.” Kremlin apparatchiks would repeat this same litany of prudence time and again, when they had to deal with radical regimes in the Third World later in the 1960s and 1970s.

Mikoyan reminded the Cubans that since 1961, Soviet-Cuban economic relations were trade in name only: the Cubans were getting everything, including weapons, free of charge. “We do not pursue any commercial or national interests in Cuba,” he told Castro. “We are guided exclusively by the interests of internationalism.”<sup>19</sup> He pointed out to Castro that the Kremlin, aware of the American “plan to strangle Cuba economically,” had “without any requests from your side” decided “to supply to you armaments, and in part military equipment for free.” The Soviets had also covered the Cuban balance of payment (\$100 million) “in order to foil the Kennedy plan, designed to detonate Cuba from within.”<sup>20</sup> If the American blockade of Cuba continued, Mikoyan warned, “then the Soviet Union would not have enough strength to render assistance, and the Cuban government would fall.”<sup>21</sup>

Mikoyan and Khrushchev evidently expected that these pragmatic arguments would carry the day with the Cuban leadership, and that the danger of a pro-Beijing reorienta-

tion of Latin American revolutionary movement could be stemmed by generous Soviet assistance.

For historians of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the most interesting parts of the documents are where Mikoyan gave the Cubans his version of the recent dramatic events. Though this version was obviously tailored to Cuban sentiments and to Mikoyan’s specific tasks, there is considerable overlap, sometimes almost verbatim, between Mikoyan’s story and the story later told by Khrushchev in his memoirs.<sup>22</sup> So all the more intriguing and credible are details that are missing in the Khrushchev’s version. First, the documents hint at what possible countermeasures the Kremlin contemplated against the U.S. attack against Cuba. The conclusions must have been bleak, as he explained to Castro on November 4. “We could not retaliate by a blockade of an American base, for instance, in Turkey, since we do not have another outlet into the Mediterranean. We could not undertake similar steps in Norway, nor in England, nor in Japan. We do not have sufficient capabilities for a counter-blockade.”

Mikoyan and Khrushchev (in his letters to Castro before and after the visit) sang the same tune when they explained to the Cubans the reasons for Soviet secrecy and their misplaced hopes to camouflage the missiles. The most eyebrow-raising aspect of Mikoyan’s explanation deals with the question of what the Kremlin believed Kennedy knew and was about to do before the breakout of the crisis. Of course, the standard version of events in most accounts has it that Kennedy and his advisers did not obtain hard evidence of the missile deployment until a U.S. U-2 reconnaissance plane photographed sites in Cuba under construction on 14 October 1962—but Mikoyan told a different story. U.S. intelligence, said Mikoyan, “worked badly,” but “in mid-September [1962] the Americans seemed to receive information about the transfer of Soviet troops and strategic missiles to Cuba.” In Mikoyan’s version, presented on November 4, the initial source of this scoop was not the U-2 flights but West German intelligence [Bundesnachrichtendienst]. Only then, he said, “the American government sent planes to the air space of Cuba to carry out the aerial-photo-reconnaissance and establish the sites of missile deployment.” Kennedy, said Mikoyan, spoke nothing about Soviet troops

which made people in the Kremlin think “that he spoke not all that he knew.” “Until the end of [mid-term] Congressional elections,” on November 6, asserted the Soviet messenger, “Kennedy did not want to speak about the Soviet missiles in Cuba. He did not want to aggravate [U.S.-Soviet relations]. But two senators from the Republican party”—clearly alluding to Kenneth Keating of New York and Everett Dirksen of Illinois—“learned about the fact of deployment of strategic missiles in Cuba, therefore Kennedy hastened to take initiative in his hands...We did not have information with respect to how he was going to act.”

A book on the hidden intelligence aspects of the Cuban Missile Crisis is being co-authored now by American and Russian historians, and I hope they will comment on Mikoyan’s assertions.<sup>23</sup> It has become known that CIA Director John McCone had concluded by the late summer of 1962 that Soviets had decided to transport nuclear-capable missiles to Cuba, though most CIA analysts discounted the likelihood of this possibility.<sup>24</sup> Yet, the Kremlin almost certainly erred in conflating the suspicions of some U.S. intelligence officials with Kennedy’s awareness of the missiles. In this case, it seems, Khrushchev’s belief that the U.S. president knew about the Soviet installation of nuclear missiles in Cuba but for domestic tactical reasons preferred to wait until after the elections to deal with them stands out as one of the most remarkable example of wishful thinking in the entire history of the Cold War.

In another interesting sidelight, the transcripts of the Mikoyan-Cuban talks indicate that the issue of Berlin was not the main cause for the Soviet gamble in Cuba, but a sideshow. Berlin was also the most serious bargaining chip the Soviets had, but they hesitated to use it during the brinkmanship and bargaining in late October. Mikoyan mentioned only in passing to the Cubans on November 4 that “countermeasures were possible in Berlin,” adding that the Soviets used the Berlin asset in a disinformation campaign in September-October, to distract American attention from Cuba. In fact, one passage from that conversation suggests that this disinformation backfired, making the Kremlin believe that the Kennedy administration was interested to postpone not only the discussion on Berlin, but also secret talks on the Soviet strategic buildup in Cuba, until

after the Congressional elections. As Mikoyan related to the Cubans, "Through confidential channels Kennedy addressed a request to N.S. Khrushchev that he would not aggravate the situation until after the Congressional elections and would not set out [immediately] then to solve the Berlin issue. We responded that we were ready to wait until the end of the elections, but right afterwards would proceed to the solution of the Berlin question. When the Americans learned about the transportation of strategic weapons into Cuba, they themselves began to get loud about Berlin. Both sides were talking about the Berlin crisis, but simultaneously believed that the crux of their policy in the present moment was in Cuba."

Did Mikoyan's mission prevent a Soviet-Cuban split? There is no categorical answer to this question. Castro had accepted Soviet assistance, but not Soviet arguments. The Cuban leader and his comrades thought primarily of the revolutionary "legitimacy" of their regime in Latin America. After the Cuban missile crisis, the "honeymoon" in Soviet-Cuban relations ended and was transformed into a marriage of convenience. This had both immediate and long-term consequences. For instance, Mikoyan's trip had a direct impact on Khrushchev's ongoing correspondence with Kennedy. In his letter of November 22, the Chairman admonished the U.S. president to put himself into Castro's shoes, "to assess and understand correctly the situation, and if you like psychological state, of the leaders of Cuba... and this striving [for independence] must be respected."<sup>25</sup> In all probability, Khrushchev addressed these words not so much to Kennedy (who had not the slightest desire to heed them), but to Castro, who on November 3 received copies of all previous Khrushchev-Kennedy correspondence on the settlement of the crisis. From then on the Soviet leadership, in order to placate their "friends," had to forgive and overlook much in Castro's international behavior, and also had to carry the burden of this behavior. In immediate implication, because the Cubans rejected inspections in any form on their territory, Soviet military and naval personnel had to comply with humiliating procedures of aerial inspection imposed on them by the Americans, something for which they could not forgive Khrushchev even decades later. For the next three decades, the Soviet economy was burdened with a multi-billion Cuban aid

program, including food, equipment, consumer goods, and weapons. Castro, when his dreams of Latin American revolutions were shattered, sought to fulfill his "internationalist duty" in other lands, and found pretexts to restore the revolutionary dignity of Cuba, tarnished during the Cuban Missile Crisis, in Angola (1975) and Ethiopia (1977-78). Even then the Brezhnev leadership, who remembered Castro's outbursts in 1962, was reluctant to make full use of the Soviet leverage on the Cuban regime.

1. See Hope M. Harrison, "Ulbricht and the Concrete 'Rose': New Archival Evidence on the Dynamics of Soviet-East German Relations and the Berlin Crisis, 1958-1961," Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 1993), *passim*, quotation on 4.

2. For illustrations, see Weathersby's article in the current CWIHP *Bulletin* as well as her CWIHP Working Paper and article in CWIHP *Bulletin* 3 (Fall 1993), as well as her documentary essay, "The Soviet Role in the Early Phase in the Korean War: New Documentary Evidence," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 2:4 (Winter 1993), 425-58.

3. This factor has begun to impress even those scholars who had previously analyzed the origins of the Cuban Missile Crisis through the prism of the bipolar confrontation and the dynamics of the balance of strategic forces, and who firmly believed that "the factor of the Cuban revolution" was of no importance in Khrushchev's decision to deploy Soviet medium-range missiles in Cuba.

4. Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev: Krizisi i raketi*. *Vzgliad iznutri*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Novosti, 1994), 388-90.

5. "Memuari Nikiti Sergeevicha Khrushcheva: Karibskii Krizis," *Voprosii Istorii* 7 (1993), 89-110; Castro and Alekseev comments quoted 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, 1993), 88-99.

6. See Castro to Khrushchev, 26 October 1962, in *Granma* (Havana), 23 November 1990, English translation reprinted in Blight, Allyn, and Welch, *Cuba on the Brink*, 481-82.

7. Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev: Krizisi i raketi*, vol. 2, 355-357, 360-362, 364; Jerrold L. Schecter with Vyacheslav V. Luchkov, trans. and ed., *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1990), 170-183; "Memuari Nikiti Sergeevicha....," 108; Brezhnev, according to his aide, Andrei M. Alexandrov-Agentov, was "trembling" at the thought of a nuclear exchange, A.M. Alexandrov-Agentov, *Ot Kollontai do Gorbacheva* [From Kollontai to Gorbachev] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodniie otnosheniia, 1994), 174.

8. Quoted by Mikoyan in his meeting with Cuban leaders, 5 November 1962.

9. Khrushchev to Kennedy, 22 November 1962, published in *Problems of Communism* 42 (Spring 1992), 108.

10. See Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 378.

11. Castro was quoted to this effect by Ernesto "Che" Guevara during Mikoyan's meeting with Cuban leaders on 5 November 1962.

12. The U.S. Congress passed the Platt Amendment in March 1901, as an attachment to the Army Appropriations Bill. It authorized the U.S. President to occupy Cuba until a Cuban constitution would provide guarantees that no "foreign power" would be ever permitted to gain a foothold on Cuban soil. Castro referred to this particular clause of the Platt Amendment as a constraint on Cuban sovereignty. He referred to it at the conference in Havana in January 1992: "We were told: either you accept the Platt Amendment, or there is no independence. No country in the world would accept that kind of amendment in its constitution, because it gives the right to another country to intervene to establish peace..." *Cuba on the Brink*, 331, 341.

13. Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev*, 378-79.

14. The text of Khrushchev-Kennedy correspondence regarding this thorny issue on 6, 11, 12, and 13 November 1962 is in *Problems of Communism* 42 (Spring 1992), 77-92.

15. Transcript of conversation between A.I. Mikoyan and Fidel Castro, 12 November 1962, translation in Gen. Anatoli I. Gribkov and Gen. William Y. Smith, *Operation ANADYR: U.S. and Soviet Generals Recount the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chicago: Edition q, 1994), 191-99; see also ciphered telegram, A. Mikoyan to CC CPSU, 12 November 1962, in *ibid.*, 189-90.

16. Castro-Mikoyan talks, 4 November 1962.

17. Mikoyan-Castro talks, November 4 and 5.

18. See, e.g., the Rusk-Gromyko meeting of 18 October 1962 published elsewhere in this issue.

19. Castro-Mikoyan conversation, 12 November 1962.

20. Castro-Mikoyan conversation, 4 November 1962.

21. Castro-Mikoyan conversation, 12 November 1962.

22. For Khrushchev's recollections of the crisis, in English, see Strobe Talbott, trans. and ed., *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1970), 488-505; Strobe Talbott, trans. and ed., *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1974), 509-514; *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, 170-83.

23. Timothy Naftali from the University of Hawaii and Alexander Fursenko from the Russian Academy of Sciences are on a contract of Crown publishers to write this story. Fursenko has a first-time access to the materials from the Archive of the President of Russian Federation and the archives of the KGB [not Federal Counterintelligence Service or FSK] that are being declassified specifically for this project.

24. McCone's predictions are documented in Mary S. McAuliffe, ed., *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: CIA History Staff, 1992), esp. 51-52, 59-60, 67-68, 77-79, reproducing McCone cables of 7, 10, 13, and 16 September 1962; see also comments of Ray Cline, *Cuba on the Brink*, 125-26.

25. *Problems of Communism* 42 (Spring 1992), 108

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## Mikoyan's Mission to Havana: Cuban-Soviet Negotiations, November 1962

[Ed. note: To preserve the flavor of the Russian documents, the original grammar and punctuation have been retained in some cases where they conflict with normal English practice.]

### Document I:

#### "And suddenly — concessions..." — The First Castro-Mikoyan Conversation, 3 November 1962

#### NOTES OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN A.I. MIKOYAN and FIDEL CASTRO

This morning a two-hour conversation took place between comrade A.I. Mikoyan and Fidel Castro, where I [Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Aleksandr Alekseev] was also present.

3 November 1962

...

Unfortunately, A.I. Mikoyan said, some differences of opinion have arisen between the leadership of the Republic of Cuba and our leadership. Ambassador Alekseev has informed us about these differences, and about the speech by Fidel Castro on 1 November 1962, in which the latter explained to the Cuban people the position of the revolutionary government.

The CC CPSU, Mikoyan emphasized, had sent me to Cuba to discuss in the most frank way all the unclear questions with the Cuban comrades. Judging by the welcome at the airport, the Cuban leaders consider this a useful meeting. I came here to speak to you sincerely and openly. And now it seems to me that it would be useful if you, comrade Fidel Castro, tell me frankly what the questions are that worry you. Only by speaking frankly is it possible to assure complete confidence and mutual understanding. As we agreed before, after this conversation a meeting will be organized with the secretaries of the National CDR [Committees for the Defense of the Revolution] leadership in order to discuss all the issues in detail.

In response Fidel Castro said that the Cuban leadership was glad to see A.I. Mikoyan in Cuba once again, and to speak with him about questions that are important for both sides. We are aware, joked Fidel Castro, that N.S. Khrushchev once said: "there is a Cuban in the CC CPSU and this Cuban is A.I. Mikoyan." We can speak to you, Fidel Castro continued, very frankly. We profoundly trust the Soviet Union.

Regarding the questions that caused some differences, as we explained it to our people, I [Castro] would like to say the following.

These questions are motivated, first of all, by psychological factors. I would like to stress

that in those days when a serious danger arose, our whole people sensed a great responsibility for the fate of the motherland. Every nerve of the people was strained. There was a feeling that the people were united in their resolve to defend Cuba. Every Cuban was ready to repel the aggressors with arms in hand, and ready to devote their lives to the defense of their country. The whole country was united by a deep hatred of USA imperialism. In those days we did not even arrest anyone, because the unity of the people was so staggering. That unity was the result of considerable ideological work carried out by us in order to explain the importance of Soviet aid to Cuba, to explain the purity of the principles in the policy of the USSR.

We spoke with the people about the high patriotic objectives we were pursuing in obtaining arms to defend the country from aggression. We said that the strategic weapons were a guarantee of firmness for our defense. We did not classify the arms as defensive and offensive, insofar as everything depends on the objectives for which they are used... [Ellipsis in original.]

Speaking of psychological questions, we would like to underline that the Cuban people did understand us. They understood that we had received Soviet weapons, that Cuban defense capacities had increased immeasurably. Thus, when Kennedy attempted to frighten us, the Cuban people reacted very resolutely, very patriotically. It is hard to imagine the enthusiasm, the belief in victory with which the Cubans voluntarily enlisted themselves into the army. The people sensed enormous forces inside themselves. Aware of the real solidarity of the Soviet government and people, Cubans psychologically felt themselves to be strong. The Soviet Union's solidarity found its material embodiment, became the banner around which the forces and courage of our people closely united.

In observing Soviet strategic arms on their territory, the people of Cuba sensed an enormous responsibility to the countries of the socialist camp. They were conscious that these mighty weapons had to be preserved in the interests of the whole socialist camp. Therefore, regardless of the fact that USA planes were continuously violating our air space, we decided to weaken the anti-aircraft defense of Havana, but at the same time strengthen the defense of the missile locations. Our people proudly sensed their role as a defender of the socialist countries' interests. Anti-aircraft gunners and the soldiers protecting the missile locations were full of enthusiasm, and ready to defend these at the price of their own lives.

The tension of the situation was growing, and the psychological tension was growing also. The whole of Cuba was ready for

defense...[Ellipsis in original.]

And suddenly—concessions...[Ellipsis in original.]

Concessions on the part of the Soviet Union produced a sense of oppressiveness. Psychologically our people were not prepared for that. A feeling of deep disappointment, bitterness and pain has appeared, as if we were deprived of not only the missiles, but of the very symbol of solidarity. Reports of missile launchers being dismantled and returned to the USSR at first seemed to our people to be an insolent lie. You know, the Cuban people were not aware of the agreement, were not aware that the missiles still belonged to the Soviet side. The Cuban people did not conceive of the juridical status of these weapons. They had become accustomed to the fact that the Soviet Union gave us weapons and that they became our property.

And suddenly came the report of the American [news] agency UPI that "the Soviet premier has given orders to Soviet personnel to dismantle missile launchers and return them to the USSR." Our people could not believe that report. It caused deep confusion. People didn't understand the way that the issue was structured—the possibility of removing missile armaments from Cuba if the USA liquidated its bases in Turkey.

I was saying, Fidel Castro continued, that in the post-revolutionary years we have carried out much ideological work to prepare people for understanding socialist ideas, marxist ideas. These ideas today are deeply rooted. Our people admire the policies of the Soviet government, learn from the Soviet people to whom they are deeply thankful for invaluable help and support. But at that difficult moment our people felt as if they had lost their way. Reports on 28 October that N.S. Khrushchev had given orders to dismantle missile launchers, that such instructions had been given to Soviet officers and there was not a word in the message about the consent of the Cuban government, that report shocked people.

Cubans were consumed by a sense of disappointment, confusion and bitterness. In walking along the street, driving to armed units, I observed that people did not understand that decision.

Why was that decision made unilaterally, why are the missiles being taken away from us? And will all the weapons be taken back? — these were the questions disturbing all the people.

In some 48 hours that feeling of bitterness and pain spread among all the people. Events were rapidly following one another. The offer to withdraw weapons from Cuba under the condition of liquidating bases in Turkey was advanced on 27 October. On 28 October there came the order to dismantle the missiles and the consent to an inspection.

We were very worried by the fact that the moral spirit of our people had declined sharply. That affected their fighting spirit too. At the same time the insolent flights of American planes into Cuban airspace became more frequent, and we were asked not to open fire on them. All of this generated a strong demoralizing influence. The feeling of disappointment, pain and bitterness that enveloped people could have been used by counter-revolutionaries to instigate anti-soviet elements. Enemies could have profited because the legal rules about which we had been speaking with the people were being forgotten. The decision was made without consultation, without coordinating it with our government.

Nobody had the slightest wish to believe it, everyone thought it was a lie.

...

Since then our people began to address very sensitively the matter of sovereignty. Besides, after the current crisis the situation remained juridically constant, as the "status quo" did not change:

1. The blockade organized by the USA administration is still in place. The USA continues to violate the freedom of the sea.

2. The Americans seek to determine what weapons we can possess. Verification is being organized. The situation is developing in the same direction as it is or was in Morocco, Guinea, Ghana, Ceylon and Yemen.

3. The USA continues to violate Cuban airspace and we must bear it. And moreover, the consent for inspections has been given without asking us.

