

Konrad Adenauer and the Cuban Missile Crisis: West German Documents

Ed. Note: Much like the other NATO allies of the United States, West Germany was not involved in either the origins or the resolution of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.¹ But, of course, nowhere in Europe was the immediate impact of Khrushchev's nuclear missile gamble felt more acutely than in Berlin. Ever since the Soviet premier's November 1958 ultimatum, designed to dislodge Western allied forces from the western sectors of the former German Reich's capital, Berlin had been the focus of heightened East-West tensions. Following the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 and the October stand-off between Soviet and American tanks at the Checkpoint Charlie crossing, a deceptive lull had settled over the city.²

Yet the Berlin question (centering around Western rights and presence in the divided city as well as Western recognition of the GDR regime and the Soviet threat of a separate peace treaty with East Germany) remained unresolved and the survival of the city's western sectors hung in the balance. It was here where future aggressive moves on the part of the Soviet Union were expected, possibly later in the year. Not surprisingly, upon discovering the Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, the Kennedy administration immediately suspected that the deployment aimed at providing Moscow with new levers of pressure on Berlin, even that the Cuban action might be a precursor to another move to evict Western forces from the divided city.

The Cuban Missile Crisis occurred in the aftermath of the deepest crisis in relations between the United States and the Federal Republic in the Adenauer years: The aging chancellor (the FRG's only leader since its inception in 1949) was having difficulties connecting with the young American president. He abhorred the idea of starting a nuclear war over Berlin and had been skeptical about hardline American contingency plans to respond to a Soviet blockade of access routes between West Berlin and West Germany or an outright take-over of the city. At the same time, he grew critical of the Kennedy administration's search for a Berlin solution as part of a larger effort at détente. Negotiations led by the US ambassador to Moscow, Llewellyn E. Thompson, for an international access agency for Berlin that could settle the thorny Allied access problem conjured up old fears of a US-Soviet deal over German heads. An international agency that included German Democratic Republic representatives would only further legitimize the regime of East Berlin's Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) and threaten West Berlin's longer-term viability as a free city.³

In April 1962, Washington had informed Bonn on short notice that it planned to propose to Moscow the creation of an

access agency, the exchange of mutual non-aggression declarations and the establishment of FRG-GDR technical commissions. Somehow the proposals leaked to the German press, leading Secretary of State Dean Rusk to protest the serious breach of confidence. Hurt by the accusation, Adenauer withdrew his longstanding confidante and ambassador to Washington, Wilhelm Grewe. Relations went from cool to icy when the chancellor publicly distanced himself from Washington's negotiation package at a press conference in May. By time the missile crisis erupted in October, Adenauer's trust in the United States had been severely shaken.⁴

The missile crisis spurred a momentary warming in the uneasy Adenauer-Kennedy relationship. Unlike other European allies, Adenauer backed Kennedy's staunch attitude during the crisis wholeheartedly, a fact that did not go unnoticed in Washington. If anything he advocated an even harder line vis-à-vis Castro—repeatedly advocating aerial attacks, invasion, and the fostering of unrest inside Cuba. Having looked the other way for years as amity blossomed between the East German communists and Castro, Bonn demonstrated its hardline attitude towards Castro when Cuba formally recognized the GDR in January 1963. Applying the so-called Hallstein non-recognition doctrine, Bonn broke off all relations with the Castro regime, even rejecting Havana's appeals to retain some limited trade or consular mission in Hamburg.⁵

But worries about the United States soon resurfaced in Adenauer's thinking. Press reports had suggested that Adenauer doubted the American assertions that all the missiles had in fact been removed, and in January 1963 the chancellor confided in French President Charles de Gaulle his incredulity at the fact that the Russians had managed to move the missiles to Cuba without being discovered. "The Americans had neither realized the danger in time nor managed to implement on-the-ground inspections." The once reliable protective power could no longer be fully trusted.—C.O.



**Cable from Federal Republic of Germany
Embassy, Washington (Knappstein), 22
October 1962**

Ambassador [Karl-Heinrich] Knappstein, Washington, to the
Foreign Office

114-8546/62 secret

Telex Nr. 3152
Citissime

Sent: 22 October 1962, 24:00 hours
Received: 23 October 1962, 08:20 hours

The current situation is characterized by the Cuba blockade imposed by the American government. For now, I want to provide the following assessment of the situation:

I. According to American opinion, a first exchange of analyses conducted in the military sub-committee (chaired by [Paul H.] Nitze) about Soviet intentions in deploying offensive strategic arms on Cuba brought about these results:

1) Expanding Cuba to a base with offensive potential is a "quantum leap" in crisis development of East-West relations. This way the United States is supposed to be forced into either accepting the deployment of these weapons next to the coast of the American continent, or into giving in to Soviet demands concerning disarmament and Berlin. The dangerousness of this "big gamble" and "extreme move" is taken extremely seriously.

2) Far-reaching Soviet intentions aim at:
- implementing Soviet disarmament demands concerning American bases overseas;
- the withdrawal of American forces from Europe;
the retreat of Western troops from Berlin.

3) Short-term intentions according to Nitze:
- pressure on "Western" alliances, especially on NATO;
- dividing the Western world ("fissures").

Lord [Viscount Samuel] Hood [Minister, British Embassy in Washington] thought the Soviets want to test American resolve. In case the first offensive expansion of the Cuban base is accepted, Moscow will step up further. If America reacts [firmly], Moscow will retreat. In any case, the Soviets want to figure out how far they can go. They will possibly try to trade in the giving up of the Cuban base for "something different."

II. In the same meeting [of the Nitze group] there existed agreement that a Soviet reaction could also affect Berlin. None of the participants present indulged into speculations which Soviet measures might be considered likely with regard to Berlin.

Nitze negated the question whether the Soviets might have intentions to push the Berlin problem to the backburner.

Nitze almost categorically rejected another question from the German side whether the new situation might limit freedom of action with regard to implementing Western plans for countermeasures in case of a conflict over Berlin. He stated that the finalization of these plans, decisiveness, and unity are more important than ever.

III. According to first impressions, the American decision must be viewed in this context:

1) In the National Security Council, the news about Soviet shipments of offensive weapons (reaching the North American continent) led a week ago to the military's demand to act. Especially the facilities in Cape Canaveral are considered potentially vulnerable.

2) In light of its nuclear superiority to last for some more years (reliably confirmed by U 2 [reconnaissance planes] and satellites, of which the Soviets are said to be aware), the [American] government believes to [be able or willing to] run an increased risk. Yet the window for freedom of action is said to be not unlimited.

3) An aggravation of the Berlin crisis in late November this year would also have provided Kennedy with the desired opportunity to act against the build-up of Cuba as a base for Soviet offensive weapons.

Khrushchev's talk with [US Ambassador Foy D.] Kohler [in Moscow on 16 October 1962] and Gromyko's talks in Washington [with President John F. Kennedy and Secretary of State Dean Rusk on 18 October], however, have raised doubts whether the Soviets are actually eager to stage a Berlin crisis at the end of the year (new indications for expanding the time factor, emphasis on ongoing readiness to talk). This renders moot the prospect that Soviet action on a separate [peace] treaty [with the GDR], or on Berlin, might soon provide a "pretext" to act against Cuba.

4) Since on one hand the government no longer wants to passively watch the offensive threat, and on the other hand Soviet policy on Berlin does not seem to provoke an immediate aggravation of the Berlin crisis, the question about the timing of the Cuba action poses itself in a different way.

a) In addition, the current timing is certainly influenced by the upcoming elections where significant losses for the Democrats are predicted. The Republican party leadership recently decided to turn the Cuba question into the main election issue. I

have no doubts, however, that domestic consideration merely influenced decisions on timing. The actual political reasons are the Cuban threat and Soviet policy on Berlin.

b) Maybe the timing also seemed favorable in context of problems Moscow is facing with the Sino-Indian [border] conflict.

5) In retrospect, those developments throw a limelight on the so far unconvincingly explained over-dramatization of the Berlin crisis by the American political leadership, and the increasing number of public hints according to which the United States is ready to go it alone if it has to do so.

[signed]
Knapstein

[Source: Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), Document 408. Translated for CWHIP by Bernd Schaefer.]



Memorandum of Conversation, Federal Republic of Germany Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Dean Acheson, Special Envoy of US President Kennedy, Bonn, West Germany, 23 October 1962⁶

Conversation of Federal Chancellor Adenauer with the Special Adviser of the American President, Acheson

115-105.A/62 highly secret

23 October 1962

On 23 October 1962 at 1745 hours the Chancellor received Mr. Dean Acheson accompanied by [US] Ambassador [Walter] Dowling.

At the beginning, Mr. Acheson reported how he participated in the course of recent weeks in many consultations in State Department and Pentagon. There recommendations were worked out for submission to the President.

The Chancellor asked whether it was also considered whether to shake the Cuban regime through triggering domestic unrest in Cuba.

Mr. Acheson admitted it was a big mistake not to conduct the Bay of Pigs landing operation with all the consequences it would have needed. Back then a revolution could have been launched. Since then, there exists iron communist discipline in the country. Castro has about 50,000 well trained and equipped soldiers and a militia of 150,000. Experiences so far have demonstrated that guerillas deployed from the sea cannot sustain themselves for long [on Cuba].

The Chancellor criticized the Chairman of the Belgian Senate. The latter had provided a legal expertise according to which the American blockade [of Cuba] is incompatible with international law. It would be more important instead, if world opinion will get the impression that Cuba's population does not stand behind the regime.

The Chancellor himself voiced the opinion it will not come to a conflict as long one remains firm. He reiterated again it should not cause any insurmountable problems to stir up domestic unrest within Cuba.

Mr. Acheson referred again to practical difficulties crippling such an approach. He then explained the deliberations discussed in Washington. Overall they fall into two major categories. The first one features an immediate use of military force, the second one just a blockade without any direct use of force.

According to the first scenario, the missile bases in Cuba would be destroyed by conventional air attacks. This would have resulted in 3,000 to 4,000 casualties among Russian personnel. This approach would hardly have caused casualties among the Cuban population.

As a next stage, airfields where Soviet MIG planes and IL 28 jets are deployed would have to be eliminated. At the same time, surface to air missile launching pads (of which there are 24 on the island) have to be taken out. This would have caused casualties among the Cuban population in the range of 10,000 to 15,000 people.

The third option would have been a combination of the first two actions described above, followed by a landing operation of about 75,000 to 100,000 soldiers on Cuba.

The President did not opt for any of these scenarios. Instead he preferred a blockade targeting in the first place offensive weapons and oil shipments. If the other side would resort to the use of force, one will not hesitate to intensify its own actions. The President believes, however, the blockade has prevented an emotional and irrational immediate action from Khrushchev, such as action in Berlin or a nuclear strike. Furthermore, the President wanted to prevent the European allies of the United States from becoming exposed to unexpected danger by an irrational action from Khrushchev's side.

The Chancellor called the President's considerations noble, but he reiterated that the other side is ruthless if it comes to

choosing its options. In this context he referred to the trial of Soviet KGB operative [Bohdan] Stashynsky at the [West German] Federal Court [between 8 and 19 October 1962]. He asked the [US] ambassador to provide Mr. Acheson with material about this trial for the President. During his last visit, Gromyko also had lied to the President. Thus one has to resort to different means, what the Chancellor considers morally justified in such a case.

According to Mr. Acheson's statements, the President is aware that the Soviets want to achieve three objectives with their Cuba policy. They want to build up nuclear capacities ready to be used against the United States. If an operational readiness of such weapons in Cuba will occur, this will result in a very large threat to the United States. Furthermore, the Soviets want to undermine the position of the United States in the Western hemisphere. Finally, they hope to move into better terms of negotiations in order to force concessions from the US, for instance through an exchange deal Cuba-Berlin. In light of all this, the President is completely aware that these weapons cannot remain on Cuba, and that one cannot afford a loss of prestige in the Western hemisphere. Moreover, the President does not feel the slightest inclination to make concessions on other issues for the removal of these weapons.

The Chancellor said, according to what he was told yesterday [by Ambassador Dowling] there are about 8,000 Russians in Cuba. Also one has to take into account that there are nuclear warheads on the island already. As a consequence, you have to assume that those 8,000 Russians can prepare those missiles to the extent that they are operationally ready, and that a use of those weapons cannot be excluded despite the blockade.

Mr. Acheson concurred with those thoughts. However, he added that through the blockade the President intends to give Khrushchev a certain time to think things over. If Khrushchev does not seize this opportunity, the United States will be in a better position to destroy the missiles deployed on Cuba, than they would have been in case of a first strike from the US. This deliberation [i.e., consideration or argument—ed.] was made to the President not by himself (Acheson), but by other people who he rates very highly. This deliberation as such is not dumb at all, since one thought the allies and world opinion will support the United States if it has sent a warning to Khrushchev first. Currently we are in a stage of mounting danger. Right now only maybe two, three, or four missiles are actually ready, and their target accuracy is still not very high. Yet the number of operationally ready missiles increases from week to week. Within two months all those missiles would be ready for a launch. So we run a certain risk here. The more time is passing by, the more the danger is growing. On the other hand, support is also increasing for the American

position with the [US] population, the allies, and in world opinion. If it comes to an armed conflict, the US does not want to be accused of having launched a Pearl Harbor type of attack in reverse.

The Chancellor doubted anything will come about if you give Khrushchev time for thinking over. He does not believe Khrushchev will pack his missiles and planes in boxes and takes them back. The current threat is terrible for the United States. Unfortunately, the Russian action will also have a negative impact on other parts of the world. He also does not expect any positive result from steps taken at the United Nations as Khrushchev is not impressed by U.N. Resolutions. This is why he [Adenauer] sees the only hope in a blockade as tight as possible, and in domestic unrest [in Cuba].

Mr. Acheson stated the Chancellor is making it difficult for him to contradict these arguments. Those were exactly the arguments he [Acheson] himself had made during preliminary deliberations. Hasty military action by the United States could have triggered a nuclear counterstrike or Soviet actions in Berlin. Then the allies might have said those crazy Americans should have approached things more carefully. President Kennedy is ready to use force. He thinks, however, it is better not to do such right away in order not to block the option of escalating his measures. If we currently talk about a quarantine, then it means to gain enough freedom of action to escalate measures at a later stage.

The Chancellor referred to the possibility of clashes on Guantanamo base between conventional American forces and Cuban forces.

Mr. Acheson responded the American garrison there is getting reinforced. Due to the geographical location of the base, however, it is very difficult to launch an attack from there.

In conclusion, the Chancellor expressed its hope it will not come to a war on paper ["Papierkrieg"].

The meeting ended at around 1900 hours.

[Source: Foundation Chancellor Adenauer House, Records III/87, Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31 Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), document 409. Translated for CWIHP by Bernd Schaefer.]



**Cable from Federal Republic of Germany
Embassy, Washington (Knappstein), 24
October 1962**

Ambassador [Karl-Heinrich] Knappstein, Washington to

Federal Minister Schröder

114-312/62 top secret

Sent 24 October 1962 6.35 pm

Telex nr. 3178

Arrived 25 October 1962 4.00 am with priority citissime

For Federal Minister and Foreign Secretary only:

Today, at 3.00 pm (8.00 pm local time), [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk has asked [French Ambassador to the United States Herve] Alphand, [UK Ambassador to the United States David] Ormsby-Gore and me to attend a meeting where he passed on the following information which was to be considered top secret and to be passed on to cabinet members only:

I. Military

1. The first six Soviet ships had been withdrawn before reaching the quarantine zone. However, this should not lead to premature conclusions; the ships might come back with escorts, perhaps submarine protection. If possible this incident should be kept secret, a message would be issued that quarantine was in full force and that there had been no special incidents. (In the meantime, however, there has been a news-agency report that the ships had changed course).

2. Submarine protection was but a vague possibility. According to very precise intelligence of the American Navy there were only few Soviet submarines within range to provide cover.

3. For the first time that day, six low-flying American aircraft had flown over and explored the launching installations in Cuba. They had not come under fire from the Cubans, although the 14 anti-aircraft batteries around the island were operational.

4. The principal aim of quarantine operations, to keep further nuclear weapons out of the island, should be attained with a minimum of force. Therefore, in case of hostile conflict, there would be only one "wounding shot" after the usual "warning shot" to affect the ships' maneuverability but not to sink them if possible.

5. According to recent intelligence none of the missile sites were yet operational. However, this could be made possible within hours as they were mobile batteries.

6. So far, no nuclear warheads had been identified, but it was assumed that there were some in place in Cuba.

7. Up to now, about eight to ten missile launch sites had definitely been identified plus at least 30 missiles.

8. There used to be at least 5000 Russians in Cuba. Very likely, at the moment, there are three missile-equipped regiments counting about 8000 servicemen (Russians).

9. Cubans did not play an important role at all in the deployment of the missile system. According to Intelligence information Cubans were not even involved in deploying the emplacements but were kept at a distance by big barriers.

10. If any of the high flying reconnaissance aircraft were hit by ground-defense one of the existing 24 anti-aircraft batteries would be destroyed without any further hostilities.

11. Up to then Soviet aircraft en route to Cuba had been refueled in Dakar and Conakry. Provisions have been made in those places to detect nuclear warheads aboard those aircraft.

II. Political

1. There were further signs that Khrushchev had been mistaken in his timetable and that the missile sites had been discovered too early. For his [planned] visit [to the United States to attend the UN General Assembly—ed.] in November he had obviously planned to surprise the President by telling him that in the meantime there were 60 operational missiles stationed in Cuba and that the President consequently had to make the desired concessions in Berlin.

2. On his last visit to the President, [on 18 October, Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko had not only made a general statement that there would be no deployment of "offensive weapons," but had definitely assured the President that there would be no emplacement of missiles capable of reaching the United States. This assertion had been an obvious lie.

3. For the near future certain changes were expected in Cuba. Castro's influence seemed already on the wane: He had been ready to release the prisoners of the recent

invasion [i.e., in April 1961 at the Bay of Pigs], however, this had been prevented by the communist ([that is, to] say Russian) party apparatus.

4. As for current affairs, Rusk did not seem to attach much importance to the debate in the United Nations. For instance he had pointed out that it had been of utmost importance for the US to have the quarantine in full force before any decisions had been made by the United Nations. Returning to the status quo of October 22nd was definitely out of question, instead there should be a return to the status quo ante (no bases in Cuba, no quarantine).

In conclusion Rusk emphasized that an unavoidable clash was by no means imminent. Since the Soviets had realized the seriousness of the situation they had become very careful. He could imagine that their miscalculation [in having sent the missiles to Cuba?—ed.] might also lead them to proceed more carefully in the Berlin question. However, all this was not to be taken as final assessment.

