

# The Malin Notes: Glimpses Inside the Kremlin during the Cuban Missile Crisis

Introduction by Timothy Naftali<sup>1</sup>

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library's October 1996 release of the White House recordings made by President Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis revolutionized our understanding of how the American side handled the most dangerous nuclear crisis of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> Some months earlier, the late Aleksandr Fursenko, a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, had learned about a collection of official notes from the meetings of the Presidium—the top decision-making body of the Soviet communist party and therefore of the USSR—during the missile crisis. These notes, which were written out in longhand by Vladimir Malin, the chief of the General Department of the Central Committee, formally recorded the Presidium's decisions and, occasionally, the discussion and justification behind the decisions. Fursenko was able to get access to a few, but by no means all, of the notes relevant to the Cuban missile crisis for our 1997 book, *One Hell of a Gamble*.<sup>3</sup> In 2003, the Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI), published a more complete collection of the Cuban Missile Crisis notes in Volume 1 of *Arkhivii Kremlya*, an edition overseen by Fursenko and edited by a team of RGANI archivists supervised by Director Natalia Y. Tomilina and Vitali Afiani.<sup>4</sup>

Whereas the Kennedy tapes are an exhaustive (and occasionally exhausting!) real-time resource, the Malin notes are fragmentary, but unless and until we discover that there was a Khrushchev Kremlin taping system, they are the best evidence we have on Soviet deliberations during the Crisis. For this special edition of the CWIHP *Bulletin* we have excerpted the notes of Presidium discussions related to the Cuban missile crisis from May through December 1962. The University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs, in agreement with RGANI, produced English translations of the notes for the Khrushchev era (1954-1964) and also of the small number of stenographic accounts of Presidium meetings also held by RGANI. Since 2006 most of these materials have been available in English on the website of the Miller Center's Scripps Library and Multimedia Archive. Professor Jim Hershberg and I are grateful to the Miller Center for its assistance with putting together this collection of Malin notes on the Cuban Missile Crisis. Dr. Mark Kramer, Director of the Harvard Project for Cold War Studies and a Senior Fellow of Harvard's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, and I worked together to update the Miller Center's translations, which were done by Olga Rivkin, a native speaker but one without a detailed knowledge of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Mark, who

did the bulk of the updating, also contributed translations for two notes not currently on the Miller Center's website.

*What do the Notes Tell Us?*

In 1969 former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in his introduction to Robert F. Kennedy's *Thirteen Days* laid out a basic research agenda for students of the Kremlin side of the Cuban missile crisis: "why did the Russians risk so much? What was their ultimate purpose? Why did they withdraw? Why did they not retaliate at other, but equally sensitive, points?"<sup>5</sup>

On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, how well do the Malin notes help us answer Macmillan's questions? And do they suggest any others?

*Why did the Soviets risk so much? What was their ultimate purpose?*

Let's take these questions together. In his dictated memoirs, Khrushchev credited himself with the idea of putting nuclear missiles on Cuba and ascribed two motives to the ploy: "The main thing was that the installation of our missiles in Cuba would, I thought, restrain the United States from precipitous military action against Castro's government. In addition to protecting Cuba, our missiles would have equalized what the West likes to call 'the balance of power.'"<sup>6</sup>

The notes underscore that the missile gambit was, indeed, Khrushchev's idea and, also, that it was a hard sell. Protocol 32 (21 and 24 May, 1962) shows that it took Khrushchev two meetings and four days to get his colleagues to approve the plan.<sup>7</sup> Although the sole leader of the USSR, especially since he survived a failed palace coup in 1957, Khrushchev still needed formal approval of the Presidium before moving ahead.

The question of the origins of the nuclear missile decision is more complex than Khrushchev remembered; but here, too, the notes are helpful, if less conclusive. Evidence that emerged in the 1990s, largely unearthed by Aleksandr Fursenko in the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), strongly suggested that the missile decision in May 1962 had come at the end of a long reexamination of Soviet military support for Cuba. In September 1961, the Cubans had asked for conventionally armed Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAMs), the SA-2s, and shore-based Sopka missiles and a Soviet deployment of 10,000 troops. Initially, Moscow had set this request

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aside. But, in March 1962, the Kremlin came back to the six-month-old Cuban request and decided to reconsider the entire problem of Cuban defense. In early April, the Soviets concluded that the best way to secure the Castro regime was to help the Cubans defend themselves. The Presidium approved additional military supplies, a medium-term training program for the Cuban military, and a symbolic Soviet detachment of 3,000 troops. The only missiles the Kremlin intended to send at that time were the non-nuclear SAMs and the Sopkas.<sup>8</sup> This new chronology effectively posed two new questions for scholars: if the Kremlin had made up its collective mind about Cuban defense in April, why did it choose to re-examine the issue in May 1962? And, more importantly, why did the Kremlin, which seemed satisfied with a non-nuclear approach to defending Cuba in April and the involvement of only 3,000 of its own men, approve dispatching Soviet nuclear weapons and over 50,000 Soviet troops to the island a month later?

Malin apparently took no notes for the April decisions regarding Cuba and his notes of the 21/24 May meeting do not reveal why Khrushchev sought to re-examine the issue of Cuban defense. They do, however, provide evidence that Khrushchev understood in May that he was proposing a big shift in how the Kremlin dealt with the problem of securing Cuba. On 21 May, Khrushchev introduced the nuclear missile proposal by saying, “[t]his will be an offensive policy.” According to Malin, the question before the Kremlin at the time was “How to help Cuba so that it can remain firm.” Why would one need an “offensive policy” to achieve what was essentially a defensive objective? Did Khrushchev misspeak or did Malin mishear? It seems likely that Khrushchev meant what Malin recorded him as saying. Two weeks later, as seen in Protocol 35, once the Cubans had agreed to the offer of the nuclear missiles, Khrushchev added, in the same spirit, “I think we will be victorious in this operation.” Khrushchev’s use of the terms like “offensive” and “victorious” implied that he knew that he was suggesting a radical and risky shift in dealing with a more powerful United States.

One has to look beyond the Malin notes, I believe, to see what might be behind Khrushchev’s risktaking. In the same volume as the Malin notes, RGANI also published in 2003 a much smaller collection (less than 50) of stenographic transcripts of Presidium discussions from 1958 through 1964. These included a remarkable monologue by Khrushchev before the Presidium on 8 January 1962, during which the Soviet leader set out his foreign policy strategy for the year. Well aware that the Soviet Union lagged behind the United States in strategic power, Khrushchev recommended a policy of aggressive containment. With the international balance of power favoring the United States, Khrushchev believed that

the Soviet Union had to exert pressure on the weak points of the US alliance system to restrain Washington. Subsequently, in February he approved the buzzing of Allied aircraft in the air corridors to West Berlin and in March he unleashed the Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese, who had wanted to violate the ceasefire in Laos to allow the Pathet Lao to approach closer to the Mekong river in northwestern Laos.

By May, this approach—which Khrushchev likened to creating a liquid meniscus by pouring enough wine in a glass to reach the brim but not a drop more—was not working. The US had stood up to Soviet provocations in Central Europe, had sent troops to Thailand to shore up the Royal Government of Laos, had resumed atmospheric nuclear testing, and there were indications of a continuing Kennedy interest in overthrowing Castro. Meanwhile Soviet production of intercontinental missiles had hit a snag. Did Khrushchev lobby his colleagues to upgrade Soviet plans for the conventional defense of Cuba so that he could add some more water to the glass, bring international politics even closer to the brim? Is this what he meant by it being “an offensive policy?”<sup>9</sup>

Malin’s notes for the 1 July meeting (Protocol 39) do provide some evidence that Khrushchev was thinking about more than Cuba that summer. After discussing the timetable for sending the missiles to Cuba, Khrushchev led his colleagues in a re-examination of the Soviet Union’s policy on West Berlin. Berlin had not been a topic of discussion for months. In January 1962, during his “meniscus” monologue, Khrushchev had told his colleagues that the balance of power was probably not conducive to getting a Berlin agreement in 1962. He predicted that a “final fight on the issues of West Berlin” was inevitable, but not yet.<sup>10</sup> Why did Khrushchev return to the Berlin issue in July?

Although a matter of interpretation, I believe that the timing of the raising of the Berlin question reflects something other than a Soviet desire to use Berlin to distract John F. Kennedy from the Cuban missile gambit. From the notes, we see that in July Khrushchev associated the idea of bringing the Berlin question to the UN with “the path of creating tensions.” And from other sources we know that by September he had chosen the path of renewed political crisis over Berlin. As the summer progressed, the Soviet foreign ministry began preparing to bring the question to the UN and, in September, Khrushchev began to tell foreigners, most notably the West German Ambassador Hans Kroll, that the USSR would be bringing the Berlin matter to a head at the UN in November and expected to prevail.<sup>11</sup> It seems likely that more than coincidence was involved in the fact that Khrushchev chose the path of renewing political confrontation with the United States over Berlin just as his missiles were reaching their

launch sites in Cuba. In *Khrushchev's Cold War*, Aleksandr Fursenko and I argued that though we don't believe that the Berlin question inspired Khrushchev's risk-taking in sending nuclear missiles to Cuba, it seemed probable that as he gained confidence that his ploy would succeed, he began to consider how the new balance of power would allow him to solve problems like Berlin.<sup>12</sup> In this way, the missile gambit was politically but not militarily "offensive."

*Why did they withdraw? Why did they not retaliate against other, but equally sensitive, points?*

The notes are much more revealing on these two questions. Let's take the second question first. At no time does it appear that Khrushchev or his colleagues considered threatening or attacking West Berlin—the main "sensitive" point Macmillan was probably thinking of—to counter the military advantage that the US held in the Caribbean. According to the notes, the Kremlin considered using force only twice during the crisis, and in each case it would have been in response to a US attack on Cuba. On 22 October, according to Protocol 60, as the Soviets awaited Kennedy's public announcement of what he planned to do about the Soviet missiles found in Cuba, Khrushchev and some of his colleagues briefly considered using tactical nuclear weapons in the event of a US airborne assault. But, at the suggestion of Soviet defense minister Rodion Malinovsky, the Kremlin postponed its consideration of a nuclear response pending details of Kennedy's speech. On 28 October, according to Protocol 63, when Khrushchev probably assumed that Kennedy's patience was at an end and the crisis might either be resolved or spin out of control, the Kremlin again considered how it might respond to a US attack. If anyone suggested a preemptive strike, or even a retaliatory strike, against a target outside of the Caribbean, Malin did not note it for the official record.

The notes also underscore the wisdom of Kennedy's choice of the blockade option. As the blockade's advocates in Washington—namely, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara—had argued, imposing a naval quarantine before possibly taking military action gave Khrushchev time to think. The continuation of Protocol 60 (when the Kremlin reconvened at 10 a.m. on 23 October) shows that once the Kremlin had seen a text of Kennedy's speech and knew for sure that Washington was not about to launch a "blitzkrieg," it wasted no time in taking steps to reduce the risks of confrontation. It ordered some ships that were still in the Mediterranean to turn around. The Aleksandrovsk, the ship carrying the nuclear warheads for the IRBMs (the R-14s), was ordered to keep sailing, however, because it was close enough to Cuban shores to dock before

the blockade went into effect. Not all decisions taken that day, however, showed a desire to reduce risks. The four diesel submarines, each of which carried one nuclear-tipped torpedo, were told to proceed.

The Malin notes make clear that Kennedy's crisis team, known as the ExComm, met more often as a group than did the Presidium. The long session of 22 October continued into 23 October. But there are no notes for 24 October or 26 October and there is no break in the numbering of the protocols. This does not mean that Khrushchev and his colleagues went for carefree walks in Moscow's lovely parks on those days, just that the Presidium, for whatever reason, was not brought into formal session.

By 25 October, Malin noted in Protocol 61 that Khrushchev was taking even bigger steps away from the brink. Perhaps after informally canvassing the opinions of his colleagues on 24 October, Khrushchev decided that the ships carrying the IRBM missiles (the R-14s) on the high seas should turn around and come home. In addition, he floated a proposal for ending the crisis: when the time seemed right he would offer to dismantle the missiles already on the island (the MRBMs or R-12s) if Kennedy pledged not to invade Cuba. In laying out this proposal, Khrushchev partially answered one of Macmillan's 1969 questions. The missile ploy, he argued, had succeeded in scaring Kennedy and in insuring that the world was focused on the plight of little Cuba. As a result, he argued, the missiles already on the island could be withdrawn if the price of their removal was a public pledge from the United States not to touch Cuba in the future. Khrushchev may have had greater goals in mind when he proposed this "offensive policy" in May, but three days into the crisis a non-invasion pledge had become an acceptable return on this investment.

Khrushchev did not wait long to make that offer to Kennedy. The next day, 26 October, without having to reconvene the Presidium, he sent his famous "knot" letter to Kennedy suggesting the trade of the missiles for a US pledge not to invade Cuba. Something then happened, because when Malin resumed his note-taking on 27 October, Khrushchev clearly thought he could get Kennedy to pay a higher price for ending the crisis. The notes do not explain why he changed his mind. Ever the gambler, perhaps Khrushchev had recalculated the odds of a US invasion and thought he could risk pushing Kennedy a little harder. In any case, on 27 October he suggested to his colleagues that the USSR up the ante. Khrushchev proposed a new demand: the removal of US military bases from Turkey and Pakistan. In presenting this, he also used, for the first time since June 1962, the trope of victory: "if we receive in return the elimination of the [US] base in Turkey and Pakistan, then we will end up victorious."

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When the Kennedy administration officials heard a few hours later that the Kremlin had increased its terms for a diplomatic settlement, they feared that the Soviet leader had lost a battle with some hawks in Moscow. Protocol 62 effectively puts that theory to rest. It was Khrushchev who decided to raise the stakes and the notes indicate that he dictated the new letter to Kennedy. What the notes do not indicate was when, or how, the Kremlin decided to narrow the new demand to just getting the US to agree to removing its “Jupiter” IRBMs from Turkey. Khrushchev would ultimately not mention Pakistan in his 27 October letter to JFK.

The acute crisis ended on 28 October, and the notes for that day (Protocol 63) have already spawned some historical controversy.<sup>13</sup> As in the case of those for 22-23 October, the structure of Malin’s notes suggests that there was a break in the meeting. In the first part of the meeting, Khrushchev proposed reacting positively to Kennedy’s response to his 27 October letter. Kennedy, in his response, had ignored the demand to remove US IRBMs from Turkey and offered only a non-invasion pledge in return for Moscow dismantling the missiles. The structure of the Malin notes for 28 October suggests that Khrushchev may have made this decision to end the crisis before knowing that late on 27 October (Washington time; after midnight in Moscow), the President’s brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, had told the Soviet ambassador in Washington, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, that JFK was also prepared to order the removal of the Jupiter missiles from Turkey. The meeting recessed after Khrushchev reacted positively to Kennedy’s letter. When it resumed, there were fewer participants and, at that point, Khrushchev discussed the message from Dobrynin. Without more information, the notes do not make clear whether Khrushchev received the message from Dobrynin only after the recess or that Khrushchev, who already knew about Kennedy’s secret offer, recessed the meeting and excused some of the participants because he wanted to discuss Kennedy’s Turkish concession in front of a smaller group. The latter explanation is not wholly satisfactory. Although President Kennedy had requested through his brother that Khrushchev keep this concession secret, it is not clear why Khrushchev would have felt that he could not mention it in front of Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, who would have seen Dobrynin’s dispatch at some point anyway, and his Minister of Defense, Rodion Malinovsky. According to Malin, Gromyko and Malinovsky were among those who left after the morning session.

The timing of when Khrushchev learned about Kennedy’s secret offer remains unclear and it is extremely significant. Would Khrushchev have ended the crisis without that additional US concession? The structure of Protocol 63 raises but does not settle this important question.

Even though fragmentary, the Malin notes suggest strongly that except on the long night of 22 October, Khrushchev took steps to minimize the risk of war. The time offered by Kennedy’s quarantine policy allowed the Soviet leader to come to grips with the need to withdraw the missiles. It took the Kremlin only three days to devise the basic structure of an agreement and it appears that it was Khrushchev who suggested it. With the possible exception of the resolution of the question of tactical missiles on 22 October, there is little that appears from the notes to have been forced upon Khrushchev by the rest of the Presidium, and here one needs to be careful. Other sources, such as notes made by Anastas Mikoyan at some of these meetings, suggest much more give and take than is reflected in Malin’s official record.<sup>14</sup> This does not mean that the Malin notes are an unreliable source for the decisions taken. We already know that Malin’s recording technique smoothed over disputes. There can be no doubt that the two-day session of 21/24 May 1962, for example, involved a debate and none of that is in the notes that we have. Regardless of the arguments that may have preceded the final decisions, however, Malin’s notes are powerful evidence that Khrushchev was the key player on the Soviet side during the missile crisis. He caused the crisis in the first place and once he got enough from Kennedy, he brought it to an end.

After the crisis ended, it was Khrushchev who was the chief spinner in defining its ramifications. On 3 December (Protocol 71), Khrushchev explained why he viewed the outcome of the crisis as a success. “The USA,” he said with evident satisfaction, “was compelled to recognize that we, too, have our interests in the Western Hemisphere.” He also stressed his pleasure at seeing that the Soviet Union could scare the United States “They themselves got frightened,” said Khrushchev adding that if the Kremlin had held out a little longer they might have been able to get Kennedy to pay a higher price. It was as if the missile crisis had redeemed his beloved meniscus strategy. Curiously, when listing the successes of the missile gambit to his colleagues that December, Khrushchev said nothing about extracting the Turkish missile concession from JFK.<sup>15</sup>

The notes do, however, add new questions to those posed by Macmillan. The pre-crisis notes from October 1962 (Protocols 58 and 59), which show an intense focus on the Sino-Indian confrontation, suggest that the Kremlin was completely taken by surprise by the crisis. In light of Khrushchev’s personal interest in the Gary Powers’ incident of May 1960, it remains a mystery why the Kremlin did not begin to worry that the missile sites would be seen by American U2 surveillance before the SAMs were fully operational. And it is not that the Kremlin did not ask questions about US intelligence efforts regarding the missile play. In

July, as shown by Protocol 39, Khrushchev discussed the importance of getting the US to stop flying over the ships heading to Cuba. The notes also provide significant details on the effect that the missile crisis had on Soviet-Cuban relations. Thanks to Castro's so-called Armageddon letter and his five points, by December 1962 (Protocol 71), Khrushchev was calling the Cubans "unreliable allies."<sup>16</sup> As we all know, that relationship would ultimately become close again.

It has been forty-five years since Harold Macmillan launched his challenge to explain what he termed "this strange and still scarcely explicable affair." Scholars can now explain much more about Khrushchev's motives and his actions during the crisis, in part thanks to the Malin notes. Huge gaps, however, remain in the Soviet record of the crisis, ensuring many more years of lively, interpretive debates and major discoveries.



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### Notes from Sessions of the CPSU Presidium Pertaining to the Installation of Soviet Nuclear Missiles in Cuba, May-December 1962

Translated and edited by Mark Kramer, with Assistance from Timothy Naftali

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: My warm thanks to James Hershberg for his extensive, very helpful comments on earlier drafts. Working with him again in zany, light-night sessions to put out the *Bulletin* — as he and I often did in the 1990s — was a real pleasure. I also want to acknowledge the Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, for having sponsored earlier translations by Olga Rivkin of most of the notes. I have redone the translations for inclusion in this special issue of the CWIHP *Bulletin*.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

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### Protocol No. 32 Session of 21 May 1962

Present: Brezhnev, Voronov, Kozlov, Kirilenko, Kosygin,

Kuusinen, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Shvernik, Grishin, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Gromyko, Malinovsky, Biryuzov.

I. Cde. Khrushchev's informational report about the delegation's trip to Bulgaria.<sup>17</sup>

Approve the work of the delegation

Regarding assistance to Cuba. How to help Cuba so that it can remain firm.

Khrushchev

Come to an agreement with F[idel] Castro, conclude a military treaty regarding joint defense.  
Station nuclear missiles [there].  
Carry this out secretly. Then declare it.  
Missiles under our command.  
This will be an offensive policy.

Cdes. Malinovsky and Biryuzov are to make calculations and look [at sites] in time.<sup>18</sup>  
Compose a letter to Castro.

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 15-16.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

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### Protocol No. 32 (continued) Session of 24 May 1962

Present: Khrushchev, Kozlov, Brezhnev, Mikoyan, Suslov, Kuusinen, Kosygin, Polyansky, Voronov, Kirilenko, Shvernik, Gromyko, Malinovsky

Endorse Cde. N. S. Khrushchev's proposal concerning matters involving Cuba.

Adopt the plan

Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 15-15ob



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

**Protocol No. 35  
Session of 10 June 1962**

Present: Brezhnev, Kirilenko, Kozlov, Kosygin, Kuusinen, Suslov, Khrushchev, Rashidov, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Malinovsky, Grechko, Chuikov, Biryuzov, Zakharov, Epishev, Gromyko, S. P. Ivanov.

I. Cde. Rashidov's informational report about the trip to Cuba.

Rashidov, Biryuzov,  
Khrushchev

Proceed to deciding the question.  
I think that we will win this operation.  
Cde. Malinovsky is to prepare a draft resolution.  
Approve the draft resolution.  
Cdes. Kosygin and Ustinov are to examine the proposals from a practical standpoint.

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 21-22



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

**Protocol No. 39  
Session of 1 July 1962**

**Ogarevo**

Present: Brezhnev, Voronov, Kirilenko, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Suslov, Khrushchev, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Grishin, Gromyko, Malin.

**On the negotiations with R. Castro**

Cde. Khrushchev  
Entrust Cdes. Khrushchev, Malinovsky, and Gromyko with pursuing the negotiations.

**II. Concerning Berlin**

Cdes. Khrushchev, Mikoyan,  
Gromyko, Kosygin, Brezhnev,  
Suslov, Ponomarev

Continue (to prepare proposals):  
Western countries reduce their troops by half in W. Berlin. The remaining half — stay under the UN flag for six years. Within two years troops of the Western powers are to be replaced by UN troops, and the UN troops are to remain in W. Berlin for four years.

A second variant: Either we ourselves or the neutrals raise the question of Germany before the UN. The debates would be in our favor. But this is the path of creating tensions.

Under the first variant — the question about access is not linked to an international control organ. An international organ is unacceptable.

I. Regarding the speech by McNamara.<sup>19</sup>  
Take a gamble.  
They are not equal, but they were saying that the forces are equal.  
Strikes not against cities — this is aggressiveness. What is the goal when they put this forward? How many bombs are needed?  
Inure the population to the idea that there will be a nuclear war.  
Cde. Gromyko will prepare for the trip to Geneva

**III. Concerning Cuba**

The schedule of transfers up to 1 November 1962.<sup>20</sup>  
Regarding the flights buzzing our ships — say that this impedes shipping.  
On the draft treaty with Cuba.  
Cde. Gromyko reads it.  
The draft is adopted.<sup>21</sup>

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 16-16ob



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

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**Protocol No. 40**  
**Session of 6 July 1962**

[ . . . . ]

**Matters Concerning Cuba**

Cde. Pliev — the commander.<sup>22</sup>  
Regarding practical matters.  
Defense equipment, then other equipment.  
Speak out in criticism of Kennedy and Rusk for their speeches marking Independence Day [4 July].<sup>23</sup>

Look at drafts of monuments.  
Concerning the subway.  
Concerning metal,  
concerning tires —  
the republics must be responsible.

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 25-26



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

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**Protocol No. 41**  
**Session of 12 July 1962**

[ . . . . ]

**II. On the dispatch to Cuba of a group of advisers on economic matters.**

Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Suslov

Provide a group of economic advisers who would not be subordinate to the ambassador, take them from Cent. Asia.