All of this seemed to our people to be a step backward, a retreat. It turns out that we must accept inspections, accept the right of the USA to determine what kinds of weapons we can use.

Our revolution rests firmly on the people. A drop in moral spirit can be dangerous for the cause of revolution.

The Soviet Union consolidated itself as a state a long time ago and it can carry out a flexible policy, it can afford maneuvering. The Soviet people readily understand their government, trust it wholeheartedly.

Cuba is a young developing country. Our people are very impulsive. The moral factor has a special significance in our country.

We were afraid that these decisions could provoke a breach in the people's unity, undermine the prestige of the revolution in the eyes of Latin American peoples, in the eyes of the whole world.

...

It was very difficult for us to explain the situation to the people. If the decisions had been taken in another way, it would have been easier. If a truce were suggested first and then the issues were coordinated, we would have been in a better position.

Comrade A.I. Mikoyan made an observa-

tion that the threat of aggression was so critical, that there was no time for consultations.

...

Then for half an hour A.I. Mikoyan discussed the issues about which Fidel Castro had talked, but these explanations were interrupted by an incoming report about the death of Mikoyan's wife. The transcript of this part of the conversation will be transmitted with the notes of the next conversation.

### 3.XI.62 ALEKSEEV

[Source: Russian Foreign Ministry archives, obtained and translated by NHK television, copy provided by Philip Brenner; translation by Vladimir Zaemsky.]

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#### Document II:

#### "It was necessary to use the art of diplomacy" — The Second Castro-Mikoyan Conversation, 4 November 1962

#### MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

A.I. MIKOYAN with Fidel CASTRO, [Cuban President] Oswaldo DORTICOS TORRADO, [Defense Minister] Raul CASTRO, Ernesto GUEVARA, Emilio ARAGONES and Carlos Rafael RODRIGUEZ

4 November 1962

A.I. MIKOYAN transmitted to the Cuban leaders cordial fraternal regards on behalf of the Presidium of the CC CPSU and N.S. Khrushchev. He said that the Central Committee of the CPSU feels admiration and respect toward Cuban leaders, who from the very beginning of their struggle demonstrated courage and fearlessness, confidence in revolutionary victory in Cuba, readiness to devote all their forces to the struggle. We are proud of the victory achieved by the Cuban revolution against interventionists on Playa Giron [Giron Beach, Bay of Pigs]. Cuban revolutionaries demonstrated such a potent spirit of resistance that it inspires admiration and proves that the Cubans are always ready to fight until victory is achieved. Cuban leaders have shown great courage, intrepidity, and firmness in dangerous days. The CC CPSU admires the readiness of the Cuban people to stand up. We trust Cuban leaders as we do ourselves.

In the course of the Cuban events our party and government were acting having in mind to do whatever was necessary to make [the situation] better for Cuba. When Ambassador Alekseev informed [us] about the opinion of comrade Fidel Castro, that there are some differences between our parties, we were very pained. Immediately all

the leadership held a meeting. For the question of Cuba worries us a lot. We felt it necessary to re-establish mutual trust because trust is the basis of everything, the basis of really fraternal relations. We understood that no correspondence can suffice to explain completely the misunderstanding of those days. Therefore the CC CPSU decided to send me to Cuba in order to explain to our friends the Soviet position and to inform them on other subjects that may be of interest to them. We know, - Mikoyan continued, - that if we explain everything frankly then you, our brothers, will understand us. Comrade Mikoyan made the observation that he, naturally, had no intention to put pressure [on Cuba], that his task was to explain our position. Being acquainted with the Cuban comrades, - A.I. Mikoyan said, - I'm confident that they will agree with it. It is certainly possible that even after our explanations there will remain some issues about which we shall still have different points of view. Our task is to preserve mutual trust which is needed for really friendly relations with Cuba, for the future of Cuba and the USSR and the whole world revolutionary movement.

Yesterday comrade Fidel Castro explained very frankly and in detail that the Cuban people had not understood everything regarding the most recent actions of the Soviet government. Comrade Fidel Castro also spoke on the issues which worry the Cuban leadership. He underlined the role of the psychological factor which has special significance in Cuba. Several particularities of the psychological mold of Cubans have formed as a result of the historical development of the country. And, as comrade Fidel Castro was saying, it is very important to take this into account.

In New York, said Mikoyan, I learned the substance of the speech by comrade Fidel Castro on 1 November. Certainly I could not perceive completely the speech insofar as the American press frequently distorts the substance of the statements made by Cuban leaders. But even on the basis of the American press interpretation I understood that it was a friendly speech pronounced by comrade Fidel Castro underlining the great significance of friendship between the Soviet Union and Cuba, mentioning the broad aid rendered by the Soviet Union to Revolutionary Cuba. He also said that there were some differences in views between us, but those differences had to be discussed on the level of parties and governments, not massive rallies. Those words of Fidel Castro, testifying sentiments of friendship and trust toward our country, were reaffirmed by the welcome reception on my arrival to Havana. The very tone of the conversation with comrade Fidel Castro was imbued with a sense of fellowship and trust.

I'm confident, continued Mikoyan, that the existing mutual trust between us will always be there notwithstanding some differences of opin-

ion. The American press spreads a lot of conjectures regarding the aim of my trip to Cuba. They are writing that I went to Havana allegedly in order to apply pressure on Cuban leaders, in order to “pacify” them, as [U.S. negotiator John] McCloy had stated to the American newspapers. About my conversation with McCloy I can tell you in detail afterward, but first of all I would like to answer the main questions.

As I have already stated before my departure from New York, the Soviet government was supporting the five points put forward by comrade Fidel Castro. The demand on liquidation of the US Guantanamo base is a just and correct demand. I had no plans to speak publicly in New York, but when I read in the American press the speculation about the objectives of my trip, I decided to voice that statement in order to make my position completely clear. Using radio, American propaganda is trying to embroil Cuba [in conflict] with the Soviet Union, is trying to sting Cubans to the quick. It’s natural. Because the enemy can’t behave differently. He always acts like this. But the enemy must be repulsed.

By decision of the CC CPSU, my task includes explaining our position to Cuban leaders within my abilities and capacities, so that no doubts are left. We also want to discuss new problems that arise in front of our two countries. It is not a part of my task at all to put pressure on Cuban leaders. That is an impudent conjecture of American propaganda. Our interests are united. We are marxist-leninists and we are trying to achieve common objectives. We discussed the current situation at the CC CPSU and came to a decision that there was no complete relaxation of tensions yet.

On the military side we can observe a considerable decrease in danger. I can add for myself that in essence currently the danger has abated. But the diplomatic tension still exists. Plans for military assault have been frustrated.

A victory was gained regarding prevention of a military assault. But still we are facing even larger tasks on the diplomatic field. We must achieve a victory over the diplomatic tension, too.

What does that victory mean? How do we understand it? I’ll explain later.

I would like to do whatever is necessary to ensure that you understand us correctly. I’m not in a hurry and if you don’t object, I’ll stay in Cuba as long as necessary to explain all the aspects of our position. I think, first of all, we must consider those issues where some differences have appeared. I’ll do my best to help you understand us. We must consider all these questions and decide what can be done jointly to ensure the success of the further development and future of the Cuban revolution.

At the moment of critical military danger we had no opportunity for mutual consultations, but now we have good possibilities for thorough

consultations on diplomatic forms of struggle in order to determine how to act in common.

Comrades, I would like to begin by asking you to say, what steps of the Soviet government have caused misunderstanding and differences, in order to give you the necessary explanations. True, yesterday comrade Fidel Castro already narrated much about this. But I would like to ask both comrade Fidel Castro and all of you to raise all those questions that you are interested in.

F.CASTRO. My colleagues are aware of the substance of our conversation yesterday, but in order to summarize the questions which are important for us let me repeat them briefly. As comrade Mikoyan has already said, recent events have considerably influenced the moral spirit of our people. They were regarded as a retreat at the very moment when every nerve of our country had been strained. Our people is brought up in the spirit of trust in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, many people do not understand the linkage between the Cuban events and the issue of the liquidation of American bases in Turkey. The unexpected withdrawal of Soviet missiles without consultations with the Cuban government has produced a negative impression upon our people. The Soviet Union gave its consent for inspections also without sending a notification to the Cuban leadership. It is necessary to take into account the special delicacy of our people which has been created as a result of several historic developments. The “Platt amendment,” imposed by the Americans upon Cuba, played a particular role in this regard. Using the Platt amendment the United States of America prohibited the Cuban government from deciding by itself questions of foreign policy. The decisions were made by the Americans behind the back of the Cuban people. During the current crisis there was also an impression that important issues, concerning all of us, were discussed and resolved in the absence of Cuban representatives, without consultations with the Cuban government. The USA imperialists undertook a series of aggressive measures against the Republic of Cuba. They set up a naval blockade of our country, they try to determine what kind of armament we can have and use. Systematically they violate Cuban air space and elevate these violations of the sovereignty of the Cuban Republic into a prerogative of the USA administration.

There is the question of inspections. True, inspections are a sore subject for us. We cannot take that step. If we agree to an inspection, then it is as if we permit the United States of America to determine what we can or cannot do in foreign policy. That hurts our sovereignty.

In conclusion I said that we are a young country, where a revolution has recently triumphed, so we can’t carry out such a flexible policy as does the Soviet Union because they are a consolidated state and on that ground they have

possibilities for maneuvering, for flexibility in foreign policy. The Soviet people easily understands similar decisions of its government.

The mentioned facts represent a danger for the revolutionary process, for the Cuban revolution itself.

Here is the summary of the questions elucidated by me in the conversation yesterday with comrade Mikoyan. We didn’t touch on the issue of the assessment of the international situation. I made the observation that at the most critical moment it had appeared that we had no understanding of preceding steps. For example, the objective of placing strategic armaments in Cuba was not clear enough for us. We could not understand where is the exit from that complicated situation. By no means were we thinking that the result could be a withdrawal of strategic armaments from Cuban territory.

Yesterday comrade Mikoyan partly explained some issues but the conversation was interrupted by the tragic news of the spouse of A.I. Mikoyan.

A.I. MIKOYAN asks: Perhaps the Cuban comrades want some other questions to be answered?

DORTICOS makes the observation that in the summary offered by Fidel Castro there have been generalized all the questions that have caused differences, but he asks [Mikoyan] to explain, why N.S. Khrushchev has accepted Kennedy’s offer to make a statement of nonaggression against Cuba under the condition of removing Soviet missiles from Cuba, though the Cuban government had not yet given its view in this regard.

A.I. MIKOYAN asks if there are more questions.

C.R. RODRIGUEZ says that his question is related to that formulated by Dorticos. It is not clear what does the Soviet Union regard as a victory, whether its substance consists in the military success or the diplomatic one. We were considering that for the time being it is impossible to speak about victory insofar as the guarantees on the part of the USA are ephemeral.

A.I. MIKOYAN says that he will give the most detailed answer to all the questions raised by comrade Fidel Castro and other Cuban leaders in order to make the Cuban comrades understand us completely. Therefore I will have to speak for a long time. Later, when you bring forward your opinions and perhaps ask some other questions, I would like to say some more words. If my arguments seem to you not convincing, please notify me, I will think over what to do in order to make you understand me, I will try to put forward new arguments.

The main issue, the issue of prime impor-

tance, is why have we decided to withdraw the strategic missiles from the Cuban territory. Apparently you agree that this is the main question. If there is no understanding over this issue, it is difficult to comprehend other questions.

Being in Moscow I did not realize that this question would be asked. Previously it had not arisen.

The fate of the Cuban revolution has always been important for us, especially beginning from the moment when Fidel Castro declared the objective of constructing socialism in Cuba. Socialist revolution in Latin America should develop and strengthen. When we received the news that had defeated the counter-revolutionary landing on Playa Giron it naturally made us happy, but to some extent it worried us, too. Certainly, it was foolish on the part of the Americans to organize such an invasion. But that fact indicated that they would try again to organize an aggression against Cuba, that they would not tolerate the further development and strengthening of socialist Cuba. It is difficult for them to reconcile with the existence of Cuba which is constructing socialism in the immediate proximity of their borders.

This event worries us, as we were realizing that the Americans would not give up their attempts to suffocate the Cuban revolution. And indeed, the American imperialists began elaborating two parallel plans. The first one consisted of an attempt at the economic suffocation of the Republic of Cuba in order to provoke discontent inside the country, to provoke famine and to achieve the collapse of the new regime due to pressure from within, without military intervention. The second plan foresaw preparation of an intervention with the participation of Latinamerican mercenaries and with the support of the United States of America. This plan envisaged invasion as the means to deal the final blow and to kill the revolutionary regime, if the economic hardships weaken it from inside. After the defeat on Playa Giron the American imperialists proceeded to the execution of those plans.

The victory of the revolution in Cuba is a great success of marxist-leninist theory, and a defeat of the Cuban revolution would mean a two or three times larger defeat of the whole socialist camp. Such a defeat would throw back the revolutionary movement in many countries. Such a defeat would bear witness to the supremacy of imperialist forces in the entire world. That would be an incredible blow which would change the correlation of forces between the two systems, would hamper the development of the international revolutionary movement. We were and are considering to be our duty, a duty of communists, to do everything necessary to defend the Cuban revolution, to frustrate the imperialist plans.

Some time ago our comrades informed us that the economic situation in the country [Cuba]

had worsened. This deterioration was caused by pressure on the part of the Americans and large expenses for defensive needs. We were afraid that the worsening of the situation could be the result of the implementation of the [American] plan for the economic suffocation of Cuba. The CC CPSU discussed the situation in Cuba and decided, without your request—you are very modest and try not to disturb us by requests—to undertake some measures in order to strengthen our help to Cuba. If before you were receiving part of the weapons on credit and only a portion of armaments free of charge, now we decided to supply you gratis with weapons and partly with military uniforms—100 thousand sets in two years—and equipment. We saw that the Cuban trade representatives, who were participating in the negotiations, were feeling themselves somewhat uneasy. They were short of more than 100 million dollars to somehow balance the budget. Therefore we accepted all their proposals in order to frustrate the plan of Kennedy designed for [causing] an internal explosion in Cuba.

The same thing can be said regarding food and manufactured goods. In order to alleviate the economic situation in Cuba we sent there articles and food worth 198 million rubles. Speaking very frankly, we have been giving to you everything without counting.

According to my point of view, we have entered a new stage of relations which nowadays has a different character. Indeed, during the first stage there was some semblance of mutually beneficial trade. Currently those supplies are part of clearly fraternal aid.

I recall, that after his trip to Bulgaria [14-20 May 1962—ed.], that, N.S. Khrushchev told us that while staying in that country he was thinking all the time of Cuba, he was worried that the Americans would organize an intervention in Cuba with the aid of reactionary governments of Latin America or would carry out a direct aggression. They do not want to permit the strengthening of Cuba, and the defeat of Cuba, N.S. Khrushchev said to us, would deliver a very powerful blow upon the whole world revolutionary movement. We must frustrate the plans of the American imperialists.

It was at that time when there appeared a plan that carried great risk. This plan placed huge responsibility on the Soviet government insofar as it contained within it the risk of a war which the imperialists could unleash against the Soviet Union. But we decided that it was necessary to save Cuba. At one time N.S. Khrushchev related that plan to us and asked us to think it through very seriously in order to make a decision in three days. We had to think over both the consequences of its implementation, what to do during different stages of its execution, and how to achieve Cuba's salvation without unleashing a nuclear war. It was decided to entrust our military with elaborating their considerations and to discuss it with the

Cuban leadership.

The main condition for the success of this plan was to carry it out secretly. In this case the Americans would find themselves in a very difficult position. Our military people said that four months were necessary to implement that plan. We foresaw that the delivery of armaments and Soviet troops to Cuban territory would take a half of the preparatory period. Measures were also thought out in order to prevent the unleashing of global nuclear war. We decided to work through the UN, to mobilize international public opinion, to do everything in order to avoid a world collision. We understood that the Americans could use a blockade. It appeared to be the most dangerous thing if the USA imperialists blockaded the supplies of fuel to Cuba. They could abstain from limiting food deliveries to Cuba, while demagogically declaring that they do not want to doom the Cuban people to famine, and at the same time prevent supplies of weapons and fuel to Cuba. And Cuba, who doesn't have her own energy resources, can't survive without fuel. Our communications with Cuba are very stretched. We are separated by enormous distances. Therefore transportation to Cuba is very difficult. We can't use our Air Force or Navy forces in case of a blockade of Cuba. Therefore we had to use such means as political maneuvering, diplomacy, we had to utilize the UN. For example, we could not blockade American bases in Turkey in response because we have no other exit to the Mediterranean. We could not undertake such steps neither in Norway, nor in England, nor in Japan. We do not have enough possibilities for counter-blockade. Counter-measures could be undertaken in Berlin.

Our plans did not include creation of our base here, on the American continent. In general, the policy of constructing bases on foreign territories is not a correct one. Such a policy was carried out in the time of Stalin. There was our base in Germany which was created on the ground of our right as conqueror. Currently our troops in Germany are quartered there according to the Warsaw Pact. Under treaty there was our naval base in Finland. We also had a base in Port Arthur in order to defend our eastern borders from Japan. All these bases were liquidated. Right now we don't have any bases on foreign territories. Nevertheless there are our troops in Poland in order to ensure communications with our forces in Germany, and Soviet troops are quartered in Hungary in order to protect us from the side of Austria. We do not need bases in Cuba for the destruction of the United States of America. We have long-range missiles which can be used directly from our territory. We do not have plans to conquer the territory of the USA. The working class of that country is stupefied by capitalist propaganda. Besides, such a plan would contradict our theory. We can use the long-range missiles only to deliver a retaliatory blow, with-

out landing troops on USA territory.

The objective of bringing Soviet troops and strategic weapons to Cuba consisted only in strengthening your defense potential. It was a deterrence plan, a plan designed to stop the imperialist play with fire regarding Cuba. If the strategic armaments were deployed under conditions of secrecy and if the Americans were not aware of their presence in Cuba, then it would have been a powerful means of deterrence. We proceeded from that assumption. Our military specialists informed us that strategic missiles can be reliably camouflaged in the palm forests of Cuba.

We were following very intently the transportation of troops and strategic weapons to Cuba. Those sea shipments were successful in July and August. And only in September the Americans learned about the transport of those forces and means. The USA intelligence worked badly. We were surprised that Kennedy in his speeches was speaking only about Soviet military specialists, but not Soviet troops. At the very beginning he really was thinking so. Then we understood that he was not saying everything he knew, and that he was holding back in order not to complicate the [Congressional—ed.] election campaign for himself. We let the Americans know that we wanted to solve the question of Berlin in the nearest future. This was done in order to distract their attention away from Cuba. So, we used a diversionary maneuver. In reality we had no intention of resolving the Berlin question at that time. If, comrades, the question of Berlin is of interest to you, I can give you the necessary information.

Kennedy addressed N.S. Khrushchev through confidential channels and made a request not to aggravate the situation until the end of the elections to Congress [on 6 November 1962—ed.], and not to proceed to the Berlin issue. We responded that we could wait until the end of the elections [campaign], but immediately after them we should proceed to the Berlin issue. When the Americans learned about the transport of strategic weapons to Cuba they themselves began crying a lot about Berlin. Both sides were talking about the Berlin crisis, but simultaneously believed that at that given moment the essence of their policy was located in Cuba.

By mid-September 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. The American administration sent planes to the air space of Cuba for aerial photography and the ascertainment of the deployment areas of the strategic missiles. N.S. Khrushchev gave the order to place the missiles into vertical position only at night, but to maintain them in a lying-down position in the daytime.