[signed] Knapstein
VS-Vol. 8418 (Minister's Office)

[Source: Foundation Chancellor Adenauer House, Records III/87, Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), document 412. Translated for CWIHP by Regina Schmidt-Ott.]



Memorandum of Conversation, West German Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder and Soviet Ambassador Andrei Smirnov, Bonn, 26 October 1962

Discussion between Federal Minister Schröder and Soviet Ambassador Smirnov [Smirnov]

Notes of a conversation between Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Schröder and Soviet Ambassador Smirnov on 26 October 1962 at 3.00 pm in the Minister's office.
Present: Dr. Reinkemeyer for the German party
26 October 1962

Ambassador Smirnov said he had come to present to the minister a statement of the Soviet Government concerning the aggressive acts the United States had committed

against the Republic of Cuba. In this statement the Soviet Government was explaining its view on the blockade the United States had imposed on Cuba. It also commented on the other aggressive steps President Kennedy intended to take against Cuba as announced on 22 October. In that statement the Soviet Government called upon all governments in the world to condemn the aggressive acts of the United States against Cuba. The Soviet Government was hopeful that the German Government would also react favorably to this appeal, it being clear that approval of such actions would mean entire responsibility for all resulting consequences.

Ambassador Smirnov then presented the text of the statement the Soviet Government had made on 24 October. The declaration had already been available in the world press.

The Minister replied:

The Federal Government would examine the statement of the Soviet Government in detail and consider it carefully. On the assumption that the Ambassador's introductory remarks were meant as a sort of summary of contents, he would limit himself at the moment to a provisional comment only:

The Soviet Government had mentioned American aggressive acts. However, the Ambassador was well aware that the United States held a completely different view on this matter. The Ambassador also knew that Soviet Foreign Minister [Andrei] Gromyko in his last talk with President Kennedy [on October 18] had presented the situation in Cuba in an entirely different light, in contrast to unambiguous evidence that was now available. On account of that evidence it was obvious that Cuba was being expanded into an offensive base. Consequently the present Soviet viewpoint on this matter was completely untenable. So much for the Federal Government's opinion concerning the problems themselves. Further, it went without saying that the Federal Government wished for a peaceful solution of the present situation. Unfortunately the Federal Republic, being not even a member of the United Nations, had no influence in that matter, and very likely, attempts to settle the problem would mainly be made within the framework of the UN. According to the Federal Government peace would at any rate be preferable to an armed conflict for all those involved. However, peace meant bringing about a situation that would guarantee a peaceful life for all people. Not intending to establish a direct link with the Cuba problem, the present state of affairs also applied to the situation in Berlin where the Soviet Union was unquestionably departing from the fundamental terms of the contractual basis the Four Powers had agreed upon for Berlin. It was the German view that that agreement should be respected. The example made clear that world peace was threatened in several places of the world, not only in Cuba. With Germany being one of those places, the German interest in a peaceful settle-

ment was particularly strong. In its memorandum of February 1962 in reply to the Soviet memorandum of December 1961 the Federal Government had clearly pointed out the important terms for such a settlement. Incidentally, the response to the German memorandum remained outstanding. For all responsible authorities in the Federal Republic maintenance of peace was paramount. The Ambassador could also learn that from recent debates in the Bundestag [Federal Lower House of Parliament] and from the statement made there which he was surely aware of.

Ambassador Smirnov replied: It was not surprising that the US was now turning the tables accusing Cuba of aggression. However, there was no doubt possible about the actual aggressor, as the United States owned a military base in Cuba where—against all legal norms of International Law—it had accumulated gigantic quantities of troops and all kinds of weapons to expand it into an offensive base against the Republic of Cuba. This was a fact, no matter how hard the Americans were trying to talk their way out of it. On the other hand the Soviet Government was making every effort to avoid atomic and ballistic warfare. The purpose of his, the Ambassador's, present visit was to call upon the Federal Government asking it on behalf of the Soviet Government to exert its influence on its allies accordingly, in order to maintain peace.

Although the Minister had rejected the existence of a direct link between Cuba and Berlin, yet there still was a connection between the two problems as there was no peace settlement with Germany, which explained the tense situation in Berlin and further complication of world politics in general.

The Minister had pointed out that, so far, there had been no reply to the German Memorandum of last February. The explanation was that, after receipt of the German memorandum, the Soviet Government had become doubtful whether the German Government was serious in its demand for negotiations: first, the contents of the German memorandum had consisted of pure propaganda and second, there had been a propaganda campaign in Germany against the Soviet document of December, notwithstanding the serious and useful suggestions the Soviet Government had put forward to solve the problems of Germany and Berlin.

The Minister replied that the USA-Cuba conflict was about Soviet installations on the island. Although a precise definition of the aggressor in case of conflict had always been a tricky problem since International Law had come into existence, there could yet be no doubt that those installations were no defensive weapons, not even surface-to air-missiles, but medium-range ballistic missile sites with a range of 1800 to 3700 km; their deployment had definitely to be regarded as an aggressive act against the United States.

The Ambassador had put forward the American base in Cuba as an argument. However, the base had existed for a long time and been leased by contract for 99 years [*sic*; the February 1903 Cuban-American treaty actually granted the United States a perpetual lease on the Guantánamo Bay area while recognizing Cuba's ultimate sovereignty—ed.]. That American base had been understaffed, [and] only very recently and due to the aggressive projects in Cuba had the American garrison been reinforced to a certain degree. It was out of the question that the Americans intended to make use of this base for an aggression against Cuba. Besides, the Americans had never imposed a [total] blockade on Cuba. They were only trying to prevent delivery of special offensive weapons the emplacement of which in Cuba would seriously threaten world peace. In no way did they intend to block delivery of food items and other commodities, nor did they mean to stop delivery of purely defensive weapons. Internationally there was no disputing that the Soviet deliveries consisted of offensive weapons bound to seriously jeopardize world peace. The problem should be dealt with by the United Nations, after relevant evidence had been submitted to them.

Concerning the Ambassador's appeal he wanted to make clear that the Federal Government would always use all its strength to maintain peace. He had only mentioned Berlin to emphasize that peace was endangered in other places, too. As to Berlin the danger consisted in the Soviets' departing or rather having already departed from a settlement which the four Powers had agreed upon at that time. It was of course possible to consider departing from certain positions of the agreement. The Federal Government would certainly support any request that was intended to put a new and better agreement in place of the old one. In no way could changes be made unilaterally without the other partners' consent, let alone against their will.

Concerning the German memorandum of last February he had already in March told the Foreign Minister Gromyko that the [Federal] German Republic meant what it said in that document. He had also told Minister Gromyko that a new German Ambassador to Moscow would be appointed soon. Like his predecessor he would consider it his first duty to work for a good relationship between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic. He was taking the opportunity of the Ambassador's visit to emphasize that, by appointing Ambassador [Horst] Groepper, the Federal Government had sent a highly qualified diplomat to the Soviet Union. Ambassador Groepper was fully aware of his task and willing to do everything in his power to achieve it. Not only was he qualified for this mission but he would also set to work with a will and an eager interest. That might go without saying, but

he, the Minister, meant to stress once again how highly the Federal Government rated Ambassador Groepper.

The Ambassador had felt it necessary to refer to the character of the German memorandum. This point had already been raised in a similar way in his, the Minister's, discussion with Mr. Gromyko. Without directly referring to the memorandum, Foreign Minister Gromyko had remarked that anti-Soviet propaganda was widespread in the Federal Republic. Replying to Mr. Gromyko he, the Minister, had suggested that independent experts over a period of three months should evaluate the frequency of negative press comments on the other in their respective countries. At the time he had been sure that such expert opinion would find favor with the Federal Republic.

He had made that remark to Mr. Gromyko half in jest and half in earnest, however, he had strictly to reject the Ambassador's dismissing the German memorandum as propaganda. On the contrary, it underlined the firm intention of the German Government to come to an arrangement with the Soviet Union. He assumed that this was also the intention of the Soviet Government. However, both their governments had a different conceptual starting point hence their difference of opinion. He was sure that the day was not far off when the Soviet Union would realize that the German solution to the pending problems was also in the interest of the Soviet Union.

Ambassador Smirnow replied: He was not disappointed [i.e., not surprised—trans.] at all at the Minister's view on the American-Cuban conflict: the Minister had stuck to his former interpretation, namely to consider all American weapons and sites of defensive purposes only and weapons and bases of non-allied powers as offensive in any case. Could missiles with a range of 5000 to even 10000 km, stationed in the United States, the Federal Republic, even in Norway on the Soviet borders, in Turkey and Greece, be qualified as purely "defensive"? On the other hand, when Cuba bought defensive weapons to be ready for fending off an American aggression it had taken "offensive" steps! The Foreign Minister might have a problem to prove that the American sites the United States had installed all over the world after the end of the [Second World] War, among others especially in Germany, the most powerful American base, were for defensive purposes only. How different the Soviet Union! It had of its own free will liquidated the base it had owned in Finland and was now living with Finland on the best of terms. In their suggestions to clarify the situation, the Cubans had never even asked for removal of the American base from the island. On the other hand the American measures were definitely aimed at doing away with the revolutionary achievements of the Cuban People. This was the very essence of the situation!

Considering German-Soviet relations, the Minister had pointed out that the Soviet Union was trying to depart from the terms of the Four Power Agreement they had decided upon with their former allies after the War. In reality it was the other way round. Since 1945 their former allies had step by step disregarded the terms of the agreement and thus eroded the foundations to which the Soviet Union had been committed. The NATO-allies of the Federal Government were the only ones to be held responsible for the present state of affairs in Germany and Berlin.

The Minister replied: With respect to Cuba, one should realize that there was a clear difference between defensive and offensive weapons. The weapons being brought to Cuba at the moment clearly belonged in the second category, and the American steps were definitely to be considered as an attempt to stop further delivery. The Ambassador had been trying to compare the American steps with the defensive measures taken by an alliance-system like NATO. This was inadmissible. NATO was but a defensive alliance and at the time [1949—ed.] had been created as such. This was without the collaboration of the Federal Government which had joined the alliance only later [in 1955—ed.]. The motives of NATO were well-known, whereas the motives of the Soviet Union were less clear. It is to be hoped that the imminent talks might result in further information as the Soviet Government was sure to comment on this issue in the Security Council. To reproach the United States with counter-revolutionary intentions in Cuba was unfounded as President Kennedy had explicitly recognized the Cubans' and every other nation's right to determine their own social systems. This was also the position of the Federal Republic. In this respect he, the Minister, had to protest vigorously against the Ambassador's insinuation that the Federal Republic was a military base of the United States. The Federal Republic was a sovereign State and an ally of the United States. Besides, without turning tables, it should be noted that there were far more Soviet divisions than American divisions on German soil.

Concerning the Berlin question the Ambassador's assessment of the Four Power Statute did not agree with the German view. The Ambassador said that according to the Soviet Union's viewpoint the foundations of the Four Power Agreement had been changed. But in the opinion of the Federal Government the Soviet Union had installed itself in Germany against the will of the German people. It observed with concern the continuous dismantling of the original agreement such as the recall of the Soviet City-Commandant and other measures. Finding a common denominator for future negotiations would certainly be difficult. However, according to the Federal Government, attempts should be continued to find a solution the entire German people could

approve of. The Federal Government would persevere with the search for possible solutions.

Ambassador Smirnov declared himself hopeful to continue the exchange of views on this topic in the near future.

The discussion ended at 4.00 pm.

[Source: Foundation Chancellor Adenauer House, Records III/87, Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), document 415. Translated for CWIHP by Regina Schmidt-Ott.]



Cable from Federal Republic of Germany Embassy, Washington (Knappstein), 27 October 1962

Ambassador Knappstein, Washington, to the Foreign Office

114-8739/62 secret

Telex Nr. 3226

Citissime

Sent: 27 October 1962, 01:10 hours

Received: 27 October 1962, 08:55 hours

I. Threat to American Security Through a Soviet Base on Cuba

Information we receive here about deployment of Soviet nuclear missiles and aircraft on Cuba are dispelling any potential misunderstandings about type, scope, and dangerousness of the threat.

1. In the context of Soviet intentions capabilities of the Cuban bases are correctly described as “offensive”. This follows from:

- confirmed information regarding type and range of weapons: mobile MRBMs (1,100 miles), stationary IRBMs (2,200 miles, only “first-strike capability” [English in original—trans.]), and IL-28 aircraft;

- the scope of Soviet engagement: about 10 percent of their MRBM potential;

- the way the Soviets acted when building and equipping their base: swiftly, secretly, and deviously (see United Nations)

- the state of readiness: 23 launching pads “operational” with 33 MRBMs, “firing readiness” in five to eight hours.

2. The scope of the threat is “significant,” since it is directed against the “soft underbelly” of the United States.

- The short flying time between launch and target does not allow for an effective warning.

- After the launch of a missile, there is no more defense available.

The Strategic Air Command (SAC) is within range of the missiles.

3. However, there is no exact proof that nuclear warheads were brought onto the island. For good reasons, though, it is considered as likely with regard to the “operational” missiles.

4. The deployment of Soviet missiles and nuclear weapons in Cuba is a new factor affecting the nuclear balance and Soviet strategy in a way which until now was viewed as unlikely.

- For the first time, Soviet nuclear missiles are stationed overseas and at considerable distance from the Soviet heartland.

- For the first time, the United States is vulnerable not only from Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), but also from medium-range missiles.

- A completion of Cuba’s expansion into a Soviet nuclear base would mean a decisive move of the nuclear balance in direction of the Soviet Union. For the first time, the latter would acquire capabilities to launch a nuclear surprise attack simultaneously against Europe and the North American continent.

Until now, the strategic potential of the United States provided a nuclear umbrella for Europe, since the Soviet Union was incapable to launch such a simultaneous attack due to the time difference (distance, length of [missile] flight).

II. Most Recent Intelligence Insights

At the ambassadorial meeting on 26 October, [Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs William R.] Tyler, [Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Paul H.] Nitze, and [Roger N.] Hilsman (Director of Intelligence and Research in the State Department) informed about the most recent intelligence on the state of expansion of the Soviet base in Cuba.

1. Ongoing aerial surveillance, in part from low heights, is proving an accelerated and continuous expansion of (stationary) ICBM positions. More deployment sites for nuclear warheads were completed. Large camouflage operations are going on at the missile sites (and the anti-aircraft defense sites). Construction of additional sites has not been discovered. IRBM missiles have not been located in the positions, though they are expected at a later stage of construction.

It is assumed that the Soviet ship "Poltava," which reversed course, had IRBMs on board; or that such missiles are already deployed on Cuba.

2. Mobile MRBMs were deployed "in an astonishingly short time" ("mushrooming from the ground"). The MRBMs are "operational." Additional MRBM sites have not been discovered.

3. The [American] public was informed that eight to ten missile sites were identified. The exact number is as follows: two IRBM and seven MRBM sites.

4. There exists certainty that nuclear warheads are already deployed on the island for those MRBMs that have been made operational already. Otherwise it would have made no sense to make those sites "operational."

5. Transition time from "operational readiness" to "firing readiness" is between five and eight hours. This time is needed to transport the warhead to the missile, to mount it, to move the missile into a launching position, fuel it, and launch it. Nuclear warheads are not mounted before the "countdown" starts. In other words: During the transition from "operational readiness" to "firing readiness," there is a certainty that the missile will actually be fired.

6. Camouflage will somewhat increase the time needed to achieve the missiles' firing readiness. This is viewed as an indication for caution on the Soviet side.

7. None of the American surveillance aircraft were fired at. Even an attempt of firing was not noticed. Soviet MIG aircraft also remained on the ground.

8. [French ambassador Herve] Alphand suggested to present convincing evidence for the threat emanating from the Soviet base on Cuba especially to the neutral and non-aligned countries. Respective understanding is still lacking on this side.

III. Purpose and Current Impacts of the Cuba Blockade

1. At the same meeting, Nitze provided the following information about implementation and success of the blockade:

All ships suspected of carrying offensive weapons material have reversed course and are on the way back to their ports of departure.

Simple tankers continue their course towards Cuba and probably do not contain any banned load. Recently about 30 ships per month arrived in Cuba, this is 1 to 2 per day. Some ships turned around; so overall the number of objects affected by the blockade operation is very small. For instance, a Lebanese charter ship was searched and subsequently cleared for passage. The Soviet tanker ultimately allowed to pass was asked to identify its name, port of destination, and country. It was granted passage without further search, as there were additional reasons for assuming it carried just a load of fuel.

2. (As we heard from other sources: The first Cuba-bound Soviet ships most suspected to be affected by the blockade reversed course and returned already six hours before the President's speech on 22 October, this is following just the pre-announcement of the speech. It is considered likely that those ships carried nuclear warheads.)

3. (Nitze again:) Aircraft are not yet subject to the blockade operation, as it is evident from the 23 October proclamation. The main reason behind this: One does not want to arrive at a situation where you are forced, for instance, to shoot down a passenger plane over high seas.

One must assume that nuclear warheads can arrive in Cuba by aircraft. Searches of planes flying to Cuba from Canada and Dakar did not yield any results. It is preferable, however, that no flights are coming in to Cuba at all, as it was promised to Canada and Conakry. Only in this way will severe incidents, undesired by anybody, be avoided.

Soviet planes can reach Cuba in direct flights only if they re-fuel in mid-air.

4. The purpose of the blockade has been achieved: Additional shipments of offensive materials to Cuba were stopped. Time has been won to provide the world public with evidence about Cuba's offensive threat.

The other main objective still stands out, namely the "removal" of offensive objects already on the island.

Negotiations about a deal on removal of the Cuban base in exchange for the removal of an American overseas missile base are not the path to be chosen by the [US] government to reach its objective.

IV. Situation of Negotiations in the United Nations

1. American information to the ambassadors' group and during meeting breaks revealed the following on this issue:

Currently [US Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson and [U.N. Secretary General] U Thant are negotiating about a two-stage approach. After the first stage of 48 hours, the following is supposed to happen:

- a) complete cessation of Soviet maritime imports,
- b) end of construction work at the missile sites on Cuba,
- c) "diffusion" of everything already installed.

During the second stage of about two to three weeks, negotiations will have to be held about how to remove the material from Cuba.

U Thant's idea, according to which the first stage should result in a "standstill," is unsatisfactory. There exists only a five-to-eight-hour timeframe to get the missiles ready for a "countdown," i.e. for firing. An actual "standstill" would only exist, if the "operational" missiles are dismantled and its parts dislocated (in particular separating the missile from the launching pads). Furthermore, according to American opinion, on-site controls and inspections are needed in order to verify the "standstill."

2. The blockade would remain in force until the second main objective is achieved, this is, the removal of offensive potential already there. Blockade forces would remain on alert, without enforcing blockade measures ("standby order"), until effective control mechanisms of U.N. inspections are established to monitor the complete removal of offensive potential from Cuba.