Cde. Titov            Cde.  
Cde. Perekhrest    Usmanov  
Cde. Bondarchuk    Yasakov  
Cde.                    V. N. Somakov

Invite them to the CC to discuss it.

It is disgraceful — we provided tractors to the Cubans, we are not providing agric[ultural] machinery.

Include also other advisers, and those who were there — bring them back as the organizers.

We sent five ships.

Perhaps send a hundred or two hundred of the best ships for fishing.

Cdes. Mikoyan, Rashidov, and Shelepin are to prepare it.

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 27-28.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

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**Protocol No. 58**  
**Session of 11 October 1962**

Present: Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Malinovsky, Kuznetsov

**On relations between the PRC and India.**

Join in, and for both of them prepare a nuanced document.

The Min of For Aff is to prepare it.

Search for reconciliation.

The McMahon Line.<sup>24</sup>

It is hard for China to agree to this.

The PRC proposal for troop withdrawals is reasonable.

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 33-34.



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Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

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**Protocol No. 59**  
**Session of 14 October 1962**

**33. [On the Indian-Chinese conflict]**

The proposals are being readied by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev

1. Delay the shipment to India of MiG-21 aircraft.
2. On instructions to the Soviet ambassador in India, Cde. [Ivan] Benediktov. Say to [Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal] Nehru: “We are disappointed.”

Are they thinking about how this conflict will end?

By whom was the McMahon Line created?

By whom was it recognized? When was it introduced?

But the circumstances have changed.

The PRC’s proposals for troop withdrawals spanning 20 km are reasonable.

India’s demands for troop withdrawals spanning an additional 20 km are humiliating for the PRC.

We are in favor of eliminating the conflict, it will not bring any benefit.

India is hardly going to gain anything from the conflict.

[ . . . ]

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 35.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

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**Protocol No. 60**  
**Session of 22-23 October 1962<sup>25</sup>**

Present: Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Shvernik, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin.

**I. On defining positions toward further steps in regard to Cuba and Berlin**

Khrushchev, Malinovsky,  
Ivanov, Mikoyan, Kozlov,  
Brezhnev, Kosygin,  
Ponomarev, Suslov

**Cde. Malinovsky.** I do not think that the USA right now could embark on blitzkrieg operations. It is not such a country (concerning Cuba). Apparently, the speech on the radio is a pre-election stunt. If an invasion of Cuba will be declared, this will be after another 24 hours has passed in order to get ready.

I think that we will not end up in a situation in which the missiles are placed on high alert.

**Cde. Ivanov.** Reports at what stage the delivery of property [weaponry and other military equipment] is to Cuba.

**Cde. Khrushchev.** I agree with Cde. Malinovsky’s conclusions. Gromyko responded to Rusk for the most part from an ethical standpoint.

The point is that we do not want to unleash a war, we wanted to intimidate and restrain the USA vis-à-vis Cuba.

The difficult thing is that we did not concentrate everything that we wanted and did not publish the treaty.

The tragic thing — they can attack, and we will respond. This could escalate into a large-scale war.

One scenario: they will begin to act against Cuba.

One scenario: declare on the radio that there already is an agreement concerning Cuba.

They might declare a blockade, or they might take no action.

Another scenario: in case of an attack, all the equipment is Cuban, and the Cubans declare that they will respond.

And another: not yet use the strategic weapons, but use the tactical.

Give Pliev instructions — bring the troops up to combat readiness.

All the forces initially should not use atomic [weaponry].

If there is an airborne assault — the tactical atomic weaponry, but the strategic [not] until orders are given (excluding use of the means in Stetsenko’s<sup>26</sup> custody).

Conclusion (is being made):

An attack is being organized against Cuba.



**Cde. Malinovsky** says: wait until 1:00 a.m., or else they will be given grounds for using atomic weaponry.<sup>27</sup>

**I. On the USSR government's draft statement concerning Cuba.**

Kuznetsov, Khrushchev,  
Mikoyan, Kosygin, Polyansky,  
Ilichev, Grechko

The USSR gov't is appealing to the peoples of the USSR — and is informing them.

Work. Measures so that we are not caught unawares.  
Accept.

**I. On the instructions to Cde. [Soviet UN Ambassador Valerian] Zorin**

Cde. Kuznetsov  
Affirm.

**Draft Security Council resolution.**

Affirm.

**I. On information to F. Castro about our further steps in events around Cuba.**

We need to tell our friends where we are heading.  
It was halfway successful, and half not.  
It is positive that the whole world is focused on Cuba. Now.  
It is not essential for Cuba but is essential for the USA.  
Time will pass, and if needed, it [weaponry] will again be sent.

**I. On the letter to Kennedy.**

Regardless of the class of weaponry, it has been delivered.  
It has been delivered with the aim of defending Cuba against aggression.

The ships that are moving in the Mediterranean Sea, return them to the Black Sea.

The armaments and military formations are not to be sent for now, return them from their voyage.

Keep the boats on their approaches.<sup>27a</sup>

On the measures for increasing combat readiness. Through a gov't decision, an order has been given to the minister of defense.

The Min. of For. Aff. is to brief the ambassadors of the Warsaw Pact countries.

Invite the commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact and the

representatives and exchange views with them.

On the treaty — do not announce it (unanimous opinion).

Issue a command for the return of ships (the ships that have not yet reached there)  
(Everyone says that this is correct.)

Compose a statement by the USSR government — a protest.

The USA has set out on the path of preparing and unleashing a third world war.

American imperialism has taken upon itself the right to dictate its will to others — we protest.

All countries have the right to defense and to conclude alliances.

Warn the gov't it is taking upon itself great responsibility.

The USSR also possesses weapons, we protest the reckless actions.

This is lawlessness and unprecedented treachery — demand an account from the other gov't.

The directive to Zorin<sup>28</sup> — along these same lines.

The peoples of all countries must raise their voices.

For preservation of the UN.

The laws and Charter of the UN are being trampled on.

All issues in dispute — by means of negotiations.

The USSR gov't is bringing the matter to the Security Council.

Let the four submarines move ahead.<sup>28a</sup> The “Aleksandrov[sk]” is to head to the nearest port.<sup>29</sup>

Send a telegram to Castro.

We received Kennedy's letter.

Crude interference in Cuba's affairs.

We are raising the matter in the Security Council against US treachery, and Cuba should come to the Security Council.

[ . . . . ]

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 36-41.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

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## Protocol No. 61 Session of 25 October 1962

Present: Brezhnev, Kozlov, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Shvernik, Kosygin, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Gromyko, Kuznetsov.

### On the return of the ship carrying special cargo.

Khrushchev  
Return it.

### I. On the response to Kennedy

Khrushchev, Gromyko

Do not get into a petty exchange of insults with the same arguments.

Compose a letter to Kennedy as dictated.

Get accustomed to it. How [to proceed] further.

Dismantle the missile installations.

We have made Cuba a country that is the focus of the world's attention.

You give a commitment not to touch Cuba, and we will give our consent to the dismantling and then will permit UN inspectors to verify it.

Kozlov, Mikoyan,  
Ponomarev, Brezhnev, Suslov,  
Kosygin

A correct and reasonable tactic. Now Cuba is not the same as it was before the events. Do not aggravate the situation. In this manner we will strengthen Cuba.

### On the instructions to Cde. Zorin concerning the resolution introduced by Ghana and the U[nited] A[rab] R[epublic]<sup>30</sup> at the Security Council

Gromyko, Mikoyan, Kozlov,  
Kuznetsov, Khrushchev,  
Brezhnev, Ponomarev,  
Polyansky, Ilichev

**Mikoyan.** He proposes not to abstain in the vote for the resolution introduced by Ghana and the UAR, and instead to vote "in favor."

Cde. Zorin has proposed this correctly. Affirm the instructions to Cde. Zorin.

### III. On the response to UN Secretary General U Thant

The text proposed by the Min. of For. Aff. is not suitable.

Say briefly: "We agree with your proposal."

Affirm the response to U Thant.

### VI. Cde. Gromyko's message about the delegation's work at the UN's XVII Session

Approve the delegation's work

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 42-42ob.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

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## Protocol No. 61 Session of 25 October 1962

Those who took part: Members of the CC Presidium Cdes. L. I. Brezhnev, F. R. Kozlov, A. N. Kosygin, A. I. Mikoyan, D. S. Polyansky, M. A. Suslov, and M. N. Shvernik; Candidate member of the CC Presidium Cde. V. V. Grishin; and CC Secretaries Cdes. P. N. Demichev, L. F. Ilichev, B. N. Ponomarev, and A. N. Shelepin; and also A. A. Gromyko and V. V. Kuznetsov. Chaired by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev.

### Point 1. On the response of the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers Cde. N. S. Khrushchev to the letter of US President Kennedy

**Cde. N.S. Khrushchev** says he decided to convene a session of the Presidium in connection with the further events in Cuba.

The further course of events is proceeding in the following way. The Americans say that the missile installations in Cuba must be dismantled. Perhaps this will need to be done. This is not capitulation on our part. Because if we fire, they will also fire. There is no doubt that the Americans became frightened, this is clear. Kennedy was sleeping with a wooden knife. [To Cde. A. I. Mikoyan's question (in jest), "Why with a wooden one?" N. S. says, jokingly, that when a man goes bear hunting

for the first time, he takes with him a wooden knife so that it will be easier to clean his trousers.]<sup>31</sup>

Cde. N. S. Khrushchev goes on to say that we have now made Cuba a country that is the focus of the world's attention. The two systems have clashed. Kennedy says to us, take your missiles out of Cuba. We respond: "Give firm guarantees and pledges that the Americans will not attack Cuba." That is not a bad [trade].

We could pull out the R-12 [SS-4] missiles and leave the other missiles there. This is not cowardice. This is a fallback position, it is possible we will have to meet with them at the UN. We have to give the opponent a sense of calm and, in return, receive assurances concerning Cuba. Beyond that, it is not worth forcing the situation to the boiling point. We can strike the USA from the territory of the USSR. Now Cuba will not be what it was previously.

They, the Americans, are threatening an economic blockade, but the USA will not attack Cuba. We should not inflame the situation and should conduct a reasonable policy. In this way we will strengthen Cuba and will save it for 2-3 more years. Within several years it will be harder [for the Americans] to deal with [Cuba].

We have to play, but we should not get out and lose our heads. The initiative is in our hands, there is no need to be afraid. We began and got cold feet. It is not to our benefit to fight. The future depends not on Cuba but on our country.

That is correct.

All the members of the Presidium and the Secretaries endorse and support Cde. N. S. Khrushchev.

Cde. N. S. Khrushchev proposes to think about information [to give to] F. Castro.

We must draft a document in which we say where we are heading. Some things worked out well, others did not. What we have right now is a positive moment. What is the positive side of this? The fact that the entire world is focused on Cuba. The missiles played their positive role.

Time will pass, and if need be, the missiles can appear there again.

Perhaps Cdes. Gromyko, Ponomarev, and Ilichev will think a bit about this document.

Notes taken by A. K. Serov<sup>32</sup> on 25 1962.

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 165, L. 170-173.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

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**Protocol No. 62  
Session of 27 October 1962**

Present: Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Shvernik, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Malinovsky, Gromyko, Grechko, Zakharov, Ivanov, Kuznetsov, Malin, Chernukha, Serov.

**Cde. Fomin's telegram from Rio de Janeiro No. \_\_\_ of 25.X.62.**<sup>33</sup>

Adopt measures.

**Cde. Pavlov's telegram from Trostnik No. \_\_\_/II of 27.X.62.**<sup>34</sup>

Affirm Cde. Pavlov's proposal

**Informational report concerning telegrams about Cuba.**

Cde. Malinovsky  
The informational report indicates the complexity of the situation

**I. About further steps concerning Cuba**

Khrushchev, Mikoyan,  
Malinovsky, Gromyko,  
Brezhnev, Kozlov, Ponomarev,  
Grechko, Kosygin, Suslov

The correspondence with U Thant can hardly be a restraining mechanism in conditions when negotiations have begun. They will not embark on an invasion, but it is impossible to make a guarantee.

Could they attack us right now?

I think they will not bring themselves to do it.

Of course, it is impossible to make a guarantee.

Kennedy's dramatic speech on radio and television, it was not out of bravery.

They are heaping all the blame on us, they had decided to settle accounts with Cuba, but now, in my view, they have reassessed this decision.

The steps we had undertaken until this were correct. Further steps.

We will not eliminate the conflict if we do not give satisfaction to the Americans and do not tell them that our R-12 missiles are there.

I think that we should not be obstinate.

Did we commit a mistake or not?

This can be assessed later on.

We must take into account that the US did not attack Cuba. And if we receive in return the elimination of the [US] base in Turkey and Pakistan, then we will end up victorious.

We agree to verification when we pull out the missiles.

All the comrades speak in support of Cde. Khrushchev's proposal.

#### **Continuation of the discussion concerning Cuba**

##### **The letter to US President Kennedy**

Gromyko, Khrushchev,  
Mikoyan, Malinovsky,  
Kozlov, Suslov, Brezhnev,  
Kosygin

Dictation of the text of the letter to US President Kennedy is under way.

Cde. Khrushchev is dictating it.

Discussion of the text of the letter to US President Kennedy.

Affirm the text of the letter.

Entrust it to the US ambassador in the USSR

Broadcast the letter on the radio at 5:00 p.m. on 27.X.62 and publish it in the press.

##### **On the letter to F. Castro**

Ponomarev, Khrushchev

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 43-44.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Presidium

#### **Protocol No. 63 Session of 28 October 1962**

Present: Brezhnev, Kozlov, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Suslov, Khrushchev, Shvernik, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Gromyko, Malinovsky, Grechko, Zakharov, S. Ivanov, Malin.

##### **On further steps concerning Cuba.**

Cde. Khrushchev

1. If an attack is provoked, we have issued an order to inflict a retaliatory strike.
2. We agree to dismantle the missile installations.

##### **I. On the letter to US President Kennedy**

Cde. Khrushchev is dictating the text of the letter.

##### **V. On the letter to F. Castro**

The text of the letter is being dictated by Cde. Khrushchev.

##### **On the telegram to Cde. Pavlov<sup>35</sup>**

Cde. Khrushchev is dictating the text of the telegram.

##### **II. On the letter to U Thant**

Protocol No. 63 (continuation)  
Session of 28 October 1962

Present: Kozlov, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Grishin, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin

##### **III. Cde. Dobrynin's message from Washington about the discussion with R. Kennedy and the telegram of the KGB station chief No. \_\_\_from<sup>36</sup>**

Send the informational report and letter to F. Castro.

About the instructions to Alekseev.

Instructions to Zorin

We can show U Thant that we are dismantling the missile installations.

##### **IX. On the instructions to Cde. Pavlov**

Instructions to Pavlov to show to U Thant  
About the ships.  
Reach out to the Red Cross (so that Red Cross  
representatives look) during the [ships'] voyage and on a  
neutral vessel.  
Letter to Castro so that he will give his consent to letting in  
Red Cross representatives [to Cuba's ports].<sup>37</sup>  
Compose an informational letter to Kennedy.

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 45-46ob.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet  
Union

Presidium

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### Protocol No. 66 Session of 16 November 1962

Present: Brezhnev, Voronov, Kirilenko, Kozlov, Kosygin,  
Kuusinen, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Grishin,  
Demichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin.

#### **On the message from US President R. Kennedy<sup>38</sup> about further steps concerning Cuba.**

Khrushchev, Gromyko,  
Brezhnev, Kosygin, Kozlov,  
Ponomarev, Suslov<sup>39</sup>  
About Castro's position — unreasonable and screechy  
Let this be a lesson for us.  
We are coming to the crunch point: Either they will  
cooperate or we will let our people go.  
Cde [Anastas] Mikoyan's letter requesting a conversation  
with Castro.

Respond that we agreed to the withdrawal of the Il-28s  
(orally).<sup>40</sup>

**Source:** RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, L. 49.



Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet  
Union

Presidium

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### Protocol No. 71 Session of 3 December 1962

Present: Voronov, Kirilenko, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Polyansky,  
Suslov, Khrushchev, Efremov, Demichev, Andropov, Ilichev,  
Rudakov, Polyakov, Titov, Shelepin, Satyukov, Gromyko,  
Malinovsky, Troyanovsky, S. Ivanov, Shuisky, Lebedev,  
Shevchenko.

#### **I. Cde. Mikoyan's report on his trip to Cuba.**

Mikoyan, Khrushchev,  
Gromyko,  
Consider the line to be correct.  
We preserved Cuba as a hub of the rev[olutionary]  
move[ment].  
The USA was compelled to recognize that we, too, have our  
interests in the Western Hemisphere.  
Whoever says that we retreated — this is malicious  
feebleness.  
We pulled out the missiles — that is correct. We assembled a  
large-scale force.  
We are participants of the world club. They themselves got  
frightened.  
If we had held out for a while longer, then perhaps nothing  
would have come of it.  
[Fidel] Castro, when he was speaking — open atomic fire.<sup>41</sup>  
Now he is backing away from this and glossing over it.  
A treaty with him is not needed, within a certain time we  
should consider some sort of declaration.

Malinovsky, Kosygin  
The Cubans are unreliable allies.  
We should be careful in dealing with our gains.  
We should treat our obligations strictly and responsibly.  
Help Cuba, strengthen its army.  
We are our own side, let them answer for their own actions.  
Kennedy, I think, will keep his word.  
Our tactics in relation to the C[hinese] C[ommunist] P[arty]  
leadership — do not burn bridges.  
Cde. Mikoyan brilliantly handled the CC's mission and  
upheld the line and coped with<sup>42</sup>  
He did it well.  
Approve the activity and the work carried out under difficult  
circumstances in our country's interests and the interests of  
Cuba.<sup>43</sup>  
Regarding plans for the withdrawal of troops from Cuba  
(Malinovsky, Khrushchev), do not consider it for a while yet.

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Source: RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, Ll. 53-53ob.

## Notes

1 Dr. Naftali, the former director of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, is a Senior Research Fellow at the New America Foundation.

2 Two transcripts, from the missile crisis meetings of Kennedy and his advisors (a group that became known as the Executive Committee [ExComm] of the National Security Council), on 16 and 27 October 1962, were released earlier, in the mid-late 1980s, but without audio files. For the original publication of excerpts from the 16 October meeting, accompanied by Marc Trachtenberg's important article, "The Influence of Nuclear Weapons in the Cuban Missile Crisis," please see *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 1 (Summer 1985), pp. 137-, 163, 164-203; and for the 27 October meeting (transcribed by McGeorge Bundy, edited by James G. Blight), see *International Security*, vol. 12, no. 3 (Winter 1987/1988), pp. 30-92. Ernest May and Philip Zelikow produced the first collection of transcripts for the entire set of ExComm conversations in 1997. Two years after their book, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), appeared there was some controversy about the quality of these transcripts, e.g., Sheldon Stern, *Averting the 'Final Failure': John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003). With the help of a group of scholars (I was among them) at the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs in 2000, May and Zelikow reworked their transcripts. In 2001 W.W. Norton published these transcripts as part of a three-volume reference set, *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy*. A year later Norton issued a revised edition of the *Kennedy Tapes* that included the revised May/Zelikow transcripts. The Norton edition of *the Kennedy Tapes* also included transcripts of conversations related to the Cuban missile crisis that were not in the Harvard edition. The Miller Center scholars transcribed these pre-October 1962 and non-ExComm October conversations from scratch. Controversy over the authoritativeness of the May/Zelikow transcripts remain but the revised transcripts that appeared in 2001 and 2002 were a vast improvement over those that appeared in 1997. The transcription process is extremely difficult and the fact that excellent transcripts only emerge as the result of a collaborative, evolutionary process is one of the key lessons of this story. As technology improves and more time is invested in listening to these recordings, scholars will continue to improve the Cuban Missile Crisis transcripts. In any case, there is no substitute for listening to the actual recordings.

3 Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, "One Hell of a Gamble": *Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

4 Aleksandr A. Fursenko, General Editor, *Arkhivii Kremlya: Prezidium TsK KPSS, 1954-1964, Tom. 1, Chernovie protokolniiye zapisi zasedanii; Stenogrammi* [Archives of the Kremlin: Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communists Party of the Soviet

Union, 1954-1964, vol. 1, Notes of State Meetings; Stenographic Accounts], (Moscow: Rosspen, 2003). An updated edition, with some corrections, appeared in 2004. In the years since, among other books, Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), and Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Knopf, 2008) have drawn upon the Malin notes to analyze the missile crisis. The notes were originally held by the closed Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF) and were transferred to RGANI in 2001.

5 Harold Macmillan, introduction to Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Mentor (paperback), 1969), pp. 17-19.

6 *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1970), p.493-4.

7 In consulting the Malin notes for the book *Khrushchev's Cold War*, I do not recall any other instance of Khrushchev having to drag out a meeting over four days to get a proposal approved.

8 See Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of A Gamble*.

9 *Ibid.*, Chapter 17.

10 Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, pp. 412-416 ("final fight" quotation on 416).

11 Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, Chapter 18.

12 *Ibid.*

13 In *One Minute to Midnight*, Michael Dobbs suggests that not too much should be read into the structure of this note and that "it seems probable, therefore, that the [Anatoly F.] Dobrynin message arrived during the early part of the meeting, before Khrushchev dictated his letters to JFK and Castro, but became the subject of detailed discussion at the second session." Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, p. 402. The timing of the Dobrynin message needs more study because getting this right would alter the debate over whether Kennedy needed to make the Jupiter offer to end the crisis peacefully.

14 Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, Chapter 19 (Paperback edition); see also, Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, Chapter 2.

15 The explanation may be, as it might be for the strange structure of the 28 October session, that Khrushchev considered the December 3 meeting too large to hear about JFK's secret promise. The December 3 meeting included people who were neither full nor candidate members of the Presidium.

16 Please see Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War*, Chapter 20.

17 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Khrushchev headed a large Soviet delegation that visited Bulgaria from 14 to 20 May 1962 to discuss a wide range of political, economic, and security issues. For a detailed account of the visit and its context, see RFE Research and Evaluation Department, Bulgarian Unit, "Khrushchev's Bulgarian Visit: A Summing Up," Background Report, 5 June 1962, in Open Society Archive (Budapest), Box 108, Folder 2, Report 66, pp. 1-11.

18 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Rodion Yakovlevich Malinovsky (1898-1967), a legendary Soviet World War II commander who had been

elevated to the highest rank (Marshal of the Soviet Union) in 1944, served as Soviet minister of defense from 1957 until his death in 1967. Sergei Semenovich Biryuzov (1904-1964), another well-known Soviet commander in World War II who became a Marshal of the Soviet Union in 1955, served as head of the Soviet Strategic Missile Forces (which had jurisdiction over SS-4 and SS-5 missiles, among others) from April 1962 until March 1963, when he was appointed chief of the Soviet General Staff. Biryuzov died in a plane crash near Belgrade in October 1964, just five days after Nikita Khrushchev was removed from office in Moscow. The reference here in Malin's notes is to a secret visit that began roughly a week later (at the end of May) by a high-level Soviet delegation, which included Biryuzov. The delegation was ostensibly headed by Sharaf Rashidov (a candidate member of the CPSU Presidium), but Biryuzov was the one who handled the crucial negotiations with Castro about the missile deployment scheme. The delegation returned to the Soviet Union on 8 June 1962.

19 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This section is referring to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's commencement address at the University of Michigan on 9 June 1962. In that speech, McNamara declared that "basic military strategy in a possible general nuclear war should be approached in much the same way that more conventional military operations have been regarded in the past. That is to say, principal military objectives, in the event of a nuclear war stemming from a major attack on the Alliance, should be the destruction of the enemy's forces, not of his civilian population." By taking such an approach, McNamara argued, "we are giving a possible opponent the strongest imaginable incentive to refrain from striking our own cities." Much of the speech was intended to stress the need for NATO's nuclear deterrent to be based predominantly on US nuclear forces rather than on multiple small forces akin to the ones already developed by Britain and France, but the targeting priorities laid out in the speech proved controversial in Moscow.