Nevertheless, the Americans managed to take a photo of the missiles in the firing position. Kennedy didn't want to speak about Soviet missiles in Cuba until the end of the Congressional elections. He did not want to strain relations. But two Republican senators [a clear reference to Sens. Kenneth Keating of New York and Everett Dirksen of Illinois—ed.] learned about the fact of the strategic missiles placed in Cuba and therefore Kennedy hastened to take the initiative into his hands, or else he would be hardpressed. We had no information on how he intended to act.

The United States of America organized maneuvers in the area of Vieques Island [in the Caribbean], naming them "Ortsac," i.e., Castro, if you read it backwards. But those maneuvers could appear to be not an exercise, but a sea cover for a strong blow against Cuba. At that moment, when Kennedy made a statement and announced [on October 22—ed.] the decision of declaring a blockade against Cuba, we didn't know if the Americans were really carrying out maneuvers or were preparing for a direct attack upon Cuba.

On 28 October in the morning [presumably this refers to Moscow time, which would mean the evening of 27 October in Washington—ed.] we received reliable reports of preparations for an attack against Cuba. Indeed we were aware of the fact that the Americans had interrupted their maneuvers because of a hurricane. The maneuvers did not resume when the hurricane went away but the American combatant ships remained in the same area in direct proximity to Cuba. N.S. Khrushchev rebuked Kennedy for declaring a blockade around Cuba. We strongly opposed the American attempts to assume the right to determine what weapons Cuba can use and what armaments it may not possess. And then the Americans decided to carry out a direct aggression. Their plan consisted of two parts. Wishing to free themselves from the threat of a blow from the strategic missiles, they decided to liquidate the launchers in Cuba with the help of conventional warhead missiles and immediately after that land troops on Cuban territory in order to liquidate centers of resistance as soon as possible.

It would have been impossible for us in these circumstances not to repulse the aggression of the USA. This assault would mean an assault upon you and us, as far as in Cuba there were situated Soviet troops and strategic missiles. Inevitably, nuclear war would be unleashed as a result of such a collision. Certainly we would destroy America, our country would be strongly damaged too, but we have a larger territory. Cuba would have been destroyed first. Imperialists would do their best to liquidate Cuba.

The objective of all the measures undertaken by the Soviet Union was the defense of Cuba. It was necessary to determine our line of conduct. The loss of Cuba would mean a serious blow to the whole socialist camp. And exactly at the moment when we were pondering the ques-

tion of what to do in the created situation we received the communication from comrade Castro, it was on Sunday, that an aggression against Cuba would be unleashed in the next 24 hours. From other sources we were in possession of information that the USA aggression would begin in 10-12 hours. Despite the fact that these were separate sources, the information corresponded. Until the moment of the start of the USA aggression against Cuba remained 10-12 hours. It was necessary to use the art of diplomacy. Had we not been successful in this regard there would have been unleashed a war. We had to use diplomatic means.

Kennedy was making statements that he had nothing against the stationing in Cuba of Soviet weapons, even troops, but that placing strategic weapons in Cuba was evidence of preparations for an assault against the USA. Therefore the USA would defend itself. Considering that the missiles had been discovered and were no longer a means of deterrence we decided that for the sake of saving Cuba it was necessary to give an order to dismantle and return the strategic missiles to the Soviet Union and to inform Kennedy of this. You agreed with the withdrawal of strategic missiles from Cuba while leaving there all the other kinds of armaments. We managed to preserve all the forces and means which are necessary for the defense of the Cuban revolution even without strategic missiles which had been a means of deterrence, but they were discovered and therefore lost their significance. We have enough powerful missiles that can be used from our territory. Since Kennedy agreed with the retaining of Soviet troops in Cuba, the Cubans kept powerful armaments and anti-aircraft missiles, so we consider that he [Kennedy] also made a concession.

The statement of Kennedy about non-aggression against Cuba on the part of the USA and latinamerican countries also represents a concession. If we take into account these reciprocal concessions and all other factors, we will see that a big victory has been gained. Never before have the Americans made such a statement. That is why we decided that the main objective—salvation of Cuba—had been achieved. There would not be an assault against Cuba. There would not be a war. We are gaining more favorable positions.

Indeed, it was necessary to send the draft of our decision to Cuba in order to have consultations with you, to receive your consent and only then announce it. It would have been done in this way if there were normal conditions. In his letter Fidel Castro informed us that an inevitable aggression was expected in 24 hours. By the moment when we received it and were discussing the situation, only 10-12 hours were left before aggression. If we had tried to send you our draft we would have had to encode the document, transmit it by radio, decipher it, translate it into Spanish.

All of this could take more than 10 hours and such a consultation would not have made sense by that time. It would be too late. It could happen in such a way, that the answer would be received, but Cuba itself would have ceased to exist, a war would have been unleashed. It was a critical moment. We thought our Cuban friends would understand us. Moreover we knew from the cable from Fidel Castro that the Cuban leadership was aware of the direct threat of assault. At that moment the main objective consisted of preventing an attack. We thought, the Cuban comrades would understand us. Therefore, we made the decision to act immediately, but without paying due attention to the psychological factor, about which comrade Fidel Castro spoke here.

Regarding the possibility of a truce at that moment, mentioned by the Cuban comrades, the Americans would not take such a step in those conditions. There are a lot of revanchists in the Pentagon, and Kennedy is a deterrent element with respect to them. The Americans would have burst into Cuba. We had no time. Certainly, it was a decision that created some difficulties for you, the Cuban people.

Let us compare the situation at the present time and the situation before the crisis. Before the crisis the Americans were preparing an intervention against Cuba. Now they have committed themselves not to attack Cuba. It is a great success. Certainly, the events also had negative consequences, especially as American propaganda was trying suit their own ends by using some facts and distorting them. But that is inevitable. These are the costs of events that have crucial importance. Our task is to eliminate the negative consequences of the recent events.

Comrade Dorticos is correct when he asks why did we give our consent to Kennedy's message on non-aggression against Cuba without the concordance of the Cuban government. But it was exactly our consent (and nothing else) that ensured some truce for a certain time.

One cannot perceive nihilistically all agreements and commitments, although sometimes these agreements and commitments are important only during a certain time, until conditions change. So they keep their importance until the situation changes.

We were asked about our demand on the liquidation of American bases in Turkey.

Speaking frankly, we were not thinking about bases in Turkey at all. But during discussion of the dangerous situation we received information from the United States of America, including an article by [columnist Walter] Lippmann [in the *Washington Post* on October 25], where it was said that the Russians could raise the question of liquidating the USA bases in Turkey. They were speaking about the possibility of such a demand inside American circles. This question was discussed in the USA. Turkish bases do not have great importance for us. They will be eliminated

in case of war. True, they have certain political significance but we don't pay them special importance, though we will seek their liquidation.

From your statements I see now that the Cubans were regarding this demand as if it was some sort of exchange. There are USA bases not only in Turkey, but also in England and other European countries. But nowadays these bases do not have decisive importance insofar as the long-range strategic missiles, aimed at Europe, can quickly destroy them.

F. CASTRO. There is a question, on which we are insufficiently informed.

On 26 October the Soviet government sent Kennedy a letter without a word about Turkey. On 27 October we learned about Turkey from the broadcasts of Soviet radio. The American media expressed some surprise because this problem had not been raised in the message of the 26th. What is it, a false communication or were there two letters of 26 and 27 October? We have received one letter that coincided with the document transmitted by Moscow radio.

A.I. MIKOYAN. There were two letters. The letter of the 26th was not published. The letter of 27 October was published. But the content of the letter of 27 October covers the questions raised in the letter of the 26th. The question of Turkey was not raised at the beginning. Later this issue was included. You have all the correspondence on this issue. If there is such a necessity, we can check it.

F. CASTRO. Here is the letter of 26 October, whose text, as it seemed to me, is identical to the other letter at my disposal, which was received from the transmission of radio Moscow and TASS. It seemed to me that one letter has not been published.

A.I. MIKOYAN. If you want, we can check.

F. CASTRO. For all that, when did Kennedy accept the proposal of N.S. Khrushchev and promise guarantees not to attack Cuba? Wasn't it in response to the letter of 26 October? What did he say then?

C.R. RODRIGUEZ. There were secret letters.

A.I. MIKOYAN. Comrades, all the documents have been given to you.

F. CASTRO. On 27 October Kennedy gave guarantees not to attack Cuba, if the Soviet government removed its offensive weapons. The impression is growing that it was in response to [Khrushchev's] letter of 26 October. That is an important question. It was decided urgently, without consultations. Apparently, before my

letter to Khrushchev, N.S. Khrushchev wrote to Kennedy and simultaneously with my letter an answer from Kennedy to Khrushchev arrived. After all, why is Kennedy already speaking about the Soviet proposal about dismantling, etc., in his response of 27 October to Khrushchev's message of 26 October, if it was not directly said in the confidential message from Khrushchev of 26 October? Negotiations began at night, after the message from Kennedy. Consequently, it was not possible to consider inevitable an attack against us. When I was writing to N.S. Khrushchev I didn't know that Khrushchev was writing to Kennedy and Kennedy—to Khrushchev. It seems to me that on 27 October, at that time, there was no unavoidable threat of attack. The principle of agreement had already been found. It seems to me that there was available time for consultations.

A.I. MIKOYAN. In his answer of 27 October Kennedy was formally responding as if only to the confidential message of the 26th, but practically he was answering both this one and chiefly the message from Khrushchev of the 27th, openly transmitted by radio, though there was no direct reference in Kennedy's message. All the messages between Khrushchev and Kennedy and everything received from him confidentially were given to comrade Fidel. I'm a participant of all the meetings, I'm aware of everything, but if you want me to do it, I'll check all the documents that I have with me and tomorrow I'll complement my information.

F. CASTRO. I agree with comrade Mikoyan's suggestion.

A.I. MIKOYAN. So, let's pass to the next question.

To many Cubans it seems that instead of our demand for the liquidation of American bases in Turkey it would be better to put the question of the liquidation of the base in Guantanamo. Such a demand seems tempting from the Cuban political and practical points of view. But from the point of view of military and practical interests of Cuba we could not put the question in this way. If the question were raised about withdrawal from Cuba of all kinds of armaments, then the [Guantanamo] question would be raised. There are no nuclear weapons at Guantanamo. But we did not have intentions of taking away all the armaments from Cuba. The Guantanamo base does not have a huge real significance insofar as the Americans can transfer their forces to Cuba without difficulties due to the geographical situation of the USA and Cuba. Indeed, it was not possible to lose all our armaments in Cuba. If we were to raise the question of Guantanamo base liquidation in exchange for withdrawal of Soviet weapons from Cuban territory in general, that would undermine Cuba's defense capability. We

can't do that. You know that in the message from N.S. Khrushchev to Kennedy there was said that "we want to create confidence among Cubans, confirming that we are with them and we do not relieve responsibility for rendering help to the Cuban people."

**F. CASTRO.** But we are speaking only about strategic missiles. Such an act would have political rather than military significance. We were looking for an exit from that situation. It seems to us that it was possible to create a more difficult atmosphere for the Americans by raising such a question as the liquidation of the Guantanamo base.

**A.I. MIKOYAN.** If the Americans had accepted such an offer, and they could do so, we would have had to leave Cuba. We could not afford it.

Now I'll pass to the issue of inspections. If we had made a statement declining inspections, the Americans would have taken it for our desire to swindle them and their intervention would have become a reality. We declared that we agree to inspections. What we are speaking about is not a broad inspection, but a verification of the sites, known to the Americans due to aerial photography and which have been locations of the strategic missile launchers. The objective would have been to verify if the missiles had really been dismantled and their embarkation really accomplished; verification of the areas where the missiles had been assembled could be carried out in one day and verification of loading—in several days. It was not a question of any permanent or general inspection. It was said that representatives of neutral countries would carry out a verification only once. We were not deciding this question instead of you. Cuban issues are solved by the Cuban leadership only. But, being owners of that kind of weapon, we stated our consent for verification of dismantling and loading. We believed that after coordinating with you, you would accept this suggestion. But we could not decide it instead of you.

We were assuming that it was possible to give consent to verification by representatives of neutral countries of the dismantling and withdrawal of the missiles—doing all of this without hurting Cuba's sovereignty. Certainly, no state would bear violation of its sovereignty. But in particular cases sovereign governments also permit some limitation of their actions, owing to voluntary agreements. Now we are not speaking about those cases when foreign powers impose their will over other countries.

I can give examples how our state and other countries voluntarily limit their actions while preserving their sovereign rights. For example, sovereignty of a host-country does not apply to the territory of foreign embassies. In this case we see a limitation of actions without limitation of

sovereignty.

Another example. An agreement to create an international verification commission was achieved in Geneva [in 1954] during the discussion of the Indochina issue. The proposal was made by representatives of the Soviet Union, China, and other countries. The proposal was also supported by the leader of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam comrade Ho Chi Minh, who was directly concerned. Currently both Ho Chi Minh and the king of Cambodia ask to preserve that international verification commission. In this case there is no question of limiting the sovereign rights neither of Vietnam nor Cambodia.

Further. Between India and Pakistan in the area of Kashmir is working an international verification commission without infringing on their sovereign rights.

Several years ago we proposed [in May 1955—ed.] to the Americans and English to create jointly international verification posts on railway junctions, in large ports, and along highways. In due time [in the 1957 Rapacki Plan—ed.] we also suggested to organize international verification in the zone covering 800 kilometers on both sides along the demarcation line in Germany. In the event of the acceptance of this suggestion, a part of our territory, Poland, and Hungary would have been controlled. And such an act, under the condition of voluntary acceptance of the commitments, would not have undermined the sovereign rights of the states.

A similar example is the creation of an international commission in Laos in order to verify compliance of the 1962 agreement, in particular, to verify the withdrawal of foreign troops from Laos and a ban on the introduction of weapons. [Laotian Prince] Souvanna Phouma did not object to such a verification. Communists of Laos and Vietnam allowed international control, communists of India didn't object to international verification. Poland agreed to verify the withdrawal of American troops and the troops of Ho Chi Minh. And it was done with the consent of comrade Ho Chi Minh and the Laotian communists.

I'm giving you all these examples because when we, on the basis of the above mentioned experience, were thinking about you, we didn't pay due attention to that psychological factor, about which we learned here from comrade Fidel Castro. In principle everything is correct, but not all that looks good in principle can be applied to a concrete situation.

Everything I'm talking about I'm saying not to gain a change of the international stand of Cuba, but in order to explain to you the motives which guided us. It is unthinkable that I might try to exercise any pressure.

During the conversation with McCloy in New York I touched on the question of verification of the dismantling of our missiles. McCloy said that insofar as Cuba was objecting to verification organized with the help of neutral coun-

tries, the USA did not insist on this form of control and it was necessary to seek other measures so that the Americans could be convinced that it had been done. He said that they were aware of dismantling work, but they were afraid that the missiles could be hidden in Cuban forests. They need to be sure that those weapons are removed from Cuban territory. I asked him about other forms of verification that he had in mind. McCloy answered that, in their opinion, an aerial inspection could be used for this aim, but that it was necessary for Cuba to agree to verification from airspace. I resolutely said in response that such a method is out of the question because it was damaging Cuban sovereign rights. I added that it wasn't worth going on with the discussion of that issue—we categorically rejected such a method and stressed our reluctance even to convey that proposal to the Cubans.

We knew that the American planes had been flying over the territory of Cuba and had carried out air photography. I told McCloy that on the basis of that aerial photography Americans could be convinced of the fact that work on the dismantling of the missiles had already begun. He answered me that air photography reflected the process of dismantling work, but that was not all, because in their view there were delays in dismantling. McCloy underlined that for Americans it was very important to be sure of the removal of the missiles from Cuban territory. Then they would not have doubts of missiles being hidden in the forests. He added that the information is needed to be convinced of the missiles' withdrawal. Meanwhile the Americans do not seek any secret information, they are worried by the question of whether the missiles have been withdrawn.

I could not, continued A.I. Mikoyan, go on discussing that issue with McCloy, but I was aware that military consultants, a general and a colonel, had been sent from the Soviet Union to [Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily] Kuznetsov. I hope, the issue will be further examined.

There is another method which I didn't mention to the Americans, but I can explain it to you. The process of dismantling and loading of the strategic weapons can be photographed and these documents can be used in order to achieve the declared objective.

How is the verification at sea carried out? It is done at a considerable distance from territorial waters. Observers examine vessels and give their consent for further travel.

On 1 November, during my conversation with McCloy, I said nothing to the Americans regarding the fact that we were looking for ways to keep our promise and give the Americans the opportunity to be certain that the dismantling and carrying away of the missiles had really been done. We are doing that in order not to contradict your statement objecting to control on Cuban territory. During the conversation McCloy told

me that the Cubans could try to prevent the withdrawal from Cuba of the strategic missiles. He added that the Cubans had 140 thousand soldiers and Soviet troops are only 10 thousand. Regarding the first remark I told him that it was nonsense, because Fidel Castro himself had announced that he was not objecting to the withdrawal of the Soviet strategic missiles. Certainly, I didn't dispute his data on the numbers of the troops.

By the way, he said that the U-2 plane had been shot down over Cuban territory [on 27 October—ed.] by Russian missiles, though anti-aircraft launchers, in his opinion, could be operated by the Cubans. I neither confirmed, nor disputed, this observation of McCloy.

**F. CASTRO.** These planes are flying at the altitude of 22 thousand meters and the limit of our artillery is lower. Therefore it's understandable that in this case the anti-aircraft missiles were used.

**A.I. MIKOYAN.** I didn't engage in further discussion with him of this issue.

We insist on immediate lifting of the quarantine. If you want us to finish the withdrawal of strategic missiles from Cuba as soon as possible, I said to McCloy, then give the vessels access to Cuba because there are not enough steamships in Cuba right now to withdraw the equipment and personnel. It could be done before the official agreement, in order to accelerate the evacuation. McCloy responded that he was ready to give orders in practice not to carry out examination of the vessels. The verification will be completely formal, as happened during the encounter of the tanker "Bucharest" with American ships. A question was asked by radio about the character of the cargo and the "Bucharest" without examination continued its journey to Cuba. Nobody stopped the ship, nobody came on its deck.

I objected to this kind of verification also. Then we passed to other issues. [U.S. delegate to the United Nations Adlai] Stevenson told me that the Americans had accepted [UN Secretary General] U Thant's proposal. I reproached them and made the observation that U Thant was suggesting not to withdraw weapons and to lift the blockade. We accepted U Thant's suggestion about verification on the part of the Red Cross.

In general it is necessary to note that the cargo transportation to Cuba represent an interest for you, not us. You are receiving the goods. We incur considerable losses. Steamships are obliged to wait at sea. We were forced to agree to the Red Cross verification in order to reduce our losses. Such a verification is better than the American one. This organization does not have any political or state character. Vessels that can be used for such verification, are not American but neutral and Soviet.

U Thant suggested two options for verifica-

tion: in port and at sea. We didn't want to hurt your sentiments and therefore responded that we agree to verification at sea, but not in port. This issue, chiefly, has importance for you. But seeking to make your situation easier, we agreed to Red Cross verification at sea.

Having returned from Havana, U Thant told me in New York that you do not agree to verification in port although, in his opinion, it was more comfortable to do it in port. U Thant is ready to choose the corresponding staff. He has available two ships. On other details of this issue I lack information. Comrade Kuznetsov is in charge of them.