Without on-site inspection and control, there is no guarantee that weapons would not become "operational" again.

3. Concerning further developments, there are currently two open questions (according to Nitze):

- a) whether the procedural process with U Thant, as mentioned above, will produce results in due time;
- b) whether Castro will tolerate inspections.

Ad a): Official information from inside the administration, and official press information since yesterday and especially over the last hours, bolster the impression that the time factor is of utmost importance.

Ad b): There is no indication for Castro being willing to accept on-site inspections. He has stated: "Only over my dead body." Tyler sarcastically called this remark prophetic.

The French side informed that the Canadian and Brazilian governments tried diplomacy to move Cuba towards an acceptance of inspections. However, they were rejected.

Alphand reiterated explicitly Nitze's statement that "another course of action will be chosen," if developments on a) and b) remain unsatisfactory.

V. Discussion of Soviet intentions

1. None of the attendees at the meeting had any information according to which the Soviets are undertaking any special military preparations at any place in their global area of influence.

2. The Soviets deny the existence of medium- and long-range missiles in Cuba, its installation, and its further expansion ([Soviet ambassador Valerian] Zorin in the U.N. Security Council). The Soviet press defines the crisis as an American-Cuban, not an American-Soviet problem. By acting this way, Nitze thought, the Soviets want to maintain their flexibility. It cannot be excluded they will continue their denials, as they did before 22 October, in order to leave an exit door open and portray the United States as the one who acted aggressively. This way also the ridicule Zorin was subjected to in the [UN] Security Council [on 25 October] when he denied the evidence from aerial surveillance pictures could pay off. Though it also could be that the Soviets want to keep the nuclear warheads up their sleeves.

[Martin J.] Hillenbrand [director, State Department Office of German Affairs and Berlin Task Force] thought another explanation likely for Zorin's behavior: Moscow has still not yet recovered from the surprising implementation of the blockade. It is telling that statements by Soviet diplomats in other places are characterized by insecurity and inconsistencies. You might surmise from this that Soviet embassies did not yet receive instructions from Moscow. Zorin might have been in a similar situation.

3. The French side reported, according to information from Paris, that Soviet diplomats there spread the rumor that a political trade-off between the Cuban base and [US] bases in Turkey is imminent. Nitze replied this is perhaps the solution the Soviets envisage. He again reiterated that there are negotiations only about the elimination of the threat from Cuba. Nitze emphasized this American position was made unmistakably clear.

VI. Cuban Crisis and Berlin Problem

In an information [report] directed to the NATO Council (see our telex 3208 from 25 October 1962 secret II.2), the Americans assessed today in another four-party meeting Soviet intentions as follows: The secret build-up of Cuba into a Soviet nuclear base serves as a preparation for another Soviet move against Berlin to be expected at the end of the year. The French and the British are waiting with their assessments of Soviet intentions until tomorrow's four-party meeting. There an instruction to [US Ambassador to NATO Thomas K.] Finletter will be discussed. Based on this instruction, he will have to inform the [North Atlantic] Council about "political contingency planning" and "reactions to a separate peace treaty." For now, I will hold back until after tomorrow's meeting with further reporting on American assessments of a linkage between the Cuban crisis and the Berlin problem.

[signed] Knappstein

[Source: Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), Document 418. Translated for CWIHP by Bernd Schaefer.]



Memorandum of Conversation, Federal Republic of Germany Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and US Ambassador Walter Dowling, Rhöndorf, West Germany, 28 October 1962

Highly secret

28 October 1962

On 28 October 1962 the Chancellor received Ambassador Dowling in his house in Rhöndorf together with State

Secretary [in the Chancellor's Office] Dr. Hans Globke and the undersigned [notetaker Horst Osterheld].

Ambassador Dowling had asked for the meeting. First he handed to the Chancellor Kennedy's response to Khrushchev's second letter of 26 [sic; actually 27] October 1962. Furthermore, Ambassador Dowling brought President Kennedy's press statement of 27 October and an instruction by [US Secretary of Defense Robert] McNamara to the State Secretary of the Air Force regarding the drafting of reservists for airborne forces.

Then Mr. Dowling informed that the American government will today ask to convene the NATO Council in order to brief it on the situation. [US Ambassador to NATO Thomas K.] Finletter will probably inform about the following issues:

1. Developments in build-up of Soviet missile bases in Cuba so far.
2. Talks held in New York [at the United Nations], as well as messages between the American and the Soviet governments transmitted through the Secretary General of the United Nations [U Thant].
3. A message from Khrushchev to U Thant, indicating the Soviet Union might be willing to dismantle its missile base provided the US makes a binding commitment not to launch an invasion against Cuba.
4. A later letter from Khrushchev to Kennedy (26 [sic; actually 27] October), where Khrushchev, contradicting his previous statements, suddenly raised conditions again, namely the dismantling of American bases in Turkey.
5. The fact that missile bases in Cuba were finished at an accelerated pace after results from surveillance flights were presented.
6. The fact that yesterday American surveillance planes were fired at for the first time.
7. The fact that Soviet ships are again approaching the blockade line. There might be an incident happening still during the course of today.

Giving these circumstances, the United States will perhaps feel compelled to resort to military action shortly. This might either occur in form of bombing the missile bases with conventional arms, or through an invasion where the missiles will be destroyed by American ground forces.

So far the US Government was eager to treat the Cuban affair as a purely American issue and keep it within the Western hemisphere. With Khrushchev referring to bases in Turkey, and through involvement of other Soviet troops and facilities, there is now a chance that Europe and NATO might be dragged into the conflict. Therefore the United States wants to sound out opinions of its NATO allies. The situation becomes increasing-

ly more serious; and the time left for discussion about the scope of military action gets shorter. Since NATO might be affected the Europeans are asked what they think about military action; probably they will still be able to stop the latter at this point.

The Chancellor stated he does not want to stop anything. He is in favor of both measures; the bases must go. However, he wishes, and here he wants to repeat what he already told [Dean] Acheson, he wishes that the Americans focus more on [Fidel] Castro as the one mainly responsible and guilty here. Certainly Khrushchev is behind the entire affair, but Castro is in the forefront. He offered his country to the missiles and thus facilitated the threat against the United States. We always must refer to Castro before the global public; it is easier to find in the United Nations a majority against Castro than a majority against the Soviet Union; in particular, it must become absolutely clear to the Cubans who is responsible for their situation and misfortune.

Ambassador Dowling did not really address the Chancellor's argumentation for quite a while; one got the impression he actually did not correctly understand the Chancellor. Dowling asserted that the United States had outlined for weeks Castro's responsibility to the world and the Cubans. Actually, Castro is just a small fry. He himself might not even have known which missiles the Russian unloaded. Cargo ports were closed to all Cubans, even to Castro.

The Chancellor rejected those and other remarks by the ambassador (for instance those about the use of unarmed surveillance planes) as in part inconsistent and missing the point. He explained the Cuban situation by giving an example: If I [Adenauer] provide my property to allow Mr. Dowling to fire a missile to the house of [Soviet Ambassador to West Germany Andrei] Smirnov on the other bank of the Rhine. However, Mr. Dowling still did not understand.

State Secretary Dr. Globke explained it will be more face-saving for Khrushchev if Castro is accused. One cannot deprive Khrushchev personally of the option to put all blame on Castro, or at least give orders to Castro to remove the missile bases (so Khrushchev does not have to do the dismantling himself).

Even then, it looked like Ambassador Dowling did not properly understand the argumentation. It was Khrushchev, said Dowling, who delivered and built the missiles. Until today they are under his exclusive authority. It is Khrushchev who wanted to exert pressure on the United States. The only point may be, perhaps, to make Khrushchev and Castro equally responsible.

Apparently, Dowling did not succeed in understanding the Chancellor (maybe because Mr. Dowling did not ask for a translation of the Chancellor's remarks; fully mired in his own thoughts, Dowling also did not seem to really lis-

ten). Since, on the other hand, Dowling had to get material to report back to Washington, he then began to summarize his previous statements. He asked the Chancellor whether he now is in favor of bombing the missile bases in Cuba, or in favor of an invasion, or against any kind of military action.

Here the Chancellor repeated again that he is in favor of eliminating the Soviet missile bases. Therefore he agrees to both kinds of military intervention, to the bombing as well as to the invasion. Following a remark by State Secretary Dr. Globke, the Chancellor got more precise: He is also in favor of an invasion, not the least in order to enable the Americans to offer something as a concession later, namely their withdrawal from the island. Then the Chancellor stated in addition to these military actions one should raise political pressure against Castro. Answering a question by Mr. Dowling, the Chancellor provided as an example a 24-hour ultimatum to Castro containing demands very difficult to comply with.

The note-taker [Osterheld] got the impression that from now on Ambassador Dowling understood the Chancellor, also with regard to his position on Castro. Mr. Dowling thanked for the Chancellor's clear position. President Kennedy will certainly be very happy that the Chancellor, like during previous days, is siding so unequivocally with the United States in this difficult hour and declares its solidarity with the US. The Chancellor has been much clearer than many other allies.

Then Mr. Dowling said he is expecting military action within the next 24 hours. There already had been the incident with the surveillance plane; another one will occur with the Soviet ship; that completely suffices.

He then gave another letter to the Chancellor stating that General [Lauris] Norstad will remain SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander Europe, NATO] until 31 December 1962. Until then General [Lyman] Lemnitzer, who will already take command over the American forces in Europe, will prepare for his assignment working under Mr. Norstad. The Chancellor welcomed this arrangement very much.

Finally, the Chancellor promised to Mr. Dowling he will take care that our [FRG] representative at NATO will be instructed according to the results of this meeting.

[Source: Foundation Chancellor Adenauer House, Records III/61, in Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1 September bis 31 Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), Document 419. Translated for CWIHP by Bernd Schaefer.]



West German Record of One-on-One Conversation between FRG Chancellor Adenauer and US President Kennedy, Washington, 14 November 1962⁷

Secret

14 November 1962

At the beginning of their talks at the White House on 14 November 1962, the Chancellor and President Kennedy had a one-on-one conversation [*unter vier Augen*].

The Chancellor congratulated the President on his success in the last weeks. Developments are into a new phase now. He assured the President that the FRG would always stand on the American side.

The President thanked the Chancellor for speaking with Ambassador Dowling right after the first announcement. This immediate support for American measures was valued all the higher for it still being clear what the effects of the American measures would be on Berlin and the FRG.

The Chancellor explained that he understood that the President must keep an eye on the global situation in making his decisions, not only Germany and Berlin...He suggested that later on in the talks, he would like to discuss his thoughts on Berlin in as small a circle as possible.

The President asked if the Chancellor considers that the present situation is worse or better for improving the situation in Berlin.

The Chancellor answered that one must be careful on this matter and he can't really say if the Cuba issue is definitively finished. The decision whether to try to make up with the Soviets, also in regards to Germany, depends on the [US] President. If the President believes that the Soviets have correctly carried out the American demands, then maybe we could undertake this. But if the President thinks that the demands are unfulfilled, then it is better to wait.

President Kennedy, making reference to press reports that the Chancellor believes that the missiles were not removed [from Cuba], asks why? According to the American interpretation based on the most recent airphotos, the missiles have been removed [*weggeschafft*]. We also don't think it would be an advantage for the Soviets to keep any missiles in Cuba. We don't think it likely that the Soviets would try the thing with the missiles again, because they know that next time, there'll be an American invasion. But even if the Americans say that the missiles are no longer there, we are still fully conscious that Khrushchev has not yet fully fulfilled his promises. The issue of the bombers and ground inspections is still open. We think in any case that air inspections are more reliable

than ground inspections by UN personnel. We're also clearer now that we won't get rid of Castro so quickly [*man Castro nicht so schnell loswerde*]. As for Khrushchev, we know he lies and there is no reason to believe his statements. For all these reasons, the President is not interested in a new Western initiative. Far better to let the Soviets come to us and see what they propose.

The Chancellor agreed fully with these thoughts and underlined that the Soviets had lied shamefully and had planned a criminal attack on the US, as never before. If we offered negotiations now, Khrushchev must assume that the West is ready to forget and forgive the matter [Cuba]. Then maybe, he will feel tempted to try to cause trouble somewhere else.

The German experience under National Socialism shows that dictatorships change people, their thinking and morality. This is also true for Khrushchev. We cannot expect him to change suddenly.

The President says that now as before we must assume that Khrushchev has the same goals as the Red Chinese, although possibly somewhat different methods. The setback in Cuba – and this was only a setback, not a defeat – will cause Khrushchev some problems. He's also got problems with the Chinese and the fighting with India doesn't work for his plans either. The situation has changed substantially in the last weeks and one must think clearly how the various factors will affect Khrushchev.

The Chancellor thought this was absolutely correct and said the Soviet Union was going through a slow evolution, but it remains to be seen how far it goes. He is convinced that Khrushchev did not want to run the risk of a war, but will try his intrigues again, so we must pay attention. On the side of the West, we should not give the impression that nothing happened and that all is forgotten. The President succeeded in turning aside the greatest danger the US has ever experienced, a great success for himself and the American people. On the other side is this criminal – and as such he should be handled, not as [merely] misguided—we have to keep an eye on him...

The President indicates that one never knows what's going on in the Soviets' heads. The Americans never thought that the Soviets would dare bring missiles to Cuba and the Soviets never thought that the Americans would react so decisively. Both sides had false ideas about each other...

The Chancellor notes that one should not judge Khrushchev based on what he has failed to get so far, but rather on how much he has succeeded already. For example, in 1953, the Soviet Union did not even have atomic weapons [*sic*; the Soviets actually achieved their first atomic detonation in 1949—ed.], and now, nine years later, they are taking missiles to Cuba. The developments of the last nine years have

been good to Khrushchev. He is a smart, reckless man without conscience, who certainly doesn't want to lose all he has gained up to now. He is a convinced Soviet patriot.

Khrushchev has now learned in Cuba that the US is stronger and more decisive than he had thought. He'll think this over now and reorient himself. The Chancellor agrees with the President that the solution of the bomber issue should show us what Khrushchev has learned. Until then, one should not offer negotiations...

The conversation was then continued with a larger group present.

[Source: Stiftung Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus, Bestand III/61, Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), document 445. Translated for CWHIP by David Wolff.]



Memorandum of Large-Group Meeting of FRG Chancellor Adenauer and US President Kennedy, Washington, 14 November 1962 (excerpt on Cuba)

St. S. 2787/62

14 November 1962

Record of the large group meeting on 14 November 1962 in the morning between President Kennedy and the Chancellor.

President Kennedy opened the talk by indicating that the Cuban crisis is not yet over. According to American intelligence, the Soviets have probably removed all their missiles from Cuba. The Americans had confirmed 32 or 33 missiles in Cuba, but under the assumption that there could have been as many as 48 there. From the Soviet point of view, it is certainly better to transport the missiles back to the USSR on boats than to leave them in caves in Cuba which would lead to problems with the Cubans.

Another problem, continued the President, is the bombers and Soviet personnel. By the end of the week, we'd like to learn a bit more about the bombers.

The Chancellor asked if all Soviet technicians had left Cuba.

The President answered that we don't know exactly about the rocket experts. They could still be there.

The Chancellor said that the presence of the technicians would be a big issue, since they would want to have something to do.

The President joked that we unfortunately can't tell from the air, if someone is a missile expert or not.

Mr. Smith⁸ answered "yes" when the Chancellor asked if all the missile-launchers had been removed. He added that the American experts had no doubts that the missiles have been removed. Eight ships took them. We photographed these ships from low altitudes and confirmed the rockets on deck.

The Chancellor asked how they got the rockets to Cuba.

Mr. Smith said they were below deck. On the return trip they were placed in haste on the deck. This is certainly not the best way to handle missiles. The Americans photographed every ship and counted 42 rockets...

President Kennedy concluded that as far as one could verify, the missiles have left Cuba...

President Kennedy stated that the US had succeeded in having its way on Cuba, because it had superior conventional and nuclear forces. The situation in Berlin is not the same. One must have the same possibilities in Europe. In Cuba the US was in a position to play the whole gamut of conventional and nuclear forces. It must be our goal to strengthen both Western conventional and nuclear forces, both in general and particularly in regard to Berlin.

The Chancellor said that he shared this interpretation fully.

The Chancellor then asked the President if he knew anything about Khrushchev's present state of health. He had heard that that recently Khrushchev had been drinking diligently [*fleissig*].

The President answered that people say bad things about all heads of government. Sir Frank Roberts [the British ambassador in Moscow] had even reported during their short talk that Khrushchev looked tired, but then perked up.

The Chancellor asked again if Khrushchev was drinking again.

Ambassador [Llewellyn E.] Thompson, asked by President Kennedy for information, stated that Khrushchev does drink a little sometimes. In general, he is in good condition.

The Chancellor points out that Khrushchev was a drunk [*Säufer*]. He stopped drinking, but started again. We should put his health and psychological state under observation.

The Chancellor continued that he shares the President's wish to see the free peoples stronger, both in nuclear and conventional weapons. This matter lies close to his heart [*am Herzen liegen*].

Then, turning to NATO...

[Source: VS-Bd.310 (Buro Staatssekretar), Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), document 446. Translated for CWIHP by David Wolff.]

Notes

1 Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev apparently believed, based on Soviet intelligence sources, that West Germany had learned about the Soviet missiles on Cuba and had tipped off the Kennedy administration. “Another possibility (as we have now been told by our intelligence) is that the presence of our missiles in Cuba was discovered by West German intelligence and then communicated to the U.S.,” Khrushchev told Czechoslovak leader Antonin Novotny on 30 October 1962 (see the translated Czechoslovak record elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*). In a 4 November 1962 conversation with Fidel Castro, Soviet envoy Anastas Mikoyan explicitly credited West German intelligence with informing the US about the missiles: “By mid-September [1962] the Americans apparently received data regarding the transport to Cuba of Soviet troops and strategic missiles. I have already spoken about this fact with comrade Fidel Castro. The American intelligence was not the first in obtaining that information, it was West German intelligence who gave that information to the Americans.” (See the Soviet record of this conversation in *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 5 (Spring 1995), p. 97.) No evidence has surfaced to support this Soviet claim. To the extent that the Soviets believed that FRG Foreign Minister Gerhard Schroeder relayed West German intelligence on Moscow’s missile deployment to Cuba when he met with JFK in the Oval Office on the morning of 17 October 1962, they were clearly mistaken. Both the secret White House tape recording

and the West German record of the meeting have surfaced, and both confirm that the Cuba did not even come up in the conversation, which mostly dwelled on the situation in Berlin; Schroeder did not pass any intelligence about Soviet missiles in Cuba, and Kennedy did not confide that the US had discovered them, or even raise the Cuban issue as a matter of renewed concern. See *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD) 1962: Band III: 1September bis 31Dezember 1962* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), Document 399 (pp. 1717-1728); and Timothy Naftali and Philip Zelikow, eds., *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy: The Great Crises, Vol. II: September-October 21, 1962* (New York: Norton & Co., 2001), pp. 469-99.