20 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This is referring to the sea-bound transfers of weapons and logistical supplies to Cuba in support of the planned missile deployments. The schedules were frequently updated and revised.

21 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: A draft "Treaty between the Republic of Cuba and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Stationing of the Soviet Armed Forces on the Territory of the Republic of Cuba" was initialed in Moscow in early July 1962 by Cuban Defense Minister Raul Castro and Soviet Defense Minister Malinovsky. The document underwent further minor revisions over the next several weeks, and a revised version was presented to Fidel Castro on 13 August 1962. Castro proposed some small changes, which were incorporated into the final version. See Anatoly Gribkov, *Im Dienste der Sowjetunion: Erinnerungen eines Armeegenerals* (Berlin: edition Q, 1992), esp. chs. 2-4.

22 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Issa Aleksandrovich Pliiev (1903-1979), a much-decorated Soviet commander in World War II, had been elevated to the rank of Army General in 1962 shortly before he was appointed commander of Soviet forces on Cuba.

23 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: President John F. Kennedy spoke at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on 4 July 1962, urging Americans

to "be ready for a Declaration of Interdependence . . . to discuss with a united Europe the ways and means of forming a concrete Atlantic partnership . . . to throw off the yoke of poverty . . . balance our world-wide trade . . . and deter any aggression in order to achieve a world of law and free choice." See "Address at Independence Hall, July 4, 1962," in US Office of the Federal Register, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: President John F. Kennedy*, 1962, Vol. 2, pp. 591-593. US Secretary of State Dean Rusk joined the president in Philadelphia and voiced similar themes in his own remarks there.

24 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The McMahon Line covering the eastern sector of the Indo-Tibetan border was a demarcation line drawn by the British government for the Treaty of Simla in 1914. In later decades the Chinese government claimed that it had never formally accepted the line. During most of the 1950s, the McMahon Line served as the de facto border between India and eastern Tibet, but official Chinese maps purported to show that some 65,000 sq. km. of territory south of the McMahon Line (i.e. in India) were still part of China. Those regions remain in dispute to this day.

25 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Because of the 7-hour time difference between Moscow and Washington, DC (a difference that increased to 8 hours on 28 October when the United States moved its clocks back an hour to Daylight Standard Time), this session of the CPSU Presidium necessarily began before President John F. Kennedy delivered his 18-minute address announcing the discovery of Soviet missile installations on Cuba. That address, broadcast over television and radio, started at 7 p.m. US east coast time on 22 October 1962, which in Moscow would have been 2 a.m. on 23 October 1962. According to Aleksei Serov's notes of this Presidium session, the deliberations began at 10 p.m. Moscow time on 22 October 1962, some four hours before Kennedy delivered his address. By that time, Soviet intelligence officials and diplomats had learned that President Kennedy would be making a major announcement about Cuba later that day. The first part of the CPSU Presidium meeting occurred before Kennedy's speech. Nikita Khrushchev received the text of Kennedy's address from the US government roughly an hour before Kennedy went on the air. According to Serov's notes, the Presidium session temporarily adjourned after the arrival of the text of Kennedy's speech, and it resumed at 10 a.m. on 23 October, Moscow time. The first part of Vladimir Malin's notes (through the statement by Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) covers the discussion that occurred before the arrival of the text of Kennedy's address. The remaining part of the notes is from the deliberations that began at 10 a.m. on 23 October, Moscow time.

26 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The surname of Igor Dem'yanovich Statsenko (1918-1987), the major-general who oversaw the Soviet R-12 (SS-4) and R-14 (SS-5) missile regiments on Cuba, is mistakenly rendered as Stetsenko in the notes.

27 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This is the last recorded comment prior to the arrival of the text of Kennedy's address. The remaining part of the meeting occurred at the resumed session on the morning of 23 October 1962.

27a TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Khrushchev is referring here to the four Soviet Foxtrot-class diesel submarines that were in the region

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(B-4, B-36, B-59, and B-130), each of which was equipped with a nuclear-capable torpedo. In coming days, three of these submarines (B-36, B-59, and B-130) were forced to surface by U.S. naval vessels. Another Soviet submarine, the B-75 (which was of the earlier Zulu-class), had also been in the region since early October to protect Soviet transport ships. The B-75 was promptly recalled to the Soviet Union, its mission having been rendered moot.

28 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Valerian Aleksandrovich Zorin (1902-1986) was the Soviet ambassador to the United Nations from 1952 to 1953 and again from 1956 to 1965, when he also served as Soviet deputy foreign minister. He was involved in the celebrated confrontation with US ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson on 25 October 1962 regarding the Soviet missiles in Cuba.

28a TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Here again, Khrushchev is referring to the four Foxtrot-class submarines.

29 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The Aleksandrovska, a large, Swedish-built cargo ship, was carrying 24 1-megaton nuclear warheads for the R-14 (SS-5) missiles that were supposed to be deployed on Cuba and 44 14-kiloton warheads for Soviet tactical cruise missiles. The Aleksandrovska was originally supposed to dock in the Cuban port of Mariel, but the outbreak of the crisis caused the ship to be diverted to the much closer Cuban port of La Isabela. Four other Soviet surface ships, including the Almat'evsk, which was escorting the Aleksandrovska, were also allowed to proceed to the nearby Cuban port. But all Soviet surface ships that were further away, including those carrying the R-14 missiles themselves, were ordered to turn back.

30 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Egypt was renamed the United Arab Republic (UAR) from 1958 to 1972, but the UAR as an entity essentially ceased to exist after the planned merger between Egypt and Syria broke down in 1961. From then until 1972, the UAR and Egypt were one and the same.

31 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The bracketed portion was crossed out in A. K. Serov's notes.

32 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Aleksei Kapitonovich Serov (1918-1993) was the head of the first sector of the CPSU General Department from 1961 to 1963. Sometimes when Vladimir Malin, the head of the CPSU General Department, was absent, either Serov or V. N. Chernukha (Malin's deputy) would take notes of the CPSU Presidium meetings. In this particular instance, both Malin and Serov took notes of the 25 October 1962 meeting, just as they had at the session on 22-23 October 1962.

33 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Andrei Andronovich Fomin (1918-1983), the Soviet ambassador in Brazil, was conveying the Brazilian authorities' ideas for a peaceful settlement of the crisis. For a detailed, insightful review of Brazil's role during and after the missile crisis, see James G. Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis (Part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20; and James G. Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis (Part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67. See also translated Brazilian documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

34 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: "Pavlov" was the pseudonym used here for Aleksandr Ivanovich Alekseev (1913-1998), the Soviet ambassador in Cuba at the time. (Alekseev had been elevated from embassy counselor to ambassador in the summer of 1962, replacing Sergei Kudryavtsev, whom Fidel Castro had grown to dislike. Upon taking over as ambassador in mid-August, Alekseev became a key figure both before and during the crisis.) Alekseev's cable of 26/27 October conveyed Fidel Castro's proposal that the Soviet Union announce that Soviet weaponry on Cuba (including the missiles) was under exclusive Soviet control. Castro thereby hoped to preclude a US attempt to portray the confrontation as one solely between the United States and Cuba. The pseudonym "Pavlov" in some other contexts was used for General Pliyev, and confusion can at times result. The term "Trostnik" was the codename for Havana.

35 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Here, once again, "Pavlov" is the pseudonym used for Ambassador Alekseev. The same is true of the heading of section IX below.

36 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The Soviet ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Fedorovich Dobrynin (1919-2010), had met with US Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy (the brother of the president) on the evening of 27 October US east coast time. Kennedy indicated that after all Soviet missile installations in Cuba were dismantled, the United States would agree to eliminate US Jupiter nuclear missile bases in Turkey, provided that the Soviet leaders kept this offer strictly secret and unwritten. (A few days later, Robert Kennedy rejected a communication from Khrushchev that mentioned the arrangement.) The explicit tradeoff was glossed over in Robert Kennedy's posthumously published, fanciful account *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), and it was not acknowledged by any of President Kennedy's other advisers until many years later.

37 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The three words in brackets were crossed out in the notes. The question of whether international inspectors should be allowed in to Cuba to verify the dismantling of missile installations became a major point of contention between Moscow and Havana — Fidel Castro vehemently rejected the idea beginning with his "Five Points" statement on 28 October 1962 — and stoked bilateral friction for years afterward.

38 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Malin mistakenly includes the "R." here. The confusion may have arisen because on 12 November (four days earlier) Robert Kennedy, speaking on behalf of his brother, had orally conveyed to Dobrynin the president's willingness to allow up to 30 days for the removal of the Il-28 bombers from Cuba and to lift the naval quarantine against Cuba even before the UN gave confirmation of the dismantling of the Soviet missiles. The CPSU Presidium had already dealt with this offer on 14 November, but the issue kept coming up as the two sides sought a mutually acceptable arrangement.

39 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The listing of speakers mistakenly mentions Ponomarev and Groyenko twice each. The extra occurrences of their names have been omitted here.

40 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: See the next document's description of Mikoyan's visit to discuss this issue and others.



41 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This is clearly a reference to one of the most remarkable (and disconcerting) events during the Cuban Missile Crisis. At a critical moment on the night of 26-27 October, Fidel Castro (who believed that a US invasion of Cuba was imminent) sent an urgent cable to Khrushchev calling on the Soviet Union to launch a nuclear strike against the United States if US forces embarked on a full-scale invasion of Cuba. Such a step, Castro declared, would be "an act of the most legitimate self-defense," and "no matter how harsh and terrible [this option] would be, there would be no other." Khrushchev promptly sent a blunt reply turning down Castro's suggestion. Castro's cable was first publicly mentioned by Sergei Khrushchev (Nikita's son) at an international conference in Moscow in January 1989 and was then recounted in print in 1990 in a supplementary English-language volume of previously unpublished segments of Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, ed. by Jerrold L. Schecter and Vyacheslav V. Luchkov (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1990), pp. 176-178. The disclosure prompted a strong reply from the Cuban authorities, who published the text of the cable in the Communist daily *Granma* on 25 November 1990. For an overview and an English translation of the document (as well as of other cables between Khrushchev and Castro in 1962), see Appendix 2 of James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis,*

*and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993). In 1992, after the Soviet Union broke apart, the document (along with other declassified Soviet cables exchanged with the United States as well as with Cuba in the fall of 1962) was published in Russian in a special issue (*spetsial'nyi vypusk*) of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's monthly journal *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*. Translations of these documents have also been published in the CWIHP *Bulletin* and in numerous anthologies.

42 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The line breaks off here unfinished.

43 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The phrase "difficult circumstances" is an understatement. Throughout Mikoyan's visit, Fidel Castro made clear his extreme displeasure with the Soviet Union's handling of the crisis, including Moscow's consent to the US demand for the withdrawal of Soviet Il-28 bombers. For a riveting account of the tense negotiations, see Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Missiles of November*, ed. by Svetlana Savranskaya (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), which is a revised and more concise version of Sergo Mikoyan's huge *Anatomiya karibskogo krizisa* (Moscow: Academia, 2006). See also the translated documents presented by Svetlana Savranskaya elsewhere in this special issue of the CWIHP *Bulletin*.

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# A Trigger for Khrushchev's Deployment?

## Alexei Adzhubei's Report on His Conversation with John F. Kennedy, 30 January 1962

Introduction by James Hershberg

From the moment US officials learned in mid-October 1962 that the Soviets were deploying nuclear-capable missiles to Cuba, a major topic of speculation and debate has been: What prompted Nikita Khrushchev to take such a risky decision? Most theorizing at the top of the Kennedy Administration, at the Excomm and elsewhere, centered on the idea that the Soviet premier had made the move to recoup Moscow's now evident inferiority in the nuclear balance;<sup>1</sup> as part of ongoing tensions over Berlin (perhaps to lay the groundwork for some sort of Cuba-for-Berlin trade, some speculated); or some broader Cold War challenge to the United States and its young president, who had endured a tough meeting with the wily, blustery Soviet communist a quarter-century his senior the previous year in Vienna. During and after the crisis, the only motive for placing missiles in Cuba that Khrushchev would admit to, publicly and privately, was to defend Cuba from the threat of US aggression, already demonstrated at the Bay of Pigs, by deterring a potential American attack—an aim that enabled the Kremlin boss to claim a measure of success after the crisis ended with JFK's non-invasion pledge, but which was widely scorned (at least in the United States) as a transparent propaganda ploy to salvage some face after a humiliating retreat. Over the past half-century of evolving historiography, all these explanations have remained plausible and won adherents, and some others have also emerged to one degree or another—most or all them compatible with other, and all generally wedded to reference to Khrushchev's rash or impulsive personality and leadership style.<sup>2</sup>

Over the past two decades or so, especially as Cuban perspectives have more actively entered the debate and more evidence has been declassified concerning US covert actions, assassination plotting, and military planning to topple Castro in 1962, the one motive that has clearly gained traction in debates over Khrushchev's nuclear decision is the defense-of-Cuba argument that the Soviet leader advanced at the time. While certainly not incompatible with other motives—from redressing nuclear inferiority to strengthening his hand to possibly re-open the Berlin Crisis ultimatum he had issued in Vienna and then suspended, to showing up the Chinese—Khrushchev's nuclear gambit clearly also reflected a genuine sense of commitment to Fidel Castro's revolutionary, and now self-described as communist, leadership in Havana.

Clarifying the timing of Khrushchev's nuclear decision, it has long been known, ever since his smuggled-out memoirs (*Khrushchev Remembers* and *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*) were published in 1970 and 1974, that the Soviet leader acted to gain approval for sending nuclear missiles to Cuba—first from his Kremlin associates, then from Fidel Castro—in the spring of 1962 following a visit to Bulgaria, and that one factor in that move was his fear of impending US military action against Cuba. But what might have caused him to believe such a danger existed to the survival of Castro's regime in Havana? In their 1997 book, *“One Hell of a Gamble”*—the most important secondary account of the missile crisis to appear since Graham T. Allison's *Essence of Decision* (1971)—Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali identified a specific trigger for Khrushchev's belief that the United States, and John F. Kennedy in particular, would not long countenance the upstart Cuban revolutionaries running this traditional playground of the North Americans' so near to Florida. In particular, they cited a private conversation with the American leader at the end of January 1962 conducted by Khrushchev's son-in-law, Alexei Adzhubei, the editor-in-chief of *Izvestia* (the leading Soviet state newspaper, along with *Pravda*), in which President Kennedy had—according to the Soviet—forcefully, even angrily, likened Cuba to Hungary, which the Soviets had invaded in 1956 to crush an uprising.<sup>3</sup> The clear implication was, a superpower must act to suppress such a blatant challenge in its own sphere of influence, and, JFK was quoted as saying, after banging his fist in anger at CIA director Allen W. Dulles' failure to vanquish the Cubans as efficiently as the Soviets had squelched the Hungarians (“in just three days”), that the United States “should learn from” its Soviet rival. Fursenko and Naftali, judiciously, observe that Adzhubei may have “exaggerated, misinterpreted, or misrepresented Kennedy's words,” though the American record (published in *Foreign Relations of the United States* a year after *“One Hell of a Gamble”* appeared) confirms that Kennedy in fact made the Cuba-Hungary analogy.<sup>4</sup> In any event, they conclude, the Kremlin leadership “came to believe not only that Kennedy spoke those words but that he was seriously considering a second, even bigger [than the Bay of Pigs] invasion of Cuba, this time involving US troops...After Kennedy compared Cuba to Hungary in a private talk with Khrushchev's son-in-law, whatever hope there might have

been that this administration might tolerate a communist country off American shores evaporated.”<sup>5</sup>

Though Adzhubei was nominally a journalist, his interview with Kennedy was not for publication, and according to Fursenko and Naftali, he first reported the “explosive bits” of JFK’s comments, including his comparison of Cuba to Hungary, only orally to his father-in-law. But, “to cover himself,” they write, Khrushchev had Adzhubei expand his report for wider circulation within the Kremlin and CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) leadership.<sup>6</sup> That report, dated 12 March 1962, appears below.<sup>7</sup> After the missile crisis, in a January 1963 letter to Fidel Castro, Khrushchev would cite JFK’s purported allusion to the Soviet invasion of Hungary in his conversation with Adzhubei as a factor prompting him to believe that it was necessary to take stronger measures to safeguard Cuba’s security, in the end, by sending nuclear missiles. The Americans, Khrushchev wrote Castro, had “often referred to the 1956 events in Hungary, viewing them as a model of a decisive measure from which to derive justification for their actions against Cuba’s revolution...They said to us, ‘You did it in your own interests because Hungary is close to you; but we also have the right to undertake the same decisive action against Cuba, which is close to us.’”<sup>8</sup> From this entire report, which also contains a seemingly ominous reference by Kennedy to West German nuclear aspirations in the context of ongoing tensions over Berlin, readers can help gauge the Kremlin’s mindset as Khrushchev prepared to roll the nuclear dice in Cuba.



### **Adzhubei’s Account of His Visit to Washington to the CC CPSU**

12 March 1962

TOP SECRET

During my visit to Washington, Brazil, and passing through Mexico, I had a few meetings with US President John Kennedy, his brother, Robert Kennedy, and a few other figures from the President’s circle. In Brazil I met with President [João] Goulart, Prime Minister [Tancredo] Neves, Minister of International [Foreign] Affairs [San Tiago] Dantos, and a few other officials. In Mexico I had a short conversation with President [Adolfo] Lopez Mateos. Telegrams were dispatched to Moscow from these countries in which the character of these conversations was reported. I would like to report to the Central Committee a few more details and circumstances

about the meetings and conversations which occurred in the USA which will help to complete the picture.

Firstly, what surprised American journalists and journalists of other Western nations accredited to Washington was the heightened interest of American society in the very fact, as [columnist Walter] Lippmann expressed it, of the contact between the USA and the USSR on various levels. When I was in the United States this concerned M. Kharlamov’s meeting with [White House press secretary] P[ierre]. Salinger. The newspapers made a lot of noise about the possibility of J. Kennedy making a trip to the USSR. Finally there was talk of the president’s inviting me to breakfast. There were a number of conjectures on this account and many direct questions at the time of the reception at the embassy, at which many notable American journalists were present: Lippmann, [*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* correspondent Marquis] Childs, [*New York Times* reporter James] Reston, [*New York Herald-Tribune* correspondent Marguerite] Higgins, directors of television and radio companies, etc. It was possible to understand from the conversations with these journalists, from the announcements of the services, that in the United States there is now a heightened nervousness and extraordinary interest in taking any step, which could occur in one way or another, that from the point of view of Americans promotes the possibility of reconciling American-Soviet differences. Much has happened to me in America, but I have never seen such agitated anticipation for the improvement of relations between our countries as exists now.

Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev said that the hour has come—the American nation is beginning to wake up and Americans are ceasing to be lazy seals that warm themselves on warm shores. It is clear that the time is approaching. In any case, as the most experienced American journalists say frankly, in many respects they can’t figure Americans out. Thus Childs has said about the persecution of the Communist party in the USA: “If it was not for this occurring, it is possible that in the past thousands of Americans, especially the youth, would not have demonstrated a large interest towards Marxism and your ideas. Even now when I [visit] universities, because I am familiar with Russia in a way, they don’t ask me about my travels in other countries but what I think about communism.” When I told Lippmann that there is a very positive atmosphere at the Soviet embassy, he laughed and rejoined:

“And how! You’ve signed the German peace treaty, established a border in Berlin, put a gate there, and since you signed the agreement a war hasn’t started, and now everything is settling normally.”

I gave the appearance that I did not understand Lippmann, and said to him:

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“The agreement is still not signed. You are clearly getting ahead of events.”

“No, it is you who have gotten ahead of events,” Lippmann remarked, “you understand everything wonderfully, and most importantly, your premier understands this.”

At this very moment a few other American journalists approached us, including Childs and Reston. Hearing what was being said, one of them remarked:

“I am sure that you will not sign the German peace treaty for a long time yet.”

“Why?” I asked.

“Because it is very convenient to have a callus on the foot of your neighbor who you don’t particularly like. There is always the possibility in such cases of unintentionally disturbing this callus and doing your neighbor harm, but then [you can] excuse yourself and say that it was an accident.”

At the time of the conversation about Germany and the problem of West Berlin it was perceived that the American journalists lacked the level of interest they had only a few months ago.

Violating all norms of protocol, a few dozen American journalists and Kennedy advisers stayed at the Soviet embassy until almost midnight. If I were to summarize the conversation that occurred that night it would go something like this. Eisenhower became president of the USA at first because in the eyes of the American people he was considered to be a hero of the Second World War. But the second time, in this very capacity, Eisenhower came forward like a peacemaker in the Korean War. His announcement that if elected he would succeed in achieving a Korean peace practically won him the presidency. Kennedy did not have many of Eisenhower’s advantages with regard to popularity. Kennedy’s administration, and the journalists and newspapers which supported Kennedy, including a number of prominent newspapers like the *New York Times*, tried to do his political business for him. The newspapers were full of various articles telling the story of the ascent of John Kennedy. They talked about his service in the navy during the war, and there were big advertisements on the occasion of his various appearances and speeches; there was [also] the story about the Kennedy family as being the ideal American family. One of the journalists even said to me as a joke: “We know that the Soviet Union struggles with the cult of personality. It is clear that we have begun our own cult of Kennedy and it may be that at some point we will have to struggle with this cult.”

It goes without saying that Kennedy was often worried and was preoccupied with the idea that it would be difficult for him to win the votes [needed] for a second term. Kennedy had already announced his candidacy and his administration was ready to actively cultivate public opinion; of that there

could be no doubt. However, Kennedy himself, his brother, and those people closest to him until that time were extremely alarmed that Kennedy had not won the election with a very large advantage over the Republicans. Now they are making every effort to start a new election campaign and gain a firmer position from which to go to the polls against the Republicans more boldly. This circumstance is forcing Kennedy and his closest people to take various measures in connection with all of the following methods. I’ve already spoken about one of these, the Cult of Kennedy. A second is to present the affair in this manner – Kennedy has gathered around himself the most intelligent Americans and that he organized a dynamic administration. Not without obvious pleasure, journalists announced that Kennedy himself and those closest to him openly mocked Eisenhower who was now openly called the Golf President. In connection with this, Reston told me a joke, which as he expressed it, he tried not to tell to foreigners during the reign of Eisenhower: “When Ike planned to go to meet you, the Soviet Union, there were rumors in America that Mister Khrushchev prepared a field to play golf somewhere in Moscow.” In that connection we said: “When Ike plays golf in the USA that is only half the trouble. When he wins or loses in America it concerns only us Americans in the end. Premier Khrushchev will surely lose to Eisenhower at golf in the Soviet Union, and along with this victory, the old man will lose to Khrushchev in completely different terms.”

This was one extremely important thing for Kennedy and any other future American president. The President of the United States must be able to speak, so they say, with Soviet leaders. In the end, this advantage seemed to be the most important. With good reason, so they say, during agitation at meetings many voices really rallied around Kennedy, saying: “[Eisenhower’s vice president, Richard M.] Nixon cannot talk with Premier Khrushchev, and if he can it is only in the kitchen (in that way, the conversation between Nixon and N. S. Khrushchev in the kitchen of a typical American household during the American exhibition in Moscow [in July 1959] was ironically ridiculed.) Kennedy knows how to speak with Premier Khrushchev.”