It's still necessary to dwell on the issue concerning U Thant's plan and verification.

During the crisis U Thant behaved himself decently, even well. It's hard to demand anything more from him. He treated both us and Cuba with sympathy, but his situation is not easy at all. We have received the "U Thant plan," of guarantees, that had been sent to everybody. This plan seemed interesting to us and useful for Cuba. What do we see positive in it?

If the UN observation posts are created in Cuba, the southern seacoast of the USA and in the Central American countries then attempts of preparation for aggression against Cuba would be quickly unmasked. In this way it will be possible to suppress rapidly any aggression attempts against Cuba. I'm assessing this issue from the point of view of international law. It's not excluded that a similar agreement can be violated, but it must not happen under normal conditions.

This issue is also interesting from another point of view. There is the Organization of American States (OAS). The Americans try to use the OAS as a cover in order not to allow a UN inspection. If the Americans had accepted UN inspection it would mean that Latin American issues are resolved at the UN bypassing the OAS. Briefly, we positively assess U Thant's plan. He said that Fidel Castro also had a positive attitude toward his plan, but I don't know if comrade Fidel Castro really has such an opinion.

U Thant told me that representatives of Latin-American countries, to whom he had spoken, took a favorable view of his plan. I asked what was the USA position and U Thant informed [me] that the Americans had called it an OAS issue without outlining their own attitude. But I managed to clear up this question during the conversation with McCloy. At first McCloy and Stevenson said that there was not a "U Thant plan." Then they admitted their knowledge of the plan, but declared that the USA opposes any verification procedures on their territory.

McCloy said they could pledge their word that all the camps for mercenary training in Central America had been liquidated or were in the process of liquidation. I asked McCloy if it had been done in all countries. McCloy answered that

it was necessary to check it. I asked why the USA recruits Cuban counter-revolutionaries to their armed forces. He prevaricated for a long time trying to explain it by the necessity of teaching those people English. He was cunning and evasive. Then he declared that Cuba represents "a source of revolutionary infection." Stevenson said that the USA would like to find a possibility for settling the Cuban issue, but Cuba is afraid of the USA and the USA is afraid of Cuba. We didn't discuss this question any more. But there is an impression that a possibility exists to reach an agreement—in the form of a declaration or some other form—between Cuba and Central American countries pledging not to carry out subversive work and not to attack each other.

Comrade Fidel Castro was right saying that it was necessary to maneuver on the issues of international policy. It is easier for the Soviet Union than for Cuba to do so, especially when American propaganda complicates your possibilities for maneuvers. Firmness should be combined with flexibility while you carry out a policy. Nowadays it is a necessary thing for marxist-diplomats. It is wrong to say that we are more liberal than others. We are firm, but we display flexibility when it is necessary.

The revolution in Cuba has enormous importance not only for the Cuban people, but for the countries of Latin America and the whole world. The revolution in Cuba must develop and strengthen. Therefore it is necessary to use maneuvers, to display flexibility in order to ensure victory.

Really, a victory has been gained over Americans and here is why. If we have a look at the whole thing retrospectively, the question is being raised—if it has been a mistake to send strategic missiles to Cuba and to return them to the Soviet Union. The CC CPSU considers that there was no mistake. The strategic missiles have done their part. Cuba found itself at the center of international politics and now when their job is done, when they have been discovered, they can't serve any more as means of deterrence. They are withdrawn. But the Cuban people keep powerful arms in their hands. There is no other country in Latin America which is so strong militarily, which has such a high defense potential as Cuba. If there is no direct aggression on the part of the USA, no group of Latinamerican countries has the possibility to overpower Cuba.

Let us try to understand, of what does our victory consist. Let's compare situations in June and now, in November. The Americans have virtually forgotten the Monroe doctrine. Kennedy does not mention it any more and, you know, the Monroe doctrine has been the basis of American imperialism in Latin America. Previously Americans were declaring that they would not tolerate a Marxist regime on the American continent. Now they are committing themselves not to attack Cuba. They were saying that foreign powers

could not be present on the American continent in whatever form. They know about the Soviet military in Cuba, but do not speak of the Monroe doctrine.

Cuba found itself in the center of international political events. The United Nations Organization is engaged in the Cuban issue. U Thant practically backs Cuba and comes out against the USA policy. And you remember that previously it was not possible to obtain support for Cuba at the UN. World public opinion has been mobilized and even some nations who were previously against Cuba.

In the USA there are hysterics, but in their souls many people understand the fairness of the Cuban demands.

In the end, the prestige of the socialist camp has strengthened. It defended peace, though the USA was rapidly sliding down toward war.

People have united in order to resist American plans aimed at unleashing a war, and simultaneously the Soviet policy was carried out in the framework of settling the issues by peaceful means.

The immediate threat of military attack against Cuba is gone. I believe it is moved aside for several years.

It is necessary now to fix that success on the diplomatic field, so that Cuba—a beacon of Latin American revolution—could develop more rapidly in every respect and give a decisive example for mobilizing other peoples for struggle.

Our support becomes more and more active. We are helping you as our brothers. More possibilities have been created.

Americans are obliged to take Cuba into account, to solve issues, regarding Cuba, with our participation. We are not speaking about Russia [sic—ed.] as such, but as a country of socialism. Socialism, which you are also meritoriously representing, became a decisive factor of international policy. American propaganda is repeating over and over again about a diminishing of Cuba's prestige. Just to the contrary Cuba's prestige has been undoubtedly strengthened as a result of recent events.

In conclusion A.I. Mikoyan apologized to the Cuban comrades for having tired them out. Joking he adds that the only compensation is that he is worn out too. So there is complete equality.

He suggests to set the time of the next meeting.

F. CASTRO asked, if it was possible, to discuss Soviet policy regarding the Berlin issue.

A.I. MIKOYAN answered that he would do so, and also would discuss the exchange of letters between the CPSU and communist parties of India and China on the issue of conflict between India and China. He can explain our plans in the sphere of disarmament, on the ceasing of tests of hydrogen weapons, and answer all other ques-

tions including economic issues.

It was decided to have another meeting in the Presidential Palace at 14 hours [2 pm—ed.] on 5 November.

Ambassador Alekseev was also present on the Soviet side.

Recorded by V. Tikhmenev

[signature]

[Source: Russian Foreign Ministry archives, obtained and translated by NHK television, copy provided by Philip Brenner; translation by Aleksandr Zaemsky slightly revised.]

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### Document III:

**“I don't understand such a sharp reaction”  
—The Third Castro-Mikoyan Conversation,  
5 November 1962 (afternoon)**

#### MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

A.I. MIKOYAN with Fidel CASTRO, Oswaldo PORTICOS, Raul CASTRO, Ernesto GUEVARA and Carlos Rafael RODRIGUEZ

5 November 1962

A conversation between A.I. Mikoyan and the same composition of the Cuban leadership, as on the previous occasion, took place on 5 November, at the Presidential palace. The conversation lasted 2 hours 30 minutes.

During the previous meeting F. Castro asked comrade Mikoyan a question which showed his doubts as if we had not given him all the messages from N.S. Khrushchev to president Kennedy. He asked how the statement of Kennedy of 27 October could be explained, insofar as there was already a reference to our consent to dismantle ground launchers for special equipment.

Comrade Mikoyan answered Castro that all confidential letters from N.S. Khrushchev had been given to the Cuban comrades and the open messages are known to them from the media. No other letters have been sent from N.S. Khrushchev to Kennedy, said Mikoyan.

In order to render the trend of developments more precisely, A.I. MIKOYAN suggested, to answer that question during consecutive conversation, that is on 5 November, after looking through the whole correspondence on this issue once more.

In the conversation [on 5 November], A.I. MIKOYAN said that the correspondence between N.S. Khrushchev and Kennedy had been looked through again, and the motives, which had prompted Kennedy to refer to our consent about the dismantling of the missiles, had been determined. You are aware of the content of all the

messages from N.S. Khrushchev to Kennedy and I would like to say that Kennedy in his letter of 27 October, which attracted your attention, formally is answering the confidential message of N.S. Khrushchev of 26/X [26 October], but in essence he is simultaneously responding to Khrushchev's letter of 27/X [27 October], which had been published even before the aforementioned response from Kennedy and in which we had raised the question of dismantling the ground launchers in Cuba under the condition of liquidating the American base in Turkey. You have been given all the correspondence between N.S. Khrushchev and Kennedy except for one confidential message from Kennedy of 25 October, which is not connected to the issue of dismantling and only accuses us of denying the fact of the construction of ground launchers for special equipment in Cuba. We can read it out and then give you the translation. (The letter is read out.)

FIDEL CASTRO. Thank you. Now this issue is clear to me.

A.I. MIKOYAN. I'll continue. Having received that message we answered it on 26 October through confidential channels. In that letter there were no concrete proposals yet. We were speaking only about the necessity to eliminate the threat of an assault against Cuba. The letter included only the idea of seeking an agreement. We didn't receive an answer from Kennedy on the 26th. There was no answer on the morning of 27 October either. We came to the conclusion that the Americans were actively preparing for an attack, but were preferring not to disclose their plans before world public opinion. Therefore, in order to tie the Americans' hands, we decided to send Kennedy a new letter and publish it in the press. That was the letter of 27 October, known to you, where the demand for the liquidation of the American bases in Turkey was advanced. We published this letter very quickly, even before the American ambassador received its text. Our objective was to forestall the Americans and frustrate their plans. Only then we received a message from Kennedy. It was sent on the evening of 27 October. We received it on 28 October toward the morning (the time difference [between Washington and Moscow—ed.] must be taken into consideration). This letter by its form seemed to be an answer to the confidential message from N.S. Khrushchev of 26 October, but in effect it was the response to the letter of 27 October. On 28 October in the morning, having received the letter from comrade Fidel Castro, and having at our disposal other data about preparations for an attack literally in the nearest hours, N.S. Khrushchev made an open radio statement that the Soviet officers had received orders to dismantle and evacuate the strategic missiles. As you understand, there was no time for consultations with the Cuban government. By publishing

the messages we had the possibility to send them quickly to Cuba, but we could not wait for an answer because it would take a lot of time to encode, decipher, translate, and transmit them.

Acting in this way, we were proceeding from our conviction that the most important objective in that situation was to prevent an attack against Cuba. I would like to underline that our proposals to dismantle the strategic missiles and to liquidate the American bases in Turkey had been advanced before receiving the letter from comrade Fidel Castro of 27 October. The order for the dismantling of the strategic missiles and their evacuation was given after we had received the letter from Kennedy of 27 October and the letter from Fidel Castro. In our message of 28 October, as you have noted, the demand for the liquidation of bases in Turkey was no longer suggested. We did this because we were afraid that in spite of our proposal of 27 October the American imperialists could assault Cuba. We had nothing else to do but to work on the main task—to prevent an attack against Cuba, believing that our Cuban friends would understand the correctness of our actions, although the normal procedure of coordination had not been observed.

The question was that there were 24 hours left before an assault against Cuba. It must be taken into consideration that we had only a few [literally, “counted”—ed.] hours at our disposal and we could not act other than we did. And there are results: an attack against Cuba is prevented, the peace is preserved. However you are right that the procedure of consultations, which is possible under normal circumstances, was not followed.

**F. CASTRO.** I would like to respond to comrade Mikoyan.

We have listened with great attention to the information and explanations offered by comrade Mikoyan. Undoubtedly all those explanations are very valuable because they help us to understand better the course of events. We are thankful for the desire to explain everything to us, for the efforts undertaken in this regard. The arguments, that the strategic missiles after being discovered by the enemy practically lost whatever military significance or their significance becomes extremely small, also cause no doubts among us.

We are grateful for all these explanations and do understand, that the intentions of the Soviet government cannot be assessed only on the grounds of an analysis of the most recent developments, especially as the atmosphere is rapidly changing and new situations are created. The totality of adopted decisions, which became the basis for supplying strategic weapons and the signing of [the Soviet-Cuban—ed.] agreement, must be taken into consideration. It was supposed to publish that agreement after the installation of the strategic missiles and after the elec-

tions in the USA. These decisions are testimony to the firm resolution of the Soviet Union to defend Cuba. They help to understand correctly the policy of the Soviet Union. Therefore, I repeat, an analysis of the USSR position can be correct only with due regard for all the events and decisions both before and during the crisis.

We do not doubt that if all the works on the assembly of the strategic weapons had been completed in conditions of secrecy then we would have received a strong means of deterrence against American plans for attacking our country. In this way objectives would have been achieved which are pursued both by the Soviet government and the government of the Republic of Cuba. However, we consider that the installation of Soviet missiles in Cuba was significant for the interests of the whole socialist camp. Even if we consider it to be a military advantage, it was politically and psychologically important in the struggle for the deterrence of imperialism and the prevention of its aggressive plans. Thus, the installation of the strategic missiles in Cuba was carried out not only in the interests of the defense of Cuba, but of the whole socialist camp. It was done with our complete consent.

We understood perfectly well the significance of this action and we considered it to be a correct step.

We also completely agree that war must be prevented. We do not object that the measures undertaken were in pursuit of two objectives, that is—to prevent an attack against Cuba and to avoid starting a world war. We completely agree with these aims pursued by the Soviet Union.

Misunderstanding arose in connection with the form of discussion of this issue. However, we understand that the circumstances were demanding urgent actions and the situation was abnormal. Assessing past events, we come to the conclusion that the discussion of these sharp questions could be carried out in another form. For example, the issue, which we have already discussed here, in regard to my letter in connection with the decision of the Soviet government and the publication of the Soviet government statement of 28 October. True, my letter bore no relation to issues mentioned in the messages of 26 and 27 October between the Soviet government and the USA Administration. Such a letter [from Castro to Khrushchev—ed.] pursued one objective—to inform the Soviet government about the inevitability of an assault against Cuba. There was not a word about any minor hesitation on our side. We clearly declared our resolve to fight. Besides, we didn’t say that we were expecting an invasion. We wrote that it was possible, but not so likely. In our opinion, more probable was an air attack with the sole aim of destroying the strategic weapons in Cuba. The basis of the Soviet government decision of 28 October had already been reflected in the message to Kennedy of 26 October and clearly manifested itself in the

letter from N.S. Khrushchev to Kennedy of 27 October. In those two documents there is the real basis for the decision announced in the letter of 28 October. So, Kennedy’s letter of 27 October meant acceptance of proposals by N.S. Khrushchev of 26 October consisting of his consent to evacuate from Cuba not only strategic armaments, but all the weapons if the USA stops threatening Cuba with an attack. Because the threat on the part of the USA had been the only reason that forced Cuba to arm itself. When Kennedy accepted this proposal (we didn’t know that he was accepting it), the conditions were created to develop the Soviet proposals and prepare a declaration regarding the agreement of the parties. The USA could have been told that the USSR was ready to dismantle the equipment but would like to discuss it with the Cuban government. In our opinion the issue should have been solved in this way instead of giving immediately an order to evacuate the strategic weapons. Such a procedure would have lessened international tension and secured the possibility to discuss the issue with the Americans in more favorable conditions. In this way it could have been possible not only to achieve a lessening of international tension and to discuss the issue in better conditions, but also to achieve the signing of a declaration.

It is only a simple analysis of previous events that does not have special importance right now.

Nowadays it is important for us to know what to do under the new conditions. In what way shall we seek to achieve our main goals and at the same time fight to prevent an aggression and preserve peace. Certainly, if in due course we manage to secure a lasting peace, then we’ll have an opportunity to better assess the undertaken steps in light of new facts. Future results of our struggle will demonstrate the importance of today’s events. Certainly, only a little bit in this struggle depends on us personally.

We are very grateful for all the explanations given to us by comrade Mikoyan, for all the efforts undertaken by him in order to make us understand the recent events. We take into consideration the special conditions under which it was necessary to act. We have no doubts regarding the friendly character of our relations, based on common principles. Our respect for the Soviet Union is unshakable. We know that it respects our sovereignty and is ready to defend us from an aggression on the part of imperialism. Therefore, the most important thing now is to determine our joint steps.

I would like to assure you, comrade Mikoyan, of our complete trust.

**A.I. MIKOYAN.** I’m deeply satisfied by the statement of comrade Fidel Castro. We have always been confident of our sincere friendship which nothing can disrupt. I’ll transmit word by

word your statement to the CC CPSU and I'm sure that it will produce gladness on the part of the Central Committee.

I would like to make a small explanation, very briefly.

I agree completely with the assessment, made by comrade Fidel Castro of his own letter. He is interpreting it correctly. It's a legitimate question raised by him—could we have made another decision instead of [sending] instructions for dismantling the strategic weapons[?] But we had been informed that an attack against Cuba would begin within the next few hours. Perhaps it was really intended to deliver a blow first of all against the strategic missile sites, but it would be followed by a strike against Cuba. We had to act resolutely in order to frustrate the plan of attack on Cuba. We realize that by doing this we had to sacrifice the necessity of consultations with the Cuban government.

Regarding comrade Fidel Castro's opinion that in the letter from N.S. Khrushchev to Kennedy of 26 October, there was a promise to withdraw from Cuba all the weapons and all military specialists. The Americans did not demand from us such a step. The issue was the offensive weapons. Perhaps comrade Fidel Castro made such a conclusion on the basis of the phrase where a withdrawal of technical specialists was mentioned. But this implied specialists who operate strategic missiles. The fact that it regarded only them is confirmed by all the letters, by the totality of their context. They were about offensive weapons only.

FIDEL CASTRO confirms, that his understanding was just the same.

A.I. MIKOYAN. It is no coincidence that in his answer to this letter Kennedy does not raise the question of removing from Cuba all the weapons. If such a proposal had been present in our letter, Kennedy would undoubtedly have taken advantage of it. Therefore the opinion, outlined by comrade Fidel Castro regarding this part, is incorrect. There is nothing of the kind in the letters of 27 and 28 October.

I would like to mention, that the Americans are trying to broaden the list of weapons for evacuation. Such attempts have already been made, but we will not allow them to do so. On our part, we gave our consent only to withdraw strategic weapons. When I was speaking to McCloy he told me with a smile that it would be good if we removed from Cuba the anti-aircraft missiles, too. But those are defensive weapons, not offensive.

Half an hour before my departure from New York, those pilferers (now we are speaking about Stevenson) sent a letter to comrade Kuznetsov, saying that they supposedly had forgotten to raise questions about some kinds of weapons. They were referring to the IL-28 bombers and

"Komar" ["Mosquito"] patrol boats. Stevenson wrote that it would be necessary to discuss that issue. Immediately I told comrade Kuznetsov that this issue was not a subject for discussion. These bombers have low speed and low altitude limits. Nor can the "Komar" patrol boats operate at great distance. Therefore those weapons are clearly defensive.

In the first Kennedy message [possibly an allusion to Kennedy's October 22 speech, which included a reference to the bombers—ed.] the American administration spoke about the bombers, later this question fell away. Now they want to raise again this question. We have resolutely rejected such a discussion. Comrade Kuznetsov received corresponding instructions from Moscow. This is nothing more than attempts to complicate the whole matter in order to create once again a tense atmosphere and dangerous situation.

Let me specify the list sent by Stevenson. Here it is. There are mentioned: bombers, "Komar" patrol boats, "air-to-surface" bombs and missiles, "sea-to-surface" and "surface-to-surface" projectiles [cruise missiles—ed.]. The Americans are impertinently continuing their attempts to complicate the situation.

It is very important to have a document of agreement, which one can use at the UN. It can be carried through the UN with the help of U Thant. But for that it is necessary to have evidence proving the dismantling and evacuation of weapons. Then the situation would improve. The earlier it is done, the more advantageous it will be for us.