2 On the building of the Berlin Wall, see Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

3 Henning Koehler, *Adenauer. A Political Biography* (Berlin: Propylaen, 1994), pp.1130-1157.

4 Koehler, *Adenauer*, pp. 1154-56.

5 William Glenn Gray, *Germany’s Cold War. The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), p. 138.

6 Ed. note: The former secretary of state flew to Bonn to see Adenauer after having briefed French President Charles De Gaulle in Paris the previous afternoon.

7 Ed. note: For the U.S. record of this conversation, see U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1961-1963, Vol. XV: Berlin Crisis, 1962-1963* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1994), doc. 153; for brief additional discussion of Cuba between JFK and Adenauer, also see doc. 154.

8 Ed. note: Not further identified; possibly Abbott E. Smith of the Board of National Estimates of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The Italian Communists and Cuba, 1958-1963— Documents from the PCI Archives

Obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow, and introduced by Silvio Pons¹

The relations between the Italian Communist Party (the *Partito Comunista Italiano*, or PCI)—the main Western Communist party—and the Cuban revolution before and after the missile crisis of October 1962 should be understood in two related contexts: the rediscovery of the Third World by the Soviets and the European Communists in the late 1950s; and the Sino-Soviet conflict and its threat to jeopardize the unity of the international Communist movement.

When the Cuban revolutionaries came to power in 1959, despite their doubtful Marxist affiliation, they provided a strong impulse to the idea that Communism could achieve decisive global influence by building alliances with the nationalist post-colonial élites. Such idea was developed by the Soviets and surfaced among the European Communists.² At the same time, conflict between the Soviet Union and China emerged. In June 1960, the Soviet Union withdrew its technical personnel from China and attacked the Chinese for violating the principles established at the Moscow Conference of world Communism of 1957. In the second world Conference held in November 1960, Khrushchev and Deng Xiaoping exchanged harsh criticism, and the formal unity of the movement was preserved only thanks to the mediation of Ho Chi Minh. That was, however, a fragile truce. By 1962, the Soviets and the Chinese were accusing each other of threatening the unity of International Communism. Like all other European Communists—the Albanians excluded—the Italians sided with Moscow, while seeking diplomatically to avoid the split.³

The roots of the conflict were obviously complex and multi-dimensional.⁴ Nevertheless, quite clearly the strategy of “peaceful coexistence” could be hardly acceptable to Third World revolutionaries and increasingly distanced them from the European Communists, who for the most part remained basically loyal to the Soviet approach. Hopes for an expansion of International Communism in the Global South had to be squared with such division. The Cuban crisis of October 1962 thus became a crucial event not only for the Cold War, as also for International Communism.⁵

The documents here presented show, first of all, how in an early phase (1959-60) the PCI had poor contacts with Cuba. Admiration for the “national and social” revolution was balanced by some skepticism, which involved even the personality of Fidel Castro, though the PCI seemed eager to play a role in terms of propaganda and economic support. The tone changes in subsequent documentation. The note by Vidali of June 1961 records a shift towards the representation of Cuba as a

revolutionary hub in Latin America, in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs counter-revolutionary attempt. The very presence of Vidali should not be overlooked—as he had a long-standing experience of Latin America as a Comintern official in the inter-war years. However, under the impact of the missile crisis, the mainstream preoccupation of the Italian Communists was typically about “peaceful coexistence.” As can be seen from the records of the party’s *Direzione* [Directorate; leadership] of 31 October 1962 (when the worst-case scenario had been prevented by the agreement between Kennedy and Khrushchev), PCI leader Palmiro Togliatti argued that what happened in Cuba should not undermine “peaceful coexistence.” He was worried about the angry reaction of the Cuban leaders against the negotiation between the superpowers and rejected Chinese criticism of the Soviet conduct. All the main PCI leaders shared such an orientation, showing concern about the diffusion in the party of radical and apocalyptic views influenced either by the Chinese or by the Cuban romantic myth.

In late July 1963, a delegation led for the first time by a member of the PCI *Direzione*, Ugo Pecchioli, was sent to Cuba with the aim to establish more solid relations and to exercise some influence. Pecchioli’s report is an important source on Castro’s position after his trip to the USSR in the spring of 1963—when he realigned Cuba with Moscow. Castro accepted “peaceful coexistence” and openly took sides with the Soviet Union against the Chinese—who had meantime publicly attacked Togliatti and Yugoslav leader Tito as “revisionists.” The Cuban leader declared that “the liberation of the people cannot ride on the use of thermonuclear arms”—a statement even more significant as he was speaking while the great powers negotiated the treaty banning nuclear tests (except below ground), disapproved by Beijing. He displayed restraint on the export of revolution, acknowledging national differences among Latin American countries. That surely sounded reassuring to the PCI. Nevertheless, Castro’s autonomous stance was hardly in tune with the PCI on the relationship between “peaceful coexistence,” anti-imperialism, and revolutionary violence. As Pecchioli had to admit, “considerations for a democratic route to socialism” seemed “still like a very foreign political idea to the Cuban leaders.” Regardless of Chinese influence and despite Cuba’s realignment with the Soviet Union, the political views and strategies of the Cubans and the PCI would diverge in the times to come—an aspect of the fragmentation of International Communism in the 1960s.



DOCUMENTS

Cuban communist party official Lazaro Pena, Report to the Italian Communist Party (PCI), "Information on the Political Situation in Cuba," 3 December 1958

INFORMATION ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN CUBA

Supplied from the Foreign Section, 3 December 1958 from Cuban comrade Lazaro Peña, Director of the Latin American syndicate

Political Situation of the Country

The political situation in Cuba continues to be extremely serious. The popular opposition to the bloody dictatorship of Batista is such that, after a certain time, the government may only manage to stand on its own feet with the assistance of the United States.

Batista now only rests on the support of a few restricted social classes: Cuban executives of monopolistic North American concessions [businesses], elements of the police and repression apparatus, industrialists financially connected to the United States monopolies, etc.

The opposition to the Batista regime clearly manifested itself during the political elections of 3 November, that were backed above all by the Americans with the intent to give an appearance of legitimacy to the political regime in Cuba. What resulted from these rigged elections, the victory of government candidate General Andres Rivero Aguero, was that not more than 40% of the electorate participated and in Havana not more than 25%.

In the country reigns the most savage terror of the work of a powerful police and military apparatus. Every day they commit assassinations, torture, arbitrary arrests. American FBI agents frequently participate in the interrogations of political dissidents. The police hammer away at, in a special way, the communists and their sympathizers.

The "July 26" Movement of Fidel Castro and the Developments of the Partisan Guerillas

The movement of Fidel Castro, that in its rise has had a spontaneous characteristic of anarchy and was supported essentially by the elements of the *petite bourgeoisie*, has today, especially in the regions where the operations of the partisans are more extensive (Oriente, Camaguey, Santa Clara etc.), a

solid following of peasants⁶ and the general popular masses. The support of the peasants⁷ was due also to the fact that the Fidel Castro movement adopted as a rallying cry the need to implement agrarian reforms. Armed partisans numbered around 10,000.

Position of the United States

The United States played, for a certain period, a double game with Fidel Castro and with the dictator Batista. Today the United States seeks to intensify the help to the government in the political sphere by supporting the rigged elections of November 3rd and in the economic sphere with the provision of arms for the government troops. The risk is ever more likely that in the case that Fidel Castro's troops are pushed into the North American nickel mining concessions, the United States would take advantage of this by provoking military intervention.

The Cuban Popular Socialist Party

The Cuban Popular Socialist Party (Communist Party), even though illegal and terrorized, actively participates in the country's political life. For the most part the comrades of the Directorate [Politburo] of the party still reside in Cuba. Periodicals such as "*Carta seminal*," "*Prensa continental*" and others are published.

Concerning its political line, it is of note that the Cuban Popular Socialist Party does not officially participate in the Fidel Castro movement even if they support it in practice.

Political Prospects

The central objective that the party is pursuing is that of organizing itself and the support for the unified anti-imperialist front, whose job it will be to overthrow the Batista dictatorship and form a national and democratic government.

Actually, though the opposition to Batista is rising in every [political] party, there has not yet been an organization that will be the heart of the anti-imperialist front. The two attempts of the opposition parties to create a unified front without the communists (Miami Pact, Caracas Pact) were fruitless.

Even if a formal agreement between the opposition parties was still not reached, nevertheless in the localities, unit committees [*Comitati unitary*] were formed during the preparations for the political strike of 9 April (promoted by Fidel Castro and conducted prematurely) and afterward during the course of the fight in defense of the workers' pressing wage claims.

In conclusion, Comrade Lazaro Peña noted the great help that the Communist Party of Italy can give to the Cuban communists by denouncing in the media the terror of the Batista

regime and the danger of American-led military aggression and he made a formal request that such help will be intensified.

[Source: 1958 Cuba Estero 457, 2271-2273, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Instituto Gramsci, Rome. Obtained by James Hershberg, translated for CWIHP by Alex Barrow.]



**Italian Communist Angelo Franza,
Memorandum of Conversation with Cuban
Communist Antonio Nunez Jimenez, n.d.
[November 1959], and note by PCI Official
Giuliano Pajetta**

NOTES FROM A CONVERSATION WITH ANTONIO
NUNEZ JIMENEZ

Director of the Cuban National Institute for Agrarian Reform [INRA]; member of the Cuban PC (Popular Socialist Party [PSP]).

In the conversation we talked about the various problems relating to the internal and external politics in Cuba and the solidarity that the PCI can provide to the Cuban liberation movement.

Regarding the Cuban situation, Captain Antonio Nunez Jimenez illustrated some problems underlining how the revolution that led to the overthrow of Batista was essentially a peasant revolution and how he naturally correlated the agrarian reforms currently in progress. Landed estates [*Latifondo*] have been abolished and there is a fixed limit on property. Expropriated land does not generally become assigned to the peasants, but is organized as state farms or as cooperatives. Because of the low level of mechanization, he does not advise the excessive fragmentation of property. The state is creating special mechanization centers that will assist and lend help to the cooperatives. The machinery is bought almost exclusively from the United States and belongs to the State.

The Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA) is the center of the revolution and of the government activities; they themselves have branches in every agricultural zone of the country; one of their representatives presides over all of the land redistribution operations and over the reorganization of cultivation, proceeding in a gradual way to suppress monocultivation [of sugar]. A section of the INRA is called "Section of Industrialization of Cuba" and it is responsible for state investments in national industries in accordance with the national sector of private industry. This section is directed by Ernesto "Che" Guevara, originally Argentine,

already an agricultural consultant of Arbenz in Guatemala and clearly oriented toward communist ideals. Now "Che" is also the director of the National Bank of Cuba.

With the hardening of the United States opposition the government developed a plan to provide arms to the peasants, which is now underway. For the rest, control of the Cuban countryside is in the hands of partisan forces and armed peasants, that have taken the place of the army and the police of the previous regime, which have been completely dissolved with the revolution. The army, as it existed before the revolution, no longer exists; it has arisen as a new organization, "the people's army" [*Popolo in Armi*], commanded by the brother of Fidel Castro, Raul, of clearly communist sentiment.

At the heart⁸ of the government there no longer exists a real and true anti-communist tendency, even if the exponents of the State, as such, call themselves "non communists." Fidel Castro does not adopt any decision of a certain importance anymore without hearing first the opinion of the communists. He and his youth group (Raul Castro, [Juan] Almeida [Bosque], Guevara, etc.) have gradually positioned themselves to the left and today have an outlook that is decidedly anti-imperialist and favorable to the reorganization of the national economy on the basis of socialism.

To help the peasants, the State, other than the machine centers, has instituted in rural zones also the "tiendas del pueblo" ["markets of the people"] a type of store where the merchandise is sold at cost or very close to it. In fact this was possible because one did not have to strike down any type of "middle class," such as merchants, which did not exist; commerce was only carried out occasionally by speculators at a high price and almost only American products.⁹ Today the State sells almost exclusively national products and consequently has the support of the national sector of the bourgeoisie, which is in a developing phase.

Landowning peasants, after all, were a miniscule minority, when they weren't American citizens. For that, the agrarian reform practically struck a very meager social class, meanwhile it helped the peasants and it opened up to national industry a market that now is protected from the invasion of foreign commerce. The Government, with the support of the PC, is conducting a campaign to "buy Cuban products" that has been a great success.

Politically, there exists a unique situation in Cuba: there is only one party that exists legitimately, the Popular Socialist Party (communists that have their daily [newspaper], magazines, and a special radio and television broadcast.) The "anti-Batista revolution," as such was deployed behind Fidel Castro, whose name has become from now on a legend. He is even an object of religious veneration and the vast majority of the masses follow him without even reflecting on whether his actions are good or

bad. Never has a “cult of personality” reached a pinnacle as high as that of Fidel Castro in Cuba. Because of this he was able to gradually eliminate the winds of the right in the bosom of his government without causing crises in his “July 26th” movement.

Now the situation is this: Fidel Castro does not support the development of political parties (meanwhile he does not impede the PC), above all for not bringing, in his words, division in the country. He would like to maintain unity around his persona. It is notable, however, that there are already signs of the rebirth of the “right [wing],” but these have not been able to find a sufficient bite. The Church is certainly conservative and worried about the innovative and revolutionary measures of the government, but they don’t have a good way on their own to defend themselves in Cuba. They are not involved in a certain sense in the current economic battles, confined to an ideological opposition of principle, which is not always an insurmountable obstacle to collaboration. Above all, an important fact is that the Spanish clergy, in the last decades, has been spontaneously replaced with local elements who are closer to the people and their problems. Because of this the Church had also assumed hostile positions toward Batista. For their part, they do not seem very inclined to accept the fanatic anti-communist approach coming from the United States. And of note is that today there is a progressive differentiation between Catholics and the regime¹⁰, even if day-to-day such differences are still vague. A huge positive repercussion is the expected message from the Pope in favor of the rural reforms underway in Cuba and of the fondness that John XXIII had expressed to Antonio Nunez for the courage with which he combated poverty in the Cuban countryside.

The trade unions are unitary [i.e., on board—trans.], even if there is the presence of anti-communist agitation which the government hopes to overcome by promoting unity as an instrument of anti-imperialist resistance.

The Cuban leaders, and Fidel Castro, feel they have the power to resist pressure from the United States. The United States of America would have to land a considerable armed force to impose its will. The Cuban leaders think that if they were able to overthrow the Batista army and his police forces with few men, it is now even easier to resist pressure from abroad with a “People’s Army” and with the support of the peasants. Relations with South American governments are mostly cold, when they are not outright bad. From the people towards popular organizations there exists instead great warmth for Cuba whose revolution is considered a first step toward the liberation of Latin America.

To this end, the Cuban government has also developed a plan to join in relations with neutral countries in Asia and Africa (and Yugoslavia in Europe) in order to open an avenue towards a new orientation in foreign affairs to the continent’s Latin American countries. Regarding relations with the USSR, a Soviet mission, which recently visited Cuba, held

that it is not opportune to re-establish diplomatic relations because such a step would not serve any practical purpose but rather would only alienate and lead to American accusations of “pro-communism.” Cuba has however stabilized economic relations, having already sold 180 million metric tons of sugar to the USSR at international prices.

Regarding the the specific relations between the PCI and the Cuban comrades and the help that would be beneficial to them, these following requests were advanced:

1. That the PCI and the Italian democratic movement (regarding this Nunez had a meeting with PSI [Partito Socialista Italiano; Italian Socialist Party] leaders and to this end will also bring in French comrades) will be able to develop more solidarity with Cuba, above all in regards to the media; they don’t request any specific operations of solidarity;
2. It was asked that the PCI help with the formation of a Roman office of the “Latin American media agency” which will be financed by Cuba;
3. It was asked to agree to an exchange of materials between the agricultural section of the PCI and INRA to know their respective positions and objectives: INRA will transfer to comrade An[g]elo Franza, the PCI will send it — for now— to the INRA through Franza; then there will come other private recipients. The important thing is to establish an exchange that is regular and constant;
4. The request was advanced to the PCI (analogous to that which will be made to the French PC) to send to Cuba a technician capable of helping the Cubans give life to a grand monthly magazine “Agrarian Reform,” that is proposed to be distributed in all of Latin America, where land issues are particularly acute; the magazine must be able to hold up, in terms of presentation and how it’s made, to publications printed in the United States;
5. Marginally it was also hinted that support from the PCI could contribute to Cuba’s economic relations with Europe (specifically the East); it was also aired out was the eventual nomination of an ambassador to Rome so we can easily understand each other, saying assurances that this would bring a positive result.

Comrade Nunez was in Rome on the occasion of the FAO congress mid-November [1959] - he was not officially noted as a communist (he was also received by the Pope!) aside from the meeting he had with Franza (drafter of the preceding note and who has had his address in Cuba) he had a conversation with Arturo Colombi and Giuliano Pajetta.

The impression that we got from this conversation is that he spoke enthusiastically and honestly when it came to techni-

cal knowledge and organizational capability, but maybe a little disingenuous on the political side. This last observation comes from the hurried way with which he responded to questions about relations with the national bourgeoisie, the danger of a class conflict capable of impeding the revolution, etc.

It appears evident that this cadre made miracles during the war against Batista and the intense popular and peasant support, above all considering the value brought forth by numerous economic and political reforms, is very energizing. In every way a good impression and the reflection of a country full of national and social revolution — highly esteemed and very friendly to our party.

[handwritten: November 1959]

Giuliano Pajetta

[Source: 1959 Cuba Estero 464, 2993-2997, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome. Obtained by James Hershberg, translation by Alex Barrow.]



**Vittorio Vidali (senior Italian communist),
Notes on a Trip to Cuba, Spring 1961
(excerpt)**

Rome, 14 June 1961

NOTES OF COMRADE VIDALI'S TRIP TO CUBA

[...]

After the May 1st demonstrations [in Havana], in the following days there was a meeting of all the Communist Party delegates in Latin America. Present were the members of the Cuban P.S.P. leadership, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and others.

The discussion unfolded on the basis of a detailed document from the B.P. [Poliburo] of the P.S.P. and this lasted, I think, five lively days. The daily agenda was "The Cuban revolution and the countries of Latin America." At the end of the debate the document presented by B.P. was collected and the B.P. of the P.S.P. was charged with publishing an editorial in "Fundamentos" for the May issue, on the basis of the discussion.