The Kennedy administration has persistently influenced the American people in the manner described above. Kennedy himself and his circle, however, are worried that he will not be able to prove to Americans in time his ability to make agreements and reconcile the continuous questions about the Soviet Union. When Childs and I said goodbye to one another (Childs and I have been acquainted for a long time. We participated together in the New Year’s discussion in 1959 in Paris), he frankly said: “We came to the Soviet embassy today [and] spent so much time here because we supposed that Kennedy had obviously decided to show that he is seriously

beginning a serious dialogue with Khrushchev.” I answered that I could not vouch for Kennedy but that as concerns the Soviet government it is always prepared for serious conversations regarding the resolution of differences. Childs added: “As you know, I sympathize with the Democrats and am worried about Kennedy. He maintains approximately 125,000 reservists in the army. This is 125,000 votes against him, plus their wives, fiancés, mothers, and fathers, that is, around half a million votes. In November 1962, elections will be held for the House of Representatives and one-third of the seats in the Senate. Although in the United States the president can do without a majority in either the Senate or the House, it is better to nevertheless have this majority. In this fashion, the November 1962 elections,” continued Childs, “will be a kind of rehearsal before his re-election campaign, which Kennedy will begin sometime in 1963.”

The day after my trip to Washington the president had me over for breakfast [on 30 January 1962], at which his wife, her sister and [Georgi] Bolshakov and his wife were in attendance.<sup>10</sup> This detail drew my attention. When I exchanged greetings with Kennedy he almost immediately directed the conversation towards Cuba and how I liked it there. Receiving a suitable answer, he paused a little and said:

“How is Che Guevara?”

I answered that he didn’t seem to look bad, although I didn’t see him often, and asked him in turn, why was the president suddenly interested in one of the participants of the Cuban revolution?

“I read some dispatches to the press,” answered Kennedy.

In turn I remarked: “You are interested in the events in Cuba, that is your right. But when we read that the USA plans to invade Cuba, we don’t think that this is your right.”

“We are not planning an invasion of Cuba,” Kennedy answered.

I reminded him: “And what of the mercenaries from Guantanamo and those other countries? You already changed your opinion regarding the landing in April 1961, that it was a mistake for America?”

Kennedy hit his fist on the table and said:

“Once I summoned [then CIA director] Allen Dulles and rebuked him. I said to him: ‘learn from the Russians. When they had a tough situation in Hungary [in 1956], they put an end to the conflict in just three days. When they didn’t like the events in Finland, the president of that country went to meet with the Soviet premier in Siberia, and everything was worked out. And you, Dulles, couldn’t do a thing.’”

I answered the President:

“With regard to Hungary, your analogy with Cuba is entirely untenable. With regard to Finland, well maybe this is the case, which should make the United States aware that they

need to learn to respect Cuba. After all, we respect Finland. Even though Capitalist elements exist within it, the president of a bourgeois government retains good relations with the Soviet Union.”

Kennedy became quiet, and then with earnestness said:

“From a psychological point of view, it is very hard for the American people to agree with what is going on in Cuba. After all it is only 90 miles from our coast. It is very hard,” he repeated, and then added, “Cuba fell from within.”

“It is necessary to become reconciled with a great many things,” I remarked to the President. “And there are a great many things to become accustomed to, and it is clear that there are a great number of new things that the American people must get used to. Only do not meddle in events in Cuba, this is most important. But your people understand this.”

Kennedy remarked sharply:

“We will not meddle with events in Cuba.”

“It’s a very big shame, Mister President,” I said to him, “that your words are not allowed to be published in the newspapers.”

Kennedy asked the question: “How would Castro react to the fact that you were invited to Washington from Havana?”

I said that Castro was very happy about this, he has an appreciation for peaceful coexistence which would include an improvement in US relations.

“We can talk more about this after breakfast, if you permit it.”

Then, as I have already written, Kennedy sent Salinger and [US interpreter Alexander A.] Akalovsky away, and asked Bolshakov to be the interpreter. The conversation continued for almost two hours. The content of the conversation has already been announced from Washington.

In the course of the conversation, Kennedy said that he was going to a press conference the following day, one which was usually held at the State Department. At the press conference there were more than 400 journalists present. There was a heightened sense of interest towards it. Although this conference occurred immediately after the completion of the conference in Punta-del-Este, Kennedy was, however, literally tongue-tied and uttered only a few words about the inter-American conference.<sup>11</sup>

He was not asked one question in connection with this conference. In the corridors American journalists asked: “What is there to ask the president, when the United States has failed? Brazil, Mexico and other nations gave us a slap in the face.”

There was one question asked which frustrated Kennedy. One of the journalists asked: “In connection with the conclusion of the conference at Punta-del-Este, did the United States return to normal trade relations with Cuba, or will it

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still not be possible to buy cigars there?" In a malcontented tone, [Kennedy responded] "I am not involved in the proceedings of that event. It seems that there is some talk about the sale of some medical supplies. Maybe we will receive cigars in return." And that prompted an explosion of laughter in the hall.

A few questions about Soviet-American relations were asked, which included one question about whether Kennedy is planning to visit the Soviet Union and whether or not he has some kind of invitation to do so. Kennedy was troubled by this question, and was feeling particularly clumsy because of the presence of Soviet journalists. His answer was evasive, meaning approximately that he would like to [visit the Soviet Union], but he was not invited.

At that time the theme of Kennedy traveling to the Soviet Union and meeting with N. S. Khrushchev appeared continuously in American newspapers. Americans with whom I have had the opportunity to speak ask this question if they are in some way interested in political questions.

I would also like to point out one more fact in connection with Kennedy's press conference. He was asked many empty, overtly demagogic questions on third-rate problems. This created the impression that this "waste of time" is a very "American tradition" created by the imperial propaganda machine for the befuddlement of the people.

After the press conference, Kennedy asked about one more meeting, which as he expressed it would be of a strictly confidential character. This has already been reported to Moscow.

Mind you, the president has a fear of being simple and open before Soviet journalists. Through Bolshakov, Salinger agreed that at 6:00 that evening he would send a car for me from the White House, in which I would ride around the city so that journalists would not discover the president's new meeting with a Soviet editor. And sure enough, the car carried us down some long streets, and at last we arrived at the White House at the president's private entrance. The gate opened quickly, we were asked for no documents, and the car went immediately through the entrance.

Kennedy was waiting and walking around the corridor. He immediately came into the room and in a nervous tone began the conversation. Gesticulating, he said: "Your armies are in Europe. I know the strength and potential of your military machine. Khrushchev can, of course"—and Kennedy made a gesture with his hands—"can take West Berlin. But then this would possibly provoke a rupture of relations between the Western nations and your nation and lead to tension."

"I want to emphasize to you again with all seriousness that it is my plan to find some [mutually] beneficial solution to this problem, which does not encroach on the positions that you cannot give up, as well as those positions, from which we

cannot retreat. I ask you to report, and if possible, to do it [only] orally, that the US, England, and France are opposed to German reunification. Such a dynamic and powerful state would be a cause of concern for us. We realize that unification is unrealistic; however, [publicly] I must speak about unification. And because of this there could be no talk about recognizing the GDR [German Democratic Republic; East Germany], and nor the border on the Elbe [i.e. the border between the two Germanys]. With respect to other border questions, it is completely possible that steps intended to regulate our disputes will lead to an announcement of the recognition of borders on the Oder and Neisse."

Kennedy very insistently, as in the first conversation, harped on the idea that in the next several years it will be necessary to work out some mutually-agreeable relations that will lead to some softening of the general world situation and permit, as he expressed it, a more composed perspective from which to observe the state of affairs in the world. In connection with this he said that in Laos he will "tie Boun Oum's arms" if for our part we guarantee him the Pathet Lao's equanimity.<sup>12</sup>

Kennedy is clearly worried about the situation in Southeast Asia and particularly, of course, in South Vietnam. He did not answer any questions about South Vietnam and the position of the United States in South Korea and did not want to continue the conversation on this theme, uttering the general phrase that neither the USSR nor the USA had any major interests in that region and we have to keep this in mind before all other things. He once again repeated the idea previously addressed that the United States of America and the Soviet Union send many weapons there, but these weapons and these complications can be used by a third power more interested in a conflict between the USA and the USSR.<sup>13</sup>

Then Kennedy long-windedly talked about how he emphasized with utmost urgency the Berlin problem. Continuing the previous conversation, he said that he would like a more constructive and, as he stated it more precisely, a more personal dialogue between [Soviet Foreign] Minister [Andrei] Gromyko and [US Ambassador in Moscow Llewellyn E.] Thompson insofar as they now only exchange general declarations. "We would like," Kennedy said, "for them to sit at a table, have in their hands the map of Germany and begin to look for possibilities for a settlement, which would be equally agreeable to the Soviet Union and the United States of America. I want your government to understand: it is impossible for us to leave West Berlin or to permit a Soviet military presence there." In connection with my question, Why can't the question of a guarantee come from the United Nations or the neutral nations[?], he said that this is also not possible, that it would lead to the total collapse of the Western Bloc. "You

understand," he began to say in a concerned way, "the more complex our relations become in Berlin and Germany, the more insistent [West German Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer becomes. For the time being I am restraining him and have sufficient arguments for not giving him atomic weapons. However, these high-level complications that are arising between us are prompting retaliatory forces in West Berlin." Kennedy was obviously calculating that this phrase on some level would, if not frighten us *per se*, intimidate us.

Kennedy answered: "It is not that we are afraid of West Germany and the president understands this perfectly." Maybe this is a delicate question – I asked Kennedy whether the United States was afraid of West Germany, or still more whether England and France were afraid of West Germany.

"It is possible to be afraid of the Germans," Kennedy answered. Then he said: "I understand that you and your allies can't use the words 'occupation force.' But with regard to a small contingent of soldiers, it would be possible to find a different name. Now about the access," Kennedy continued. "I see things realistically. Insofar as you object to international control of the highway [between West Berlin and West Germany], it is senseless for us to insist on it. After all the officers of the GDR are already (I thanked the president for pronouncing the full name, the German Democratic Republic, before me for the first time) putting their stamps [in documents]. The important thing is not who is affixing the stamps. Could you and I fantasize a bit (this is exactly what he said) about some compromise steps regarding Western powers' access to West Berlin? We are ready to meet the Soviet Union halfway and we will not have political ties with the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany; West Germany]. Maybe you too could meet us halfway in terms of some softening on the Western positions in the issue of access.

Then the president developed this idea: the situation could arise that the Soviet fleet was carried by storm into the waters of [Francisco] Franco's Spain. "In such a case you would not be able to make contact with Franco, but would you not ask that a third power somehow intercede on your behalf?"

"We already tried to do this, when the question arose about the Soviet tanker *Tuapse*, which was seized in a bandit fashion by your friend Chiang Kai Shek [Jiang Jieshi] and nothing came of it."

"Let's not talk about the past," the president said. "We also have friends we don't like. So, if an American caravan of freight cars gets into a conflict on a highway, we cannot – and don't try forcing us to do —do it – beginning a dialogue with [GDR leader Walter] Ulbricht. It would clearly mean being pulled into recognizing the GDR. To whom would we turn in such a case to deescalate, to untie this crisis?"

I answered that if it was defined by this simple analogy, it was obvious [that the US would turn] to some sort of third power.

Kennedy said: "Now maybe it will be worthwhile to fantasize around this." Once again he emphasized: "We understand we cannot win international control, and of course it is foolish to cling to that which will not be put in writing."

Then Kennedy spoke about how they worked out with [British Prime Minister Harold] Macmillan a new pretext for disarmament, which he considers would meet with a constructive response from the Soviet government side.

(One can imagine how stunned Kennedy was when he heard about our plan to convene the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee at the highest level. This undoubtedly struck out Kennedy and Macmillan's hopes to [have the] initiative.) Then Kennedy said that he personally welcomes the contact which existed between Bolshakov and Robert Kennedy, insofar as it gives him the possibility to manage without the services of a translator from the State Department. These observations show that surely in the presence of Akolovsky and even Salinger – a person closer to him the president speaks with a completely different tongue and is visibly more tense.

He asked: "Was your conversation with Robert Kennedy after breakfast interesting?"

I answered that his brother was quiet and said almost nothing about international problems. Then I matter-of-factly asked the president:

"I recently saw in *Life* magazine a big portrait of your brother, Robert Kennedy, below which was a passage: 'The number 2 man. The hard-line, unrelenting, younger brother.' Is this accurate that Robert Kennedy has become the #2 man in the USA?"

Kennedy was surprised:

"Even you turned your attention to this? I spoke with my brother on this subject and said to him that if he is planning to become No. 1 this would not be so easy for him, and that he would sooner become No. 3, No. 4, No. 5, No. 6."

"By the way – remarked Kennedy – there was quite a scandal with regard to [my] brother's [proposed] trip to the Soviet Union. We are now trying to find a person in the State Department, who [could] make it public that Robert might visit the Soviet Union as a private citizen. I very much wanted him to meet with Chairman Khrushchev. But when the American press created a scandal, we were forced to deny it. Clearly, here we need to arrange all these things more simply," remarked Kennedy. "Look here, you invited Salinger to Moscow and the Republicans are already attacking Salinger and me."

Saying goodbye after the conversation, he asked me to give his greetings to N. S. Khrushchev in the hopes, as he said smiling “of the possibility of a calmer meeting than in Vienna, where I was more concerned about how to behave in front of a whole pack of journalists.”

Then Kennedy asked me how I spent my day in Washington. I answered that Washington is always boring because there is nowhere to go here: there are no theaters, no good concert hall. “But tomorrow you will have a violin concert—I noted—it will be quite interesting to attend.”

“Yes,” Kennedy confirmed, “Washington is certainly a capital without theaters. As you know, we plan to build a large cultural center in Washington, but this would require nearly 30 million dollars. Right now my wife and I are occupied with writing letters to various parties to give donations for the construction. But it is going very slowly. People don’t want to part with the money.”<sup>14</sup>

“But why wouldn’t you, Mr. President,” I asked Kennedy, “give the money from your own private means? After all your family is very rich, and if you made such a grand gesture you would probably obtain a good many kind words for your own household.”

Kennedy smiled and said completely frankly:

“Yes, but here we are talking about my own money.”

The next morning when I was intending to leave for New York to board my flight for Mexico, [former US ambassador to Moscow and now State Department official W. Averell] Harriman unexpectedly called me and said that he was prepared to go to the Soviet Embassy to see me for a few minutes or, if it was more convenient, asked me to see him. I answered that it would be better if I dropped in on Mr. Harriman. The conversation with Harriman took 15 or 20 minutes and was of a general character. Harriman was concerned with Laos, and reiterated Kennedy’s idea a few times that it would be good to agree about Laos. Then he asked me to send Khrushchev a big hello and said that he remembered the meeting with Nikita Sergeevich and was happy to welcome him at his home.

“All our family remembers this visit and remembers that the Chairman carried the conversation lightly and nonchalantly,” Harriman said. “I am an old man but I dream about a new meeting with Khrushchev and am sure we will certainly speak about US-Soviet relations.”

Harriman asked permission for several journalists and photographers to come into his office and repeat his greeting for N. S. Khrushchev and to say again in the presence of the press that he would like to meet with N. S. Khrushchev to discuss many important problems. This was all obviously done with the consideration that Harriman’s name would once again appear in print, especially in connection with

[the fact] that he is acquainted with and has spoken to N. S. Khrushchev.

Adzhubei

[Source: *Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), Moscow, Special declassification, April 2002; translated by Adam Mayle (National Security Archive).*]

## Notes

1 In October 1961, US deputy defense secretary Roswell Gilpatric had publicly asserted a substantial American advantage in strategic striking power, thereby casting aside notions of a “missile gap” favoring the Soviets.

2 For enumerations of Khrushchev’s motives in sending the missiles, see, e.g., Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, “*One Hell of a Gamble*”—*Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: Norton and Co., 1997), chap. 9; William Taubman, *Khrushchev, The Man and His Era* (New York: Norton and Co., 2003), chap. 19; James G. Hershberg, “The Cuban Missile Crisis,” in O.A. Westad and M.P. Leffler, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 65-87.

3 For their account of the 30 January 1962 Adzhubei-Kennedy conversation, see Fursenko and Naftali, “*One Hell of a Gamble*,” pp. 151-54.

4 After noting that Adzhubei had wondered whether the United States “realized that by its unfriendly attitude toward [Fidel] Castro it was pushing Cuba farther and farther away,” the minutes record:

President Kennedy emphasized that the strong reaction in the United States toward events in Cuba was due to the fact that over the past hundred and some odd years, the United States had had no hostile power close to its borders. Therefore, when a group which preached hostility toward the United States seized power in Cuba the reaction in the United States was bound to be very strong. The US was psychologically unprepared for such a change. The President pointed out that the USSR would have the same reaction if a hostile group arose in the vicinity of its borders. In this connection, the President referred to the Soviet reaction to the Hungarian uprising.

See record of Kennedy-Adzhubei conversation, 30 January 1962, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Vol. V: Soviet Union* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1998), doc. 150. It should be noted that JFK’s taping system did not go into operation until exactly six months later, so no recording is known to exist.

5 Fursenko and Naftali, “*One Hell of a Gamble*,” pp. 153, 183.

6 Fursenko and Naftali, “*One Hell of a Gamble*,” p. 156.

7 Fursenko and Naftali cited and quoted a few passages from the document in “*One Hell of a Gamble*” in 1997; it was previously translated and circulated by the National Security Archive for the October 2002 conference in Havana to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary



of the missile crisis; and it can be found on the National Security Archive website. Until now, however, it has not appeared in print.

8 Khrushchev to Castro, 31 January 1963, quoted in Fursenko and Naftali, *One Hell of a Gamble*, p. 326. This translation of this letter, released at the January 1992 Havana conference on the missile crisis, appears in Peter Kornbluh and Laurence Chang, eds., *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A National Security Archive Documents Reader* (New York: New Press, 1992; revised paperback edition, 1999).

9 Ed. Note: An Eisenhower visit to the Soviet Union was planned for the summer of 1960—reciprocating Khrushchev's visit to the United States in September 1959—but the trip was cancelled after the collapse of the May 1960 East-West summit in Paris as a result of the Soviet downing of a US U-2 reconnaissance plane and Eisenhower's refusal to apologize for sending it.

10 Ed. note: Bolshakov, a Soviet military intelligence (GRU) officer at the Soviet Embassy in Washington, had established a cordial liaison to JFK through the president's brother, Robert F. Kennedy. The link ruptured later in 1962, at the time of the missile crisis, when US officials concluded that Khrushchev had used him to mislead the Kennedy Administration the secret deployment of

nuclear missiles to Cuba, thereby destroying his credibility and ending his usefulness. His place was, in effect, taken by the Soviet ambassador, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, who met with RFK during the crisis and became a new back-channel conduit between Kennedy and Khrushchev.

11 Ed. note: This refers to the meeting of Organization of American States (OAS) foreign ministers in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 22-31 January 1962, at which US Secretary of State Dean Rusk pushed for measures to further isolate and sanction Cuba, achieving some limited success.

12 Ed. note: The reference here is to the opposite sides in the Laotian civil war that the United States and the Soviet Union were, respectively, supporting; in a rare sign of agreement, Washington and Moscow were able to reach agreement in Geneva in July 1962 on a pact to neutralize Laos, which failed to end the simmering conflict there but for the most part removed it from the superpower agenda.

13 Ed. note: Amid signs of a Sino-Soviet schism, Kennedy is here making an evident allusion to the People's Republic of China.

14 Ed. note: A reference to what would become known as the Kennedy Center after its namesake's assassination.

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# The Polyansky Report on Khrushchev's Mistakes in Foreign Policy, October 1964—Excerpt on The Cuban Missile Crisis.

Translation by Svetlana Savranskaya

**E**d. note: *When Nikita Khrushchev was ousted as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in mid-October 1964, many outside observers connected his downfall at the hands of his Kremlin associates to what was widely viewed as his humiliating defeat in the Cuban Missile Crisis exactly two years earlier, when under pressure from US President John F. Kennedy he withdrew the nuclear missiles he had secretly deployed to the island.<sup>1</sup> Khrushchev had alienated many members of the Soviet party Presidium (Politburo) with a variety of policies, actions, and behaviors, so his failed Cuban gambit was hardly solely responsible for his ouster. However, as Timothy Naftali and Aleksandr Fursenko comment, it indeed left him “vulnerable” to attack.<sup>2</sup> The indictment prepared to condemn Khrushchev at the climactic 14 October 1962 CPSU Central Committee plenum, by Politburo member Dmitri Polyanski, indeed included a scathing denunciation of Khrushchev’s “adventurism” in sending the missiles to Cuba, causing the “deepest of crises [that] brought the world to the brink of a nuclear war.” Ridiculing Khrushchev’s claims of having achieved a successful “penetration” of Latin America, Polyanski dismissed his contention that the crisis had in fact ended with a Soviet victory. The full text of Polyanski’s report is now available; here is the section on the missile crisis—or what Soviets knew as the “Caribbean Crisis”—translated by Svetlana Savranskaya of the National Security Archive.*

Now on to the Caribbean Crisis. Cde. Khrushchev stated that Stalin was not able to penetrate Latin America, but he succeeded. However, first of all the policy of “penetration” is not our policy. And secondly, only an adventurer could insist that in the current situation our state could provide real military assistance to the countries of that continent. It is many thousands of kilometers from us, and oceans separate us. How would we transport our troops there, and how would we ship supplies? Missiles will not work in such a case — they would only burn a country we want to help — that’s all. You can ask any one of our marshals or generals, and they will tell you that the plans for military “penetration” of South America are just delusions leading to a greater danger of war. And if we, in order to help one of the Latin American countries, had delivered a first nuclear strike against the US, not only would we have made ourselves a target of a [retaliatory] strike, but everybody else would have shunned us.

The adventurism (recklessness) of the policy toward Cuba is particularly obvious in light of all this. In one of his speeches, Khrushchev stated that if the US touched Cuba, then we would deliver a strike against them. He insisted that our missiles be sent to Cuba. That [action] led to the deepest of crises, and brought the world to the brink of a nuclear war; it also scared the organizer of that idea himself greatly. Having no other way out, we were forced to accept all the demands and conditions dictated by the US, including humiliating inspections of our ships by the Americans. The missiles, as well as most of our troops, were withdrawn from Cuba after the US demand.

This event also damaged the international prestige of our country, our party, and our armed forces, while at the same time helping to strengthen US prestige.

Soviet-Cuban relations deteriorated seriously. Castro and the Cuban people understood the withdrawal of the missiles as abandoning Cuba to its fate. Serious cracks emerged in the Cubans’ attitude toward us and our country, and we still feel them.

However, you know that Cde. Khrushchev portrays his defeat in the Caribbean Crisis as his victory. Moreover, he intends to proceed in the same manner, i.e. in a reckless manner. Recently he said the following to the members of the CC Presidium: “We should sign a mutual assistance treaty with Cuba. They will scream that it is a reckless action. To hell with them, let them scream.”

*[Source: Volkogonov Collection, US Library of Congress, the Manuscript Division, Reel 18. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya, (National Security Archive).]*

## Notes

1 For a dramatic account of the culmination of the Kremlin conspiracy, see *William Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2003), chapter one (“The Fall: October 1964”), pp. 3-17.

2 Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *“One Hell of a Gamble”—Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1997), pp. 353-55 (quotation on 355). See also Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 193-94.

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# Fidel Castro, Nuclear War, and the Missile Crisis— Three Missing Soviet Cables

Obtained by the National Security Archive and introduced by James Hershberg

Some past issues of the *CWIHP Bulletin*, particularly in the mid-late 1990s, have featured extensive compilations of translated telegrams from Soviet diplomats during the Cuban Missile Crisis, in particular from Moscow's ambassador to Cuba, Aleksandr Alekseev.<sup>1</sup> Since then some additional contemporaneous documentary materials have become available in Moscow, including a special release of material from the Russian Presidential Archive (APRF). A translation and commentary of one of these important sources, the notes of Kremlin discussions taken by Nikita Khrushchev's secretary, V.M. Malin, appears elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.<sup>2</sup> Presented below are three documents obtained from the Russian archives and translated by the National Security Archive in connection with its role in co-organizing a conference in Havana in October 2002 to mark the 40th anniversary of the crisis. However, the documents were not widely circulated then, and are printed below for the first time. There are only three, all ciphered telegrams from the Soviet ambassador in Havana, but they are significant additions to the existing record.