For the Americans it is better to postpone the solution of this question. In this case they have the possibility to continue the quarantine and other aggressive actions. We would rather help U Thant in order to give him a chance to report to the UN that the Soviet side has carried out the dismantling and evacuation of offensive weapons from Cuba. We should talk about it.

We have resolutely rejected the American demand for aerial inspection. Nevertheless, with the help of air photography the Americans collected data that the dismantling of the strategic weapons had concluded and published that information by themselves. U Thant could have informed the UN, but he needs evidence, proving the evacuation of the weapons. UN representatives must see how the evacuation is carried out and inform U Thant on the results of their observation mission. Then the situation will become significantly simpler. The issue will be sent to the Security Council where the decisions are taken not only by the USA representatives.

I'm not insisting that you answer this question right now. Maybe you can do it tomorrow. If it would be acceptable for you, why, for example, not give consent for U Thant's representatives to verify how the weapons' loading onto Soviet ships is carried out. You know that different

international commissions or representatives of foreign powers often operate at sea ports and that fact does not limit the sovereignty of the host country in the slightest measure. Such a possibility would allow U Thant to consider accomplished the decision to withdraw the strategic missiles from Cuba. These observers would be given the opportunity to visit Soviet ships, anchored at the ports, to verify the fact of the armaments' removal. From my point of view that would not represent any infringement of national sovereignty.

Socialist countries, insofar as we are marxist-leninists, have to find a way of securing a unity of actions even in those cases when our opinions are somewhat different. Moreover, I believe, it would be taken into consideration that there are Soviet troops on Cuban territory. Therefore, our cooperation in the fight against imperialism must be especially effective. You may respond to this proposal [of mine] maybe not today, but tomorrow; in general, it seems to me that it is a minimum concession which would allow U Thant to present a report to the Security Council about the evacuation of the missiles. In the contrary case we will inevitably hear at the Security Council that the Cubans do not permit verification to be conducted, and that the Russians are only talking about control. But if the Security Council is given the opportunity to establish compliance of the promise of N.S. Khrushchev, then the quarantine may be lifted. The stage of diplomatic negotiations will begin. Roughly such an appeal was put forth by U Thant during his conversation with me. I ask you to discuss this proposal. I believe that the solution of this problem will help create definite conditions to settle the crisis situation which had developed in the Caribbean sea.

The Americans would like to delay the solution of this issue. Dragging it out gives them the opportunity to prolong the term of the quarantine. We told the Americans that we would be able to evacuate the weapons in 10 days. They are not in a hurry and say that it could take even a month. It is advantageous for the USA to preserve tension in this area. And we are standing for a lessening of tension, in order to solve this question at the Security Council. In our view, it's difficult for the Security Council to discuss this issue until the end of the USA elections. The elections will be held tomorrow and so it would be appropriate to think about its solution. It's very important to keep U Thant on our side. It seemed to me that he was very satisfied by his meeting with comrade Fidel Castro. But if we delay the solution, the Americans will seize the opportunity for their benefit.

C.R. RODRIGUEZ. So, if I understand you correctly, the question is about verification of loading at the Cuban ports as a minimum demand and the Americans would consider such a control a sufficient guarantee? Won't they later demand

an on-site verification, in the forests? I'm afraid if we go along such route we can even reach an inspection on site, where the strategic missiles previously have been located.

A.I. MIKOYAN. The imperialists are not the point. Such a verification is necessary for us. If the imperialists protest we can send them to hell. But it's necessary to take into consideration that the support of U Thant is very important for us, and the imperialists can say what they want. We'll send them to hell, the more so as they have already been convinced of the dismantling of the missiles with the help of air photography. If we manage to come to an agreement over verifications on ships, then the UN representatives will be able to control the process of loading also. We will not accept any more. Indeed, appetite comes with eating, but we will resolutely oppose such a rise of appetite, we'll do a step forward and that's enough for them. We rejected inspection, we didn't allow surface verification, we won't permit control over dismantling. But in order to strengthen our position at the UN, the representatives of this organization should be given the facts. Otherwise it will be difficult to restrain revanchists at the Security Council. But if the evacuation of weapons would be carried out and verified, then we'll obtain the lifting of the quarantine. I think, we should not put the sign of equality between the UN and the American imperialists. The matter is that the UN cannot exceed the limits settled by the two messages. If we manage to receive support from the UN, then the Americans would go to hell. We promised to allow verification of the evacuation. That verification can be organized by means of the UN. We didn't pledge anything else. But if we do not fulfill our promise, the situation may become considerably complicated. Perhaps you will discuss this issue without our presence and at the same time consider the possibilities of our further joint actions. If you find the opportunity we can meet today. However the meeting can be held tomorrow.

F. CASTRO. And what will the inspection look like?

A.I. MIKOYAN. Representatives of U Thant will arrive at the port of loading. Currently there are 4-5 ships assigned for that purpose. Then they'll climb on board. They will be shown the cargo and given corresponding information. In this way they will be convinced that we are fulfilling our promise and will go away. That is my understanding of this form of verification. If we come to an agreement regarding this proposal, I'll inform our representative to the UN and then we'll have the opportunity to settle the technique and procedure of this work.

I would be able to inform Moscow that we agreed to give both U Thant and the UN informa-

tion necessary to declare the verification to be carried out.

F. CASTRO. Isn't it possible to do the same on open sea?

A.I. MIKOYAN. The form of loading verification is more suitable for U Thant. It is not hurting your sovereignty either, because the verification will be carried out not on your territory, but aboard our ship.

F. CASTRO. I understand very well the interest in keeping U Thant on our side. But such an inspection will undoubtedly have a painful effect on the moral condition of our people. The Americans are insisting that the agreement on verification has been achieved by the exchange of messages. And, indeed, in the letter from Khrushchev to Kennedy of 28 October, it is said: "As I informed you in the letter of 27 October, we are prepared to reach agreement to enable United Nations representatives to verify the dismantling of these means."

Therefore it implies representatives of the Security Council for the mission of verification of dismantling on the site.

In the message of N.S. Khrushchev it is said, that consent would obviously be needed on the part of the governments of Cuba and Turkey in order to organize control of compliance of undertaken commitments. That means that N.S. Khrushchev in his letter of 28 October, is making reference to the message of the 27th. The necessity of obtaining consent on the part of Cuba is mentioned there, but that is not a responsibility of the Soviet Union, insofar as the USSR has already warned in the letter of 27 October, that the permission of the Cuban government is needed.

Comrade Mikoyan is saying that the imperialists could be sent to hell.

On 23 October I received a very clear letter where the precise position of the Soviet government is explained. Kennedy's statement is characterized therein as an unprecedented interference into internal affairs, as a violation of international law and as a provocative act. The Republic of Cuba, like all sovereign states, has the right to reject control and decide by itself what kinds of weapons it requires. No sovereign state must give an account of such actions. These concepts of the letter of 23 October are very precise and correctly reflected our position.

One more question. The formula that foresees UN observers in Cuba, in the USA, Guatemala and other countries seems to me a more reasonable verification. A unilateral inspection would affect monstrously the moral spirit of our people. We made big concessions. The American imperialists are carrying out aerial photography freely and we do not impede them due to the appeal of the Soviet government. It is necessary to look for some other formula. I would like to

explain to comrade Mikoyan that what I'm saying reflects the decision of the whole Cuban people. We will not give our consent for inspection. We don't want to compromise Soviet troops and endanger peace in the whole world. If our position imperils peace in the whole world, then we would rather consider the Soviet side to be free of its commitments and we would defend ourselves. Come what may. We have the right to defend our dignity.

O. DORTICOS. The statement voiced by comrade Fidel Castro reflects our common resoluteness and we consider that this issue does not deserve further discussion.

A.I. MIKOYAN. I don't understand such a sharp reaction to my proposal. What we were speaking about was not an inspection of Cuban territory, but a verification procedure in the ports. Foreign representatives can be found in any port. It does not have anything to do with aerial or surface inspection. I'm saying that not to call into question your statement, but in order to explain.

Besides the issue we have just finished discussing, we were going—according to your proposal—to talk over a plan of joint actions. We can have such a discussion not now, but at a time convenient for you.

F. CASTRO. On the basis of yesterday's meeting we came to the conclusion that the Soviet government understood the reasons for our resoluteness not to allow a verification of Cuban territory. That resoluteness is a starting-point for us. We proceeding from the same point regarding joint actions as well. It's difficult to talk about them, if we have not come to an agreement on the previous issue.

That issue is the most important from Cuba now from a political point of view. The guarantees are very problematic. It is not peace that we are speaking about. But inspection is a component of their strategy in the struggle against the Cuban revolution. The American position is weaker. The journal "Time" wrote that the dismantling was proceeding rapidly. Verification in the ports and at sea is just the same. But verification in the ports is very insulting for us from the political point of view and we cannot fulfill this demand of the USA administration.

A.I. MIKOYAN. My proposal was regarding not the Cuban territory, but only the Soviet ships, vessels are considered to be territory of that state, whom they belong to. Such a proposal I put forward on my personal behalf. Moscow did not entrust me to suggest it. Speaking frankly, I considered that insofar as such a verification did not regard Cuban territory, but Soviet ships, it could be accepted. I was saying that although we understand the Cuban position, the verification procedures were not dangerous. I don't under-

stand your reaction to my proposal.

Our Central Committee entrusted me to explain in detail the Soviet position on all the issues that are of interest to the Cuban comrades, entrusted me neither to impose our opinion, nor pressure you in order to obtain consent for inspection of the Cuban territory.

F. CASTRO. But verification would be carried out from the Cuban territory.

A.I. MIKOYAN. No, it could be carried out only aboard the ships. For that purpose Soviet and neutral country ships could be used. The UN representatives could live and sleep aboard those steamers.

F. CASTRO. Such a verification in the ports does not differ from control on ships on open sea.

A.I. MIKOYAN. There is no doubt that a verification can be carried out on open sea too, but does not bear relation to Cuba.

O. DORTICOS. It seems to me that now we should interrupt our work. We can agree upon further meetings through Ambassador Alekseev.

Ambassador Alekseev was also present on the Soviet side.

Recorded by V. Tikhmenev  
[signature]

[Source: Russian Foreign Ministry archives, obtained and translated by NHK television, copy provided by Philip Brenner; translation (by Aleksandr Zaemsky) has been slightly revised.]

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#### Document IV:

**“The USA wanted to destroy us physically,  
but the Soviet Union with Khrushchev’s  
letter destroyed us legally”—  
Mikoyan’s Meeting with Cuban Leaders,  
5 November 1962 (evening)**

Copy

Top Secret

#### MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

A.I. Mikoyan with Oswaldo Dorticos, Ernesto Guevara, and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez

Evening 5 November 1962

After mutual greetings, Com. Dorticos said

that Fidel Castro had not been able to come because he is feeling poorly.

A.I. MIKOYAN expressed his sympathy in regard to the fact that F. Castro is feeling under the weather.

O. DORTICOS. We have analyzed Comrade Mikoyan’s latest proposals regarding verification of the loading of the strategic missiles on the decks of Soviet ships in Cuban ports. Our opinion is thus: keeping in mind chiefly the maintenance of the high moral spirit of our people and, besides that, wishing not to allow the outbreak of legal arguments in relation to the issue of the extraterritoriality of the ships, we want to give a conclusive answer to Comrade Mikoyan. We believe that it is impossible to accept that proposal. We must refuse it, since in principle we do not allow inspections, not on Cuban territory, nor in our airspace, nor in our ports.

After we have finished our consideration of the issues which concern us, we could move to a consideration of our tasks in the near future. We would like for the new steps which stand before us to be agreed with the Soviet government. We believe that after the elections in the USA it will be possible to make a joint statement of the Soviet government and the government of Cuba or to make separate, but simultaneous statements.

The Cuban government unilaterally will declare that it opposes any surveillance of its territory, airspace and ports aimed at inspection of the dismantling and removal of “offensive” weapons. However, we are ready to consider U Thant’s proposal about the possibility of inspection or verification on Cuban territory under the condition of a simultaneous inspection on the territory of the USA, Guatemala and in other countries of the Caribbean basin upon the coming into force of an agreement on the liquidation of the conflict in this region. Of course, we have no right to oppose inspection on the open seas. That is not in our competence. We would like Comrade Mikoyan to understand why we oppose inspections in Cuba. It is not just a matter of thoughts of legal procedure. The political side of the issue also has great significance. Such is our position.

The are other issues of concern to us, but we would not want to mix them up with the current question. Therefore we would be glad to hear Comrade Mikoyan’s opinion.

A.I. MIKOYAN. The variant which includes inspection on ships which are being loaded—that is my initiative. I have already told you that I had no authority to put forth that proposal. We understand your position. It seems to me that we have made our position clear to you. We are informing the CC CPSU and the Soviet government about your position on this issue. As far as a declaration is concerned, then I don’t see the point for either you or we to make a declaration

on the first point, especially since that has already been loudly declared by the Cuban leadership. Second, the publication of separate declarations would reveal the disagreements between us on this question, and that would be disadvantageous for both sides.

When I spoke about the necessity of thinking through our joint positions, I did not have inspections in mind. We must think about the entire complex of measures, both in the sphere of diplomacy and in all other spheres, so as to satisfy our common interests. Whether it will be in the form of a protocol or a declaration is not so important. The main thing is not the form, not the points, rather it is the position from which we can speak to U Thant and the UN. It follows that we should come to an agreement on our position, so as to make possible unity of actions. Concerning disagreements on the control issue, I don’t see the point of making a declaration on that issue and continuing its consideration after the speech of comrade Fidel Castro. However, I have already spoken about that. I think that we will not make a declaration on that topic and we will respect each other’s position, maintaining our own opinions on this issue.

Concerning the proposals about inspections in the USA and other countries of the Caribbean Sea, this proposals accords with the plans of U Thant, we support it, and we can envisage it in the draft of the protocol which we will propose to the Americans. To this point it is mentioned there in a somewhat general form. I spoke about it with U Thant, since this question seemed interesting to us. Although the Americans may support such a proposal regarding to other countries, they will not allow observers at home. If you agree with this point in the draft of the protocol, then it could occupy a place in our joint proposals.

On the basis of a conversation with U Thant I came to the conclusion that a coordinated declaration will not satisfy the Americans and that they will call for declarations from each of the sides. However, form is not the main thing. It is necessary to coordinate our positions so that both our and your representatives in New York could act in a coordinated manner.

The draft of the document with which you are familiar is not limited to U Thant’s plan, but it would still be possible to revise it. U Thant has said that it would be possible to make more concrete the part of the document in which the plan for the presence of the UN in the Caribbean Sea region is noted. U Thant, referring to such states like the USA, Cuba, and a range of other states of Central America, believes it would be possible to do this. This could be done in the text. This issue of coordinated observation by representatives of the UN on the territory of the USA, Cuba, and other countries of Central America could be reflected in the protocol. In this case we would be starting from a common position. However, thus far we do not know your attitude to the

given document.

Comrade Kuznetsov, who is located in New York, asked me to find out the opinion of the Cuban comrades. Not knowing your opinion, Comrade Kuznetsov has been deprived of opportunities to speak with U Thant and the Americans.

A.I. ALEKSEEV. This would give us the possibility to work out a common position in regard to other articles of the protocol as well.

O. DORTICOS. We reviewed the text of the protocol immediately after it was given to us, i.e., even before the conversation with Comrade Mikoyan. We have no fundamental objections. It seems to me that in the protocol there is one article about an inspection in Cuba. It would make sense to work out the issue of the conduct of a one-time observation both in Cuba and in the United States and in other countries of Central America. In view of the information which was given by Com. Mikoyan yesterday, we believe that we will not have any major objections to the document.

C.R. RODRIGUEZ. I have doubts whether the proposed formula regarding the fact that the USA is obliged to secure inspections in Central American countries is lawful.

E. GUEVARA. That formula really causes doubts.

A.I. MIKOYAN. It is still possible to do some serious editing work.

Despite the fact that the Americans may not accept the proposals contained in the document, it will be advantageous for us to have a common position and to link it with U Thant's plan. Even if the Americans will be against it. The inspection will not be unilateral, it will be multilateral, so it evidently doesn't bother you. Whether or not the document will be accepted, it can still have great significance.

The idea belongs to U Thant. It is possible to specify the list of countries which will be listed in this document. For example, Cuba, the USA, Guatemala and others. It seems to me that it makes sense to think over this issue. It would be an advantageous position. The Americans will be opponents of such a proposal, since they do not want to allow inspections on the territory of the USA. However, even our posing of this issue will have great political significance. It is difficult to say how this will end, but the struggle for acceptance of these proposals should bring us a victory.

In this way we see that the protocol does not prompt objections if does not speak about the necessity of striking articles about inspections of the dismantled weapons as applied to Cuba. There, where it speaks about multilateral inspection, it seems to me that it would be necessary to name

the countries. And what is your opinion, Comrades?

O. DORTICOS. I agree. Consequently we should strike article 13.

[Ed. note: Article 13 of the draft protocol read: "The Government of the Republic of Cuba agrees to allow onto the territory of Cuba confidential agents of the U.N. Security Council from the ranks of representatives of neutral states in order so that they can attest to the fulfillment of obligations vis-a-vis the dismantling and carrying away of the weapons mentioned in article 9 of the present Protocol." Draft Soviet-American-Cuban protocol (unofficial translation), 31 October 1962, Russian Foreign Ministry archives.]

C.R. RODRIGUEZ. And change article 10.

[Ed. note: Article 10 of the draft protocol read: "The Government of the USSR, taking into account the agreement of the Government of the Republic of Cuba, from its side agrees that confidential agents of the [UN] Security Council from the ranks of representatives of neutral states have attested to the fulfillment of obligations vis-a-vis the dismantling and carrying away of the weapons mentioned in Article 9 of the present Protocol." Draft Soviet-American-Cuban protocol (unofficial translation), 31 October 1962, Russian Foreign Ministry archives.]

A.I. MIKOYAN. In the 10th article something is said about Cuba?

E. GUEVARA. Yes. I would like to add that it seems to me that it makes sense to take into account the points which we made about the form. The document signed by the representatives of three countries cannot determine the list of countries in which observers from the UN or the Security Council should be present.

A.I. MIKOYAN. Maybe in this article references should be limited to the USA and Cuba, and stipulate that other countries can be included upon the agreement of their governments. So, for instance, from the direction of Guatemala they constantly will be threatening aggression. It would be advisable to point out that fact. It would be possible to ask the Security Council to set the list of countries. It could do this in article 15, there where U Thant's plan is mentioned. We could leave the article without changes or note that the countries are to be determined by the Security Council. It seems to me that it is important to preserve the reference to U Thant's plan.

C. RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ. It would be possible to make many editorial changes here. So, for example, in the 3rd article it is said that "the Government of the USA will restrain those who intend to undertake aggression against Cuba

both from the territory of the USA and from the territory of the neighboring states of Cuba." This type of formulation seems to give the USA the right to determine the actions of other states.

A.I. MIKOYAN. What are you going to do about that? They are satellites. Maybe another editing will tie them even more. So far we have no other version, but it is possible to think about it. The 5th article contains clauses which have a similar nature. However, international law allows similar formulations.

[Ed. note: Article 5 of the draft protocol read: "The Government of the USA declares that the necessary measures will be taken to stop, both on the territory of the USA and on the territory of other countries of the Western hemisphere, any sort of underground activity against the Republic of Cuba, [including] shipments of weapons and explosive materials by air or sea, invasions by mercenaries, sending of spies and diversionists." Draft Soviet-American-Cuban protocol (unofficial translation), 31 October 1962, Russian Foreign Ministry archives.]

C. RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ. That is so, if the governments of those countries will not object. However, Guatemala will oppose this proposal. The situation will change, and the USA will refuse its obligations.

A.I. MIKOYAN. In Kennedy's message pretty much the same thought is expressed, but the use of a phrase like "I am sure, that other countries of the Western Hemisphere will not undertake aggressive actions..." Approximately in such a form. Comrade Carlos Rafael Rodriguez's observation is just. But it is necessary to think up something. The Americans may say that this is an issue for each of these countries. Let's take a look at the formulation in Kennedy's message.

ALEKSEEV. In this message it is said that "I am sure that other countries of the Western Hemisphere will be ready to proceed in a similar manner."

C. RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ. It would be possible to propose approximately this formulation: "The Security Council will undertake measures so as not to allow aggression against Cuba from the countries of the Caribbean, and also the use of weapons and the territory of these countries for the preparation of such aggression." It also would make sense to note that the "USA will take upon itself the obligation that no preparations will be conducted on its territory or with the assistance of its weapons..." It would be possible to work out this variant.

A.I. MIKOYAN. Yes. This variant really is interesting. It is important to note that the USA

acts not only from its own territory. This is a very important point for Cuba.

DORTICOS. It is necessary to work on the editing of this document. We are not prepared for this today. Here, it is necessary to think about the form, and also to work on the editing of this document, although we are essentially in agreement with this document and understand how important it is to achieve success. We can work a little bit together, significantly improving the formulation, but it makes sense to do it quicker.

ERNESTO GUEVARA. In essence we are in agreement with this document.

DORTICOS. Naturally, we have to overcome certain language difficulties, too. A more careful editing of the document evidently is necessary in both languages.

A.I. MIKOYAN. That is good. Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs is waiting for a communication about your attitude towards this document. Com. Kuznetsov also requested a clarification of your position on this issue. Now we could report about the principal agreement, excluding article 13, thoroughly editing article 5, and bearing changes in article 3 regarding the USA's position in respect to the countries of Central America. After our report about your fundamental agreement, but the MFA and also our representative at the UN will be able to begin work. Maybe we could present our variant tomorrow.

C. RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ. The formulation of article 5 bothers me.

A.I. MIKOYAN. Yes. It encroaches on the sovereignty of the countries of Central America, but the governments of those countries are conducting a very bad policy.

DORTICOS. We will try to prepare our variant by tomorrow.

A.I. MIKOYAN. Working out this document, we are thinking about providing for the security of Cuba. It seems to me that it is not possible to limit the declaration about non-aggression to the United States only. The United States of America can push other countries towards aggression and provide help to them in aggression, while remaining on the sidelines itself. We have to oblige the United States to fulfill Kennedy's promise. Com. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez is entirely right. It is not of course a matter of these governments, rather, the important thing is in the essence of this issue. Kennedy on this issue came to meet us. We demanded that not only the USA would give its word about non-aggression, but its allies too. This is a compro-

mise for them. We should use this compromise. It was not easy for the United States to make it.

ALEKSEEV. We should not miss this opportunity.

A.I. MIKOYAN. I am trying to evaluate the situation which flows from your positions. McCloy said that he gives his word that the camps will be liquidated, that there will be no preparations for aggression. This type of declaration has significance even in oral form. When the world knows, it will be uncomfortable for them not to fulfill their promises. I think, that it would be useful for you, comrades, to think about issues of mutual tactics. Let's say that the USA will not agree to inspection on its territory. However, as it seems to me, it would be important to organize observation on the territory of Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and certain other territories with the assistance of the UN representatives.

It seems to me that it would be important to arrange for inspection in the countries of Central America. Is Cuba interested in this? What are the positive and negative sides of this type of proposal? I am in no way an authority on issues of Central American policy, but it seems to me that it would be important to secure the presence of the UN there, in order to mitigate the significance in this region of the OAS and the Organization of Central American States. Comrades, have you thought about this issue? It will be easier for you to decide, than for us. Could the following situation come to pass? They will say to us, that inspections of the Central American countries are possible, but they cannot be realized on the territory of the United States of America. Would you agree to that or, in your opinion, is that type of a resolution not interesting to you, if it does not extend to the USA? This would be important for us to know in order to work out a joint tactic. It is clear that the USA will figure on the list. Or perhaps an agreement can be reached on inspection in Central American countries, while the USA will be limited only by the declaration. You could give your answer to my questions not today, but tomorrow.

DORTICOS. If inspections of the USA will be excluded, then in the same way inspections of Cuban territory will be excluded too.

A.I. MIKOYAN. You could thoroughly consider this issue, and then inform us of your decision.

C. RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ. It would make sense to specify the terms of the multilateral inspections as they apply to Cuba. It should spell out the fulfillment of the obligation which the Soviet Union has accepted on itself, i.e. verification of the dismantling and evacuation of the Soviet missiles. As far as the rest of the countries

are concerned, this inspection would refer to the areas where camps for the training of counter-revolutionary mercenaries for aggression against Cuba are set up. The inspection could be extended to part of Florida, not touching, naturally, Cape Canaveral. It is also necessary to organize an inspection of camps in Puerto Rico, on the island of Vieques and in certain other territories, i.e., the inspection will touch not the entire territory of the mentioned countries, but rather those regions where these camps exist.

A.I. MIKOYAN. It is immediately evident that Carlos Rafael Rodriguez is a great specialist on these issues. In this way we could drive the aggressors into a corner. It is important to find an appropriate formulation. This variation represents a big step forward. Maybe tomorrow [Soviet officials] Bazykin and Alekseev will meet with some of you and confer on editorial issues. It will be important to have this document immediately following the elections in the USA. We will take the initiative, and we will not allow the Americans to capture it. Perhaps the Security Council can be convened on the 7th or 8th of November.

ALEKSEEV. According to my information this will be done on the 6th.

DORTICOS objects.

GUEVARA objects.

A.I. MIKOYAN. U Thant told me that on 6 November the Security Council cannot be convened: we will argue. There are protocol issues here, and declarations, and procedures. We mustn't underestimate the importance of the struggle in the UN and the opinions of the member states.

DORTICOS. We believe that it is possible to act in the following way. Let us undertake a thorough revision of the document, and we will try to do it quicker. Right after we have prepared it, Comrades Bazykin and Alekseev can meet with our representatives in order to consider editorial issues.

There is information from Comrade [Carlos M.] Lechuga [Hevia], our new representative at the UN, regarding the fact that U Thant is inclined to put off the convening of the Security Council. It is possible that his session won't even be this week. U Thant is interested in holding bilateral meetings before convening the Security Council. Besides this, now we are entering a pretty complicated time: in the recent hours the USA has begun to create even more tension, not only in relation to the IL-28 bombers, but has also announced unlimited airborne surveillance.

This is dangerous. We will consider what to do under conditions of a renewal of provocations

from the air.

A.I. MIKOYAN. You, Comrade Dorticos, possess trustworthy information. We told U Thant that it would be good if the Security Council were convened after the elections. I already said that when we withdraw the strategic missiles and present evidence of that fact, we will be able to begin to speak about something else.

Maybe tomorrow in the first half of the day the comrades will work on editing the document, and after lunch we will organize an exchange of opinions.

I would also like to propose that we not publish a report about every meeting. It seems to me that there is no point in doing this today, and in general it would make sense for us to come to an agreement about this.

DORTICOS agrees with Comrade Mikoyan's proposal.

A.I. MIKOYAN. When we complete the evacuation of the missiles, many issues will be seen in a different light. While we still have not withdrawn them, we must maintain a different line. For that, 5-6 days are necessary. It is necessary to hold the line; otherwise they will accuse us of treachery. After we complete the evacuation, we will be able to adamantly oppose overflights, the quarantine, verification by the Red Cross, violations of airspace. At that moment the correlation of forces will change.

It is necessary to get the UN on our side. We must achieve more than was promised in Kennedy's letter. We mustn't underestimate the value of diplomatic means of struggle. They are very important in periods when there is no war. It is important to know how to use the diplomatic arts, displaying at the same time both firmness and flexibility.

E. GUEVARA. I would like to tell you, Comrade Mikoyan, that, sincerely speaking, as a consequence of the most recent events an extremely complicated situation has been created in Latin America. Many communists who represent other Latin American parties, and also revolutionary divisions like the Front for People's Action in Chile, are wavering. They are dismayed [*obeskurazheni*] by the actions of the Soviet Union. A number of divisions have broken up. New groups are springing up, fractions are springing up. The thing is, we are deeply convinced of the possibility of seizing power in a number of Latin American countries, and practice shows that it is possible not only to seize it, but also to hold power in a range of countries, taking into account practical experience. Unfortunately, many Latin American groups believe that in the political acts of the Soviet Union during the recent events there are contained two serious errors. First, the exchange [the proposal to swap

Soviet missiles in Cuba for U.S. missiles in Turkey—ed.], and second, the open concession. It seems to me that this bears objective witness to the fact that we can now expect the decline of the revolutionary movement in Latin America, which in the recent period had been greatly strengthened. I have expressed my personal opinion, but I have spoken entirely sincerely.

A.I. MIKOYAN. Of course, it is necessary to speak sincerely. It is better to go to sleep than to hear insincere speeches.

E. GUEVARA. I also think so. Cuba is a country in which the interests of both camps meet head on. Cuba is a peace-loving country. However, during the recent events the USA managed to present itself in the eyes of public opinion as a peace-loving country which was exposing aggression from the USSR, demonstrating courage and achieving the liquidation of the Soviet base in Cuba. The Americans managed to portray the existence of Soviet missiles in Cuba as a manifestation of aggressive intentions from the Soviet Union. The USA, by achieving the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba, in a way received the right to forbid other countries from making bases available. Not only many revolutionaries think this way, but also representatives of the Front of People's Action in Chile and the representatives of several democratic movements.

In this, in my opinion, lies the crux of the recent events. Even in the context of all our respect for the Soviet Union, we believe that the decisions made by the Soviet Union were a mistake. I am saying this not for discussion's sake, but so that you, Comrade Mikoyan, would be conversant with this point of view.

C. RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ. Even before your arrival, Comrade Mikoyan, immediately after the famous decision of the Soviet government was made, comrades from the editorial board of the newspaper "Popular" phoned me and requested an interview. They wanted urgently to receive our declaration regarding the situation which had developed, since the representatives of the "third force" were actively opposing Soviet policy. You know that group, it is deputy Trias. I gave an interview, not very long, since though I had been informed about the basic points in the speech of Fidel Castro which should have taken place on November 1, I could not use them, and in conclusion I observed that the development of events in the coming days would show the significance of the decisions that had been made.

A.I. MIKOYAN. The meetings and conversations with Comrade Fidel Castro had for me very great significance. They helped me to understand more deeply the role of the psychological factor for the peoples of these countries.

E. GUEVARA. I think that the Soviet policy had two weak sides. You didn't understand the significance of the psychological factor for Cuban conditions. This thought was expressed in an original way by Fidel Castro: "The USA wanted to destroy us physically, but the Soviet Union with Khrushchev's letter destroyed us legally [*iuridicheskii*]."

A.I. MIKOYAN. But we thought that you would be satisfied by our act. We did everything so that Cuba would not be destroyed. We see your readiness to die beautifully, but we believe that it isn't work dying beautifully.

E. GUEVARA. To a certain extent you are right. You offended our feelings by not consulting us. But the main danger is in the second weak side of the Soviet policy. The thing is, you as if recognized the right of the USA to violate international law. This is great damage done to your policy. This fact really worries us. It may cause difficulties for maintaining the unity of the socialist countries. It seems to us that there already are cracks in the unity of the socialist camp.

A.I. MIKOYAN. That issue worries us too. We are doing a lot to strengthen our unity, and with you, comrades, we will always be with you despite all the difficulties.

E. GUEVARA. To the last day?

A.I. MIKOYAN. Yes, let our enemies die. We must live and live. Live like communists. We are convinced of our victory. A maneuver is not the same as a defeat. Compare the situation of a year ago, and today. A year ago the presence of Soviet soldiers in Cuba would have provoked an explosion of indignation. Now, it is as if the right of Russians to be on this continent also is recognized. That is good. McCloy even told me jokingly during a conversation that the presence of Russian officers [in Cuba—ed.] calms him down. The Cubans could open fire without thinking, he observed. But Russians will think. Of course, there could be objections to this remark, but the psychological aspect is taken into consideration.

Sometimes, in order to take two steps forward, it is necessary to take a step back. I will not in any way teach you, though I am older. You may say: it is time to consign it to the archive, request that we resign.

Recently, I read Lenin. I want to tell you about this not for some sort of an analogy, but as an example of Leninist logic. When the Brest peace treaty was signed, Bukharin was working in the International Committee of the Party. Although he was repressed, I consider him a good person. He tried, it happens, mistakenly, emotions had great significance for him. We were friends (not in 1918, at that time I was working in

the Caucasus, but much later). And so the International Committee accepted a resolution in which it was stated that the concession in Brest was shameful. The point of Soviet power is lost. The comrades accepted the resolution as if rejecting Soviet power itself. Lenin wrote about this resolution: monstrous. How is it possible for such a thought even to occur to a communist? But you know, at that time we practically had no armed forces, but those comrades wanted to die heroically, rejecting Soviet power.

E. GUEVARA. Yes. I see that there is no analogy here, but great similarities.

A.I. MIKOYAN. There really is no analogy in this example. Imagine, Russia at that time was alone. We had no forces. There was some sympathy from the working class of other countries, but sympathy alone doesn't help much. Cuba is powerful. You have no war. You have the support of the socialist camp. It is true, your geographic situation is disadvantageous, communications are far extended. This is a weak position. The Americans can disrupt communications and not allow the delivery of fuel to Cuba. We could have brought 200 million people into the streets as a demonstration of protest. But this would not have garnered any fuel for you.

How can the blockade be disrupted? How can it be broken? We have at our disposal global rockets. Using them would lead to nuclear war. What do you say to this? Shall we die heroically? That is romance. Why should revolutionaries die[?] It is necessary to maneuver, develop the economy, culture, serve as an example of other peoples of the countries of Latin America and lead them to revolution. Lenin, in a complex situation even agreed to the conduct of the conference in the Prince Isles. Study Lenin. To die heroically—that's not enough. To live in shame is not permitted, but nor is it permitted to give to the enemy your own destruction. It is necessary to seek a way out in the art of diplomacy.

A barber comes to me in the residence with a pistol, and I ask him: "You want to shave me with a pistol? No, with a razor." Or, a correspondent from the newspaper "Oy" interviewed me, what a pleasant young man, also with a pistol. He has to take notes, but he lost his pencil. What can he write with a pistol? Do you understand me? If Kennedy maneuvers, dissimulates, conducts a flexible policy, why don't the Cuban comrades use that weapon[?] You won't manage to knock off the reaction with a pistol, the diplomatic art is necessary too.

I was very satisfied by the conversation with comrade Fidel Castro, but today I didn't even know what to say regarding his reaction. But I repeat that it was amazing. Maybe I spoke foolishly, but before that I thought for a long time. For me it has been morally difficult during these days. And today it was difficult for me to

understand his reaction. Perhaps I let some clumsiness show, spoke in some kind of tone? No, I, it seems, gave no grounds. I said that it is necessary to help U Thant. It is necessary to keep U Thant on our side. Comrade Fidel asked an appropriate question, why not conduct the verification on the open sea. But U Thant won't gain anything with the assistance of this type of verification. Today I became a victim of Fidel's good speech, evidently because I extemporaneously put forth my idea. An old man, I have the shortcomings of the young.

E. GUEVARA. One day before that we said that there would be no inspections. Comrade Mikoyan said that he had told McCloy that airborne inspections are inadmissible.

A.I. MIKOYAN. My proposal did not concern even the shore. The subject was verification of our ships. Ships are sovereign territory. The waters are yours, therefore we were trying to elucidate your point of view. We didn't touch the land. We were talking about the waters. The land had nothing to do with it. Evidently I was naive. I thought that this variant was possible. Our ambassador, a young person, told me secretly: "I think that the Cubans will accept this proposal." (To Alekseev): Don't you speak for them. You are not a Cuban.

C. RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ. I have been reading Lenin's works for a long time. In the present situation we need evaluations which correctly reflect the situation. It is not a matter of feelings. These are the objective conditions in Latin America.

In the first day of our conversations Comrade Mikoyan spoke about two types of struggle. I think that in certain conditions the last word belongs to the political struggle. In Latin America after these events a feeling of demoralization arose among the people. The nationalistic petit bourgeoisie lost their faith in the possibility of confronting imperialism. Diplomacy may change the situation. Many people believe that if Kennedy affirms his promises only orally, that will be equivalent to a defeat. But if pressure will be applied by the Soviet Union, if Cuba will act decisively, if we use U Thant and the neutral states to the necessary extent, if we insist on the acceptance of the demand re: verification of the enemy's territory, if we achieve acceptance of Fidel's five points, we will gain a significant victory.

An oral declaration of non-aggression definitely will create a feeling of a defeat.

A.I. MIKOYAN. I agree with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. Comrade Guevara evaluated the past events in a pessimistic tone. I respect his opinion, but I do not agree with him. I will try during the next meeting to convince him, though I doubt my

ability to do that. Comrade Carlos Rafael Rodriguez pointed out the directions of the future struggle. I like this way of framing the issue. Of course, it is foolish simply to believe Kennedy, it is necessary to bind him with obligations.

C. RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ. And with strategic missiles?

A.I. MIKOYAN. We cannot defend you with these missiles. I received the possibility to visit you, while others could not do that. We had to request the agreement of Canada, the USA to the overflight, and to overcome other difficulties. They told us, for example, that we could not fly to Canada without lead [escort?—ed.] planes. We had to receive visas. What could we do? That is their right. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs phoned the State Department and asked: Will you give a visa to Mikoyan or not? Canada delayed giving an answer, the Canadian minister was absent, he was in New York. Other officials could not resolve that issue. Approval was granted at 1:30 a.m., and at 3 a.m. we took off. But somehow we started talking about me. If Cuba was located in Greece's place, we would have shown them.

I am satisfied by my meetings with you. The business side is important. Basically, we have come to an agreement on the protocol. Besides that, I must say that I thought that I understood the Cubans, and then I listened to Comrade Ché and understood that no, I still don't know them.

ALEKSEEV: But Ché is an Argentinean.

A.I. MIKOYAN, to Ché: Let's meet and talk a little. I would like to exchange some thoughts with you. It is not a matter of who will be victorious over whom. We must try to help each other. I understood a lot. I understood how important the psychological factor is in Latin America. I am at your disposal. Every meeting is very useful for me. However you want it: one on one, two on each side, and so on. When I return to Moscow, I should have the right to say that I understood the Cubans, but I am afraid that when I return I will say that I don't know them, and in fact I will not know them.

Our stake in Cuba is huge in both a material and moral [sense], and also in a military regard. Think about it, are we really helping you out of [our] overabundance? Do we have something extra? We don't have enough for ourselves. No, we want to preserve the base of socialism in Latin America. You were born as heroes, before a revolutionary situation ripened in Latin America, but the camp of socialism still has not grown into its full capability to come to your assistance. We give you ships, weapons, people, fruits and vegetables. China is big, but for the time being it is

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will conclude with some observations about the legacy of the Cuban missile crisis for Warsaw Pact nuclear operations, a legacy that endured until the Pact itself collapsed in 1990-91.