The discussion fundamentally revolved around the problem of the pacifism and violence of socialism and of the tangible efficacy of guerrilla warfare. There were differing opinions, particularly from the Argentine delegations ([Rodolfo] Ghioldi) and on the part of the Brazilian delegation.

The editorial-document contained the following concepts:

The Cuban revolution represents progress for revolution in every country in Latin America.

For that, the first duty of every anti-imperialist revolutionary, socialist or Latin American democrat is that of defending the Cuban revolution. One can not be anti-imperialist, patriots, progressives, revolutionary, socialists, communists, without defending, supporting Cuba.

Defending Cuba means defending national independence, independence of politics and economics, national sovereignty, unity of Latin American and the rights and demands of the workers and poor peasants. From when the Cuban revolution triumphed, every country in Latin America is more free. Yankee imperialism can not use the same past methods of appeal through discount offers, coaxing and blackmail.

Cuba is especially interested in the development of the national and social liberation movement and vice versa.

This solidarity has at its core the fact that the people of Latin America are geographically close, for their [shared] history and for the struggle against a common enemy: American imperialism.

The United States of America wants to use the countries of Latin America in the battle against Cuba. A victory over Cuba would mean reinforcing imperialism; a victory for the Cuban revolution facilitates revolution in every country of Latin America.

In accordance with the Declaration of the Moscow Conference of 81 communist and workers' parties, one must be against the exportation of revolution and at the same time struggle with maximum energy against the exportation of counterrevolution.

The North American aggressions against Cuba, the preparations for military intervention in Cuba and in every Latin American country, the proclamation of the right to "intervene" invoking the Monroe doctrine, the fight against communism for the "security" of the West, etc. are all done and thought up only to protect, and defend the interests of the yankee monopolies.

In Latin America there exists a strong movement against intervention. The principle of "non-intervention" is defended also by conservative elements. For that, the defense of national sovereignty and of the right of self-determination of every Latin American population must be undertaken with vigor, energetically denouncing every effort of imperialist intervention, unilateral or "collective." Cuba, defeating the mercenaries, contributed to saving the peace.

In spite of the recent aggression, the Cuban government is in favor of a method of direct negotiations for peacefully resolving every problem and is prepared to re-establish diplomatic and friendly relations between the two countries.

Peace is defended by defending Cuba, fighting for the principle of "non-intervention" and respecting the right to self-determination of the people. Solidarity between the Latin American countries and between these countries and Cuba, the solidarity between socialist countries, continued and unselfish, and the

solidarity of the whole world with Cuba, is that which makes for a solid base for the struggle for peace.

Friends of the Cuban revolution are the people, patriots, revolutionaries, anti-imperialists, and partisans for peace.

Enemies of the Cuban revolution are the exploiters [also translated as “pimps”—trans.], millionaires, imperialists, reactionary militarists, and mercenaries.

Imperialism, and its agents, the media and press, subsidized trade unions, conduct an intense campaign against Cuba, to falsify the truth of the revolution, to isolate the Cuban people, to justify aggression.

It is necessary to fight back against these works; systematically propagandizing the truth about Cuba, intensifying the solidarity with the Cuban people as a means to elevate the knowledge of the necessity of economic-social changes in the Latin American masses.

As it stands currently, between the Latin American countries there are many differences in regards to the economic, political, [and] social development.

However, there is a common ground between the Latin American people, other than Cuba, all are victims of exploitation and of political oppression by the United States; all, more or less, are missing their own industrial development; in all exists semi-feudal land ownership [*latifondismo semifeudale*] and imperialism; foreign monopolies have dominion over the fonts of raw materials, services and industries; in these countries there is hunger, chronic unemployment, illiteracy, a lack of hygiene; they export their raw materials and partially-made products and import industrial articles and even basic foodstuffs.

[Source: 1961 Cuba Estero 483, 2756-2771, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translation by Alex Barrow.]



Message from the PCI to the Cuban Leadership, 2 February 1962

2 February 1962

To the Leadership of the Integrated Revolutionary Organization

HAVANA

While our worry about the dangers of military aggression against the Republic of Cuba lingers on, it is our desire to explain to the Cuban people and its government the fraternal and active solidarity of the communists and all of the Italian

democrats, together with the condemnation of the anti-democratic decisions made by the Conference of Punta del Este.

Even if the final vote gives a fictitious majority to the United States, reducing the Organization of American States from a regional organization analogous to the United Nations to a bloc with orders from Washington, we highly value the fact that the major countries of Latin America — such as Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador — where the resistance to the penetration of North American imperialism is the strongest, where the political and social life is more rich - they did not cede to the pressures and they did not accept the open intervention and foreign interference against a revolution that is proceeding rapidly, that reveals itself able to collect always the largest consensus and is able to split the imperialist front.

The decisions of the OAS cannot suspend the Cuban truth from the American continent, the truth of a population that fights for its right to a peaceful and independent life and with the knowledge that this happened as a choice, lining up on the side of forces of the world that are for peaceful coexistence, disarmament and negotiations, for progress by way of popular socialism on every continent.

To you, to your leader Fidel Castro, to all of your citizens [that] gather together in a great protest, we renew our full solidarity, our encouragement, our best wishes for new successes, that they are successes for all of the people who love liberty and peace.

The Secretary of the PCI

[Source: 1962 Cuba Estero 0502, 2446-2447, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow.]



Italian Communist Journalist Carmine De Lepsis, Interview with Ernesto “Che” Guevara, Havana, 29 September 1962

(portions in bold-face published in the Italian communist newspaper *Paese Sera* on 26-27 October 1962 under the headline, “GUEVARA: The economic blockade of Cuba has failed”)

FULL TEXT (RECONSTRUCTED FROM NOTES)
OF THE INTERVIEW HELD BY COMRADE
CARMINE DE LEPSIS WITH MINISTER ERNESTO
“CHE” GUEVARA FOR “PAESE SERA” IN HAVANA,
SEPTEMBER 29, 1962

The interview with Ché Guevara was part of a group of interviews

with Cuban leaders (Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Raul Roa, and the Ché Guevara) for which I made a request to the Press Office of the Cuban Foreign Ministry just after my arrival (the first attachment is a copy of my working plan presented to the Foreign Ministry). The interviews should be structured to cover the whole situation: the defense of Cuba from the possibility of an aggression (Raul Castro); the international situation related to Cuba; the problem of Catholics (Fidel Castro); economic development (Ché Guevara); and international relations of Cuba, especially with Latin America (Raul Roa). As is clear, I exaggerated with my requests because I knew I would have got just some. And that's what happened: I had only the interview with Che Guevara, in which I inquired about almost all the other topics for the interviews I didn't get. A written request (second attachment) preceded this interview, with all the questions and some notes - written by me - for the newspaper I work for and for a biography. The request was made on the 21st of September; the interview was given, more or less, one week later. It seems to me that, before giving the interview Ché requested some information about me from the Cuban Institute of Friendship with people and to the Foreign Ministry. The conversation took place, as I said in the published text, at the behest of the interviewee from 1.30 to 4.00 in the morning (so in conditions, at least for me, not ideal). There was, other than me and the interviewee, a young escort of the Institute of Friendship that didn't want to leave the office, I believe to show off in front of a Cuban leader. I made a weak attempt to make him go away, then he remained. It seemed to me that the presence of the young boy was damaging for the course of the interview, because Guevara was giving, sometimes, laconic answers, not thorough and motivated. After some pleasantries the conversation started with a personal note. I told to Guevara that I was particularly attached to him because two years before during a rally at which he spoke, I met a Cuban girl that now is my wife. That note helped to make the conversation more familiar.

DE LIPSIS: I present to you a list of written questions. Then I am going to ask you some questions that come from the impressions I had during my stay in Cuba. We are going to split it up into what can be published and what can't.

GUEVARA: (He is a little upset with the written questions) These are all questions on economic matters, so I will try to answer to them all together. **The fundamental successes achieved in the four years since our revolution have been preserved despite the freeze. The most serious problem with which Fidel, me and the all the other men of the Sierra, had to face right after the victory was the complete dependence of our economy on the United States. Cuba, when we took it, wasn't a underdeveloped country but a badly developed country: the monoculture of sugar, as it's known, and of a few other products was the distinguishing mark of our economy, where backwardness of some sectors and high**

technical standards in others were coexisting. Other than the monoculture, everything else was for local market only. Cuba was forced to sell at international prices but forced, instead, to buy at the prices imposed by the United States. Everything here was controlled by the USA, mainly the banks, the means of transport, etc..., the biggest purchaser of our sugar.

The US brought in their enterprises with advanced technology. We found ourselves, upon nationalizing the means of production, facing the problem of guaranteeing their continued operation and, so, of having a base of spare parts that usually socialist countries don't have. The same is true for raw materials: from the socialist countries we can import only similar products. Despite these difficulties we managed to guarantee the yearly growth of industrial production, if you don't consider the sugar sector, of 7%.

We can now lay the foundation for the spread of industrialization and not limit ourselves to develop what already exists.

At the end of the next four-year-period we'll gain a big metallurgic basis and i believe that we'll be able to maintain the rate of growth at the [rate of] 7%. On the other hand we must consider that now our economy is, for sure, opened while previously the American domination was barring the development of other sectors.

With agriculture the situation is more difficult: we suffered damages because of the drought that hit our country in the strongest measure ever registered in the last 40 years. I have to say that some mistakes in the organization of the agricultural production have been made. But, today we can be sure that even in this sector there is now constant growth.

DE LIPSIS: At your conference, in which I participated in two years ago, I remember you saying that Cuba shouldn't be considered an underdeveloped country but a badly developed country due to monoculture. Were you able to change this situation?

GUEVARA: No, the monoculture aspect of our economy has still not changed, but it's changing: we need the sugar, the coffee, and tobacco to provide us the currency fund.

Let's get to the second question: what will be the future development of the Cuban economy etc...[?] One of our main aims is the self-sufficiency for our semi-tropical products and to develop some specialization that would allow us to export all over the world. This development of the industrial sector, will be realized on the basis of a technology equal to [that of] some of the most advanced countries. We'll have a steel industry for the processing of a special steel, we'll develop the chemistry related to the production of sugar, and electronics (that is for us a fundamental issue), that is

what we consider one of our main goals; we'll increase the mining, the engineering industry (to strengthen the other industries) **and, also, the maritime industry.**

We need to keep in mind that our economy is linked to the big international markets; Cuba is an import-export country, we cannot be limited to the local market.

Let's pass to the third question: what kind of influence did the [US economic] blockade have on the economic projects of the government... It had a double effect of deterrent for the economy I) **troubles supplying foodstuff II) deficiencies in the development of the economy.** It forced us to make some sacrifices for the basis of rational development. Our duty now is fast development of the engineering sector and the creation of new products of good quality. But **the same difficulties created by the blockade have been motivation for the popular masses, whose enthusiasm has allowed us to ensure a constant growth of our production. In its main goal, therefore, the blockade failed: with the help of the popular masses and from the socialist countries, we can keep pushing forward, even far forward.**

Let's get to the other questions (Guevara skips the question about the governmental measures for overcoming the difficulties in the supplying of food items and approaches the one about the changes to the economic plans of the government – ed)¹²

D.L.: Some weeks ago the weekly journal of our party Rinascita published one of your speeches on the matter. Is there something new compared to what you said on that occasion?

G.: No, there's not. On the other hand it wasn't much time ago. So we can pass to the question on the meaning of the three part rallying cry: Produce, save, organize. These issues are related. An increase of production is necessary to supply the population. Now we need to save as much as possible because of the lack we have of a supply shortage. The saving goes hand in hand with the organization. Even if [unreadable] we need to improve the growth of productivity, trying to modify the absurd salary system that there was before in Cuba.

D.L.: On the improvement in productivity and the establishment of new labor laws, are you trying to lean on moral factors (as the minister of the labor Augusto Martinez Sanchez ed.) or focus on the material gains?

G.: The moral factors are still important, but let's **not forget the material gains that are implicit in the socialist system.** The basis of this system is the same as the one found in other socialist countries with a few differences. Now we are on more solid ground. At the heart of the new society that we're building

is the working man. That's why productivity is of a fundamental importance. We prefer to close the factories that can't achieve a high level of productivity and send the workers to work somewhere else or to study, than to let them be unproductive. We observed that with what you can save on one side you can cover the expenses for the other workers that are not working anymore or who are studying to specialize. These young workers sent to study are attending courses in two phases 1) until the 6th year 2) toward a specialization. We concentrated the production and with the same vigor we are preparing new "cadre". There is going to be a successively more elevated phase, more elevated to get them to be more specialized.

D.L.: So you're working toward a concentration, a centralization of the economy? That is going to cause an elimination, in the short term, of the small private production, of the small commerce, etc.?

G.: Yes. We need to produce with high-level technological processes

D.L.: Of course, it's socialism in America, there's a need for strong productivity! It's a matter of making Socialism in America, not as it was done in the Soviet Union.

G.: (Nods) I'm going to say something about that but it must not be published....

D.L.: (Nods)

G.: We have disagreement with the Soviets about that ... They insist that we should introduce collective economic management and financial autonomy in the factories. There is a debate on this matter. We insist, on the contrary, on the centralization of the economy, the way we chose is the concentration of the production. A *pesar que nos llaman* from the Spanish text one could translate in Italian as "no matter what or in spite of it we are called revisionist."

D.L.: *Rivisionista* in Italian.

G.: Looks at me a little surprised and stays silent.

D.L.: But what's going to happen to the 150,000 small artisans?

G.: He doesn't answer and goes back to the written questions. We'll do all that we can to ensure the growth of the technological progress. We want to reach the top level of technology. I can't tell when it's going to happen. We have, already, one third or one fourth of the sugar cane production mechanized and **in two or three years the collection of sugar cane will be mechanized,**

with machinery created in Cuba, and constructed in Cuba.

All this industrial installation will be used to rapidly mechanize agriculture. (And he passes to the question about the trip to USSR.) We signed some agreements for the installation of a small steel factory in Havana, and for the construction, on the eastern part of the Cuban island, of a big steel plant that will produce 1 million 3 hundred thousand tons of steel per year.

D.L.: Will it be a Kombinat?

G.: Yes, it will be a complete Kombinat and it will utilize nickel and a special kind of cobalt, that is found on the island: laterite. (About his trip to USSR, he doesn't say any more and he passes to the last question about relations with Italy.) **The relations between Cuba and Italy could be much improved. All the more because your country, having an advanced industrial system, could replace, for some items, the United States. Italy has many products that for us are really interesting, and already some Italian enterprises came forward, like the Oronzio di Nora company from whom we bought completely equipped factories. We are ready to buy whatever we need, it's up to Italy having a similar interest.**

D.L.: I had the chance to talk with some diplomats from the Italian Embassy in Cuba. I'm going to tell you about some of their opinions, but before [that] I have to warn you that the old staff of the Embassy is of a clear Fascist nature, and so I don't know how much their opinions can be considered valid. Concerning our new Ambassador my opinion is different, he's a reasonable person (I was referring to the fact that Ambassador [Gian Luigi Milesi?] Ferretti mentioned to me to a few criticisms about the US policy toward Cuba, sustaining a line similar to the one kept by England in the crisis in the Caribbean—ed. note¹³) but these are our businesses, of the media and of us, Italian democrats. We'll see what is possible to do unblock the situation (the old staff of the Embassy praised the Batista regime to me and had negative things to say about the one of Fidel Castro—ed.¹⁴). At the Italian Embassy they say that one of reasons that the commerce between Italy and Cuba is not increasing, could be the missing payment by the latter of almost one million dollars, which Italian enterprises have had on their books since prior to the revolution.

G.: I remember perfectly this situation, because at the time I was the director of the National Bank. But all that is about the interest of Italy in trading with us. You cannot trade just from one side. These credits can be repaid when we'll be able to, anyway with new relations, when you have a mutual interest, anything can be cleared up (the answers to the written questions have ended, now we start an extemporaneous dialogue)

D.L.: The difficulties you are finding are due only to the blockade or also to, let's say, subjective problems?

G.: The blockade caused us some distortions, and forced some structural changes, but the difficulties we have to deal with are also due to some subjective problems, first of all **the poor organization of the revolutionary party that must be the ideological engine of the production, it has to ensure the ideological control. There were episodes of hoarding in the Party** (in Cuba, when they talk about the party they refer to old P.S.P. – the Socialist Popular Party, (communist)—ed.¹⁵), and **centralization.**

D.L.: Bureaucratization?

G.: Yes, bureaucratization. We entrusted the old party with so much power because we were in need, right away, of experts and of solid system. But things didn't go as we expected, they were accumulating offices, centralizing the power, and bureaucratizing the relations with the masses. At one point we realized that even the statistics that were given to us about the production in the different provinces were wrong, and we ended up losing control of the situation: mistakes both in agriculture and industry were accumulating. So, when we realized that things were not working right, we looked at ourselves and faced a problem: **Comrade X summons the workers so that at 6 in the morning they go to volunteer work. At six in the morning, all the workers are there but not comrade X. He shows up at ten in a government car; he checks the number of those present, and leaves. Someone protests, an inquiry is opened and is found out that comrade X lives in a luxury apartment, property of a rich Cuban exiled to the US. The Committee of the Party approves his expropriation request, because his home is unsafe.**

D.L.: That's unbelievable in a revolution, like this one, so full of strength in the ideals.

G.: And then there's the story about people expelled from the old communist party that revealed themselves, instead, to be good revolutionaries... there are people that just want to boast of thirty years in the party. Ok, but then there's also the years, '31, '32, '33...

D.L.: They are the ones that in Italy we call Stalinist "trombones."

G.: Anyway we all agree, what would do the job is a party that would be the engine of the revolution and we are building it on a new basis, since the experiment with the old PSP didn't go well. There are going to be also aspirations for a new period of change.

D.L.: There's not a risk of building an "elitist" party divorced from the masses?

G: We'll try to create an operative party, controlled by the workers. Let's try this new method and let's see where it leads.

D.L.: Even if we grant for the sake of argument that the sectarianism issue can be eliminated just with the criticism of the old communists, don't you think that more gradual progress of the revolution toward the some part of the population, [such] as the middle and lower middle class, would have been more appropriate? I'm referring to what happened in the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (the neighborhood organisms of the revolution installed home by home ed.). The one that I saw was working well, but they told me that in other places the volunteer work, in a word, that they are pushing toward a sharp proletarianization also of the culture.

G: The volunteer work is, voluntary... (talking to the young escort that didn't say a word for the whole conversation) . But we have also allowed for example, a center for doctors where these professionals could meet, even talk negatively about the government... (then he takes up the conversation with an irritated tone, upset with my question) we **can coexist with the lower middle class, but not on the basis of mutual concessions on principles...**

D.L.: You mean accepting the proletarian hegemony.