The first document contains a fairly extensive report on Alekseev's 23 October 1962 conversation with Fidel Castro, together with two other members of the Cuban leadership, the day after the public crisis began when US President John F. Kennedy announced in a televised address the discovery of Soviet nuclear missile sites in Cuba and the impending imposition of a blockade ("quarantine") to block any further shipments of arms. Presented with the official Soviet statements on the crisis, Castro reviews the situation and confidently vowed defiance to the US "aggression" which he said was doomed to failure. At that moment the Soviet-Cuban front seemed firm, and—significantly, given the emerging Sino-Soviet schism—at the end of the conversation Castro even rapped Beijing; he criticized their actions along the disputed border with India, where the Chinese reported to have launched fresh attacks, and said China's actions "complicate" Cuba's position both domestically and internationally.<sup>3</sup>

The second document, dispatched from the Soviet embassy in Havana early on the morning of Saturday, 27 October, alerts Moscow to the fact that Fidel Castro was at the embassy and composing an important "personal" message for Nikita Khrushchev. Foreshadowing the contents of that controversial letter (more on which below), Alekseev said the alarmed

Cuban leader anticipated an "almost inevitable" US invasion in the next "24-72 hours."

The third document, a lengthy and sensitive message from the Soviet ambassador on 2 November, is probably the most significant, for it bears on the circumstances surrounding Fidel Castro's controversial 27 October letter (dated 26 October, but clearly sent after midnight in the early morning hours) to Khrushchev. Its existence was first disclosed in 1990 in the publication of Khrushchev's third volume of memoirs—the extensive series of reminiscences drawn from his tape-recorded recollections after his ouster in 1964, that were smuggled to the West. *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes* contained materials that were deemed (by his associates and family) too sensitive to be published in the first two volumes, *Khrushchev Remembers* (1970) and *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (1974), with the Cold War still actively raging. Against the backdrop of Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and an evident warming of US-Soviet ties, these portions were now revealed—including a section on the Cuban Missile Crisis, omitted from the early volumes, that included some harsh criticism of Fidel Castro, especially the allegation that the Cuban leader had urged Moscow to make a preemptive nuclear strike on the United States in a communication received as the crisis was nearing a climax. In a September 1990 speech following the publication of *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, Castro strongly denied that he had urged Khrushchev to make a preemptive nuclear strike, and two months later the Cuban communist newspaper *Granma* published the full texts of the Castro-Khrushchev correspondence from late October 1962.<sup>4</sup> In the actual letter, it emerged, Castro had indeed counseled Khrushchev to never allow circumstances to develop in which "the imperialists" (i.e., the Americans) carried out the first nuclear strike—any means, "however harsh and terrible," were justified to preclude this from happening and to "eliminate this danger forever."<sup>5</sup> By the time of his 2 November cable, which of course followed Khrushchev's 28 October decision to withdraw the offending nuclear missiles from Cuba under US pressure and Castro's angry reaction to that step (i.e., his "Five Points" declaration rejecting UN inspections accepted by Khrushchev and demanding the Americans abandon Guantanamo, among other things), there had been a spurt of disagreement-filled correspondence between the Soviet and Cuban leaders over the resolution to the crisis. Castro's clear displeasure had already prompted Khrushchev to send his

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most trusted associate on the Presidium (Politburo), Anastas Mikoyan, to Cuba to explain Moscow's thinking and try to smooth the ruffled feathers and chart a path forward in Soviet-Cuban relations.<sup>6</sup> But Mikoyan had not reached Cuba yet (he stopped in New York City en route), and in his cable Alekseev provides considerable and candid background on Fidel Castro's actions and attitudes at the peak of the crisis, and especially his nocturnal visit to the Soviet embassy and preparation of his letter to Khrushchev on the night of 26-27 October. The Soviet diplomat, aside from advising Moscow on how to handle the angry Cuban leader, offers some analysis of the emotions and moods of Fidel Castro and his closest associates at that moment of acute tension—not only in the Cold War as a whole, but in Soviet-Cuban relations and in the history of the nuclear arms race. Historians can only hope that authorities in Havana will also more fully contribute their side of the story, so we can better understand the mutual perspectives during the Soviet-Cuban crisis of late October 1962 and beyond.<sup>7</sup>



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## DOCUMENT No. 1

Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Alekseev, 23 October 1962

TOP SECRET  
Making Copies Prohibited  
Copy No.12  
Ciphred Telegram  
Spec. No. 1643-1644  
Top Priority

Your No. 811, 812-813 were presented to F. Castro in the presence of [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos and [Emilio] Aragones. At the same time I transferred to them what was received through TASS, a full text of the announcement of the Soviet government and a report about the measures adopted by the USSR Minister of Defense [Rodion Malinovsky] regarding the combat readiness of the Soviet Army and the announcement of [Warsaw Pact Commander-in-Chief] Marshal [Andrei] Grechko to be the representative of the nations of the Warsaw Pact. Castro thanked the Soviet government for its assistance and expressed his complete assurance that the new plans of US aggression were doomed to fail. He announced that the United States at the present time did not have sufficient strength for a sudden attack on Cuba. In order to avoid possible attempts at direct intervention, the

Cuban government has prepared every military division for combat readiness and is hastily attempting to mobilize the members of the national militia. According to Castro, among the populace there is universal enthusiasm and no sign of any sort of elements of panic. In the mills and factories, meetings are being held with regard to the implementation of mobilization. In Castro's opinion, the USA's new threats serve to rally further the Cuban people and rouse their determination in the conflict against American imperialism. Castro says that he fully approves of the Soviet government's tactics, the tone of the documents sent to him, and the aim to unmask the US leadership as an international gendarme before public opinion and to show the unlawfulness of their domineering actions.

Castro supposes that the USA is succeeding in persuading several Latin American governments to break diplomatic ties with Cuba, but this measure against the Cuban Republic does not reflect on the development of the Cuban revolution and only arouses the intensification of the anti-imperialism movement in the countries of Latin America.

Castro considers that the actions of American imperialism against Cuba gives the Cuban government the moral right to establish on practical grounds the demand for the liquidation of the legal right for the American base at Guantanamo and to use this circumstance in its anti-imperial propaganda.

In this connection, the presence of Soviet military specialists is not a secret for the imperialists or for the Cuba people and Castro expressed the idea about possibly creating their own separate divisions to be included in our military formations.

According to him, this measure will arouse huge enthusiasm among the Cuban population putting the USA in an even more difficult position.

Expressing these considerations, Castro also cited the need to consolidate discipline among our military specialists, insofar as there are many marked occurrences of public agitation [one word unclear], panic, automobile accidents, etc, arousing unpleasant reactions in the backward stratum of the Cuban public.

In connection with these signals raised by our Cuban friends with reference to this concern, our command has planned today to hold a general conference with the commanders who will be responsible for coming forward to R. Castro regarding the questions of maintaining discipline. However, the result of the situation has forced the conference to be postponed.

The command accepts the need to answer this question with every possible measure and considers this one of the main problems at present.

Fidel Castro asked me to assure the Soviet government of the firmness and the composure of the Cuban leadership

and to express his complete trust in those measures that the Soviet government is taking and will take with regard to the defense of Cuba.

At the end of the conversation, Castro touched upon the Chinese-Indian conflict and said that the actions of our Chinese comrades complicate the positions of the Cubans both internally and in its international plans. He said we cannot approve of the PRC's politics in this matter and are otherwise forced to consider these to be insults on the part of the Chinese, and that they are gradually hinting to us to hush up our press about this event.

23. X. 62 Alekseev

REFERENCE: NO. 811 / No. 29127 / from 23. X. 62. Cde. Kuznetsov sent F. Castro's dispatch to N. S. Khrushchev about the USA government announcement and Kennedy's 22 October appearance with regard to the coarse interference in Cuban affairs.

No. 812-813/ No. 29128/ from 23. X. 62 Cde. Kuznetsov sent to F. Castro for presentation a copy of USA President Kennedy's letter to the Chairman of the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR N.S. Khrushchev concerning Cuba.

*[Source: Obtained and translated by National Security Archive for the October 2002 conference in Havana.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 2

Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Aleksandr Alekseev, 27 October 1962

TOP SECRET  
Makings Copies Prohibited  
Copy No. 12

CIPHERED TELEGRAM  
SPEC. No. 1666

Top Priority

F. Castro is with us at the embassy and is preparing a personal letter for N.S. Khrushchev that will immediately be sent to him.

In F. Castro's opinion, the intervention is almost

inevitable and will occur in approximately 24-72 hours.

27/X-62 Alekseev

*[Source: Obtained and translated by National Security Archive for the October 2002 conference in Havana.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 3

Ciphered Telegram from Alekseev to CC CPSU, 2 November 1962

Telegram

50390 50396 50397  
50474 50424

Special # 1717-1722  
Top priority

Special

To our [telegram] # 1710

When Fidel Castro was writing his letter, he was clearly irritated and experienced the influence of the revolutionary in form, but backward in substance, the mood of a certain part of his circle [of officials] and the electrified masses of people, to whom up to the last moment the Cuban leadership has not explained the essence of the decisions made by us, and thus objectively encouraged the emerging confusion and even anti-Soviet feelings.

The silence in the press about the responses in the world to the decision of the Soviet government, stimulation of militant anti-American feelings and in particular the wide mobilization of the public opinion in support of the five points of Fidel Castro's [28 October 1962] statement gave the people the grounds to think about the existence of serious differences between the governments of Cuba and the USSR.

As should have been expected, the Chinese have not missed a chance to exploit the temporarily unfavorable for us situation.

The government and the press of the People's Republic of China made pseudo-revolutionary statements, which started appearing in the Cuban newspapers, which flattered the excited Cubans.

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Officials of the Chinese Embassy “went to the masses” and began calling them for resistance to the aggressor with their own forces.

In the attempt to influence the sentimental feelings of the Cubans, many of those [Chinese] came to the blood donation centers so that they could give blood and thus “cement the Chinese-Cuban friendship with blood.” However, these cheap methods of propaganda did not have much success, although they strengthened the confusion of the Cubans even more.

One has to state the fact that this confusion affected not only common people, but also a number of the Cuban leaders. According to our information, members of the national leadership Guillermo Garcia [Frias], A. Santamaria [Haydée Santamaría Cuadrado], and partially [Raúl] Curbelo [Morales] and R. Valdez [Ramiro Valdés Menéndez] voiced criticism of our decisions at the last session of the ORI [Integrated Revolutionary Organizations] leadership.

[Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos also expressed his dissatisfaction with our methods of resolving this issue.

J.[oaquín] Ordoqui and C. R. Rodriguez spoke in defense of the decision. [Ernesto “Che”] Guevara and [Emilio] Aragonés did not speak, and R. Castro was not present at the session.

Fidel Castro apparently has not drawn any conclusions, and just let everybody, who wanted to speak out do so, while he himself did not take any definite position.

Apparently, they achieved an agreement to consider the decisions made by us the business of the Soviet government.

They also agreed not to interfere in our subsequent decisions about the remaining troops and military equipment and not to present any requests regarding leaving them behind [in Cuba].

It was recommended that Fidel Castro should not subject our decision to analysis in his speech, and speak only in defense of the five points of his statement, negotiations with [Acting United Nations Secretary-General] U. Thant and that he should put an end to the anti-Soviet feelings, which emerged among the people, by placing an emphasis on the indestructible and permanent nature of friendship with the USSR.

If Fidel Castro himself was convinced that the Cuban revolution had gained a lot and became stronger as a result of the Soviet Union making such a courageous decision, then one could be sure that the entire population would have supported him and that would have removed all the confusion and stopped accusations against us. However, up until recently Castro was a prisoner of his delusion, and only after his meetings with U Thant and after having received the last letter from comrade Khrushchev, he seems to be assuming the correct realistic positions.

Castro’s misunderstandings were caused by the following circumstances:

He is convinced that after the first concession to the imperialism others might follow (this is how he interpreted the decision of the Soviet government).

Castro has no doubt that the imperialists will press new accusations against him and will be searching for an opportunity for provocations.

In some of his remarks in his inner circle, he expressed the idea that the Cuban question had shifted from the international sphere to the local sphere, and that they should be prepared for a local war, in other words, with their own forces. He believes that in the period of the highest peak of the revolutionary transformations one should not be cooling down the Cuban people and imposing on them the illusions of reconciliation with imperialism. However, I see the main problem of Castro’s confusions not so much in his still insufficient ideological preparedness and the absence of party experience, but in his special very complex and excessively sensitive and easy to offend character. The smallest incorrect expression, which has a double meaning or efforts of putting pressure on him, is perceived very painfully. This is what happened with the response to the letter from comrade Khrushchev that was sent to you. He “picked” on every detail and composed his response in a very emotional state. Here is the history of Fidel Castro’s letter from 27 October:

On 27 October, at 2 a.m. Dorticos called me at my apartment and informed me that Castro is coming over for an important meeting. Castro stayed at my place until 7 a.m. trying to explain the critical nature of the moment, dictating and re-dictating dozens of times the letter that was later sent to you. Castro took turns dictating and making some notes before he finally decided on the full text. In the beginning, I could not understand for a long time what did Castro want to say with his quite intricate phrases, and in order to find out his opinion I directly asked him: “Do you want to say that we should deliver a first nuclear strike against the enemy.” “No,” said Castro, “I do not want to say it directly, but under certain conditions, without waiting to experience the treachery of the imperialists and their first strike, we should be ahead of them and erase them from the face of the earth in the case of their aggression against Cuba.” F. Castro was convinced that the attack was inevitable, saying that there were only 5 percent out of 100 that it would not happen. While reading the letter from comrade N. S. Khrushchev, he made two comments about which I already wrote to you (see #1701).

Castro was especially disappointed by the following phrase in the letter: “In the telegram from 27 October, you suggested that we should be the first to deliver a nuclear strike against the enemy’s territory.”

Castro thought that you decided in Moscow that he is calling for a strike not after the invasion of Cuba but now, during the crisis. He suspected that we incorrectly translated his idea, and asked [me] to give him a translation of the telegram that we sent and his drafts, which we of course did, and he could see that we passed his thoughts on correctly.

From the letter that had been sent to you, Castro's confusion is obvious. The second item that offended him, and probably the main one, is that he does not believe that the telegram, which he had sent to us could be considered evidence that we had consulted him before making the decision.

He also expressed to me some friendly objections regarding sending "worrisome telegrams about the situation" (in reality I did not write such telegrams, but I did not tell Castro about it) and regarding my information that among some Cuban comrades the opinion exists that the Cuban people would have wanted a different [Soviet] statement, in any case not about the removal of the missiles." "You know better than me then not just certain comrades, but the entire people wanted that," he said.

By the way, the Russian text of the letter contains an unfortunate mistake, which we had to correct in the interest of our cause.

The text said: "Dear comrade Castro, when you sent us telegrams one more worrisome than the other, and finally the last telegram from 27 October . . ."

We translated and passed the following text to Castro: "When we received telegrams one more worrisome than the other and finally your telegram from 27 October . . ."

In reality, Castro had not written anything to Moscow with the exception of the telegram from 27 October. Had we not corrected that mistake, one should have no doubts about the directness of Castro's reply that would have followed.

In the most recent days, I think, Castro has understood that Cuba was really able to avoid the war and destruction and that the prospects of peace and independence emerged now, and he began to reconsider his mistaken positions and regained his spirit.

Due to his character, he has not rejected the old opinion yet, but the crisis I think is over now, and in the future he would repeatedly express his gratitude to us for the wisdom of the decision that we took.

Knowing Castro's sensitive nature, I believe that we should not hurry or push him, and especially we should not start any polemics with him yet.

The last letter from comrade Khrushchev and the future conversations of comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan with Castro will work its course.

When he understands his mistakes, he will move even closer to us and will strengthen his party spirit even more, especially if we do not remind him of [his mistakes].

Taking all this into account, I would consider it possible not to respond to his letter, which was caused by a momentary irritation, or to send him a response, in which to express approximately the following ideas:

We were glad that you expressed your thoughts frankly as it is appropriate for a Marxist-Leninist.

Only on these conditions true friendship is possible. We will not argue who of us is correct, history will judge that.

We fully share your assessment of imperialism and this is why we are doing everything in order to complicate its aggressive actions, not only directly, but also through the diplomatic channels.

You could always rely on us in your just struggle. It is possible that we do not cry against imperialism as loudly as some, but with our actions we deliver much more sensitive blows against it. (This should be said in such a way that Castro would not perceive the last thought as directed against him, but understand that it was directed against the Chinese.)

It would be desirable to emphasize the courage of the Cuban people and the personal courage of Castro and his concern about the future of his people and the cause of socialism.

It would be better not to enter into an argument with him on other small issues, and maybe we should even admit that the complex nature of the circumstances did not allow us to conduct consultations, because we always do it under normal conditions.

I am convinced that a response along such lines would be received by Castro with great satisfaction and that he will repeatedly regret having written that letter.

I start from the assumption that we would need one or two years of especially careful work with Castro until he acquires all the qualities of the Marxist Leninist party spirit. However, currently he is the main force in Cuba and the living program for the people, and therefore we should fight for him, educate him, and sometimes forgive him some of his mistakes.

The potential danger, I believe, is hidden not in Castro's ideological confusions but in the qualities of his character. If I am mistaken, I am asking you to correct me.

2 November 1962 Alekseev

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Reference: # 1710 (entry # 50273) from 1 November 1962  
Comrade Alekseev transmitted translation of F. Castro's letter to Khrushchev in response to his letter of October 30 of this year.

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#1701 (entry # 49971) from 31 October 1962. Comrade Alekseev reported about his meeting with Fidel Castro and delivery him a letter from N. S. Khrushchev.

[Source: Obtained and translated by the National Security Archive for the October 2002 conference in Havana.]

## Notes

1 See, e.g., “Russian Foreign Ministry Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis,” *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 58, 63-77; and “New Evidence on the Cuban Missile Crisis: More Documents from the Russian Archives,” *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 8/9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 270-338.

2 An earlier version of most of these translated Malin notes was put on-line by the Kremlin Decision-Making Project (run by Timothy Naftali) of the Presidential Recordings Project of the University of Virginia’s Miller Center for Public Affairs.

3 For more on China and the Cuban Missile Crisis, see the compilation of translated Chinese documents, introduced by Sergey Radchenko and James G. Hershberg, elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

4 Translations of these materials can be found in James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), pp. 474-91.

5 Fidel Castro to Nikita Khrushchev, 26 [sic; actually 27] October 1962, in Blight et al., *Cuba on the Brink*, p. 481.

6 On Mikoyan’s November 1962 mission to Cuba and negotiations with Fidel Castro and associates, see Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Missiles of November*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC: Wilson Center Press; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

7 Although the Cuban government has released selected materials on the Cuban Missile Crisis, including a substantial tranche for the October 2002 conference in Havana (see the website of the National Security Archive for further details), much of the record of Soviet-Cuban exchanges before, during, and after the October 1962 events remain off-limits in Havana—inevitably warping the resulting history, since the most extensive contemporaneous sources are Russian and American. On post-crisis tensions between Moscow and Havana, see, in addition to *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis* (cited above), Philip Brenner and James G. Blight, *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba’s Struggles with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).



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# The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis:

## Documents on Anastas Mikoyan's November 1962 Trip to Cuba

Translated and introduced by Svetlana Savranskaya

The following three documents come from a forthcoming book by late Sergo Mikoyan edited by Svetlana Savranskaya: *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Missiles of November* (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 2012). Sergo Mikoyan was the son and personal assistant of the Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Anastas Mikoyan, who was number 2 in the Kremlin under Nikita Khrushchev. Anastas Mikoyan was the Kremlin's emissary to all the "hot spots" in the socialist bloc, including China, (North) Vietnam, Poland, Hungary, and others. He was also the man who essentially discovered Cuba for the Soviet Union on his trip there in February 1960. He signed the first series of trade agreements with the Cuban revolutionary government and established friendly relations based on a mutual personal sympathy with the Cuban leaders.

In November 1962, after Khrushchev and Kennedy exchanged letters ending the visible part of the Cuban Missile Crisis (i.e., the US-Soviet showdown over the Soviet deployment to Cuba), the Soviet Union still had the less visible but not less dangerous part to deal with: How to extricate the weapons from the hands of a reluctant and bitter ally who had been barely consulted about the installation of the weapons and who had not been consulted about their removal. The task of persuading the Cubans to relinquish the weapons, in such a way as to keep them as allies fell to Anastas Mikoyan, whom Khrushchev dispatched to Cuba in November to mollify and explain Soviet policy to Fidel Castro and his associates. Mikoyan had to go back to the island and use all his diplomatic skills, patience, and the human capital that he built on his earlier trip to bring the Cubans back from the brink.

When the Soviets agreed to remove the "offensive" weapons from Cuba, they told the Cubans that the rest of the weaponry, equipment and personnel would stay in Cuba and would be gradually transferred to the Cuban army. That was the message that Mikoyan brought to Cuba on 2 November. Difficult negotiations followed, but a week later the Cubans were reconciled to the new situation. However, on 11 November, Mikoyan got new instructions from Khrushchev in a personal telegram—telling him to inform the Cubans that in the interests of the entire socialist camp, the nuclear-capable IL-28 bombers would also be withdrawn from Cuba. The telegram, written in Khrushchev's rambling style, gives the rationale behind the decision: It was much better to end the crisis by giving up planes that were already obsolete—to

show that the Soviet Union and Cuba had fulfilled all the promises Khrushchev had given Kennedy—and consequently to expect, and demand, full compliance with the non-invasion pledge on the part of the United States, than to retain the planes and give the Americans a justification to violate their pledge. The telegram also spells out, in Khrushchev's words, of the reasons why the weapons were deployed to Cuba in the first place.

The second document is a memorandum of a key conversation between Mikoyan and Fidel Castro two days later, on 13 November, after the Cuban leader refused to see the Soviet envoy for three days in a reaction to the new demand. In this conversation, Castro starts by declaring his disagreement with the decision to remove the IL-28s but then assures Mikoyan that the revolutionary leadership discussed the issue and agreed to the removal. Mikoyan presents all his arguments to show that the withdrawal of the planes would end the crisis and make the US non-invasion pledge more credible. He acknowledges the "negative psychological effect" of the decision and reiterates that all the rest of the weapons would stay in Cuba so its security would be guaranteed without the obsolete planes. They also agree on the rules of verification of the withdrawal. Mikoyan saves the day once again, resolving another crisis within the crisis.

The third document is a unique record of a 16 November conversation between Mikoyan and Che Guevara on Soviet-Cuban economic and trade relations. The conversation takes place soon after the IL-28 crisis, which gives Mikoyan a chance to patch up the relationship with band-aids of trade agreements and promises of future aid and industrial cooperation. Guevara points out sharply that the estimates of the cost for building a Soviet refinery are "approximately twice as much" as the US-built plants in Cuba. Mikoyan admits problems with inflating the costs and promises to reduce them. Mikoyan suggests that the Cuban government should not worry about the debt to the Soviet Union and to continue to trade "on the basis of trust." When Guevara lights up, Mikoyan notes that it is bad for his health and tells Guevara how he himself quit smoking, and then proceeds to offer to buy tobacco from Cuba (but only cheap tobacco). He offers help on purchases of barley to increase production of Cuban beer and proposes to send Soviet engineers to set up production of parts for the American cars that were left on the island. Near the end of the conversation, Guevara and Mikoyan discuss the theory of revolutionary struggle. Guevara shares

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his vision that “further development of the revolutions in Latin America must follow the line of simultaneous explosions in all countries.” Mikoyan cautions him, pointing to the Soviet experience and using the metaphor of the rebellion on the battleship “Potemkin.” Hinting at further disagreement ahead, he gently registers his disagreement with the Cuban leader’s drive to ignite revolution in the hemisphere.