**“Lessons” of the Cuban Missile Crisis**

Several features of the Cuban missile crisis were of direct relevance to subsequent Soviet nuclear deployments in Eastern Europe. The “lessons” that Soviet officials derived from the crisis were of course not the only factor (or even the most important factor) shaping the Warsaw Pact’s nuclear command structure, but they seem to have been of considerable influence, at least implicitly. Although Soviet leaders had been concerned well before the Cuban Missile Crisis about the difficulty of retaining secure control over nuclear weapons and about the danger of unauthorized actions, the crisis put these risks into a whole new light.<sup>8</sup> By underscoring how easily control could be lost, the crisis inevitably bolstered Moscow’s determination to ensure strict centralized command over all nuclear operations, including nuclear operations conducted by the Warsaw Pact.

One of the most disconcerting lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis from the Soviet perspective was the potential for nuclear weapons to be misused if the aims of local actors were not identical to Soviet goals. It is now known that at the height of the crisis Fidel Castro sent a top-secret cable to Moscow urging the Soviet Union to launch a nuclear strike against the United States if U.S. forces invaded Cuba.<sup>9</sup> Castro apparently had been led to believe that the Soviet Union would be willing to go to war—and risk its own destruction—in defense of Cuba. Nikita Khrushchev’s response to Castro’s plea indicates that the Soviet leader had no intention of ordering the use of nuclear weapons, regardless of what happened to Cuba.

For Khrushchev, this episode was especially unnerving because he initially had given serious consideration to providing Castro with direct command over Soviet forces in Cuba, including the nuclear-capable Frog (“Luna”) missiles and Il-28 aircraft.<sup>10</sup> (Only the medium-range SS-4 and SS-5 missiles would have been left under Moscow’s command.) As it turned out,

Khrushchev decided not to give Castro any direct jurisdiction over Soviet tactical nuclear forces; indeed, the draft treaty on military cooperation between the Soviet Union and Cuba, which was due to take effect once the presence of the Soviet missiles in Cuba was publicly revealed at the end of October, would have left the “military units of the two states under the command of their respective governments.”<sup>11</sup> Even so, the Cuban leader’s message on 26 October 1962 still struck a raw nerve in Moscow.<sup>12</sup> It was a vivid reminder of the dangers that might have resulted if the Soviet Union had delegated any responsibility for nuclear operations.

A related lesson about the dangers posed by local actors pertained to the role of the commander of Soviet forces in Cuba, Army-General Issa Pliiev, who was chosen for the post because of his long-standing and very close friendship with both Khrushchev and the Soviet Defense Minister, Marshal Rodion Malinovskii.<sup>13</sup> At no time during the crisis did Pliiev have authority to order the use of either medium-range or tactical nuclear missiles, but it is now known that several weeks before the crisis—in the late summer of 1962—Malinovskii had considered the possibility of giving Pliiev pre-delegated authority to order the use of tactical missiles against invading U.S. troops if Pliiev’s lines of communication with Moscow had been severed and all other means of defense against an invasion had proven insufficient. A written order to this effect was prepared on 8 September 1962, but in the end Malinovskii declined to sign it. Thus, at the time of the crisis Pliiev had no independent authority to order the use of nuclear weapons or even to order that nuclear warheads, which were stored separately from the missiles, be released for possible employment. The limitations on Pliiev’s scope of action during the crisis were reinforced by two cables transmitted by Malinovskii on October 22 and 25, which “categorically” prohibited any use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances without explicit authorization from Moscow.<sup>14</sup>

The strictures imposed by the Soviet leadership held up well during the crisis, as the procedural safeguards for nuclear operations proved sufficient to forestall any untoward incidents.<sup>15</sup> For the most part, Khrushchev’s and Malinovskii’s faith in Pliiev was well-founded. Nevertheless, it is clear that Pliiev wanted to ease some of the proce-

dural restrictions—at least for tactical missiles—even after he received the two telegrams “categorically” forbidding him to order the issuance or use of nuclear weapons without express authorization. On October 26 he sent a cable to Moscow in which he apparently mentioned that Castro wanted him to prepare for a nuclear strike and that, as a result, he had decided it was time to move nuclear warheads closer to the missiles (though without actually issuing them to the missile units). Pliiev then requested that his decision be approved and that he be given due authority to order the preparation of tactical missiles for launch if, as appeared imminent, U.S. troops invaded the island. Soviet leaders immediately turned down both of his requests and reemphasized that no actions involving nuclear weapons were to be undertaken without direct authorization from Moscow.<sup>16</sup>

Still, the very fact that Pliiev sought to have the restrictions lifted, and his seeming willingness to use tactical nuclear weapons if necessary, provided a sobering indication of the risks entailed in giving discretion to local commanders. The risks would have been especially acute in this instance because there were no technical safeguards on the nuclear weapons in Cuba to serve as a fallback in case Pliiev (or someone else) attempted to circumvent the procedural safeguards.<sup>17</sup> This is not to say that it would have been easy for Pliiev to evade the procedural limits—to do so he would have had to obtain cooperation from troops all along the chain of command—but there was no technical barrier per se to unauthorized actions.

Thus, one of the clear lessons of the crisis was the need not only to maintain stringent procedural safeguards for all Soviet nuclear forces, but also to equip those forces with elaborate technical devices that would prevent unauthorized or accidental launches. This applied above all to nuclear weapons deployed abroad, where the lines of communication were more vulnerable to being severed or disrupted.<sup>18</sup>

One further lesson from the Cuban Missile Crisis, which reinforced the perceived need for strict, centralized control over all nuclear operations, was the role that accidents played. The most conspicuous instance came on October 27 when an American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft was shot down over Cuba.<sup>19</sup> The rules of engagement for Soviet troops in Cuba did not permit the

## WHEN AND WHY ROMANIA DISTANCED ITSELF FROM THE WARSAW PACT

by Raymond L. Garthoff

In April 1964, the Romanian leadership issued a declaration in which it first expressed public dissatisfaction with the Warsaw Pact. Georghiu Dej, and after 1965 his successor Nicolae Ceausescu, increasingly distanced themselves from the Pact and Moscow's leadership, although without challenging the Soviet Union. Romania ceased to participate actively in the military command of the Warsaw Pact after 1969. All of this small slice of history has, of course, been well known. It has not been known why Romania launched itself on that path at that particular time. Above all, it has not heretofore been known that even earlier Romania essentially repudiated its allegiance obligations in a secret approach to the United States government in October 1963, promising neutrality in case of the outbreak of war. This was a stunning, unilateral breach of the central obligation of Warsaw Pact alliance membership, which Romania nominally maintained until the very end, when the Pact dissolved in 1991.

What precisely happened, and why? The precipitating event was the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962. The tensions generated by that crisis had reverberations throughout Europe. No country wanted to be brought into a war over the issue of Soviet missiles in Cuba. But while members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact dutifully gave public support to the United States and the Soviet Union, respectively, some did so with considerable trepidation. And in Bucharest, the leadership decided after that crisis that it would seek to disengage itself from any automatic involvement if their superpower alliance leader, the Soviet Union, again assumed such risks.

Romanian-American relations at that time were minimal. Nonetheless, when Romanian Foreign Minister Corneliu Manescu asked to meet with the Secretary of State Dean Rusk, when both were in New

York for the opening of the UN General Assembly in the fall of 1963, a routine meeting was arranged for October 4. Manescu then arranged a private meeting with Rusk, attended only by an interpreter. It was the first opportunity after the crisis nearly a year earlier for the Romanian leadership to approach the United States government at this level.

Manescu told Rusk that Romania had not been consulted over the Soviet decision to place nuclear missiles in Cuba, and was not therefore a party to the dispute. The Romanian government wanted the United States to understand that Romania would remain neutral in any conflict generated by such actions as the Soviet deployment of nuclear missiles in Cuba, and sought assurances that in the event of hostilities arising

in Romania and offered the United States any opportunity it wished to verify that fact. (The absence of nuclear weapons accorded with U.S. intelligence, and the United States did not pursue the verification offer.)

In view of the sensitivity of the matter, any knowledge of this exchange was very closely held in Washington, and no doubt in Bucharest. It was not divulged to NATO governments. So far as is known, the Soviet leadership did not learn of it—although that remains to be determined from the Soviet archives. It did not “leak” in thirty years. I do not know if there is today any written account in either American or Romanian archives.

I was told about the exchange by Dean Rusk soon after it occurred, and I reconfirmed this account of it with him in 1990. It seemed to me that with the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, the overthrow of the Romanian government, and the reunification of Europe, the matter is now safely history, and should become a footnote to the historical record.

It may be instructive, as well as interesting, history. For example, as far as I am aware no one has ever speculated on a relationship between the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Romanian actions in distancing themselves from the Warsaw Pact. It is also interesting to reflect that despite that crisis and other severe trials, the two alliances did hold together throughout the Cold War, and with relatively

little evident concern over the risks involved, even in other countries hosting nuclear weapons of the superpowers. Thus, remarkable as was the Romanian case, it was the sole exception to alliance solidarity—assuming the archives or informed officials do not have any other case, on one side or the other, to reveal.

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from such a situation, the United States would not strike Romania on the mistaken assumption that it would be allied with the Soviet Union in such a war.

Secretary Rusk in response indicated that the United States would take into account any country that did not participate in or permit its territory to be used in military actions against the United States or its allies. In this connection, he said that it would be important for the United States to know whether there were nuclear weapons on Romanian soil, and that if the United States were given assurance that there were none, that fact would be taken into account in U.S. targeting. The Romanians subsequently responded that there were no nuclear weapons

downing of American planes except those carrying out an attack.<sup>20</sup> When the U-2 was shot down, no one in Moscow was quite sure what had happened—Khrushchev and most others mistakenly thought that Castro had ordered Soviet troops to fire at the plane—but everyone was certain that further incidents of this sort might cause the crisis to spin out of control. The risks posed by accidents would have been especially great if the local commander (i.e., Pliev) had been given independent authority to order the use of nuclear weapons. After all, Pliev and other officers based in Cuba, whose lives were directly at risk during the crisis, were naturally inclined to overreact to unintended “provocations” from the opposing side. To the extent that such overreactions could not be avoided in future crises, it was essential that the consequences be minimized and that further escalation be prevented. Obviously, it would be vastly more difficult to regain any semblance of control if local actors “accidentally” resorted to the use of nuclear weapons.

Hence, the accidents that occurred during the Cuban Missile Crisis underscored the need for rigid safeguards, both procedural and technical, to preclude the use of Soviet nuclear weapons except in the most dire emergency. This lesson, like the others that Khrushchev and his colleagues derived from the crisis, survived the change of leadership in Moscow in October 1964. Although Leonid Brezhnev altered many aspects of Khrushchev’s military policies, he was just as determined as his predecessor to retain stringent political control over Soviet nuclear forces.

### **Nuclear Operations and the Warsaw Pact**

Nuclear weapons first became an issue for the Warsaw Pact in mid-1958 when, allegedly in response to deployments by NATO, Khrushchev warned that the Pact would be “compelled by force of circumstance to consider stationing [tactical nuclear] missiles in the German Democratic Republic, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.”<sup>21</sup> Shortly thereafter, the Czechoslovak, East German, and Polish armed forces began receiving nuclear-capable aircraft and surface-to-surface missiles from the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup> The Bulgarian and Hungarian armies also soon obtained nuclear-capable aircraft and missiles from Moscow; and

even the Romanian military was eventually supplied with nuclear-capable Frog-7 and Scud-B missiles. In all cases, the deployment of these delivery vehicles was well under way by the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The new East European weapons were officially described as components of the “Warsaw Pact’s joint nuclear forces” and were later used for simulated nuclear strikes during Pact exercises, but all nuclear warheads for the delivery systems remained under exclusive Soviet control, and the delivery vehicles themselves would have come under direct Soviet command if they had ever been equipped with warheads during a crisis. Moreover, the thousands of tactical nuclear weapons deployed by Soviet forces on East European territory were not subject to any sort of “dual-key” arrangement along the lines that NATO established in the mid-1960s. Whenever Warsaw Pact exercises included combat techniques for nuclear warfare (as they routinely did from early 1962 on), the decision on when to “go nuclear” was left entirely to the Soviet High Command.<sup>23</sup> In every respect, then, the East European governments had no say in the use of the Pact’s “joint” nuclear arsenal.

The exclusivity of Soviet command was reinforced by secret agreements that the Soviet Union concluded in the early to mid-1960s with Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Poland regarding the storage of nuclear warheads in those countries. Although all the agreements were bilateral, they were described as coming “within the framework of the Warsaw Pact.” The first such agreements were signed with East Germany and Czechoslovakia before the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Soviet-East German agreements, signed at various intervals in the early 1960s, covered some 16 storage sites, all of which were controlled exclusively by special troops assigned to the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany.<sup>24</sup> The East German authorities had no say at all in the location or maintenance of these facilities, not to mention the use of the munitions stored there. Soviet agreements with Czechoslovakia were somewhat more complicated because no Soviet troops had been present on Czechoslovak territory since the end of 1945. Two preliminary agreements were signed in August 1961 and February 1962 entitling the Soviet Union to dispatch nuclear warheads immediately to Czechoslovakia in the event

of an emergency.<sup>25</sup> After the Cuban Missile Crisis, those two agreements were supplanted by a much more far-reaching “Treaty Between the Governments of the USSR and CSSR on Measures to Increase the Combat Readiness of Missile Forces,” which was signed by Malinovskii and his Czechoslovak counterpart, Army-General Bohumir Lomsky, in December 1965.<sup>26</sup> The treaty provided for the permanent stationing of Soviet nuclear warheads at three sites in western Czechoslovakia.

This third agreement with Czechoslovakia was concluded just after the Soviet Union had worked out a similar arrangement with Hungary.<sup>27</sup> The Soviet-Hungarian agreement was signed by Brezhnev and the Hungarian leader, Janos Kadar, and was kept secret from almost all other Hungarian officials. Much the same was true of an agreement that the Soviet Union concluded with Poland in early 1967.<sup>28</sup> Only a few top Polish officials were permitted to find out about the document. The Soviet agreements with all four countries covered nuclear warheads slated for use on delivery vehicles belonging to Soviet troops stationed in those countries. Some of the warheads were also intended for weapons deployed by the local armies, but in that case the delivery vehicles would have been transferred to direct Soviet command. Under the new agreements East European officials had no role in the use of the Pact’s “joint” nuclear arsenal, nor any control over the reinforced storage bunkers for nuclear warheads (or even the housing for elite units assigned to guard the bunkers). A senior East European military official later confirmed that “the procedures for the defense and protection of these special-purpose storage centers for nuclear warheads were such that no one from our side had permission to enter, and even Soviet officials who were not directly responsible for guarding and operating the buildings were not allowed in.”<sup>29</sup>

Thus, by the late 1960s the Soviet and East European governments had forged a nuclear command-and-control structure for the Warsaw Pact that gave exclusive say to the Soviet Union. Even before the Cuban Missile Crisis, Soviet leaders had been inclined to move in this direction, but the crisis greatly accelerated the trend and effectively ruled out anything less than complete control in Moscow.

### Intra-Pact Debate about Nuclear "Sharing"

The effects of the Cuban Missile Crisis could also be felt, if only implicitly, when the Soviet Union had to deal with complaints from its allies about the Pact's nuclear arrangements. The lack of East European input proved unsatisfactory to several of the allied governments, who urged that they be given some kind of role in nuclear-release authorization. Their concerns were prompted in part by changes in Soviet military doctrine in the mid-1960s, which seemed to open the way for a nuclear or conventional war confined to Europe. Under Khrushchev, Soviet military doctrine had long been predicated on the assumption that any war in Europe would rapidly escalate to an all-out nuclear exchange between the superpowers; but by the time Khrushchev was ousted in October 1964, Soviet military theorists had already begun to imply that a European conflict need not escalate to the level of strategic nuclear war.<sup>30</sup> Under Brezhnev, Soviet military analyses of limited warfare in Europe, including the selective use of tactical nuclear weapons, grew far more explicit and elaborate.<sup>31</sup> Although this doctrinal shift made sense from the Soviet perspective, it stirred unease among East European leaders, who feared that their countries might be used as tactical nuclear battlegrounds without their having the slightest say in it.

The issue became a source of contention at the January 1965 meeting of the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee, where the assembled leaders discussed NATO's plans to create a Multi-Lateral Force (MLF) that would supposedly give West Germany access to nuclear-armed missiles. The PCC warned that if an MLF were formed and the West Germans were included, the Warsaw Pact would have to resort to "defensive measures and *corresponding steps*."<sup>32</sup> The nature of these "corresponding steps" was never specified, but Romanian and Czechoslovak officials at the meeting maintained that the obvious solution was for the Soviet Union to grant its Warsaw Pact allies a direct say in the use of nuclear weapons stationed on East European soil.<sup>33</sup> The Romanians were especially insistent on having responsibility shared for all Warsaw Pact nuclear systems, including those deployed with the various Groups of Soviet Forces. Brezhnev and his colleagues,

however, were averse to any steps that would even marginally erode the Soviet Union's exclusive authority to order nuclear strikes, and it soon became clear during the meeting that Soviet views on such matters would prevail. As a result, the PCC communiqué simply called for both German states to forswear nuclear weapons, proposed the creation of a nuclear-free zone in central Europe, and advocated a freeze on all nuclear stockpiles.<sup>34</sup> The implication was that arrangements within the Warsaw Pact were best left unchanged.

That stance was reaffirmed over the next few months in a series of conspicuous Soviet declarations that "the Warsaw Pact is dependent on the *Soviet* strategic missile forces" and that "the security of all socialist countries is reliably guaranteed by the nuclear missile strength of *the Soviet Union*."<sup>35</sup> The same message was conveyed later in the year by the joint "October Storm" military exercises in East Germany, which featured simulated nuclear strikes authorized solely by the USSR.<sup>36</sup> In the meantime, the Soviet monopoly over allied nuclear weapons procedures was being reinforced by the series of agreements signed with Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Poland, as discussed above. The codification of exclusive Soviet control over nuclear weapons deployed in the other Warsaw Pact countries all but eliminated any basis for the East European governments to seek a role in the alliance's nuclear command structure.

Yet even after the Soviet Union tried to put the matter to rest, controversy persisted within the Warsaw Pact about the allocation of responsibility for tactical nuclear weapons. At a closed meeting of Pact leaders in East Berlin in February 1966, Romania again pressed for greater East European participation in all aspects of allied military planning, and was again rebuffed.<sup>37</sup> A few months later, the Czechoslovak Defense Minister, Army-General Bohumir Lomsky, publicly declared that the East European states should be given increased responsibility for the full range of issues confronting the Warsaw Pact.<sup>38</sup> That same week, a detailed Romanian proposal for modifications to the alliance was leaked to the French Communist newspaper, *L'Humanite*; the document called for, among other things, an East European role in any decisions involving the potential use of nuclear weapons.<sup>39</sup> Subsequently, at the July 1966 session of the PCC in Bucharest,

officials from Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary renewed their bid for "greater rights of co-determination in planning and implementing common coalition matters," including (by implication) the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>40</sup>

As on previous occasions, however, the Soviet Union resisted whatever pressure was exerted for the sharing of nuclear-release authority. In September 1966, a few months after the Bucharest conference, the Warsaw Pact conducted huge "Vltava" exercises, which included simulated nuclear strikes under exclusive Soviet control.<sup>41</sup> The same arrangement was preserved in all subsequent Pact maneuvers involving simulated nuclear exchanges. Thus, well before the signing of the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty put a symbolic end to the whole nuclear-sharing debate, the Soviet Union had firmly established its exclusive, centralized control over the Warsaw Pact's "joint" nuclear forces and operations.