G: (Changing the tone, to be more incisive)... **coexistence, but accepting the ways of development of the revolution.** On this question there's need to be intransigent. **Of course, on this basis, many from the lower middle class, do not march and decide to leave Cuba.**

D.L.: I'm not discussing the line followed by the leaders of the revolution, but are you sure that that is well applied?

G.: Of course the problem depends, also, from the way in which this policy is applied. The petite bourgeois wants the car, the trip to Miami for the week-end, the refrigerator ...

D.L.: All things that the revolution can't give to them.

G: Nods, the **petit bourgeois was living in a North American way**, which in has in many ways different characteristics than that of the petite bourgeois in Europe. It is a certain practical (utilitarian) sense of life (I did not quite understand what he mean by this during our discussion – ed.¹⁶) There is a racial component that is important here too. Anyway we should look at the relationship

with that we have had with our clergy and priests (he stands up and makes a gesture of contempt with his hand as if to say "go to hell" –ed.) Now, the priests come to us asking if we can't live together. Now to the Nunziatura Apostolica they have sent a nice young man who is quite active.

D.L.: And what about the artisans, how are they dealing with the socialization?

G: The Cuban artisans are not like the Europeans. I don't know Europe, but I know it well in Argentina because of the immigrants. And I can say how things are in the middle classes... **Instead the Cuban artisans wouldn't have any trouble adjusting and going to work in a factory, because they are not so attached to the work of their workshop.**

D.L.: What percent of industry is already socialized?

G. 95%

D.L.: Do you think about how the socialization will proceed?

G.: Nods

D.L.: I did some personal research around the shops of Galiano and San Rafael (the commercial streets of Havana – ed.) and I found out that they sell many items. For what concerns the food, I had the impression that in Havana one can eat pretty well, that the essential items, in the end, are not missing, but in the province of Pinar del Rio (I look at the young man) where we have been, things for the farmers are much different, they are missing also the rationed food (in this area the farmers were getting 300 gr[ams] of meat every month, instead in Havana 1 kg and a half)... there is a huge gap (I was talking about the fact that in some areas many things were missing that in other areas were available, among them vital things like salt and matches – ed.¹⁷)

G: In the countryside one has to make do... we have made a particular effort in Havana, where the counter-revolution is stronger. And you have to keep in mind that in Havana we have to feed almost 100.000 "becados" (students holding a scholarship) and, gosh, they eat, and they eat every day!

D.L.: The impression that I had during my stay about the three main internal factors of the revolution, the military one, the political one and the economic one is the following: the military one is going well; from the marching units you can see a real army; the political one too, the revolution keeps having the popular support; but the economic one ... that's where you can see some discontent, "en la calle" ["on the street"] - I'm sorry

if I'm being rude but I'm communist too and we're serving a common interest - is missing because it get lost during the way or because it just not there.

G: Just not there.

D.L.: "How do you think to deal with the exodus of technicians, and in general part of the lower middle class?"

G: Some of our Polish and Hungarian friends, warned us to be prudent with the lower middle class (here he was talking with a tone that seemed to me pretty upset -- ed.¹⁸) **Some friends from socialist countries** (I think that here he was talking about the Soviets ed.) asked us why we let them go away. **We don't force anyone to stay.** There was the case of some technicians who clearly told us that they didn't want to stay any more. And we told them: Ok, but before [going] you have to finish your job. And they finished their job (and he makes a gesture with the hand like that of a well-oiled machinery and they went.

D.L.: Did you do that for ethical reasons ... practicality?

G.: Both for ethical and a practical reasons: we prefer the old counter-revolutionary technician to go, so he won't have a bad influence on young people that we are grooming by the tens of thousands.

D.L.: Don't you think that there is a unrealistic expectation for the foreign technician? Do you think that the technician can stand for the organization? The technician can be a technician; but how can the foreign technician be the one that organizes people in a country with a different mentality, so different from them, who, on their side too, have a different way of looking at things?

G: I agree with you, the technician without a structure is nothing; the structure without the technician can, slowly, go on; the best thing, obviously, is having both. Apart from that we have Soviet technicians who are working wonderfully.

D.L.: Marxism is entering the heart of the Cuban people. But sometimes one has the impression that it has taken a religious form instead of [a] rationalist [form]. A few days ago I saw a militant wearing an needlepoint badge: it was the face of a cherub surrounded by an aura of gold. I asked her what was it about, thinking it was a religious thing, and she answered me: "it's Lenin when he was a kid."

G: (Smiles and doesn't say anything.)

D.L.: ... I've been to the "festival de los aficionados" (festival of the lovers of folk music and dance founded by the workers from Havana) and the majority of the bands I saw were imitations of Russian or Czechoslovakian song and dance: can it be a manifestation of affection for the socialist countries, but does not all that affect the patriotic sentiment of Cubans?

G: We had Soviet bands, Hungarian, and Polish that had a great success. Not to speak of the Polish dancers (he smiles mischievously¹⁹)

D.L.: I'm not talking about the bands coming from the Eastern countries; they came also in Italy and had a great success, I'm talking about the Cuban bands, made of Cubans, but dressed like Cossacks and talking like Russians from Kharkov [in Soviet Ukraine].

G: (He smiles again, like to agree with what I was saying) Here we had the Spartakiadi (a sporting event in the stadiums like the ones that are organized in Czechoslovakia--ed.²⁰) with the girls moving the hoops here and there (making gesture as to mime something unpleasant).

D.L.: To get back to the topic of a certain kind of "religious" manifestations, i have some journalistic impressions that may be superficial: at the Congress of the Federation of the Cuban Women, on the stage there was a big board with the slogans of the congress and the image of a woman with a baby, that looked exactly like the Virgin Mary...

G: (He doesn't talk)

D.L.: Let's move to the situation of Cuba projected onto Latin America: it's impossible to deny that in this context Cuba is isolated. Even Fidel noticed it. **I'm not talking about an ideological isolation, which it is not, but about a political one.** How do you think should be remedied? What's going to happen?

G.: The future is unpredictable: who can say what's going to happen in the future? The isolation of Cuba is real, of course.... the imperialists are preparing for military intervention all over Latin America. And so the expectations are for huge armed battles by the revolutionary forces... there is going to be a direct intervention from the US imperialists, so the word should be given to mainly to the armed struggle.

D.L.: In Latin America there is huge revolutionary potential, but isn't a complex and differentiated organization missing[?] Who can organize the enormous masses of the farmers?

G: (He winces and I have the impression that what I said about the farmers is what he thinks too. But this harmony revealed to be a misunderstanding during the rest of the conversation, because actually I meant a totally different thing: that before leading the masses to the armed struggle there's the need to get organized with democratic demands and necessary alliances --ed.²¹). No. I'm going to say some things but it is better not to publish them... Because they accuse us of wanting to be the "popes" of the revolution, and we don't want to interfere in the politics of the "popular fronts," that have their different managers of the progressive forces on the Latin America. The only country in which there is a positive situation for the politics of the "Frente Popular" is Chile; where the "Popular Front" could keep going on and gain some power. But how is the action of the communist party?! it's "flaca" (weak, and he makes a gesture as to mean that it is very weak--ed.²²) There are parties that are born in the city, and are closed in the cities. Let's look at how we did it here in Cuba: an armed force that from the mountains went and lead directly to the heart of the enemy, went straight to the power and took it....not to talk about the strikes, the actions of the masses....

D.L.: There's need for building alliances for the masses of farmers, and to consider the lower middle class.

G.: (With a gesture of irritation) **but, in the end, what is this myth of the petit bourgeois?**

D.L.: But I was talking about revolutionary alliances, farmers' conflicts, starting from the occupation of the land.

G.: There's a need to hit the national armies... the only solution is the armed struggle all the way.

D.L.: Are there other forces ready to stand up against the United States? Let's look at the revolt of Porto Cabello undergone by military forces; let's look at some anti-yankee positions in some strata of the Brazilian army and - like the Argentine comrade, that is also a friend of yours, told me - even - of a similar attitude in the Argentine army too!

G: What about the Argentine Army?! And concerning **the revolt of Porto Cabello, it was not democratic: it was all about replacing one puppet with another. As far as we are concerned we tried to open up a dialogue with one of the "Frentes Populares," in which there is the lower-middle class, the one of [President C.J.] Arosemena [Monroy] in Equador. Two days after Fidel congratulated the victory of Arosemena, he cut all relations with Cuba.**

D.L.: Just two more questions and we are done. One concerns economic matters, since you are an economist, the other is about the intellectuals. I would like to know how things are going in agriculture; are the farmers dealing with collectivization?

G: (laughing) But I'm not an economist! As I have already said we are having some troubles in agriculture but even in this field the production is growing. The farmers are accepting the collectivization up to a point, some strata do better accept the cooperatives.

D.L.: Are there different kinds of cooperatives, like in popular democracies with a certain gradual socialization of the means of productions and in the distribution of profits?

G: There is just one kind, the mixed one. The Cuban farmer does not have the attachment to the land.

D.L.: Like in Europe ...

G.: ... but, in some ways, he keeps it.

D.L.: I have been talking to many intellectuals. They exposed to me the problem of "Lunes de Revolución" (the literary weekly of the daily newspaper "Revolución", suppressed - I could not go deeper into the matter - it seemed to me, with brisk [administrative] measure--ed.²³). Now the same things that were written on the "Lunes de Revolución" are written in the "Gaceta de Cuba" (the new weekly of the Union of the Writers, directed by Nicolas Guillen where two groups, more and more polemical, are coexisting, one of the old comrades that reports to Guillen, and the one of the youths of the "26 July" looking with favor at the PCI, and that utilized, in my opinion in a clumsy way and just for internal interests against the old communists, some scripts of [PCI leader Palmiro] Togliatti--ed.²⁴)

G.: Not only are they writing the same things, but also, it's the same people who write.

D.L.: And that's a sign of tolerance or of a lack of a political culture?

G.: Everything started with a film about Havana completely made in the old style. From the new Havana, with the militiamen and the militia, there was nothing. We tolerated it, but then we had to intervene. Our position on the intellectuals, has been expressed by Fidel: until they don't attack the Revolution that we are making, we don't take much care of them, we're not experts in that field. I can say something on the Cuban ballet, for example, on the Licia Alonso's ballet (and here he starts with

a long digression about pros and cons of the Alonso's ballet. Of course they could not, and cannot, accept, all that "mariconadas" – to mean pedophilia – and all those sexual storylines).

D.L.: My journalistic duties impose me to ask you some more questions about your private life.

G: (Standing up) No, no, for God's sake...

D.L.: Some of the bourgeois newspapers wrote that you are the grey eminence of the revolution, the "deus ex machine."

G: Yes, I know that. They did that trying to oppose me to Fidel, and even more to Raul, to show that there is rivalry among us. Nonsense... instead I should be clear about something (while flipping through his book - that I showed him - "Guerrilla Warfare" translated in Italian by the socialist publisher "Il Gallo"--ed.²⁵). On the cover, it is written that I work from 6 in the afternoon until 6 in the morning, in company only of two revolvers and my working documents: I would like to point out that I have just one revolver, and above all that I have my wife.

D.L.: I'll show you the written text of the interview, and you will tell me what can be published and what can't.

G.: No, no everything can be published but the two things I have told you not to.

(That means, the disagreements with the Soviets about collective management problems, and the direct controversy with the "progressive" parties (to read as communist) in the Latin America. On the last point I didn't get if the veto was limited to just this last part or over all the judgments about Latin America. I didn't have time to insist, because it was already 4:30 in the morning when we finished the interview and Guevara had already led us to the door. I kept the word given about the first topic and I solved the uncertainty about the second one keeping for the piece written in "Paese Sera" - written hastily, in the editorial office, pushed by several sides, and compelled to do, at the same time, the right thing - the controversial parts with the Chilean communist party and with the other parties. Some days after, since my departure was delayed, through the writer [Roberto Fernández] Retamar, a friend of mine that was meeting with Guevara, I asked him if he had been offended by any of my questions. Guevara let me know that he wasn't, that I just had done my job of journalist. He didn't let me know anything about the check on the written text that I asked from him. I had the impression that he just didn't care. At the door, while saying goodbye, with vague words he just told me: "Just publish the interview, then, eventually, I'll see.")

[Source: 1962 Cuba Estero 502, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow.]



Minutes, Meeting of Italian Communist Party (PCI) Politburo, 31 October 1962

Directorate [Politburo] of the Italian Communist Party
Meeting of 31 October 1962

Present: Togliatti, Longo, Terracini, Roasio, Berlinguer, Novella, Colombi, Scheda, Alinovi, Cossutta, Pajetta, Amendola, Macaluso, Romagnoli, Alicata, Bufalini

Absent: Ingrao, Sereni, Scoccimaro

Invited: Occhetto, Barontini, Barca

Secretary: Amadesi

Objectives of the Day:

[...]

1. - The fight for peace (speaker Alicata);
2. - On the Congress of the Italian Communist Youth Federation [*Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana*] (speaker Barca);
3. - The situation of the dailies and other periodicals (speaker Pajetta);
4. - On the organization of the center of the party (speaker Longo).

- The fight for peace.

Alicata: It is difficult today to try and reconstruct the full course of events related to the American aggression in Cuba. [These were] surprising actions that only "L'Unita" had forecast. At the bottom of everything, is the US attempt to invade Cuba, even if the problem of the missiles should not have been a pretext. [There was a] large resistance in defense of Cuban independence, on the part of many countries and in the world public opinion. The crucial point of the crisis was the night between Friday and Saturday. The second message of Khrushchev and Kennedy can be explained by the need to exert pressures. What is unexplainable is the affirmation of [Soviet UN Ambassador Valerian] Zorin [to the UN Security Council on October 25] that in Cuba, missile bases do not exist.

The conclusion of the incident is positive only if the guarantees for Cuba are real. This objective is something of which we were fundamental proponents. If one makes other hypotheticals and considerations one can arrive at other critical conclusions,

but that does not seem to be the case. The reaction in Cuba is not good; the reaction is negative for the fact that everything developed about and outside of them. The Cubans legitimately demand to obtain effective guarantees and justice on their request for Guantanamo.

A great possibility has opened for the development of actions in favor of coexistence, for the abolition of the bases, and disarmament. Even in [Italian Foreign Minister Attilio] Piccioni's arguments in the Camera [Italian Chamber of Deputies] this can be heard.

[There was a] positive judgement of the way that the party reacted. [There is] wide support for our actions: [amongst] intellectuals, socialists, youth. The élan of the students and the intellectuals seems to have surpassed that of the workers; at many demonstrations they are the vanguard. That must be because of the fact that many people don't believe that the danger of war is real. That is not only happening in Italy, in all of Western Europe, the reaction of the masses has been very limited. In Latin America, there has not been a political counter-movement like the one that accompanied the previous act of invasion of Cuba.

When there is a dramatic episode, like that in Milan, popular support becomes so vast.²⁶ [There are] diverse reactions in the party to the events. Not to say that they might have been disappointed at the absence of a show of force, but it is difficult to understand that to you all there were signs of weakness on the part of the U.S.S.R. in the sense that they abandoned the Cuban Revolution to fend for itself. To our allies, the reaction is positive. To give continuance to our peace initiatives, we insist on the opportunity to defend the independence of Cuba, and to develop actions against American bases in Italy and the world. [We should] enlarge and consolidate the alliances that are installed. The nuts and bolts of these problems are put up now for discussion.

Togliatti: On the diplomatic front there is something that can give you pause for reflection. There is an impression that we don't know everything. The fact that Zorin denied the existence of the bases doesn't worry me much. The truly important point is the eventual unrest of the Cuban leaders. Let's move the discussions in the party about this and that episode and concentrate them on fundamental problems, of principle.

Compared to other countries, in Italy we have done more, but the limits, the growth of the movement are evident. In many cities, they aren't doing anything or hardly anything — at the most some small demonstration. We need to analyze concretely the zones of passivity that are in the party. Among the comrades [there are] two contrasting and paralyzing positions: nothing will be done, the USSR won't risk war. The other: The USSR will show the Americans what they are not expecting. They do not understand that it's possible to arrive at peaceful coexistence

with battles, even bitter ones, for singular concrete aims. For example, the agreement on the objective of obtaining real guarantees for Cuba today is now possible, meanwhile 15 days ago it was not. Let's continue the struggle on this basis. Among other things it helps us connect with the socialist masses and other dispositions. The actions of the Chinese in this moment are not comprehensible.

Pajetta: [I'll] underline the positive and negative elements. [There was] activity in Spain a few weeks ago that demonstrated the vast potential for solidarity and for struggle. On the other hand [there is] deafness and passivity in certain zones of the party. There are potential units that for a long time did not hold demonstrations in Rome at Brancaccio. Certain unclear aspects of the events do not justify the incorrect orientation of some comrades. Let's not put on the same level those that renounce the struggle and those that are ready to fight. [A] positive judgement for the way that *L'Unità* illustrated the various phases of the crisis

Our position on the Chinese-Indian conflict. We are not, and, I do not believe we have to be, supportive of China for condemning certain positions of Nehru.

Throughout this crisis, we attacked the government and we must continue to witness their ambiguous positions. [There is a] major possibility to conduct effective actions that profit from the weakness of the adversaries: the position of [Italian reform socialist Giuseppe] Saragat is different than that of [Prime Minister Amintore] Fanfani and [Italian Socialist party leader Pietro] Nenni. The United States has "legalized" its right to control Cuba militarily and that can make more likely the renouncement of the invasion.

Cossutta: I do not doubt that the position: "ben vengà" the war²⁷, exists in certain circles. However more widespread is the idea: what could we possibly do? This is to be decided by only two men. [i.e., Kennedy and Khrushchev]

[...]

Berlinguer: The majority of the public opinion has risen regarding the views of the U.S.S.R. but in the class of Western managers, extremist elements are unleashed and even some that critically orient themselves toward Kennedy's politics remain perplexed and convinced that he was right.

[I have a] positive judgment of the mobilization of the party. There's a need to review the growth of the movement, the participation of the workers that, in some centers, was considerable. In places where we are strong the movement has been weak and vice versa. This is due to the orientation of our group of directors. There's not just incredulity about the risk of the war but also some fatalism.

Amendola: Let's discuss the orientation of the party, I worry about the vast areas where incredulity, fatalism and bureaucracy dominate. In certain active parts of the party in the last few days you see there is a certain crisis ... [...]

Bufalini: [...] The peace march set for 1 November will not take place because the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement produced a certain demobilization. The demonstrations instead will probably take place in a theatre against the missile bases in Italy for the input of the Brancaccio presidency [...]