The three translations presented here are part of a far larger complex of translated Russian documents from November 1962, many from Sergo Mikoyan’s personal collection, that offer a virtually complete Soviet record of Mikoyan’s contacts in Cuba and dialogue with Khrushchev in Moscow (as well as of his meetings in New York and Washington en route to and from Havana), that readers may find in the appendices to *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*.



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### Document No. 1:

Telegram from Nikita Khrushchev to Anastas Mikoyan, 11 November 1962

11 November 1962 (Sunday)

The following telegram from N. S. Khrushchev for Comrade A. I. Mikoyan was received in the morning (Special No. 1013):

In connection with the last letter from President Kennedy which was sent to you, and the issues which he raised, we are informing you about our considerations and the steps we are planning to take with the goal of achieving a favorable result and fulfilling the obligations undertaken by the United States, as set forth in the president’s letters and in our October 28 letter to the US president. We are passing them along to you for your consideration and reflection. We would like to know your opinion, since by now you are almost like a Cuban.

We discussed these issues before the full quorum of our collective leadership and our military, and all those present arrived at the unanimous conclusion that it would be reasonable to act as follows—to agree to the removal of all Il-28s from Cuba; we have forty-one of them altogether.

What do we lose and what do we gain as a result of the removal of the Il-28s from Cuba? There are no particular losses. There will be only moral losses for Cuba. From the military perspective, there are almost no losses because these planes, as is well known, are obsolete and do not play any role in the armed forces; we have already discontinued their production a long time ago, and are breaking up the Il-28

units. The remaining planes, which we still have, exist as a result of US actions and our response to these actions. If there had been no such action by the president when he demanded authorization to mobilize 150,000 reservists, we would not have had these planes and units supporting them; those planes would already have been removed from service.

We can imagine how difficult it would be to impress such an understanding on our friends. But therein lies the art of politicians—when encountering difficulties to show the ability to overcome such difficulties.

We take into account the fact that our agreement on the removal of the Il-28s from Cuban territory will inspire internal counterrevolution in Cuba, and will inspire aggressive forces in the United States to turn this to their advantage and exaggerate this as their own success.

After all, we could [choose to] not agree with the US demand and remove the Il-28s. We are confident that this would not cause a military conflict or an immediate invasion of Cuba, although this can never be guaranteed, of course, when one has to deal with lunatics. However, we think that in the present conditions it would be difficult for the United States to take such a step.

The insistent demand of the United States to remove the Il-28s can be explained first of all not because they are worried about their presence in Cuba, or because they want to remove them from Cuba, saying that they are offensive weapons. This is an argument they made up because the United States themselves, the American military, understands that this is a weapon that is completely not suited for use abroad because, due to its slow speed Il-28s need antiaircraft cover. But the main problem is not the speed but the ceiling, because their ceiling is only 12,000 meters, and such planes, as you know from your sons’ reports, have already been rejected by us even as flying targets, because they do not satisfy the requirements. We cannot use them for training troops for antiaircraft cover.

The Americans, of course, are aware of all this.

Why are they focusing attention on these planes now? Here, so to speak, two factors play a role. First is that the president mentioned the planes—the bombers—in his proclamation. And before that, as you will see from the letter, in his speech on 22 October, he spoke about the “jet bombers capable of carrying nuclear arms,” and so on. This is one point. This is an issue, so to speak, of prestige—an issue of presidential prestige, and of the prestige of the country. However, the main issue, we think, is that currently criticism of the president’s position is growing in the United States because the president, in his correspondence with us, bound himself by the following obligation: If the other side fulfills certain conditions, then the United States will undertake an obligation not to invade Cuba and to restrain its allies—that

is, countries in the Western Hemisphere—from doing so. This is the main concern that worries Kennedy now because the fire of his [domestic] opponents' criticism is targeted exactly on this point.

Therefore the president now wants to do a maneuver: either to obtain full satisfaction of those conditions he put forward—to remove missiles and Il-28 bombers from Cuba—or alternatively, to abrogate the agreement, i.e., not to fulfill the obligations he undertook in his letters from 27-28 October, justifying this before world public opinion by saying that we do not fulfill our obligations. This is his main point.

Now we are faced with the following task: We have to assess the situation as revolutionaries and as leaders, to weigh what is most important and what factor should be given preference in the interests of Cuba—to leave the bombers, and consequently to undermine the fulfillment of the obligations that were given on condition of the removal of the missiles, but to keep the Il-28s in Cuba, or to remove the Il-28s as we removed the missiles, but to have an agreement on noninvasion of Cuba both on the part of the United States and on the part of other Latin American countries surrounding Cuba.

All this should be weighed. When we were thinking about and discussing these issues, all those present arrived at the indisputable conclusion that these [two alternatives] are not equivalent. The Il-28s are no longer any good for offensive action, as we have already explained, and the Americans understand that. As far as defense is concerned, Il-28 planes are not absolute weapons that would make the territory where they are deployed impenetrable to the enemy. We understand this very well, and we are able to estimate the situation, and we think that this would be a persuasive argument for our friends as well. If our enemy, for example, had the weapons Cuba has, including Il-28s, then for the Soviet state, assuming we have the weapons we do, it would not be an obstacle to aggressive actions by us because it would not be possible to resist the might that we possess. With these weapons one can exhibit heroism, but to achieve the main goal—to repel aggression—these means are insufficient. They are sufficient for repelling aggression like that in 1961, and even aggression by more powerful forces, but not all those forces in the possession of the United States.

Through diplomatic channels we are aware that the US representatives, while agreeing that Il-28 planes are indeed obsolete weapons, and that they do not represent a great danger for the United States, justify their demand for the removal of Il-28s from Cuba by saying that this weapon represents a great threat for Latin American countries. They therefore state that there should be a guarantee that there would be no threat to countries in the Caribbean. That should also be taken into consideration, because the removal of Il-28s from Cuba gives

serious grounds to demand that there should be a guarantee from the other side as well, that is, a guarantee through the United Nations that no Caribbean country would undertake actions of aggression, attack, or sabotage against Cuba. These would be mutual obligations for all Caribbean countries.

Therefore, we believe that if our friends would understand us correctly then from the point of view of cold reason we should agree to withdraw Il-28s from Cuba with all service personnel, and, as the United States demands, with all the equipment. As a result, we would create such conditions for the United States that it would be forced to fulfill its obligations as set forth in the president's messages of 27 and 28 October. And we believe that this is more important than a show of resolve in retaining the Il-28s in Cuba.

It is true, some people can say that the appetite grows at mealtime and that the United States would pose new demands and insist on their fulfillment. But we will resist that in our negotiations.

With respect to the question of our instructors' staying in Cuba after the removal of the missiles and Il-28s, there would be no weapons that the Cubans could not master on their own. Therefore, the question regarding the Soviet instructors in Cuba is not a problem, not for today.

We shipped some weapons to Cuba that were required to protect the people operating the missiles; now that the missiles have been removed the need for this protection is no longer there.

But the weapons that were shipped to Cuba are already there, and nobody is thinking of removing them. Later, when the situation is normalized, most likely it would be expedient to transfer those weapons to the Cubans. They are quite capable of mastering them (tanks, armored personnel carriers, and other types of weapons) themselves. A portion of the antiaircraft systems is already in Cuban hands. In the future, a situation could emerge where, we think, there would be no need to have our troops operating these anti-aircraft systems. (But this is for you [personally]; this is, so to speak, for the future.)

Now, about the Il-28s. From the point of view of ensuring Cuban security and using them for defensive purposes, the fighters they already have are a better means than the Il-28s. But those are fighter planes; we are not talking about them now. The Americans, to the contrary, are saying (Robert Kennedy in his conversation with Dobrynin on November 5), that they are not raising the issue about the recall of the fighters from Cuba, and by the way, the fighters are more modern weapons.

We are mentioning the fighters to you so that when you talk to our friends, tell them that the fighters that are already in Cuba would carry out the same defensive functions, for

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which the Il-28s were intended—and more successfully. Moreover, they are more versatile because they can take part in aerial combat, of which the Il-28s are not capable.

Not now but later, depending on how events develop, if there is a need we may have to give reinforcements to the Cubans, but not in the form of bombers, but in the form of fighters, about which they should be informed.

We believe that on the question of verifying fulfillment of the agreement on removing the Il-28s, we would be able to agree with Americans that this verification would be based on the same conditions mutually agreed upon in relation to the missiles—inspections on ships in neutral waters. This order would not require inspections on Cuban territory.

This is how we understand the issue of verification. Of course, when we start concrete negotiations about this, obviously the United States will exert some pressure on us, but this should be anticipated, and we think that the precedent that we already have will be applied for this weapons system as well.

Regarding the presence of our military instructors in Cuba: This question, as we understand it, was set forth in the US president's letter not as a condition for the resolution of this conflict but as a suggestion for the future in order to finally normalize the situation. It seems as if it is an acceptable suggestion for the future, and it would not create difficulties either for Cuba or for us on the condition that the agreement is reached on the same basis as was laid out in the letters, and if that agreement is followed.

The psychological side of the issue is the most difficult one. And each person's psychology reveals itself in a special way; you cannot prove [*dokazat'*] it completely; the issues are resolved in discussions about the possible and the impossible. When our Cuban friends say that they cannot trust the United States, this is true—one cannot disagree with this; we know it from our own experience. But on the other hand, so far we have no alternatives other than to rely on these words and the assurances we have received. In fact, this is basis of coexistence between two state systems with different sociopolitical structures. While exhibiting vigilance and caution, we should build normal relations between states because there are no other alternatives.

If we start from the assumption: I do not believe, I do not tolerate—that would mean to deny the possibility of peaceful coexistence. That would mean, so to speak, permanent war, until one side emerges as the absolute victor.

However, we have our own understanding on this issue. It is set forth in the decisions of the congresses of our party in the Program of the CPSU, and it found its own expression in the Declaration of Communists and Workers Parties of 1957, and in the Statement of Eighty-One Parties of 1960.

We live in a time when two worlds exist—the socialist world and the world of capitalist countries, as well as intermediate transitional states, which at decisive moments unfortunately do not vote with us at the UN on the main issues.

We must take all of this into consideration. I think that our friends understand that if we now chose exacerbation of the situation in the Caribbean, and did not make compromises and mutual concessions, that would be a movement towards a dead end. We do not want that. Apparently, our enemies—the imperialist camp—are being forced to accept the fact that if they do not exhibit understanding and restraint on their part, the matter could end in catastrophe.

Therefore, we believe that for our camp, precisely for our camp and not only for Cuba—but for Cuba primarily—the elimination of the tensions that have been created in the Caribbean by means of an agreement based on conditions set forth in the exchange of letters between the United States and the Soviet Union would be a positive result. Moreover, there would be other pluses for us, and for Cuba, because this is an unequal and uneven agreement: on the one hand, the obligations undertaken publicly and solemnly by the United States that they and other countries of the Western Hemisphere will not invade Cuba, and on the other hand, withdrawal of the Il-28s from Cuba.

A person who is free from a certain moral psychological factor, and who with his mind's eye could get a wider view of the situation that has emerged in connection with Cuba, would understand the clear benefit of such an agreement for us and for Cuba.

Let's return to the Cuban statements to the effect that the United States cannot be trusted. In general this is correct, and this is what we call vigilance. But we think it is hard to believe that the United States now, having entered into an agreement with us, would decide to invade Cuba after the removal of the Il-28s. To think like this means to not understand the importance of the Il-28s, to overestimate their capabilities as a weapons system, and at the same time to underestimate the capabilities of the enemy and the weapons they possess.

According to the considerations of our Cuban friends, the situation looks like this: The Americans cannot be trusted, and if we remove the Il-28 planes after removing the missiles, that would create better conditions for aggression against Cuba. This picture does not correspond with reality, because if the United States had indeed intended to invade then the Il-28s would not be a deterrent factor. To think otherwise would be not to comprehend the real state of affairs.

Of course, the removal of the Il-28s is a concession on our part. We wanted to separate that weapon from the missiles, but to some extent it fits under the category of offensive weapons because it is a bomber and it has quite a long range.

In its time, about twelve years ago, it was the best bomber in the world and we publicized it widely. But now it has already become obsolete, and we retired it from service.

We are telling you all this so that you yourself, so to speak, will comprehend it, and if something is unclear to you, you can ask us for additional explanation in order to help you prepare to conduct discussions, and to try to persuade our Cuban friends that this step we are suggesting is a step toward the stabilization of the situation in Cuba.

For us sitting here in Moscow, and for you there, it is clear that if we drag out the debate now we will postpone an agreement, prolong an abnormal situation in the Caribbean, and maintain tensions.

Now difficulties have been created for the movement of ships to Cuba. And in general, of course, with the blockade of Cuba, there is no possibility to send ships to Cuba under protection in order to break through the blockade, because the distance and geographical situation of Cuba—and our Cuban comrades should understand that themselves—are very unfavorable for us. Therefore, Cuba would suffer from the continuation of the blockade because it needs uninterrupted communications with the external world, and most of all with the Soviet Union. This is also a factor that the enemy is taking into account, and it wants to exploit this factor—that is, to prolong the blockade, or, as the United States calls it, the quarantine (but it is a blockade). The United States can maintain this situation for a long time, and maybe even indefinitely. But for Cuba—I don't know how Cubans see this—we think that it would be very hard to live through this.

They can say we will handle it, we will die. . . . We know this ourselves; we have handled things for forty-five years already, and we were under a blockade—barefoot, hungry, living on 250 grams of porridge—and battled on. Therefore, such arguments for us are something we have already experienced in the past. We marched on and we died, and many more of us died. But after all we were not fighting in order to die, although our song went: “We all will die as one for the power of the Soviets.” Those who went into battle sang that song, but the people sent their representatives to battle in order to survive and to win. And we have achieved that.

And Cuba will survive and win, too. But in this struggle, we must now rely not only on weapons or act too forcefully. No, we must show flexibility, taking the current situation—and first of all Cuba's peculiarities and geographical location—into account. The question is not and cannot be defined the same way in relation to Korea or Vietnam—we are not even talking about the European socialist countries—these countries have already been written off for capitalism. However, in the Western Hemisphere the imperialists, of course, will do everything possible to achieve their goal. But

we should not make it easier for them to exploit the benefits of their situation. And to exacerbate the situation to the extreme, to armed conflict, would do exactly that. This is one approach. And there are some forces in America that would desire such a development of events.

But obviously the most important method that the president of the United States and his circle have chosen for themselves is to strangle Cuba economically by isolating it commercially. They want, as the US press put it before the crisis, to make Cuba too expensive an experiment for the Soviet Union so that it will exhaust the resources the Soviet Union has available for aid, and therefore undermine the economy of Cuba and to make Cuba not only an unattractive but even a repulsive model for the Latin American peoples. They want living standards in Cuba to drop even lower than they were before the revolution, when Batista was in Cuba.

These stakes are not new for us. Some time ago, similar calculations were made in relation to Soviet Russia when they tried to strangle our revolution with the bony hand of hunger. The imperialist interventionists, when they were thrown out of Soviet territory and lost the opportunity to crush the revolution with armed force, also believed that their main approach would be to create conditions of economic disaster and undermine the socialist revolution in Russia by economic means. They are currently pursuing the same goals in relation to Cuba.

If the Cuban comrades, our friends, correctly understand us and trust our conclusions, if they agree with the steps that we are planning, then Cuba will live. We will not abandon Cuba—we are Cuba's brothers; we have said this publicly, and we repeat it now. We will do everything in our power so that Cuba will rise again—and it has the ability to do so. Along with sending military assistance, we also sent our technicians, agricultural specialists, veterinarians, irrigation specialists, and scientists so that they could focus their efforts on strengthening Cuba's economy. This is the main factor. And Cuba can demonstrate before the entire world its economic capacity, which emerged as a result of the expulsion of the US monopolies and the seizure of power by the people under the leadership of their chief, Fidel Castro, and his comrades in arms.

Strictly speaking, this is how the question stands now in our understanding.

If we look back to the history of our state, during Lenin's period, Lenin was willing to undertake serious maneuvers, compromises, and mutual concessions. And this was correct and justified by history. One cannot submit to a loud revolutionary phrase. That is perhaps as useful as lightning in darkness: It flashes, illuminates the road, and disappears immediately. It is good on the barricades. But when the barricade battle ends, that means that the period of acute struggle

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is over and that it is passing into a phase of protracted struggle and a period of prolonged coexistence. And this prolonged coexistence necessarily carries with it mutual struggle because the social systems confronting each other are antagonistic and it is impossible to reconcile them. On this long historical path—and there is no measure for how many years this path would take—we must be guided not only by feelings but also by facts, by our theoretical Marxist-Leninist principles, and by the successes in the development of the economies of socialist states—and on this basis we should show our skill in this struggle. If cannons do not fire, then diplomacy carries out the functions of the cannons. One must not exclude the other: not just cannons, and not just Il-28s. No, that is incorrect. At this point, a rational step that puts the enemy in an unfavorable position before the entire world would often be more useful than 100 cannons.

The law is on Cuba's side. Cuba wants to be an independent sovereign state, and all the states of the world understand this. Even the unbridled imperialists cannot openly trample upon this right and cannot deny such aspirations of the Cuban people. It is precisely this that will create even greater problems for the imperialists when the independence and sovereignty of Cuba are protected by an agreement affirmed through the United Nations.

If one talks about whether to trust or not to trust the United States, then history teaches that there was the League of Nations, then it collapsed, and then there was a world war. Could the UN now collapse? We give no guarantees. Yes, it could. Could world war break out? It could, and we are close to this. But we, as people, as politicians, as Communists, who enjoy the trust of their own people—and not just our own but of the peoples of other countries as well—should utilize everything in order to preserve peace and ensure the independence of their own states and the right of every people to develop in a direction chosen by the people of each country.

This should be understood. Therefore, the words “to believe or not to believe” have meaning only at a rally, and a very transient one at that. And in politics, we should rely on factors of a more constant character, acting over a longer term. This is the meaning of the agreement at this stage.

We learned from your letter that Fidel Castro, in his impulsiveness, said that if the Cuban position (on the issue of inspections) jeopardizes peace throughout the world, then the Soviet side may consider itself free of its obligations. What can we say to that? Only one thing: We are very disappointed by this understanding on the part of our friend, Fidel Castro, toward whom we feel limitless trust and respect, as to a real hero selflessly devoted to the Revolution. And when he said that, we think that he himself understood that we of course have such a right—to free ourselves from obligations, just as

the other side has the right to tell us about it. This is logical and understandable to us. But to say it at this moment and in this connection, understanding us incorrectly, means to injure us, to force us to suffer deeply.

Ask Fidel and his friends: What motivated us to come to an agreement with them and to send our people to Cuba; what motivated us to send our weapons there, what motivated us to send our technical specialists, to send our fishermen, what motivated us to send them oil and other goods and to buy their sugar? How could the Cuban comrades think that we pursued any commercial aims, that we got any sort of economic benefit from that? Apart from material expenses, this gives us nothing, and this is known to everyone and is known to our Cuban comrades.

We sent our people to Cuba when an invasion was expected. We knew that if there was an invasion the blood of both the Cuban and Soviet peoples would be spilled. We did that. We did that for Cuba, for the Cuban people. Yes, we also did it in our own interests. But our interests here were expressed as common revolutionary interests, the interests of the revolution, the interests of the international worker's movement, and Marxist-Leninist teaching. We did it only in the name of all that.

And now that the situation we expected has developed—and we expected it when we took this step, almost all of us foresaw this—this is how they see us [i.e., as caring only about Soviet interests]. It was painful for Mikoyan to listen to that and for us it was no less painful to read about it.

Tell Fidel and our other friends that we could have adopted “the most revolutionary” position as some do now. And how would that, so to speak, revolutionary character be expressed? In empty phraseology. When the crisis erupted and a threat hung over Cuba, we could have passed a resolution, an address with the most abusive words against imperialism, the United States, and world imperialism, and we could have written there that they were capable of every base act, that they were mean and ignoble and we could have broadcast it on every radio station in all the languages of the world. And we would have considered that our revolutionary duty toward heroic Cuba had been fulfilled.

So what? Would it have had great significance? As we know, the imperialists don't lose weight from our insults—we have cursed them for forty-five years. And if our efforts had been limited only to cursing imperialism without undertaking any measures for the real strengthening of the forces of socialism, the forces of revolution, then most likely we would have stopped cursing them long ago. They would have physically compelled us to shut up, as they are capable of doing. They would have dealt with us as they have [previously] dealt with more than one revolution in more than one country.

Under Lenin's leadership in the first years of the Russian Revolution, when we did not have diplomatic relations with anybody and when diplomatic channels for expressing the will of the Soviet government were completely unavailable, then we only had one opportunity: to curse the imperialists. And then we had only one radio station; it was called "Named after the Comintern" [*Imeni Kominterna*]. And then we, so to speak, would plaster the imperialists and capitalists of all countries with curses in every language. That was the extent of our diplomatic activity.

But we got through those times. We developed different kinds of relations with the outside world. Now not only the Soviet Union but one-third of the world lives under the banner of Marxism-Leninism. We have diplomatic relations with most of the countries of the world. Therefore, now the resolution of issues depends not only on the correlation of forces, although the correlation of forces—economic and military—is of course the main factor. But when the cannons are silent, diplomacy is assigned a sufficiently large role, and it would be unreasonable for us to reject this instrument that has been developed and tested for ages. One has to have weapons. But weapons bring extermination, especially in our age. Therefore, there is a great deal of work for diplomacy here.

Of course, it would have been easy for us to fulfill our revolutionary duty if we had done like certain others: showed our solidarity with the Cuban people and offered to give our own blood at donation centers so they could mix it with Cuban blood. That is quite a cheap revolutionary gesture. We could have sent a lot of blood once the war had begun; but this blood would have been mixed not with blood but with Cuban soil. And it is doubtful that it would have helped the Cuban people.

We have undertaken steps of a different character. We upgraded the armed forces of the Soviet Union and our missile technology to combat readiness, and set in motion the diplomatic machinery. And we believe that we achieved [our] goals in the interests of Cuba, in the interests of the people of the Soviet Union and of all the people of the world. We demonstrated the aggressiveness of the United States of America; we showed the peace-loving nature of the socialist countries and the Soviet Union, as the most powerful among the socialist states. And that is not the least factor in the struggle for the minds of the people today.

That's why we are disappointed that our friends obviously did not understand that; we took these steps in the name of friendship. They not only did not value this, but even said words that hurt our noblest feelings and our noblest revolutionary outpourings of friendship to the Cuban people.

Fidel Castro in a conversation with you expressed the idea that the deployment of our missiles in Cuba was carried out in

the interests of the entire socialist camp. Explain to Fidel that this is not our understanding of the situation. The interests of the defense of the socialist camp, and the USSR as the most powerful socialist state, did not require the deployment of our missiles in Cuba. We possess sufficiently powerful missiles on the territory of the USSR to ensure this defense, and we can use them against the imperialist aggressor.

In deciding to deploy the missiles in Cuba, upon our agreement with our Cuban friends, we pursued the goal of rendering assistance to Cuba, of defending it in the face of the threat of aggression. We understood that this would cause a great shock among the American imperialists, and it did cause such a shock. They drew a conclusion regarding non-invasion guarantees to Cuba, which were expressed in Kennedy's letters. We believe that the goals we pursued have been achieved and our action of deploying the missiles in Cuba has been justified.