### The Lessons of the Crisis and Allied Nuclear Arrangements

The legacy of the Cuban Missile Crisis helped ensure that the intra-Warsaw Pact debate in the mid-1960s did not bring about any change in the alliance's nuclear command-and-control structure. Had it not been for the dangers that were so clearly revealed by the events of October 1962, Soviet leaders might have been willing to consider an arrangement for the Warsaw Pact similar to the "dual-key" system that NATO adopted. When Operation "Anadyr" was first being planned in the late spring of 1962, Khrushchev had toyed with the idea of giving Fidel Castro broad command over Soviet tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba as well as over all non-nuclear forces on the island. Ultimately, Khrushchev decided not to share or delegate any responsibility for the nuclear-capable weapons based in Cuba, but the very fact that the issue was considered at all suggests that if the Cuban Missile Crisis had not intervened, the Soviet Union might have been receptive to some form of nuclear "sharing" with its East European allies. Indeed, a "dual-key" arrangement for the Warsaw Pact, which would not have provided any independent authority to the East European countries, could easily have been justified as a response to NATO's policy and as a useful means of strengthening allied cohesion. But after October 1962, when Soviet leaders

drew a number of lessons about the risks of even sharing, much less delegating, nuclear authority, the prospects of adopting a “dual-key” system for the Warsaw Pact essentially vanished.

Although Moscow’s willingness to share control over the Warsaw Pact’s “joint” nuclear arsenal would have been sharply constrained even before October 1962 by the lack of permissive-action links (PALs) and other use-denial mechanisms on Soviet nuclear weapons, that factor alone would not have been decisive if the Cuban Missile Crisis had not occurred. After all, when Soviet officials seriously contemplated allotting partial nuclear authority to Castro in 1962, that was long before Soviet tactical weapons were equipped with PALs. The physical separation of warheads from delivery vehicles, as had been planned for the missiles based in Cuba, was regarded at the time as a sufficient (if cumbersome) barrier against unauthorized actions. That approach had long been used for tactical weapons deployed by Soviet forces in Eastern Europe, and it would have been just as efficacious if a “dual-key” system had been adopted—that is, if the East European armies had been given control over the Pact’s nuclear-capable delivery vehicles. Not until after the Cuban Missile Crisis was the option of relying solely on the physical separation of warheads and delivery vehicles deemed inadequate. In the latter half of the 1960s, the Soviet Union began incorporating electronic use-denial features into its strategic missiles, and the same was true of Soviet tactical weapons by the early to mid-1970s. Concerns in Moscow about the physical security of nuclear weapons were hardly negligible before October 1962—in part because of the possibility that requisite procedures might not be followed—but it was not until after the Cuban Missile Crisis that Soviet leaders fully appreciated the magnitude of this risk.

The Cuban Missile Crisis also heightened Soviet concerns about the particular dangers posed by crises. To be sure, Soviet leaders were hardly complacent before October 1962 about the need to maintain tight political control over nuclear operations; indeed, the stringent centralization of nuclear command was a consistent theme in Soviet military planning. Even so, it was not until after the Cuban Missile Crisis—and especially in light of the unexpected interven-

tions by Fidel Castro—that this factor became a paramount reason to deny any share of nuclear-release authorization to the East European governments. Although East European officials could not have ordered the use of nuclear weapons on their own, they might have inadvertently (or deliberately) taken steps in a crisis that would have caused NATO governments to believe that a Warsaw Pact nuclear strike was forthcoming (regardless of what actual Soviet intentions were). That, in turn, might have triggered a preemptive nuclear attack by NATO. Only by excluding the East European states altogether from the nuclear-release process could the Soviet Union avoid the unintended escalation of a crisis.

The risks posed by a “dual-key” arrangement could have been mitigated if the Soviet Union had built in extra procedural and technical safeguards, but this in turn would have created operational problems for Soviet troops who might one day have been ordered to use the weapons. If a future conflict had become so dire that Soviet leaders had decided to authorize the employment of tactical nuclear weapons, they would have wanted their orders to be carried out as fast as possible, before the situation on the battlefield had changed. By contrast, East European political and military officials might have been hesitant about ordering the nuclear destruction of a site in Western Europe, not least because the launch of nuclear weapons against West European targets might well have provoked retaliatory strikes by NATO against East European sites. The problem would have been especially salient in the case of East German officials who would have been asked to go along with nuclear strikes against targets in West Germany. Thus, even though Soviet officials could have developed a hedge against the risks that emerged during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the safeguards needed for this purpose would have been extremely burdensome, depriving the Pact of the ability to respond in a timely manner. From the Soviet perspective, it made far more sense to circumvent the problem entirely by eschewing any form of shared authority.

It is ironic that the Cuban Missile Crisis, which barely involved the Warsaw Pact at all, would have had such an important long-term effect on the alliance. It is also ironic that the actions of a third party, Fidel Castro, posed one of the greatest dangers during an

event that has traditionally been depicted as a bilateral U.S.-Soviet confrontation. Not only must the Cuban Missile Crisis be thought of as a “triangular” showdown; its repercussions can now be seen to have been at least as great for Soviet allies, notably Cuba and Eastern Europe, as for the Soviet Union itself.

1. This statement is based on a perusal of documents from the East German, Czechoslovak, and Polish archives. See, e.g., “Odvolanie opatreni v zavislosti s usnesenim VKO UV KSC, 25.10.62 (Karibska krize),” 25 October 1962 (Top Secret), in *Vojsensky Historicky Archiv (VHA) Praha, Fond (F.) Ministerstvo Narodni Obrany (MNO) CSSR, 1962, Operacni sprava Generalniho stavu cs. armady (GS/OS), 8/25.*
2. “V shtabe Ob”edinennykh Vooruzhenykh Sil stran Varshavskogo Dogovora,” *Pravda* (Moscow), 23 October 1962, p. 1. For the effects of the alert from 27 October through 23 November, see the series of top-secret memoranda to the CPSU CC Presidium from Soviet Defense Minister Rodion Malinovskii and the Chief of the Soviet General Staff, Mikhail Zakharov, 5 November 1962, 17 November 1962, and 24 November 1962, in *Tsentral’nyi arkhiv Sovremennoi Dokumentatsii (TsKhsD), F. 89, Opis’ (Op.) 28, Delo (D.) 14, Listy (L.) 1-8.*
3. “V shtabe Ob”edinennykh vooruzhenykh sil stran Varshavskogo Dogovora,” *Krasnaya zvezda* (Moscow), 22 November 1962, p. 1.
4. See the account by the Hungarian charge d’affaires in Washington, D.C. in October 1962 (who later defected), Janos Radvanyi, *Hungary and the Superpowers: The 1956 Revolution and Realpolitik* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), 137.
5. “Razvitie voennogo iskusstva v usloviyakh vedeniya raketno-yadernoi voyny po sovremennym predstavleniyam,” Report No. 24762s (TOP SECRET) from Col.-General P. Ivashutin, chief of the Soviet General Staff’s Main Intelligence Directorate, to Marshal M. V. Zakharov, head of the General Staff Military Academy, 28 August 1964, in *Tsentral’nyi arkhiv Ministerstva oborony (TsAMO), Delo (D.) 158, esp. Listy (L.) 352-353, 411-412, 423, and 400.* I am grateful to Matthew Evangelista for providing me with a copy of this document.
6. This point is stressed in the top-secret cables adduced in note 2 *supra*.
7. On the state of the Russian archives, see Mark Kramer, “Archival Research in Moscow: Progress and Pitfalls,” *CWIP Bulletin* 3 (Fall 1993), 1, 14-39.
8. “Razvitie voennogo iskusstva v usloviyakh vedeniya raketno-yadernoi voyny po sovremennym predstavleniyam,” pp. 332-333.
9. “Obmen poslaniami mezhdru N. S. Khrushchevym i F. Kastro v dni Karibskogo krizisa 1962 goda,” *Vestnik Ministerstva inostrannykh del SSSR* (Moscow) 24 (31 December 1990), 67-80, esp. 71-73.
10. *Ibid.*, 73-75. This point was reemphasized to Castro by Prime Minister Mikoyan during their conversations in November 1962. See “Zapis” besedy A. I. Mikoyana s prem’er-ministrom revolyutsionnogo pravitel’sva Kuby F. Kastro,” 12 November 1962 (Top Secret) and “Obesedakh A. I. Mikoyana s F. Kastro,” 20 November 1962 (Top Secret), both published in *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn’* (Moscow) 11-12 (November-December 1992), 143-147 and 147-150, respectively. See esp. 149.
11. It should be noted, however, that a decision to send

901-A4 nuclear warheads and 407-N6 bombs to Cuba for the Frogs and II-28s was not finalized until 8 September 1962, by which time Khrushchev may already have changed his mind about the command-and-control arrangements. See "Nachal'niku 12 glav'nogo upravleniya Ministerstva oborony," 8 September 1962 (Top Secret), Memorandum from Defense Minister R. Malinovskii and Chief of the General Staff M. Zakharov, in TsAMO, "Dokumenty po meropriyatiyu 'Anadyr'," F. 16, Op. 3753. It is eminently possible that the nuclear-capable weapons would not have been equipped with nuclear warheads if they had been placed under Castro's command.

12. "Dogovor mezhdru pravitel'stvom Respubliki Kuby i pravitel'stvom Soyuzu Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik o voennom sotrudnichestve i vzaimnoi oborone," undated, Article 10.

13. See Nikita S. Khrushchev, *Vospominaniya* (Moscow: typescript, 1966-1970), Vol. IV, "Karibskii krizis," esp. p. 12. I am grateful to Khrushchev's son, Sergei, for providing me with a copy of the 3,600-page transcript of his father's memoirs. For an English translation of most of the account about the Cuban Missile Crisis, see *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, trans. and ed. by Jerrold L. Schecter and Vyacheslav V. Luchkov (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 170-183.

14. Maj.-General (ret.) V. Makarevskii, "O prem'ere N. S. Khrushcheve, marshale G. K. Zhukove i generale I. A. Plieva," *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya* (Moscow) 8-9 (August-September 1994), 197. Makarevskii served for many years under Pliev's command. Pliev's close friendship with Khrushchev and Malinovskii is overlooked in the jaundiced assessment offered by General Anatolii Gribkov in *Operation ANADYR: U.S. and Soviet Generals Recount the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chicago: Edition Q, 1994), 25-26.

15. "Komanduyushchemu gruppoi sovetskikh voisk na o. Kuba," 8 September 1962 (Top Secret), in TsAMO, "Dokumenty po meropriyatiyu 'Anadyr,'" GSU GSH, F. 16, Op. 3753; reproduced in *Operation ANADYR*, 183. For a discussion of this matter and relevant citations, see Mark Kramer, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons, Soviet Command Authority, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *CWIHP Bulletin* 3 (Fall 1993), 40-46, esp. 42-43, 46.

16. "Trostnik—tovarishchu Pavlovu," No. 4/389 (Top Secret) from R. Malinovskii (Direktor), 22 October 1962, reproduced in *Operation ANADYR*, 181. This directive was reaffirmed three days later after a request for clarification from Pliev; see Lieut.-Col. Anatolii Dokuchaev, "100-dnevnyi yadernyi krizis," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 6 November 1992, 2. See also Sergei Pavlenko, "Bezmyannye motostrelki otravlyalis' na Kubu 'stoyat' nasmert'," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 29 December 1994, p. 4. For further discussion and relevant citations, see Kramer, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons, Soviet Command Authority, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," 45-46.

17. In early 1994, General Anatolii Gribkov claimed that Pliev not only wanted to move several nuclear warheads out of storage on 26 October 1962, but had actually issued orders to that effect without authorization from Moscow. See *Operation ANADYR*, 63, and Gribkov comments at a 5 April 1994 meeting at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., organized by the Cold War International History Project. However, Gribkov produced no evidence to back up his assertion that warheads were actually moved out, and in a lengthy interview with the present author in Moscow on 29 September 1994 he said he could not be certain that Pliev had given such an order. Gribkov's initial

claim had already been contradicted by the Soviet officer who was in charge of the "central nuclear base" (i.e., the storage site for all nuclear warheads) in Cuba during the crisis, Colonel Nikolai Beloborodov, who testified in late 1992 that "nuclear weapons could have been used only if the missile officers had received orders via their own chain-of-command from the General Staff, and only if we, the officers responsible for storing and operating warheads, had received our own special codes. At no point did I receive any signals to issue warheads for either the medium-range missiles or the tactical weapons." See Dokuchaev, "100-dnevnyi yadernyi krizis," 2. Beloborodov reemphasized this point several times during an interview with the author in Moscow on 28 September 1994: "No nuclear munitions of any type, whether for the medium-range or the tactical weapons, were ever moved (*byly dostavleny*) out of storage during the crisis. Nor could they have been moved without my knowledge." Beloborodov's account was endorsed by General Leonid Garbuz, the deputy commander of Soviet forces in Cuba in 1962, in an interview that same day in Moscow.

18. The exact contents of Pliev's telegram on the 26th are unknown, but the numbering of telegrams that are available makes clear that he sent at least two that day, the second of which is the one in question. (His first telegram on the 26th, which was declassified in October 1992, pertained only to air defense operations against possible U.S. air strikes.) The text of the Soviet leadership's response to Pliev's second cable is available (see next note), and, combined with retrospective comments by ex-Soviet officials, it suggests that Pliev referred to Castro's efforts and requested authority to move the warheads (though not yet authority for actual use).

19. "Trostnik—tovarishchu Pavlovu," No. 76639 (Top Secret), 27 October 1962, reproduced in *Operation ANADYR*, 182. See also Kramer, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons, Soviet Command Authority, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," 46; and Pavlenko, "Bezmyannye motostrelki otravlyalis' na Kubu," 4.

20. Marshal V. F. Tolubko, "Glavnaya raketnaya sila strany," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 19 November 1963, 1.

21. See Khrushchev's comments on this point in *Vospominaniya*, Vol. IV, "Karibskii krizis," p. 18.

22. Army-General Yu. P. Maksimov et al., eds., *Raketnye voiska strategicheskogo naznacheniya: Voenno-istoricheskii trud* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), 109-110. Detailed first-hand accounts by high-ranking Soviet air defense personnel who took part in the shutdown are available in "Voina ozhidalas's rassvetom," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 13 May 1993, 2.

23. The rules of engagement are spelled out briefly in the cable from Malinovskii to Pliev, as cited in Dokuchaev, "100-dnevnyi yadernyi krizis," 2. More elaborate rules are specified in documents now stored in the Russian General Staff archive; see "Dokumenty po meropriyatiyu 'Anadyr,'" in GSU GSH, F. 16, Op. 3753, D. 1, Korebka 3573.

24. Krushchev, *Vospominaniya*, Vol. IV, "Karibskii krizis," pp. 17-18.

25. "Vystuplenie glavy Sovetskoi delegatsii Predsedatelya Soveta Ministrov SSSR N. S. Khrushcheva na Soveshchaniy Politicheskogo Konsul'tativnogo Komiteta gosudarstv-uchastnikov Varshavskogo Dogovora 24 maya 1958 goda," *Pravda*, 27 May 1958, p. 3.

26. Thomas Wolfe, *Soviet Power in Europe, 1945-1970* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 150-151, 487-489.

27. Der Bundesminister der Verteidigung, *Militarische*

*Planungen des Warschauer Paktes in Zentraleuropa: Eine Studie*, February 1992, p. 5; for an English translation, see Mark Kramer, trans. and annot., "Warsaw Pact Military Planning in Central Europe: Revelations From the East German Archives," *CWIHP Bulletin* 2 (Fall 1992), 1, 13-19.

28. Militarisches Zwischenarchiv (Potsdam), VA-Strausberg/29555/Box 155.

29. "Dohoda CSSR-ZSSR o vzajemnykh dodavkakh vyzbroje a voj. techniky v rr. 1963-1965," in VHA Praha, F. Sekretariat MNO, 1960-1962, OS/GS, 26/2.

30. "Dogovor mezhdru pravitel'stvami SSSR i ChSSR o merakh povysheniya boegotovnosti raketnykh voisk," 15 December 1965, in VHA Praha, F. Sekretariat MNO, 1960-1962, OS/GS, 2/16.

31. See the reports on "Hungary: USSR Nuclear Weapons Formerly Stored in Country," translated in U.S. Joint Publications Research Service, *Nuclear Proliferation*, JPRS-TND-91-007, 20 May 1991, pp. 14-16.

32. "Opzedsiewzieciu majacym na celu podwyzszenie gotowsci bojowej wojska," 25 February 1967, in Centralny Archiwum Wojskowy, Paczka 6, Tom 234.

33. Interview with chief of the Czechoslovak General Staff, Major-General Karel Pezl, in Jan Bauer, "Jaderna munice: Asi tady byla," *Ceske a moravskoslezske zemedelske noviny* (Prague), 4 July 1991, p. 1.

34. See, for example, Col.-General I. Glebov, "Razvitie operativnogo iskusstva," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 2 April 1964, pp. 2-3; and Col.-General S. M. Shtemenko, "Sukhoputnye voiska v sovremennoi voine i ikh boevaya podgotovka," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 3 January 1963, 2-3. See also Marshal V. D. Sokolovskii et al., *Voennaya strategiya*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1963), 373-374. This theme is also evident in "Razvitie voennogo iskusstva v usloviyakh vedeniya raketno-yadernoi voiny po sovremennym predstavleniyam," *passim*.

35. See, for example, Col.-General N. Lomov, "Vliyanie Sovetskoi voennoi doktriny na razvitie voennogo iskusstva," *Kommunist vooruzhenykh sil* 21 (November 1965), 16-24.

36. Cited in "Rech' tovarishcha L. I. Brezhneva," *Pravda*, 25 September 1965, p. 2 (emphasis added).

37. "Stenografische Niederschrift der Konferenz der kommunistischen und Arbeiterparteien die Staaten des Warschauer Vertrages," January 1965 (Top Secret), in Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMDB), Zentrales Parteiarchiv (ZPA) der SED, J IV, 2/202/130.

38. "O zasedanii Politicheskogo konsul'tativnogo komiteta gosudarstv-uchastnikov Varshavskogo Dogovora o družbe, sotrudnichestve i vzaimnoi pomoshchi," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 21 January 1965, 1. See also Colonel V. F. Samoilenko, *Osnova boevogo soyuzu: Internatsionalizm kak faktor oboronnoi moshchi sotsialisticheskogo sodruzhestva* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1981), 259.

39. See, for example, Marshal R. Ya. Malinovskii, "Moguchii strazh bezopasnosti narodov," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 13 May 1965, 3; Marshal A. A. Grechko, "Nadezhnyi shchit mira i bezopasnosti narodov," *Kommunist vooruzhenykh sil*, No. 9 (May 1965), 13; and Marshal A. A. Grechko, "Boevoi soyz bratskikh narodov," *Pravda*, 13 May 1965, 1. (emphases added)

40. "Informacna sprava o vysledkakh cviceniya 'Oktobrova Burka,'" 16-22 October 1965 (Top Secret), in VHA Praha, F. Hlavna Politicka Sprava (HPS), 1965, HPS 1/2.

41. "Konferenz der kommunistischen und Arbeiterparteien die Staaten des Warschauer Vertrages:

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