Alinovi: In Naples [...] The masses recognize that Khrushchev eliminated the residual malcontent of last year with the resumption of Soviet nuclear experiments [in September 1961]. We must be clear. There are comrades that undervalue the strength of the USA and therefore do not understand the need to find a way towards a *modus vivendi*. The potential existed for a bigger battle than that which manifested itself. The impression that the danger was real was widespread. There is an important function that non-involved countries not involved had. The position of the party on neutrality of Italy is to [be] agreed upon. The proposal to collect signatures against the planned bases seems to me opportune. [...]

Roasio: There were different positions in the party that were caused by the dramatic, confused and also contradictory manner with which the news of the events unfolded from one hour to the next. Let's explain, therefore, the events and let's not seek deviations.²⁸ Moving to the Chinese-Indian conflict. We must intervene somehow and present our positions.

Terracini: We protested in defense of Cuba, exerting pressure on our government because it modified its foreign policy. There are also those favorable to the independence of Cuba who did not criticize the government. Let's move forward in the developments of actions for solidarity with Cuba. The war is avoidable because the socialist world cedes: this can be the conclusion to which some comrades come under the influence of the opposing camp. Let's take this into account in our propaganda.

In the theses, a different avenue was adopted for China and Albania which to me seemed incorrect.

Togliatti: [Armando] Cossuta points out that in Milan they always acted in accordance with the C.d.L. [perhaps the Consolenti del Lavoro—trans.] and that it was better to take charge of the demonstrations rather than leaving them without any direction. This would have happened anyway. The whole party apparatus present in Rome is responsible stimulating and organizing the party for Cuba. We certainly

did not intend to open up a conflict with Chinese comrades on their current disagreement with the Indians. On this border question they are not wrong. The mistake is instead of not accepting preliminary discussions and to have pushed forward with military operations at the present time.

Alicata: Let's properly orient the party on the fight for coexistence, coordinating moments of attack and when they ebb. The foreign policy of the USSR — also in form and in method — distinguishes itself, and must distinguish itself with that of the bourgeois because it must be inclusive and accepted by the masses. If this does not happen, the consequences can generate a lot of confusion. Let's not have illusions about what the USA will do against Cuba to make sure it is not attacked.

It is critical to the government that their position was not extremist. For the India-China conflict, I underline that the solution would be easier if China was in the United Nations. The misjudgement by China that India is an imperialist country.

Decision: A communique from the party will be released.

[Source: 1962 *Direzione* 026, pp. 026-523 to 026-531, *Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records*, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translation by Alex Barrow.]



Letter from Italian Communist Journalist Carmine de Lipsis to Senior Italian Communist Giancarlo Pajetta re Interview with Che Guevara, 26 November 1962

To com[rade]. Pajetta
Direction [*Direzione*] PCI

Dear Pajetta,

I'm taking the initiative of sending to you and to the Secretary of the Party the uncut version of the interview I had with [Ernesto] Ché Guevara, it is reconstructed with a careful reading of the notes, and it is faithful in spirit and in form, but, small and secondary variations and omissions are possible in the final version.

Comparing the two texts – the one I'm presenting to you and the one published in "Paese Sera" (for lack of space necessarily shorter: it was of 6 typewritten pages although the uncut one is of almost 15) – will show that:

1. I was faithful to the spirit and nearly always to the form given to me by my interlocutor;

2. I left out the more bitter things [i.e., statements] than the ones published;

3. That in the hurry in which I had to write the interview (the journal didn't give me the chance to stay at home writing with more attention to the piece, but forced me — while urging me to publish rapidly all before the eventual aggression by the US — to do simultaneously the editorial work) I made some mistakes that look like small details to the sentence you quote (“but in the end what's that myth of the petit bourgeois?”) was actually said: “but in the end what is this petite bourgeoisie?” and was referring not to the hint of controversy that Guevara made to Poles and Hungarians but to the situation in Latin America related to the question that I posed to him about the alliances. He said that with an irritated pitch (repeated any time he was talking about the bourgeoisie) and then the word “myth” came out like an interpretation, summing up the content of the tone of his answers;

4. That the matter of the policy of the Popular Fronts in the Latin America [word illegible] in the spirit, in the terms in which it was published, as you will understand from Guevara's view on the situation in Chile and on the policy of the communist Chilean Party. Of this last part — these were the concluding points, and so made more hurriedly — but just of this last part, I'm not completely sure of having copied down in my notes (that are for the rest stenographic) of my interlocutor's words in the same order in which he pronounced them. But I'm sure about the spirit and the form.

I took the initiative of sending you the uncut text of the interview both for dispelling the doubts that you raised about some sort of an intentional alteration of it (and what for, in the end?), and also because it could be useful for you as a documentation about the Cuban situation.

About the truthfulness of this text — with the clarifications I made — I give my honor, inviting you, in the case you would believe it necessary and in the form you would think most appropriate, to deliver it to Guevara himself. On my side I already intend to send to Havana the published text with the other articles.

I've already taken note of your assurance — repeated by Lusvardi [Luciano?] — that my dismissal from “Paese Sera” has nothing to do with my articles about Cuba and specifically with the interview, but I would like to point out that inside the newspaper and outside it, there are still persistent rumors about it being the cause of my present status; rumors that I believe come from the fact that I was dismissed (in such an inopportune way) while the publication of my articles on Cuba was still underway. Something that, by the way, I couldn't finish!

What you told me, at the end of our conversation, about the possibilities of my collaboration with the Foreign Section and the Print and Propaganda have reassured me.

There are, anyway, some expressions that you used toward me during our conversation (the little story of the “provocation”) that you used many times in a kind way and that, however, I firmly reject. And the fact remains that I was paradoxically confused, even if just for a while, by that attitude of childish extremism and sectarianism, against which I fought honorably my whole life, paying dearly (even for the misguided way I behaved sometimes in similar situations) many times in person; against which I fought for the newspaper, against which I keep fighting now that I am “free” and, mainly, against which I distinctly expressed myself in Cuba with my Cuban friends — as will result from what I'll write further — and with Guevara himself — as will result from the text of the interview — risking even the personal interests I have with them.

After my dismissal several “discontented” (mainly from the left) got in touch with me, and also some “ex-journalists” settled somewhere else with big incomes, who were looking for some sympathy in the “common misfortune.” I gave to all of them the same answer: what happened to me doesn't change in any way my loyalty to the party, to its direction, and mainly to its actual policy, loyalty that is not based on faith but is based on rational and intimate beliefs, passed through direct and sometimes painful experiences (read as Czechoslovakia, D'Onofrio, Rebetti, the old direction of “Unità” and, lastly, some lonely follower in “Paese Sera” and “Paese”) during which I resolved any doubt — that I sincerely confess I had — about the leading group of our party, noticing that “my” demands weren't out of line with party or its leaders but were already involved in their dialogue of development. And so there are already those at the newspaper who smile about De Lipsis' affair, a “naïve conformist” who would have been hit by the same people that he was going to defend, and in private there are those who portray me as an “unreadable” character still busy defending, even with friends, just these comrades.

About this “atmosphere” and these epithets I don't give a damn, and I leave them to petit-bourgeois and sectarians, to tired and frayed ones. I put too much trust in my qualities as a militant and professional revolutionary (with or without a salary) to let myself be affected by them. But at this point I have to open a critical word on the unbelievable suspicions that sometimes were raised about some of my behaviors (but, how can one not see that they are just the fruit of my moral and idealistic reactions to unsolved and un-explained problems?) or initiatives like trips abroad dictated by necessity (when I'm unemployed) and by my own specialization. The little story of the provocative behavior already came out, even at the

newspaper, mainly when I was back from Czechoslovakia and I remained for a long time unemployed (I still have to ask for an explanation from Calamandrei, and I will if necessary, about why on that occasion he asked me, with an inquiring tone, from where I was taking money for living). Or maybe, by chance, were taken as serious (not from you, I know it!) the obscure and dishonest “ideas” of the Czechoslovak security services for which it looks like, finally, the day of the reckoning, in front of the tribunal of the communist morality, has come. Still a few days ago some Italian comrades who were in Czechoslovakia in the same period as me, told me that the reason of some behaviors that were held toward me was related to the fact that I went “in a prohibited military zone.” Vulgar nonsense: in Czechoslovakia, I’ve never been in a prohibited zone. Where did they arrive was to hide other reasons like the insane internal fight of that party and its attitude toward us, for which I was just an easy target.

I want to point out to you the following:

-- I can’t see why — given my full support, many times demonstrated, to the line followed by our party — I might have “provocatively” modified the Ché Guevara interview.

-- The reason could be seen in what the comrades of Print and Propaganda told me: the interview was inserted (intentionally?) in the debate about our thesis (and now we’re definitely out of this world). What does our thesis have to do with this? What do they have to do with the material of a journalist just back, after 40 days of absence, from Cuba? I just tried to provide a truthful description of a situation I saw “on-the-spot”; to make further developments understandable. So, then, should we keep writing in the old manner, pre-XX congress [of the CPSU], to have it said to us — like had happened to me at the Unità and in the party sections — that we weren’t critical and truthful enough? Look at the story about missiles that I gave in my first reports (and for which, if you had asked me for direct information when I was back, you could have avoided some unpleasantry which took place in the party assemblies!): sectarians of our party would be elaborately formulating a sort of “generic Castroism” to mechanically apply to Italy. The name of “Ché” Guevara, taking advantage of the huge prestige of Cubans, would objectively serve to feed that. Not considering the fact that five days after the interview the first disagreements between Cubans and Soviets were clear (and I agree with the last ones, as I wrote in a letter, responding to comrade Conte with whom you entered in a debate too, to the Congress of the Roman Federation) and so the interview, that I agree could have been published later, at least was useful in understanding from where the disagreements were coming from; for what

concerns me, I’m declaring to be against this sort of “generic” or “concrete” Castroism applied to our condition. I think that it is idiocy, the fruit of childish extremism, of political primitivism, and worse of a tired breakdown in the application of the line of revolutionary action of our party. I’ll not be considered one of the “Castroists for Italy” just because I’m married to a Cuban!

To prove to you what I’m saying, I’m ready to intervene, in words and actions, in our print and in our organizations, with the modest weight of someone who, like me, has already been to Cuba twice where these kind of rallies have happened. And I make a concrete proposal: I would be ready to go to Padua to hold a conference on Cuba, entering into a debate with those expelled by that Federation who, as has been said to me, raised these stupid principles.

I want to point out to you that any time that I had the occasion to, in the context of my competences and my contacts, I disagreed with the extremist, Trotskyist, “global” (and so on) positions. And the same happened mainly at “Paese Sera” in controversy with Riccardo Minuti; with youth from “Nuova Generazione” in private discussions, arriving to the halt of any form of collaboration with their newspaper; on occasion of the Congress about Capitalism in Italy, in the controversies, transferred to “Paese sera” and to “Paese,” with all of what, in that occasion, Lucio Magri (against his “Catholic-Stalinist-Trotskyist” thesis I prepared a speech that I didn’t give because I got sick) had to say; in the animated cell discussion, lasting for more than a month, about the newspapers that were following the XXII congress of the C.P.S.U. in which I was the protagonist of a political battle led against the two main tendencies manifested on that occasion (from the “right” Salerno and others and, mainly, for the “left,” Minuti, etc.) supporting, with some critical consideration, the declaration made by the Secretary of the Party on that occasion, in one of my written mentions that was put in circulation, and so on.

-- Mainly I want to point out to you that during my stay in Cuba, when I was forced to, I rejected stupid opinions — even if I’ve heard nice ones — about our party: “The P.C.I. is an equivocal party” as it appears Fidel Castro himself said: “you can’t take the power without the guns, what’s this pacifist strategy?”; “[Party secretary Palmiro] Togliatti is a guy who made many mistakes at the Internazionale and after that”; “the movement of the people in Italy is stronger, more radical than the party”; “the P.C.I. is a Titoist party”; etc... Rumors, I’ll say, that look like [they] were coming mostly from the old Cuban communists). I rejected these opinions in the following occasions: with Nicolas Guillen [head of the National Cuban Writers’ Union]: even expressing my reserve about the

fact that the group of young intellectuals were hostile with him and the cultural directors would have taken advantage of some writings of our party like the one from Togliatti, that I gave to you, for controversies and in a situation different from ours; I asked him the reason of some judgments on our party; with colleagues of "Revolucion" (among which I found a warm environment, favorably disposed toward Italians, humanly sane, even if some times superficial and politically heterogeneous). They reported to me some anti-P.C.I. opinions (I don't know of whom exactly) of some old comrades. Through them I told Fidel Castro's secretary, Celia Sanchez, with whom I should have had an interview, that in Cuba there were wrong opinions about our party due to a lack of information, and that I found contradictory the fact that there were misunderstandings [lit. incomprehensions] between two revolutionary movements: ours and the Cuban one, that have origins and some features in common (the popular character, the origin from wars for liberty, the connection with masses, the originality of the idealistic elaboration). With the Minister of Labor Augusto Martinez Sanchez and with the Foreign Minister Raul Roa to whom I expressed—in relation with the fact that I was having a few difficulties, for more than 2 years, in finding a job for my wife at the Roman Embassy [i.e., Cuban Embassy in Rome], although she was in Cuba an officer of the Revolution, difficulties that from some parts were considered caused by the prejudice toward the Italian communists – the opinion that the Roman Embassy [Cuban Embassy in Rome] could do much more, that the mistake of looking at the Italian situation with "Cuban eyes" was being made, even admitting that from some Italian comrades (I was referring to a journalist colleague), once in Cuba, the opposite mistake could have been made, With the comrades of the Cuban Institute for the Friendship with People to whom I spoke, without naming any name or going into detail, about the pervasive sectarianism at the Cuban Embassy in Rome, about the prejudices that there were (now there are many new officers) toward our party, and about the incomprehension due to superficiality and lack of study of the Italian situation. With a group of Argentine and foreign comrades, who considered the ideas expressed in the debate of "new generation" coming from the P.C.I. saying that we had rehabilitated Trotsky, explaining to them how things were, instead.

-- For two years, even through my personal friendship relations, I argued and many times entered into a debate with almost all my Cuban friends from the Roman Embassy [Cuban Embassy in Rome] replying to their extremism and their prejudices about the P.C.I., trying, often in vain, to make them understand the different peculiarities of the

Italian situation, helping them to get along, and maybe compromising, with that, for last year's hiring of my wife.

-- If spite of it all I left a good impression in Havana (as it was said to me by different sources and also by the written praise coming from my Cuban friends in Rome); I obtained the hiring of my wife to the embassy and even an undefined office (external and not paid) of political counselor; I realized all of that on a sane basis, clearly, supporting always our party, and always refusing to get down to rumors and information about our internal situation, something that I was sometimes pushed to do (not from people of distinguished responsibility). I believe that this my individual action, occasional, always done using just my person (I've never feigned any right of representation) bore some fruit: Foreign Minister Roa said to me that the [Cuban] Embassy in Rome will be enhanced, with a crew [i.e., staff] which will be politically more qualified, and that he wants to keep good relations with our party, about the knowledge of which, he cares a lot.

Concerning the interview and my reports about Cuba in general I would like to add also:

-- I find correct the criticism that you made to me about the inopportune publishing, in that moment, of the interview with Guevara (but how would I have gone about not publishing it once I obtained it? How would the Cubans have interpreted, toward me and toward the party, that silence? The interview was published with a month's delay after I got it).

-- Also, the considerations made by the comrades of the Foreign Section and others related to facts and news published (originally) in some of my reports that would have been better not to say correct.

As I said, the reports were written in a hurry because as soon as I came back the Cuban crisis exploded; the newspaper didn't give me the option of staying at home concentrating on writing more carefully. I had to work 10 hours per day editing, writing the pieces in my spare time; I finished the interview with Guevara that was under editing, while I was pushed to publish it immediately. Also I was half-sick from an annoying vaccine given to me at the airport in Prague.

-- I prepared a scheme of the whole "reportage" for Coon before the crisis exploded. It was accurate and polished, right for more quiet times. The blockade, the danger of an aggression disrupted my report, I was forced to modify the

tone, to make everything more bitter, and also the interview with Guevara suffered from that. I had to highlight the reasons behind the position of the Cubans more than my critics. The initial scheme, that Che approved, was more critical and distanced.

But from that to mistake me for the opposite of what I am: I'm surprised that all that happened for a one-time incident, forgetting all the rest (that I exposed to you) and mainly all my past as a militant and as a journalist, that is in a completely opposite direction from the suspicions to which I've been subject.

I want to make it apparent to you that this demonstrates how inefficient, superficial, and non-political the connection between the newspaper and your source are, if it's true that no one pointed out to you which was my real everyday attitude at the newspaper; that my relations with the party from 6 years ago to now have never been for me anything else than a sequences of administrative facts without any political or ideal nature.

This situation at "Paese Sera" was aggravated by the Regiment that was imposed on me, of just executive work, that brutalized me, leading me to a real process of alienation from any political discussion, if it's true that I ended up doing, involuntarily, in the case of the interview with Guevara, something that resulted as completely and objectively opposite, in effect, to my own convictions.

Many cordial salutes.

[signed]

(Carmine De Lipsis)

P.S. For what concerns "Paese Sera", I do not exclude the things that I said to you in the previous letter²⁹, I don't expect much more out of them, taking advantage of the incident and of your intervention to do what was missing to the plans they had before I arrived there: exclude me from the editorial campaign, so that the stagnant water would remain so, in a deaf hostility to new times.

Rome, 26 November 1962

[Source: 1962 Cuba Estero 502, 2459-2467, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow.]



**Italian Communist Ugo Pecchioli, Report
on Trip to Cuba, 12 August 1963**

COMMUNIST PARTY OF ITALY - FEDERATION OF
TURIN

12 August 1963

To the Secretary of the Party
ROME

Dear Comrades,

I send to you the first notes on the results of the trip to Cuba in reference to the principal political questions examined in the meeting with Fidel Castro. Other relative information about the domestic situation in Cuba (economic development, life of the PURS [United Party of the Socialist Revolution], union activity, etc.) will be possible to send to you when - at the end of the month - I will meet with other comrades of the Italian delegation and we put together our notes and collected materials.

Additionally I will send to you and the Foreign Section a note on the concrete proposals to establish tighter contact between the two Parties and for other initiatives about which you will also find mentioned in the attached report.

I think the trip was very useful and it served to launch a basis for profitable collaboration and more intense relations between PURS and our Party. I consider that all of the complexities of the discussed proposals for Cuba should be well-examined as soon as possible, elaborating the opportune solutions. It is my conviction and the conviction of all of the comrades of the delegations that our Party can and must have a role of great importance in Cuba and in Latin America. In this sense, I hold that we do not just content ourselves to sending more materials, but we must think about the ways to have Cuba as another Comrade of ours. The proposals, contained in the notes, are for the radio, for l'Unità, for tourism etc. if they are sorted out for us, could allow us to have in this country a small collective that would have fortuitous connections, beyond Cuban comrades, also with many exponents and representatives of other Latin American countries that are always present in large number in Cuba.