We received information from our military comrades that at a ceremonial session that was arranged by our people on November 6, the head of the intelligence administration general staff of Cuba, Pedro Luis, tried several times to raise a toast "to Fidel and Stalin" at his table.

We have raised a toast to Fidel ourselves. We have raised a toast to Fidel ourselves here, but we condemned Stalin. We are offended that Pedro Luis, a person who enjoys great trust, a person who works in the intelligence service, catches our enemies, would extol that which we have condemned, especially at this moment of tensions between the countries of socialism and the countries of imperialism. This is to some extent a violation of the relationship of trust between the Soviet Union and Cuba. It was very unpleasant for us to read this report, and it was unpleasant for our people in Cuba to hear it. (This information should be carefully checked. You should talk to the comrades who were present; you should talk to comrades Gribkov and Pavlov.)

We wanted to say everything to you candidly. These are not the last difficulties that we will experience. We should be able to assess the situation today patiently and skillfully, and to look toward tomorrow, toward the future—and this future is good. We will have to live through this crisis. This will not be the final crisis because the imperialist camp will not leave us alone and will create crises in other places. Therefore, we should remember one thing: if we really share the same positions, the Marxist-Leninist positions, then we should look for joint decisions and undertake coordinating steps that correspond to the interests of the socialist camp, the interests of peace and socialism.

Our efforts are following this course. Cuba today finds itself in the epicenter of the struggle for these ideals. Therefore, we are doing everything in order to secure a posi-

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tion such that Cuba would be following the path chosen by its people—it would be developing on a socialist basis.

Regarding the inspections: We agree that unilateral inspections are unacceptable for any country, including Cuba. But U Thant's proposal about "the UN presence" is beneficial for Cuba. In general, this is beneficial for any small country because in this case the United Nations—the world organization—to some extent becomes a guarantor against an invasion of the country that is threatened by invasion. Of course, this must be implemented on an equal basis so that UN observers would be [stationed] in Cuba, in some region of the United States and also in other countries of the Caribbean. Then sovereignty, equality, equal conditions, and equal guaranties will be ensured. If the imperialists announce that Cuba is planning an attack and therefore they want to have observers there, then in its turn Cuba, if someone is planning an attack against it, can demand that observers be sent and observer posts be established in those countries from which such aggression is possible.

We believe this approach to be correct. As early as 1955 and then in 1958, we ourselves introduced proposals at the disarmament negotiations, which presupposed establishing observer posts at airports, at railway hubs, on highways, and in large ports on a mutual basis. Those proposals remain in force today. Their purpose is to avert the danger of some aggressive country preparing a sudden attack, concentrating forces, and carrying out an invasion of the other country.

Apparently, even if we eliminate the crisis we are currently living through—and we think that we will eliminate it on the basis of a mutual agreement—this question will take on an importance beyond Cuba (but Cuba could start the process). This system then could be expanded to Europe and Asia, which would serve the cause of guaranteeing the security of all countries of the world and most of all of the two camps—of the countries of the socialist camp and the countries of the imperialist camp that have joined NATO's military bloc.

We believe that this is reasonable. Therefore now we need to enter diplomatic negotiations, which have already started. In order to create a basis for that, our country has to fulfill its obligations so that the other country can fulfill its obligation. The US president accepted this in principle in his letter. (But you should not cite this last confidential letter in your conversation with the Cubans.)

In our letter to Comrade Fidel Castro, we have already given an explanation [in response] to his statement that we allegedly have not consulted with him. We have no other alternatives except to repeat what we have already said: We believe that there was consultation when we received a telegram from Havana, which said that an attack on Cuba was

almost inevitable, and that the alternative to this was to preempt and to deliver a nuclear strike.

We understood that you wanted us to undertake measures that would preempt the enemy, and preclude the possibility of an air strike or an invasion of Cuba. You believed that this could have been achieved by our delivering a nuclear strike on the United States. According to your information about the timing of attacks on Cuba, we did not have time for formal consultations, which we wanted to conduct before doing what we did.

Therefore, we hope that you will understand that we acted in the interests of Cuba, in the interests of the Soviet people, and in the interest of the people of the entire world. And in our opinion, we achieved those ends.

When you are prepared, choose a moment for conversation. As you can see from Kennedy's confidential letter, we need to give him an answer. We have been delaying this answer for some time, and we would like to receive your opinion, which would be passed to us after having already incorporated the reaction of our friends. Then we would be able to give Kennedy an answer that we would not have to change later—an answer that would ideally express a coordinated position and would satisfy ours and Cuba's mutual interests.

We know that a hard task has befallen you. But we decided, and the military for their part quite firmly said, that in the interests of normalizing the situation the Il-28s should be removed from Cuba in order not to make the Il-28 into some kind of fetish—either the Il-28s or nothing. This would be foolish because this is not the kind of weapon for which it would be worth breaking off negotiations and thus jeopardizing all the achievements we have reached in our correspondence with the president. We should not provide an opportunity for the aggressive forces to undermine what was already achieved and place the responsibility for the breakup on us. This would be unforgivable from our side; it would show a lack of understanding of simple things.

From the materials we have obtained (and we sent these to you), you can see that among the responsible leading circles of the United States they allegedly allow for the possibility that in order not to create a crisis out of the dispute over the Il-28s, the Americans could even agree to leave the planes there; however, we must give assurances that their numbers will not increase in the future.

This, of course, would be the best option for us. But it would not be completely correct to start from this assumption in elaborating our steps. Therefore, we should exhibit caution. We are using this, but only in the course of bargaining. If we can get this bargain, then of course we would not refuse it, but we have to determine our ultimate decision, and our ultimate decision is the agreement to withdraw the Il-28s,



which will not affect the defensive measures that have been taken in Cuba. On the contrary, the moral strengthening of our position in the negotiations is worth the withdrawal of these airplanes since then the United States will be faced with the necessity of affirming, even more firmly before the entire world, the obligation undertaken in the president's letter, and to register it at the United Nations. This act warrants the withdrawal, the removal of the Il-28s from Cuba.

N. Khrushchev

[Source: From the personal archive of Dr. Sergo A. Mikoyan, donated to the National Security Archive. Translation by Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive.]



## Document No. 2:

Record of Conversation between Mikoyan and Fidel Castro, Havana, 13 November 1962

November 13, 1962

The conversation took place at A. I. Mikoyan's residence. After exchanging greetings, Mikoyan talked about his visit to the cattle farm located on Turiguano Island. He made this trip by plane on the same day, together with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and head adviser F. R. Titov.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Today's trip was very interesting. We were impressed with the work carried out by the revolutionary government in developing animal husbandry. The Santa Gertrudis cattle breed can take a high place at any exhibition.

*F. Castro:* The revolutionary government plans to export cattle from this farm in the future.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Our minister of agriculture acquired a few animals of this breed in the United States. I saw them. It is a very promising breed. Speaking about the cattle farm in Turiguano, Mikoyan expressed his admiration for the scope and quality of the construction of buildings for cattle and pigs. Judging by the scope and quality of the ongoing work, one could say that this is not a socialist, but a Communist farm, Mikoyan joked. The cattle farm in Turiguano is very large. I would say that there few farms of this scale in the world. We have similar types of farms in Uzbekistan and Siberia, but I think the farm in Turiguano far exceeds them in size.

*F. Castro:* Have you read the article about the arrest of an American CIA agent who was sent to Cuba?

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Yes. I read these materials today. Here is the true face of the "free" Western world for you. Ambassador [Aleksandr] Alekseyev told me today that some time ago there was an assassination attempt on Comrade Carlos Rafael Rodriguez.

*F. Castro (jokingly):* This attempt, it seems, was due to the shortage of meat in Cuba.

*C. R. Rodriguez (also jokingly):* At the time, he did not yet hold a post at the National Institute of Agrarian Reform.

*F. Castro:* Comrade Mikoyan, please, let's talk about the issue raised in yesterday's conversation.

A. I. Mikoyan agrees with Fidel Castro's suggestion.

*F. Castro:* We basically did not agree with the removal of strategic missiles, just as we disagree with the removal of Il-28 bombers from Cuba. These measures create a difficult situation for us. They undermine our sovereign right to determine for ourselves what type of weapons we can have, and what agreements we can make.

With respect to the missiles, we are faced with a *fait accompli*, and we will not persist with regard to Il-28 bombers. We are aware of the Soviet government's intention to withdraw the Il-28 bombers from Cuba as a basis for negotiations with the Americans. The same thing happened with the missiles—first you made a commitment, then you started to remove them. Our position is as follows: tie the removal of the naval blockage and the cessation of the violation of Cuban airspace to the withdrawal of Il-28 bombers. Without these requirements, we cannot give our consent. I believe that it is a minimal, but also our firm requirement. Otherwise, the five points put forward by the revolutionary government will become meaningless, and we consider them our guarantee. If the requirements I outlined—to lift the naval blockade and cease violating Cuba's airspace—are met, then the Il-28 bombers can be removed from Cuba.

We already spoke with Comrade Mikoyan about the need to send a letter to the acting UN Secretary General U Thant that, despite the removal of offensive weapons from Cuban territory, the Americans continue to violate our airspace.

We have taken a passive, permissive stance on violation of Cuban airspace. The Americans are insolent. They make shaving flights over Cuban territory, flying at 100 meters over our military bases and units. This is bad for the morale of our people and makes them resentful. Our position led to the point that now our enemy knows everything. The Americans' reconnaissance flights over Cuban territory led to the weakening of our country's defense.

It is difficult to explain to our people this concession to the enemy. It is difficult to explain why we let ourselves come to this state of affairs. All we need now is for American planes to land on our territory to refuel. And what are we doing? We

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are enabling them. In effect, we are allowing the enemy to violate our airspace.

The Soviet Union, the socialist countries, or any other sovereign nation would not allow it. Why do we? Such enabling on our part can be interpreted as a sign of cowardice, like we forgot the principles of morality. We think that after the strategic missiles are removed from Cuba, we can no longer allow this to go on. We decided to write to the acting Secretary General U Thant that all the planes making shaving flights over Cuba will be shot down.

Now I would like to speak about the Il-28 bombers. Since they are the property of the Soviet Union, we, despite the statement I just made, will agree with the Soviet government's decision to remove them, just as we agreed with the decision to remove the missiles. This is not just my personal opinion. We discussed the issue of Il-28 bombers at the secretariat of the ORI national leadership and unanimously came to this decision.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* I would like to respond to this question in several parts. First, I will talk about our position on the issue of violations of Cuba's airspace. At one time, we considered it necessary not to shoot down American planes. This issue was raised some time ago by Comrade Dorticós. After a conversation with Comrade Dorticós I informed the Soviet government of the Cuban position.

The day before yesterday, during a conversation with Comrade Fidel, I told him that our government came to an agreement with your position regarding contacting U Thant and demanding an end to these brazen flights. This protest could be motivated by the fact that the Soviet Union kept its promise, but the United States does not want to keep theirs. This kind of protest against the violation of Cuban airspace would serve as a warning from the revolutionary government of Cuba. It would be a serious warning to the Americans.

*F. Castro:* I agree with this formulation of the issue. We understand your concerns.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* We had to tolerate this lawlessness only to a certain point, not more.

*F. Castro:* We understand Comrade Mikoyan's considerations.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* We believe that the withdrawal of the Il-28 bombers has to be tied to the removal of the naval blockade. It is to this end that we agreed to negotiate regarding the removal of Il-28s from Cuba. All our actions are directed toward achieving this goal—lifting the naval blockade. The CC CPSU adopted the following resolution: to agree to withdraw the Il-28 bombers from Cuba if the United States will fulfill its obligation; but if they do not remove the blockade, we leave the bombers in Cuba. You see that our position is quite clear. I do not want to come back to topics we already

discussed, but it seems useful to note that after the strategic missiles were discovered, they ceased to be a deterring force. They already served their purpose. After they were discovered, they ceased to be a deterrent.

The Il-28 bomber is an old type of aircraft with a small ceiling. They are not very important for Cuba's defense. The fact that Cuba has weapons like high-speed fighter planes, missile-carrier boats, anti-assault landing and antiaircraft means—this covers all the losses that might be caused by the removal of the Il-28 bombers from Cuba. I will report your considerations to the CC CPSU. I want to reiterate that very powerful defensive weapons remain in Cuba. We will be able to transfer it to you when the Cuban military officials become familiar with it. This military equipment is incomparably more powerful than any equipment Cuba currently has. These are the most advanced weapons Comrade Pavlov currently has. The CC CPSU's resolution is to transfer these weapons to you over the course of time. I would like to emphasize that we are taking these measures in Cuba's interest, in order to ensure that the United States does not keep the blockade. We want to provide the best conditions for the comprehensive development of Cuba. The issue was discussed in the CC CPSU, together with our military. Both perspectives I described have been carefully studied. Our comrades have decided that the only correct way is to lift the blockade and withdraw the Il-28 bombers from Cuba.

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev wrote me with instructions to tell Fidel Castro and his comrades about our position and about our guiding motives. He again noted that the Soviet Union will always support Cuba.

We admire the courage of the Cuban people and their leader Fidel Castro and his comrades. I want to emphasize that we consider your difficulties to be our difficulties, and we regard your victory as our victory. Of course, one can criticize the government of imperialist countries and condemn their policies, but this does not help if there is no practical assistance. We offer you all kinds of fraternal assistance—military, economic, and diplomatic. I would like to add that we are planning to consider the possibility of providing additional weapons to Cuba. We are a fraternal nation, and we will do everything to protect Cuba. We fully supported the five points put forward by Comrade Fidel Castro. I received a telegram from Comrade Kuznetsov, in which he writes about the steps taken by our diplomats to support the five points of Cuba's revolutionary government. We understand that there will be many difficulties in the struggle to realize these five requirements, and that we will not immediately succeed in implementing them. This struggle will take place in practical terms in our negotiations with the Americans. We believe that your UN representative should join this struggle.

Our task is to use the UN and its secretary-general, U Thant, to the fullest extent to resolve questions that are important to us.

The Americans wanted to use Cuba's economic difficulties to strangle the revolution with the bony hand of hunger. But if there is no blockade, Cuba will have an opportunity to develop its economy. Our economic aid will increase, and Cuba will win.

*F. Castro:* I have a question related to the Il-28 bombers. What are the USSR's intentions? If the Americans fail to fulfill their promises and lift the blockade, then the bombers, as you said, will remain here. What does that mean? I do not understand in what form you plan to announce the withdrawal of the Il-28 bombers.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* For now we are continuing to assert that the Il-28 bomber is not an offensive weapon. The Americans argue that any bomber is an offensive weapon. So far, we have not agreed to remove the Il-28s from Cuba.

If you agree to our proposal, we will state that as soon as Kennedy's promises will be fulfilled, we agree to remove the Il-28s from Cuba. Consequently, we are talking about the possibility to start negotiations. I want to stress that we will not remove the Il-28s, the personnel and equipment until we reach an agreement with the Americans.

*F. Castro:* Will this position include the requirement to cease the violation of our airspace?

*A. I. Mikoyan:* We consider such flights to be illegal. You are planning to send your protest to the UN. It will be a serious warning to the Americans.

*F. Castro:* I quite agree with you, Comrade Mikoyan.

*A. I. Alekseyev:* The Il-28 bombers are material for negotiations, so to speak.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Yes. We want to have an agreed position with you when we conduct negotiations with Americans regarding the blockade. The anti-aircraft missiles will remain here. That is a modern weapon. We will leave them in Cuba. The Americans do not dare talk about them, although they are a dangerous weapon.

*A. I. Alekseyev:* I read today in a review of the foreign press a report that said the MiG-21 fighter planes can be used as offensive weapons.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Yes, they can be used like that.

*F. Castro (jokingly):* If you fly the MiG-21 one way and jump off with a parachute, then the aircraft can be used at a distance of 600 kilometers.

*E. Guevara:* No. It would be a distance greater than 600 kilometers.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* More precisely, the range of the aircraft will be 600 to 700 kilometers one way and the same on the way back. The designer of the aircraft created a wonderful

machine, which broke the record of height and speed for this class of aircraft. The record is registered by the International Aviation Federation.

*F. Castro:* Of course, from a military point of view, the Il-28 is not very important to us. The question of withdrawing the Il-28s can be used to make the Americans fulfill our demands.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* We understand the negative psychological effect of withdrawing this outdated bomber from Cuba.

*F. Castro:* It would be bad if this was a unilateral move. We have to demand concessions from the Americans.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* So we will turn the question of the withdrawal of Il-28s from Cuba into a subject of diplomatic negotiations, we will win the support of the UN and neutral countries.

*C. R. Rodriguez:* And if the Americans will not remove the blockade and the Il-28s will remain here, what should we do in such a case?

*A. I. Mikoyan:* I already said that we cannot send warships to escort commercial ships in the Caribbean. Considering the correlation of forces in the Caribbean, the Americans could continue the blockade. We want to deprive them of the excuse they want to use. In this case, we can work through the UN. After all, this is not an issue worth starting a nuclear war.

If Cuba was located geographically closer to the Soviet Union, the issue would be resolved without difficulty. Cuba's geographical location is very disadvantageous for us. Is it worth firing nuclear missiles? That would not help to resolve the current crisis. It would be better to take this step, without decreasing Cuba's defense capabilities, to remove the Il-28 bombers in order to guarantee nonaggression. The guarantee will be valid—this is the general consensus—for a certain length of time. Two tendencies are clearly emerging in the United States. Kennedy is under harsh criticism. Militant circles are trying to use the fact that the Il-28 bombers are still in Cuba to delay and prolong the blockade.

Kennedy would like to strangle Cuba by the blockade. He needs to save his prestige, too. Kennedy is not any more positive toward Cuba than any other American reactionaries. But, he is smarter, he understands that he should not undermine the prestige of the United States by a military attack on Cuba. He thinks that the blockade can undermine your system, cause economic hardship and the fall of the revolutionary government. Kennedy hopes that the entire burden of economic aid will fall on the Soviet Union, and that the Soviet Union could not bear the economic difficulties associated with the need to help Cuba. He believes that Fidel Castro's government will not be able to cope with the situation, and the people of Cuba will overthrow the government. In other

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words, his whole calculation rests on the idea that Cuba will collapse economically.

Kennedy's plan is better than the plan put forward by the US military, because it is unrealistic. Cuba has great potential for the development of its economy. Our assistance will enable the growth of Cuba's economy, culture, and science. As a result, Cuba will become a model for Latin America; it will be a center of attraction for the people of Latin America.

If the blockade continues, the Cuban people's standard of living will fall, and difficulties will increase.

We have to secure the removal of the blockade and guarantees that the United States and other countries will not attack Cuba. These guarantees have to be reflected in UN documents. It is unlikely that this will be done in the form of a protocol, but it is still necessary to achieve UN control in the Caribbean.

Comrade Kuznetsov has been insisting on this plan at the UN. This plan is good because it does not allow for the possibility of a surprise attack on Cuba.

Americans cling to the OAS [Organization of American States], trying to extend the activities of this organization to Cuba. They are opposed to the UN addressing issues of the threat of sudden attack.

However, if U Thant's proposal on control is accepted, then the UN will act in the Caribbean and the OAS will be on the sidelines. Of course, the Americans will oppose the adoption of this and other proposals. But we have to fight for the five points put forward by Comrade Fidel, as well as for all our requirements.

*F. Castro:* Perhaps my colleagues have more questions?

*E. Guevara:* I do not have a question. I would just like to comment on the issue at hand. We must pray to God that the Americans do not find out about our conversation. The Americans are tying the withdrawal of Il-28s to the inspections, referring to the letter from Comrade Khrushchev. From a diplomatic point of view, they can find fault with the fact that in Comrade Khrushchev's letter he mentions both the removal of offensive weapons and inspections on the ground. If the Americans know that the blockade will not lead to nuclear war, they will keep the blockade.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* I think they will not attack, but they very much want to maintain the blockade. Formally, they can say that there was no on-site inspection. However, the Americans themselves retreated on the question of inspections of strategic missiles. We believe that since they confirmed the removal of these missiles through aerial photography, it will suffice. Demands for on-site inspections are just nitpicking. If the Americans wanted to complicate the issue, they would say that they have no information as to whether or not the missiles were removed.

We agreed only on visual surveillance of the removal. It was used when strategic missiles were removed from Cuba. There was also visual surveillance from ships at close distances. Although there was one attempt to go aboard one of the Soviet ships with weapons, but Soviet sailors thwarted the attempt and did not allow the controllers aboard the ship. They also put up a protest regarding this attempt to breach the agreement. After all, we agreed only to allow controlling ships to come within a small distance. Therefore, when the captain of the control ship tried to get on board our ship, he was not allowed. It should be noted that for the entire time of the blockade, controllers did not go on board Soviet ships, they feared conflict.

I emphasize once again that different forces are at play in the United States. Kennedy does not want conflict. The American press is shouting that there is no certainty as to whether all missiles were removed or a part of them was hidden. It is important that we reached an agreement on control precisely in this form. Kuznetsov was asked about the whereabouts of the warheads intended for the missiles that were removed. He replied that warheads cannot function without missiles. Even with ground inspections, it is practically impossible to find the warheads. With the withdrawal of the Il-28s from Cuba we want to alleviate the conditions of the struggle. Of course, there is no guarantee that the Americans will accept all our demands, but we will fight hard to achieve our goals.

*F. Castro:* All right. We agree with this.

Ambassador A. I. Alekseyev was present at the conversation, which lasted an hour and a half.

Recorded by V. Tikhmenev.

Verified: [signature]

[Source: From the personal archive of Dr. Sergo A. Mikoyan, donated to the National Security Archive. Translation by Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive.]



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### Document No. 3:

Record of Conversation between Mikoyan and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Havana, 16 November 1962

16 November 1962

Ernesto "Che" Guevara received A. I. Mikoyan and his colleagues—deputy chairman of the State Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers for Foreign Economic Relations, Comrade A. I. Alikhanov; the head of the group of chief advis-

ers-organizers of production in Cuba, Comrade F. E. Titov; and the adviser on economic affairs to the embassy, Comrade N. V. Goldin—in his office at the Ministry of Industry.

After exchanging greetings, A. I. Mikoyan suggested to E. Guevara that Comrade Alikhanov would give a progress report on the Soviet Union's obligations for building industrial facilities in Cuba.

A. I. Alikhanov reported the following.

During the time we spent in Cuba, Soviet experts and heads of Cuban organizations have reviewed the state of affairs in the implementation of the Soviet-Cuban agreement on economic and technical cooperation, and we visited a number of construction sites and projects.

Construction has begun on a number of facilities provided by our agreements, including industrial objects. In May of this year, only one project was being built—a file-making plant; but today a whole range of projects is under construction, including two large power plants: one in Mariel, with a capacity of 200,000 kilowatts; and the second in Renta, with a capacity of 100,000 kilowatts; as well as a mechanical plant in Santa Clara. Work has started (though still in its initial stages) on the reconstruction of a steel works plant. Construction is also under way for training centers to prepare skilled industrial workers.

Construction of the file-making plant is nearing completion. All equipment for this plant has been delivered from the Soviet Union and installation is almost complete. The plant is scheduled to start manufacturing goods this December, that is, a year ahead of schedule.

Construction of the mechanical plant is proceeding well. The Cuban workers are promising to complete construction of the building in December. A part of the equipment has already been delivered from the USSR, and considering that construction of this plant is proceeding ahead of schedule, we will try to take action so the majority of the essential equipment will be shipped in the first half of 1963.

Then Comrade Alikhanov spoke about the construction of other facilities. He informed Comrade Guevara that the main lift crane equipment for the construction of the power plant in Mariel will be shipped in December of this year, and equipment for the power plant in Renta will be shipped in the first quarter of 1963. He also said that due to the difficulties of shipping a 50-ton crane for the installation of engineering structures, the Cuban side promised to find a crane for this purpose in Cuba.

Comrade Alikhanov said that all matters relating to the construction of industrial facilities were reviewed with the deputy minister of industry comrades Borrega, Trueba, and Solodriguez [sic], as well as with the minister of public works, Comrade Cienfuegos, and his deputies.

In connection with the request made by Comrade Borrega on behalf of Comrade Guevara regarding the delivery of finished steel structures for the reconstruction of a steel works plant and the construction of power plants, Comrade Alikhanov suggested that it would be inexpedient to change the course we agreed upon earlier, when it was decided that steel structures would be manufactured in Cuba from metal imported from the Soviet Union. Comrade Alikhanov also said that changing the previously established procedure for manufacturing steel structures will delay their production, and that a part of the metal has already been shipped from factories in the Soviet Union.

As for the possibility of manufacturing critical and nonstandard equipment in the USSR, Comrade Alikhanov said that we will review this question further when we return to Moscow.

Comrade Guevara agreed.

It was reported to Comrade Guevara that Soviet organizations will satisfy his request for the extension of Soviet adviser Comrade Fedorov's stay in Cuba, and on sending an expert metallurgist to work on the reconstruction of the steel works plants.

It was reported that the Soviet government approved a request from the Cuban side regarding the question of the Soviet Union providing technical assistance in the organization of production of spare parts in Cuba. For this purpose, 140 specialists will be assigned to Cuba, including 30 this year. In the first quarter of 1963, the necessary equipment for creating four laboratories (welding, metallographic, chemical, and controlling and measuring instruments) will be delivered.

*E. Guevara:* I would like to ask a question regarding the construction of a refinery plant. Cuban specialists recently received the Soviet project for it. When they looked it over, they saw that the cost of the work outlined in the draft is approximately twice as much as the construction costs of similar North American plants that are located in Cuba. The specialists are well aware of the costs of building North American plants, since they participated in the construction and continue to work in these plants. Also, I know that American monopolies tend to inflate the cost of construction in underdeveloped countries, because it helps them to take out large profits in the metropolis. Therefore, the actual difference may be even greater.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Right now, it is difficult to answer this question. We do not have the necessary data, but we will look into this and let you know the answer.

*N. V. Goldin:* The specialists who worked on this project will arrive here in a few days. They will look into this matter together with the Cuban side.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* I would like to tell you, Comrade Guevara that our design engineers often overstate the cost of the proj-

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ects, and we have to be in an uncompromising struggle with them. Sometimes, we manage to reduce the initial cost by as much as 20 to 30 percent. For example, the project of the largest oil refinery in Belarus comes to mind. After a thorough review and amendment we were able to reduce construction costs by 30 percent.

Overstating the cost usually happens because a lot of support structures are included into the project, and these support structures are not always necessary. The design engineers usually place various buildings at a great distance from each other, citing fire concerns. This, in turn, lengthens the communication lines, thereby increasing their cost. When I was in Mexico, I noticed that the various service buildings of the oil companies were arranged very compactly. And rightly so, because it reduces the construction costs. And if there is a fire, it seems to me that the enterprise will burn either way (*general laughter*).

In addition, design engineers sometimes make mistakes in counting the cost of equipment, especially if it is a new model.

Different kinds of mistakes can happen, too. I remember a case with an oil refinery that we were planning to build in Ethiopia. This refinery was designed to power half a million tons of oil. When the project was finished and the Ethiopians looked it over, they said that they did not like it because it cost more than similar North American projects. We studied the situation and found out that the cost of the project included expenses for construction of a power plant that was supposed to supply electricity for the plant and for a large city, as well as expenses to build a water purification plant, which was also designed to meet the utility needs of the city, and in addition there were expenditures for construction of port facilities for receiving oil. We only had to deduct these expenses from the cost of the project and everything fell into place. The cost of our project no longer exceeded Western models. As you can see, our engineers are far from commerce, and made plant construction cost calculations based on our internal regulations. That's why I say that we need to look into the matter. I will give an order to organize a special expertise on this project in Moscow. In connection with this, I would ask you to give us precise data on the construction costs of North American plants, to facilitate the work of our experts. If our design engineers really made a mistake, we will correct them. Such a study would be useful to the Soviet Union as well. If our plants are more expensive to make, we will have to catch up. Therefore, your criticism will be beneficial to us.

*E. Guevara:* But I didn't criticize anybody. (Everybody laughs.) I only made a preliminary comment on the project.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* We do not need to be afraid of criticism. Criticism and self-criticism are at the heart of our devel-

opment. I ask you to give information about the North American plants to our comrades.

*E. Guevara:* Yes, I will give instructions to prepare the data.

N. V. Goldin hands A. I. Mikoyan a brief reference on the planned oil refinery.

*After studying the reference note, A. I. Mikoyan says, addressing E. Guevara:* As far as can be seen from these data on the composition of the future refinery, there is ample evidence that the construction costs should be reduced instead of being inflated. I see that the new plant is tied to an existing plant and therefore they will have a number of shared services. This should lower the cost of construction. However, despite this, we should examine this question. Comrade Goldin will help in this matter. He is a big specialist, he built the steel plant in Bhilai.

*E. Guevara:* Yes, I know about it.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* You should put him to work more (*Everybody laughs*) He built a plant there for 1 million tons of steel. It is a large plant. And now it is already working at full capacity. The British and the West Germans also built a factory each in India. But they are still working only at two-thirds of their capacity. As for the oil refinery plant, I think there is some kind of misunderstanding here. In India we are building an oil refinery, also for 2 million tons of oil. The question of excessive costs did not arise there. Apparently for the Indian project the world market prices were taken into account, I do not know why the problem of cost came up in the Cuban project.

*E. Guevara:* I noticed that there are some paradoxes in the prices of Soviet industrial equipment. Some equipment is sold far below world prices, other equipment is sold at world prices, and yet other is considerably above world prices.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* That is not entirely correct. We usually sell our industrial equipment at world market prices, or rather, slightly below. Inside the country the price of industrial machinery and equipment differ significantly from international prices. For example, we make a profit on the production of trucks and tractors, but we produce passenger cars at a loss. When we sell products abroad we set prices in line with world prices. For this purpose, we study reference manuals, magazines, newsletters, and so on. If we cannot find price data on certain equipment in reference materials, we give instructions to one of our trade representatives to contact the Western enterprise in question, which manufactures analogous products, and, acting as a potential buyer, to inquire about the prices for this product.

It is true that pricing industrial equipment is a complicated matter. It is not like wheat or some other agricultural commodity, the prices for which are readily available every day. Different companies producing analogous equipment do not

copy each other exactly. Furthermore, it has been established as a general rule that equipment produced in West Germany is cheaper than equipment produced in North America. British equipment is more expensive than West German, but cheaper than American. The Japanese often sell their equipment even cheaper than West Germans. So the pricing of equipment sold abroad is a complicated matter.

Further, A. I. Mikoyan directed E. Guevara's attention to an issue that in his opinion is very important for Cuba. He was talking about setting up production of spare parts for industrial equipment. A. I. Mikoyan said that Soviet specialists working in Cuba told him that Cubans allocated large production facilities for organization of enterprises that will produce spare parts for Soviet vehicles. This factory will be created on the base of the former Amber Motors. Soviet specialists believe that it would be possible to set up production of spare parts for American cars at these production facilities as well. This is of paramount importance if we consider that there are 300,000 North American cars that are already well worn. Soviet specialists proposed to invite an additional number of engineers from the Soviet Union, so they could study the relevant parts and make working drawings of them, because there are no such drawings available in Cuba. However, I think that this is not the best option. It could be arranged much faster if you send the parts to the Soviet Union and the working drawings were made there. We have hundreds of design engineering bureaus which could quickly do this work. Sending the specialists to Cuba could take a long time.

E. Guevara agrees.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* I wanted to bring to your attention another very important question, Comrade Guevara. The uninterrupted supply of Soviet goods to Cuba's industries in the course of the next year depends on the resolution of this issue. Our Ministry of Foreign Trade received an order for supply of goods in the nomenclature. However, it does not have the specifications that are necessary to place the orders in our factories. This matter has taken a very long time. If we do not receive the specification in the near future, the uninterrupted continuity of our shipments will be compromised starting next year. I took an extreme measure and instructed Minister Patolichev to place orders from Cuba whenever possible without specifications. However, he told me that it is impossible with regard to machinery, equipment, ferrous metals and certain other goods. So I ask you to take the necessary steps to ensure that the required specifications are transferred to our Minister of Foreign Trade.

*E. Guevara:* The following happened with regard to the specifications. When I was in Moscow and spoke with Comrade Khrushchev, we discussed issues of foreign trade. We have developed a trade deficit in your favor in the amount

of 190 million pesos. We agreed that this matter would be resolved later. Therefore, we did not want to produce orders for next year before we addressed the issue of balancing our trade relations. And then the events happened, of which we are aware, and made us neglect this issue completely.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* It is wrong to wait for a settlement of the deficit and not prepare trade for the coming year.

*E. Guevara:* But how can it be otherwise? On what basis can we do trade, if we owe you.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* On the basis of trust. We are friendly countries. Moreover, I am informing you that our government has decided to register Cuba's foreign trade debt as a trade credit. I have not told this to your leadership yet. I am telling you this now.

*E. Guevara:* You are talking about our debt for this year?

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Yes, for this year. And besides, did anyone tell you that we cannot do the same thing next year? I cannot give a specific number, but we can agree on a trade credit for next year, as well.

E. Guevara offers the present company to smoke. All except Comrade Titov refuse on the grounds that they are nonsmokers. E. Guevara lights a cigar.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Smoking is a bad habit. Our scientists estimated that out of six people who died of cancer, five smoked. In our CC CPSU Presidium, for example, almost nobody smokes. Only Comrade Brezhnev smokes sometimes, but even that is more for amusement than real smoking. I have a pretty big family, around twenty people. And none of us are smokers. Four of my sons were in the army, where the conditions are very predisposed to smoking—there is even a free issue of tobacco for each soldier—and still they did not acquire this habit. I smoked at one point. But then doctors told me I could not. I started developing tuberculosis on the tops of my lungs, and I quit smoking.

*E. Guevara:* I also have tuberculosis, but I smoke. Neomycin works for me.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Tuberculosis is a terrible disease. We have a goal in our country to eliminate tuberculosis completely. We developed a special program to combat this disease. In particular, we have now established a worldwide network of boarding schools for children, working on a system reminiscent of your system *becados*. The network will continue to grow. We decided to put all children sick with tuberculosis into these boarding schools, taking them out of the family. Tuberculosis can be cured within a year, using new methods of treatment. Thereby, we will completely eliminate this disease among young people. We will also increasingly rely on sanatoriums for the treatment of adult patients.

*E. Guevara:* Tuberculosis is a terrible disaster in Cuba. It is perhaps the most widespread disease here, especially in

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rural areas. It seems to be due to the hard work and constant malnutrition. It is a terrible plague that we inherited from capitalism. In Cuba, TB causes more deaths than cancer. And if in the Soviet Union five out of six people who died smoked, in Cuba every five out of six people smoke.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* How is your tobacco production?

*E. Guevara:* With tobacco things are good. Natural conditions in Cuba are extremely favorable for the production of tobacco. We have some difficulty selling it abroad. The United States used to buy a lot of it. The capitalist bosses are used to Havana cigars, and right now they have to do without them.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* You know, when I was in New York en route to Cuba, I was talking with Adlai Stevenson. He complained to me that he misses Cuban cigars. I gave him some friendly advice to normalize trade relations with Cuba and thus solve the problem. (*Everybody laughs*)

*E. Guevara:* Recently, the use of tobacco within our country has increased.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Do you have large trade surpluses of tobacco?

*E. Guevara:* I do not remember the exact number.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* At what price do you sell tobacco?

*E. Guevara:* We produce different varieties of tobacco. There is tobacco that costs 500 pesos per ton, and there is tobacco that costs 12,000 pesos per ton.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* In principle, we could buy tobacco from you. But we need cheap tobacco. We produce enough expensive grades of tobacco ourselves. Our domestic production is around 80,000 to 90,000 tons per year. Sometimes it goes up to 110,000 tons. Our domestic consumption of tobacco is about 180,000 to 190,000 tons. We make up the deficit by buying abroad. But, I repeat, we are buying cheaper grades. For a while, China supplied us with large quantities of tobacco. But in recent years, because of falling production, China has refused to supply us with tobacco. Bulgaria is our regular supplier of tobacco; we buy 30,000 to 40,000 tons. We buy tobacco from Greece and Turkey out of political considerations, but not in large quantities. This year Bulgaria had a bad harvest of tobacco, and it supplied us with only 20,000 tons. So we could buy your tobacco. And in general, we could always buy the tobacco that you do not sell to other countries, provided that it is cheap-grade tobacco. We could conclude a long-term agreement on this, securing a certain share of Cuban tobacco in our purchases of tobacco abroad.

*E. Guevara:* Could you buy black tobacco from us?

*A. I. Mikoyan:* I think so. We process a large number of tobacco products and, blended with other varieties of tobacco, we might be able to use the black tobacco. I think we should instruct our trade associations to discuss this issue.

*E. Guevara* agrees and makes a note in his notebook. The present company is served Daiquiris. Guevara explains that this is a Cuban drink made of rum and finely crushed ice.

*A. I. Mikoyan* praises the drink and says that it is very tasty. He notes that a Daiquiri is much nicer than pure rum, and it is weaker, so it is less dangerous in terms of intoxication.

*E. Guevara* jokingly explains that the strength of the drink depends on who prepares it (*Everybody laughs*).

*A. I. Mikoyan:* In our country, we pursue a policy of limiting the consumption of hard liquor and we are developing the production of wines and beers. The fight against alcoholism is very important, especially among the youth. We have data that half of the crimes are committed in a state of intoxication. Based on this fact alone, it is worth fighting drunkenness.

*E. Guevara:* The opposite is the case in Cuba; recently, the tendency has been to increase the consumption of alcoholic beverages. This year, for example, beer production will only be 60 percent of last year's production, while production of liquor grew to 110 percent.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* You have good beer. When we recently visited the Isle of Turiguano, we were treated to Cuban beer, which I really liked. At the time, I joked that by the quality of the beer you can tell that Minister Guevara has been doing a good job. (*Everybody laughs*) Why is your production of beer dropping?

*E. Guevara:* Our breweries are suffering from a lack of raw materials. We import hops and malt. We buy the hops from the Czechs, but they have a limited amount to sell us. The same can be said about malt.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* I will check back home in the Soviet Union to see there is something we can do to help you in this regard. Why don't you organize production of raw materials on site? You should try to master the cultivation of hops in Cuba and buy barley abroad and make malt out of it on site. This is much cheaper. It is not difficult to set up this production, it can be arranged in a matter of six months. If necessary, we can send you our specialists and equipment. The Czechs can probably do the same. Then you will have no shortage of raw materials, and you will be able to further develop the brewing industry. Beer brings a good income to the state. Considering that your country has too much money in circulation, increasing beer consumption would play a positive role.

And while you are building a factory for the production of malt, we could negotiate the purchase of barley from us and its treatment, either in the Soviet Union or in Czechoslovakia, if the Soviet Union does not have the capacity. You will buy our barley, and we will follow your instructions to send it to Czechoslovakia for processing and further transportation to Cuba. This work in two directions will help you to quickly increase production and meet demand.



E. Guevara made a note in his notebook and said that this option should be looked into.

*E. Guevara:* In particular, my ministry has a farm. We conduct various experiments on this land. We should try to plant hops there. I will also give an assignment to study the possibility of building our own malt production plant. The present company is invited to proceed to the convention hall of the ministry, where dinner is served.

While the rest of the company moved away, A. I. Mikoyan told E. Guevara that on the occasion of the forty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution, the CPSU received a congratulatory letter from the leadership of the American Communist Party.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* This letter is of some interest. In particular, it notes that the events in Cuba greatly influenced the mood of the American working class. The awakened the working class, forced it to think about political issues. In recent years, there has been an influx of workers into the Communist Party. This is a welcome phenomenon. In this letter, the American Communist Party is critical of the fact that it did not use the Cuban events to the fullest extent possible in its work. It notes that the party should have been more vigorous in defending the Cuban people. It seems to me that this letter is of some interest to the Cuban leadership. I received this letter because as a member of the Presidium of our Central Committee, I am informed about all our important matters, for which a variety of materials are directed to me here from Moscow. We are not talking about the fact that the Americans asked us to send you the contents of this letter. I think that the Cuban leadership will be interested to know its contents, to have a better understand of the situation in the US working class. It is impossible to fight against US imperialism without knowing the sentiments of the American working class.

E. Guevara agrees.

Everyone walks over to the dinner table. Guevara introduces Mikoyan to Guevara's deputies—Orlando Borrego, Juan Castineras, Tirso Saenz, Gomez Trueba, Mario Sorroli, and Santiago Riera—who join them for dinner.

During the dinner conversation, the question was raised about the difficulties of socialist construction. A. I. Mikoyan said that Cuba could build socialism with far fewer sacrifices than did the Soviet Union.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* We really had it very tough. We were alone. Out of the forty-five years, we spent fifteen with food rationing, when even supplying the population with bread was a difficult task. We had food rationing cards during the Civil War, during the collectivization of agriculture, and during the last war, all the way up to 1947. During the war, we had bread rationing of 300 grams to 1 kilogram of bread per day per person. Workers employed in particularly heavy industries received the highest rations. Meat and butter were given out in very small quantities.

In the last years of the war, we introduced a system of so-called commercial shops, where people could buy food at higher prices but without the rationing cards. At the time, we ended up with two price systems. Goods could be obtained through rationing cards at the low prewar prices, while prices in the commercial stores were three to four times higher. In 1947, the rationing cards were canceled. We also reinstated uniform prices for goods. These prices were higher than before the war but below commercial prices. The increase in prices served to absorb the excess money collected in the population during the war years. The money reform had the same goal, when we exchanged money at the rate of 1 new ruble for 10 old ones. Note that we exchanged cash up to 3,000 rubles, and money in bank savings up to 10,000 rubles. This reform was welcomed by the majority of the population, although, of course, a small portion of the people who had accumulated large sums was displeased. This reform improved the monetary circulation in the country.

The situation is completely different in Cuba, Mikoyan continued. If our task was to provide the population with bread, then in Cuba, it is to provide the population with meat, fats, etc.

*E. Guevara:* If we talk about the plight of the masses as a factor that causes revolutionary upheavals, then of all the countries in Latin America, Cuba was the least suitable country for a socialist revolution. The standard of living in Cuba was is one of the highest in Latin America.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Russia was also an exception. If you follow dogmatic Marxism, the most suitable country for a socialist revolution was and is the United States, since the socialization of production there is the highest among all the capitalist countries.

Russia during the Revolution was one of the most backward countries in Europe, with strong vestiges of feudalism. And then a socialist Revolution happened in this country. It was our luck that the Russian bourgeoisie was weak and had a dumb political line. It was unable to solve a single problem of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

The working class is an advanced class, but it should not be idealized. It lends itself to bourgeois influences. If the Russian bourgeoisie had abolished the Tsarist government and conducted at least some land reform, like the one the Americans did in Japan, and to some extent solved other problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the socialist Bolshevik Revolution in Russia would have been delayed for many years. Therein lies the greatness of Lenin—he was able to understand the complex situation of the time and advanced the slogans that brought the vast majority of the population to the side of the Communists. This slogan—“Peace, Bread, and Land”—is essentially bourgeois. Peace is for all people. Land is for the peasants, that is, the majority of the population. And only bread is for the working class. Through this

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slogan, the Bolshevik Party was able to win over the masses. It is not a paradox that at one point there were people who said they were for the Bolsheviks but against communism.

The Cuban Revolution also took place “against the rules.” The study of this revolution is of great theoretical interest. To properly understand the issues of the socialist Revolution in Cuba would be to make a major contribution to the development of Marxism-Leninism.

The great significance of the Cuban Revolution is that it is the first socialist revolution in the Americas. If Cuba was somewhere in the region located close to the Soviet Union, it would not have such significance, and it would not attract so much attention. The Cuban Revolution lit the torch of socialist transformation in America. It is difficult to say when and which Latin American countries will follow.

*E. Guevara:* It seems that the further development of the revolutions in Latin America must follow the line of simultaneous explosions in all countries. Only this way can they succeed.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* This is incorrect. The countries of Latin America have their own national characteristics, which cannot be ignored. Because of these features, the revolution cannot occur simultaneously in all countries. These revolutions can happen shortly one after another, but an overall explosion is unlikely.

*E. Guevara:* Unless there is a simultaneous explosion, the revolutions in individual countries will be suppressed by the reactionary forces in alliance with imperialism. This is confirmed, in particular, by the events in Venezuela and several other countries.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* This is possible, but not inevitable. If the revolution takes place quickly and the rebels manage to seize power throughout the country before the intervention begins, they can survive. But if this is not achieved, and the country has two governments, the imperialists will have a “legitimate” excuse to provide armed support to the government the rebels are trying to overthrow. Otherwise, it is difficult to organize intervention, because even imperialists are not always able to flout law and public opinion, especially now that there are powerful forces in the socialist camp, standing guard over the revolutionary movement.

As for Venezuela, I do not have enough information, but it seems to me that the recent attempt at insurrection was unsuccessful due to the fact that the rebels did not have a connection with the people. It was something like the battleship *Potemkin* during the 1905 Revolution, when the rebellious sailors were isolated from the people and defeated.

*E. Guevara:* We told our Venezuelan comrades that they were using the wrong tactics. They entered into an agreement with the army. They sent their people into the army. There was an uprising. As often happens in Latin American history, the army rebelled and the army surrendered. As the result, the

Venezuelan comrades lost their people, who were either killed in open battle, or captured.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* The battleship *Potemkin* was a good lesson to our revolutionaries. The uprising in Puerto Cabello can have the same significance for Venezuela. The uprising must be supported by the masses. Individual acts, like the recent sabotage of American oil fields, are not very useful. They do not cause serious damage to American imperialism as such. They hurt a particular company, and even that damage is relative. The company will rebuild the damaged installations and will continue to exploit people.

*E. Guevara:* Indeed, the company can rebuild the installation, but these installations can be blown up again. If this happens repeatedly, the imperialists will see the advanced firing line and they will lose any desire to invest their capital in that place.

*A. I. Mikoyan:* Speaking specifically about this case does not really prove the point. In recent years, there has been a tendency in the world not to import refined petroleum. Now it is more profitable to import crude oil and to develop the petrochemical industry around refining it. That is why American companies can let go of their oil refineries in Venezuela. This will only help them to exploit the Venezuelan people even more.

As for the theory of a simultaneous explosion, I would like to say that during the first years after the October Revolution, we were also waiting for socialist revolutions in other countries. Many people thought that if such revolutions do not take place, we would not make it. And in fact a socialist revolution broke out in Hungary and Bavaria. However, these revolutions were soon crushed by the reactionary forces. Some time passed, and we saw that the time for revolutionary crises in capitalist countries had passed, and then we made an important decision and announced that capitalism had entered a period of partial stabilization, and we need to build socialism on our own.

With this, the conversation ended and the Cuban comrades present at the dinner warmly said goodbye to A. I. Mikoyan and his accompanying colleagues.

Recorded by O. Darusenkov.

18 o'clock: In the embassy building, A. I. Mikoyan received the former president of Guatemala, Jacobo Árbenz, and the Guatemalan Labor Party Central Committee member, José Manuel Forntuny, at their request.

[Source: Personal archive of Sergo Mikoyan, donated to the National Security Archive. Translation by Anna Melyakova for the National Security Archive.]