A job well done, now for Cuba it is necessary above all to take into account with a general perspective of the development of the democratic and socialist movement in south-central America.

Heartfelt thanks to you for offering me the possibility of this experience, I salute you all cordially.

Ugo Pecchioli



The meeting with Fidel Castro, upon our prior request, had no formal character of simple courtesy - as is usually the case with numerous other foreign delegations - but consented to face the political problems and common interests for the two parties in a very frank and open manner. The conversation unwound itself in a climate of great cordiality and is considered very useful.

I sum up here the opinions of Fidel Castro on the topics that I posed to him:

1. Relative to the international situation of Cuba, Fidel Castro openly acknowledges that in the months that have followed the crisis of last autumn there has been a marked improvement. Although there remains a significant imperialist threat, for Cuba a phase of increased security has opened up. Many times he underlined — on this subject — the firmness of the responsibility to guarantee Cuban independence from every aggression directed by the United States. This commitment was confirmed in the joint Soviet-Cuban communique penned during the trip to the USSR of Castro and — added Castro — in different classified cables, marked with a strong support, from the Soviet government to that of the United States. Castro is definitive in saying the solution given to the crisis was positive, opens a new period of increased peace [tranquility] for Cuba, thus allowing the government and the Party — always maintaining at a maximum vigilance and bettering the level of military preparation — to gain momentum in order to strengthen the socialist party internally.

Castro confirmed that his recent trip to the USSR [27 April-3 June 1963] had definitively liquidated every possible residue of divergence and misunderstanding with the Soviet Union. Incidentally, this was well signaled in these weeks and in the course of the rallies for the tenth anniversary of 26 July, one of the dominant themes is the Soviet-Cuban friendship (the documentary of the Castro trip to USSR is broadcast in all of the cities after being premiered — Fidel Castro in attendance — to all of the foreign delegations with visible embarrassment from the Chinese delegates.)

Still on the topic of the international situation of Cuba, Castro said that only the politics of such an end [of USSR guarantees] by the Cuban government can discourage the intent of the more aggressive American imperialist circles and deepens the contradictions between them and the “opportunistic route” of Kennedy.

There is today in the Cuban leadership absolute certainty in Soviet protection; they have the conviction that a direct aggression by the United States would mean a world war. From this the documented opinion of a new level of relative security is derived.

The government’s decision, announced by Castro, to institute obligatory military service does not contradict this new phase of relative increased security. This measure has two fundamental purposes: to allow for the intake in the economic and social life of the country many technical and political cadres which until now were concentrated predominantly in the army and of absorbing in rank the mass army which still consists of youths that are out of work or not studying. A well thought decision of conscription means precisely an effort in favor of the social and economic development of the country.

Castro believes on the one hand, and we think with good reason, in the possibility of new attempts to land mercenaries (in Florida, Guatemala, Nicaragua departments of Cuban exiles continue to be trained and armed by the United States) and on the other that the army and the Cuban militia are today capable of repelling and disrupting in little time any operations of this kind. Also to this idea Castro underlined that the USSR furnished the Cuban army with massive quantities of conventional arms, technical assistance and the most modern equipment.

He continued to add that the normalization of the international situation of Cuba, and of relations between the US and Cuba, are strictly tied to the success of USSR in the socialist camp for the fight for peaceful coexistence. They firmly reject every prospect of aggravation of the international situation by means of accelerating, in Latin America and the world, the revolutionary process. In this regard — Castro affirmed — a solution must be found for the problem of Guantanamo. An attack by us on Guantanamo would signify an unpardonable provocation.

2. Regarding the profound divergence that exists between the Chinese Communist Party and the great majority of the other communist parties, Fidel Castro explicitly affirmed that the Chinese attack on the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] doesn’t have a foundation and that it was a grave error of the Chinese to publish their “25 points” during the course of the meeting in Moscow. Before speaking to the split with the Chinese, Castro underlined the great worry of the Cuban comrades for the current division: “In our difficult situation internally and internationally — he in essence said — and with a party that is still not ideologically prepared this discourages and deprives popular enthusiasm.”

He affirmed that, in an attempt to smooth out the contrasts and favoring compromise, the Party and the Government of Cuba have held that they must not take an explicit position of dissidence with a formal act. He considers, however, that at this point it has become necessary for PURS to take an official position and that this position is under consideration.

The preference to not dive into a position of dissent (and that, as I see it, is even more important than not disturbing enthusiasm and revolutionary tension of Cubans and other rev-

olutionary movements in Latin American) has also caused the Cuban leaders to publish nothing — up to the last few days — on the international debate in their media. Castro, however, announced to us that in the next edition of the PURS magazine, “*Socialist Cuba*,” it would be reporting the entire text of the letter of the CPSU and the “Chinese 25 points.” Two days after our meeting, in fact, the magazine came out with the two documents and this signals an opening, in the Cuban party, of a debate from which it was no longer possible to escape.

Fidel Castro on this topic said that he was confident that the Cuban communists know how to confront this issue without being discouraging. “The Cuban revolution will not fall because of this. Our Party is firmly united.”

On the subject of the divergence he was very rapid and explicit. He affirmed that he is completely in support of the policies of the USSR. Peaceful coexistence, achieved by a struggle for reasonable agreements with the imperialists, opens up new possibilities for the advancement of the revolutionary movement. The liberation of the people can not ride on the use of thermonuclear arms. Relative to the liberation movements of the dependent colonized countries, Castro affirmed that they assert themselves and progress thanks to the help of the USSR — (“we live and build socialism because we have the help of the USSR. We help other revolutionary movements in Latin America because we have the help of the USSR.”)

Definitively Fidel Castro defined the [Cuban] relationship with the USSR and CPSU as “magnificent.” It’s also needed to point out that in his speech on July 26 he really underlined the Soviet-Cuban friendship, he emphasized the agreement with Moscow to partially suspend nuclear experiments, he referred many times, to exalt them, to the policies of peace of Khrushchev. Meanwhile in previous speeches and official acts — also in the 2nd Declaration of Havana — he always made reference to the USSR and the People’s Republic of China jointly, in all the following rallies he cited only the USSR. It is not without significance the fact that the slogan repeatedly chanted by the hundreds of thousands of people present at the July 26 rallies was “Fidel-Khrushchev *nos estamos con los dos*” [“Fidel-Khrushchev we are with both”]. In numerous other contacts made with other Cuban leaders — particularly with Fabio Grobart, director of “*Socialist Cuba*”, with Calcinez [Rafael Calcines?] member of the leadership of PURS, with Jolanda Perez director of ICAP, etc. we ascertained that the Chinese comrades send out a great number of materials against the CPSU and other parties including our own. They are ready to create an expanded media agency whose publications will reach every environment. Comrade Grobart sustains that the PURS [United Party of the Socialist Revolution] and the government must take positions to limit this fractious effort, he

sees that at this moment it is difficult. Among all the comrades in leadership, there was talk of great indignation toward the Chinese comrades.

It is my opinion [and] that of the comrades of the delegation that the cadre of leaders of the Cuban Party have conquered the right position. However, we believe that while having their justifications, in the cautions and preoccupations of the Cuban comrades in informing the Party and public opinion about terms of dissent with the Chinese, in opening a debate and in taking a position, they can today — at the moment in which nothing can no longer impede a discussion — come up with some counter strokes. This also takes into account the level of education, experience, the still crude ideological grounding of the Cuban militants, for many of them the actual divergences with the Chinese comrades go off without actual understanding of all the moments that have led to these divergences. To this one can add two facts: that the Chinese comrades have worked and are working to widely disseminate their positions, and that in the Cuban people lives a sentiment of gratitude for the help given by the Chinese in their revolution.

There is however a good reason to believe that the great prestige of Castro and his group of Cuban leaders will succeed in overcoming these difficulties, just as they succeeded to overcome the critical moments in the “*caso Escalante*” [“Escalante Case”] and of the split with the USSR last Autumn [over the Soviet withdrawal of the nuclear missiles to resolve the crisis with the United States—ed.].

We did not have an inkling of eventual clashes in the group of Cuban leaders in terms of the present controversy in the communist camp. Comrade Grobart, speaking with me, did not exclude the possibility that the inferior level of the cadre of leaders might necessitate a political struggle, but he said that he was confident in the possibility to capture all of the party with the right positions.

3. On the development of the struggle for democracy and socialism in different Latin American countries Fidel Castro affirmed that he shared the conviction that it is not possible to generalize through a single model. Implicitly correcting an impression that to us some time ago seemed to be in the media, from declarations and speeches of Cuban leaders and of Castro himself, it comes today clearly affirmed that also in a relatively homogeneous group — single Latin American countries have diverse situations (for the level of economic development, for tradition and experience, for knowledge and revolutionary and democratic organizations, for the amount of United States intervention, etc.) consequently the revolutionary vanguards of every single country vie to elaborate and pursue their own avenues and objectives of advancement. Other than in the conversation with us, Castro also spoke about this question in his speech of

26 July. Speaking with us he wanted, country by country, to illustrate to us where a peaceful avenue that could be taken and where instead there was no other option but armed struggle. The two cases that speak most to this are that of Chile and Venezuela. For the latter country he reminded that some time ago the Venezuelan revolution was accused (he did not specify by whom) of risking armed conflict; today he underlined the correctness of this choice that corresponds completely with the actual situation of that country and is obtaining good results. Castro said that the armed conflict in Venezuela could rapidly bring stabilization of democratic liberty and to elections that would signify the broken cracks of [Venezuelan President Romulo] Betancourt. Regarding Chile, and in general in the countries where it is today possible to advance in a more peaceful way, he parsed that he fundamentally could identify with a peaceful avenue and with the possibility of the conquest of the majority in an election.

Considerations for a democratic route to socialism, that for example, were worked on by us (fights for economic revendications, for structural reforms, for the development of democracy, links between the different levels of these struggles, electoral momentum, etc.) seemed still like a very foreign political idea to the Cuban leaders. This question must be, I think, addressed with great depth on the occasion of the arrival in Italy of the PURS delegation and materials on this topic (as was explained before) must be sent to Cuba.

Speaking with us, Castro more than once expressed the concept that "Latin America is the weak link of imperialism. The collapse of the positions of power in Latin America will provoke an irreparable crisis in the United States." His opinion that was proposed is that in only a brief matter of time there will be other breaks in countries that today are today subjects of the United States. The situation is most advanced in Venezuela. He also insisted that because also the Parties of Western Europe, in the first place our own, which are intensifying their solidarity toward the liberation movement of the Latin American countries, [we should] not exclude the possibility of direct assistance.

Speaking then with some Argentine and Chilean comrades I had the impression that today - after Fidel's trip to the USSR - the relations are much better between the Cuban Party and the other Latin American parties, in whose ranks — these years — there have been open lacerations the origins of which were certainly not foreign to the view that the experience of Cuba was outright [*tout court*] reproducible everywhere.

4. On the relations between PCI and PURS and on the Italian situation the conversation can be summed up like this:

a) Castro expressed great admiration for our Party, for its struggles, for the great electoral success that for Cuba was loudly celebrated. Particular emotion was kindled by the

solidarity of Italian workers during the landing [*sbarco*] at the *Playa Giròn* [i.e., Bay of Pigs] and during the crisis of '62.

b) He has a relatively exact knowledge of the conditions in which the PCI fights, of its objectives, of its strategy (knowledge which is very scarce and fragmentary, as was demonstrated by the fact that time and time again, in our trip we heard the question posed: "How come with two million registered and eight million votes you can't take power?") Castro said he understood and shared our political line given that the situation in the West entails a suitable revolutionary strategy. He recognized that the exchange of information between the two parties is too meager and occasional and that forms of organic contacts must be added. To this proposal he welcomed with enthusiasm the invitation contained in the letter of Comrade [Palmiro] Togliatti to send to Italy a PURS delegation. He then welcomed all of our proposals:

- 1) Transmissions in Italian language from Radio Cuba for Latin America where there are tens of millions of Italian emigres;
- 2) Exchange of correspondence between "Hoy" and l'Unità. It would be even better to have a reporter from l'Unità in Havana; it is rather more difficult for them — because of the absence of a group of expert journalists - to send a correspondent to Italy;
- 3) Reciprocal translations of political documents and books etc;
- 4) Organized and permanent sharing of party materials, asking that PCI regularly print its foreign bulletin in the Spanish language and send it in large quantity
- 5) Exchange of delegations of diverse nature
- 6) Reciprocal sending of lecturers

On all of these proposals I will enclose an attachment with some concrete proposals to be examined separately by other PURS comrades. Relating to defining a period for receiving a PURS delegation in Italy it will occur that the Secretary of the Party will solicit a written response from the Cubans.

I think that it will also be good to find a way to make known that it would greatly please us to receive a delegation of comrades of great qualifications.

c) Fidel Castro posed to us two other problems:

- 1) To find a way to send to Cuba a group of Italian technical experts (medics, teachers, industrial experts of any branch, etc.) For them Italians offer a double advantage of coming from a country with a great democratic tradition and of not encountering great difficulties with the language. In successive meetings with other comrades in the Cuban leadership the question was proposed always with great insistence. They also consent to the sending of also the family of these technicians and they welcome the idea that their stay would be long. I consider that the question must be examined with attention also because the experience up to now has not been amongst the happiest, and it has left some bad legacy (on what we can now know especially from the experience of the failed group of our comrades sent to Cuba from Czechoslovakia and that are now almost all back in their homes, it will need to be examined fully).
- 2) To organize mass tourism to Cuba from Italy. Castro said that, through their touristic agency (INIT), Cubans are able to offer easy payment terms [*Rateazioni*] also for up to two years. He insisted that there be rise in the direct contact between INIT and ITALTURIST. The Cuban leaders, to break the American blockade, make great efforts to establish economic, political and cultural relations with all of the countries of the world. To tourism from Europe they give great importance and it must be remembered that the preexisting hotel-touristic apparatus that the old regime which has been recently prepared, offers ample possibilities in this sense.

[Source: 1963 Cuba Estero 492, 2555-2566, Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI) records, Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome; obtained by James Hershberg, translated by Alex Barrow.]

Notes

1 Silvio Pons is Professor of East European History at the University of Rome 2 and Director of the Gramsci Institute Foundation in Rome, which holds the PCI archives.

2 O. A. WESTAD, *The Global Cold War. Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005); M. GALEAZZI, *Il Pci e il movimento dei paesi non allineati 1955-1975* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2011); O. PAPPAGALLO, *Il Pci e la rivoluzione cubana. La «via latino-americana al socialismo» tra Mosca e Pechino (1959-1965)* (Roma: Carocci, 2009).

3 S. Pons, *Il comunismo internazionale dopo Stalin. La Conferenza di Mosca del 1957*, in *Società totalitarie e transizione alla democrazia. Saggi in memoria di Victor Zaslavsky*, edited by T. Piffer and V. Zubok (Bologna, il Mulino, 2011); Zh. Shen and Ya. Xia, “Hidden Currents During the Honeymoon: Mao, Khrushchev, and the 1957 Moscow

Conference,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 11, no. 4 (Fall 2009); C. SPAGNOLO, *Sul Memoriale di Yalta. Togliatti e la crisi del movimento comunista internazionale (1956-1964)*, Carocci, Roma 2007. S. Pons, “The Italian Communist Party Between East and West 1960-1964,” in W. Loth, ed., *Europe, Cold War and Coexistence 1953-1965* (London: Frank Cass, 2004).

4 L. M. LÜTHI, *The Sino-Soviet Split. Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); S. RADCHENKO, *Two Suns in the Heavens. The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967*, (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press/Wilson Center Press, 2009); J. FRIEDMAN, “Soviet Policy in the Developing World and the Chinese Challenge in the 1960s,” *Cold War History*, vol. 10, no. 2 (May 2010).

5 S. Pons, *La rivoluzione globale. Storia del comunismo internazionale 1917-1991* (Torino: Einaudi, 2012; forthcoming with Oxford University Press), pp. 301-4.

6 [*Contadini*—literally peasants but working class or the support in the countryside in this context may be suitable as well.—trans.]

7 Ibid.

8 [*In seno*; literally, in the bosom—trans.]

9 [Literally: “In fact it was possible because one did not have to strike down any ‘middle class,’ such as commerce, which before did not exist, it was only carried out occasionally by speculators at a high price and almost only American products.”—trans.]

10 [Probably referring to the clergy or perhaps the Church as an institution—trans.]

11 Ed note: This is a reference to the US economic embargo, rather than to the “quarantine” (i.e., blockade) imposed by Washington during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

12 [In original—ed.]

13 [In original—ed.]

14 [In original—ed.]

15 [In original—ed.]

16 [In original—ed.]

17 [In original—ed.]

18 [In original—ed.]

19 [Trans. note: The original Italian word, maliziosamente, can also be translated as “maliciously”—but without the weighted negative connotations of the English word—or “artfully.”]

20 [In original—ed.]

21 [In original—ed.]

22 [In original—ed.]

23 [In original—ed.]

24 [In original—ed.]

25 [In original—ed.]

26 Ed. note: According to Italian scholar Leopoldo Nuti, the allusion to a “dramatic episode” in Milan refers to an incident on Saturday, 27 October 1962, in which a young student in a demonstration, Giuseppe Ardizzone, was killed when he was accidentally run over by a police jeep when police charged to disperse the crowd.

27 [“So much the better the war.” This in Italian is an expression of welcoming indifference but not of want or need. Best: “But if there is war, so be it.”—trans.]

28 [That is, let’s set the record straight and speak in a unified manner.—trans.]

29 Ed. note: Not found or further identified.

Italy and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Documents translated and introduced by Leopoldo Nuti¹

Italy was directly affected by the Cuban missile crisis for a number of reasons. The most important was the fact that together with Turkey, Italy was one of the two European countries which hosted the US Jupiter Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM), which inevitably drew comparisons with the Soviet deployment of the SS-4 and SS-5 (R-12 and R-14) missiles in the Caribbean. Italy also played, or tried to play, an active diplomatic role in the second phase of the crisis, after President John F. Kennedy's 22 October television speech to the nation: its prime minister, Amintore Fanfani, was a most energetic and dynamic personality, and he felt it was his duty to work for a peaceful resolution of the crisis, even if the extent of his initiatives has yet to be fully clarified.

An overall assessment of the Cuban crisis' impact on Italy should also take into account two additional aspects. First, by October 1962, the country was well advanced in an important domestic political experiment, the so-called opening to the left, which affected Italy's international posture during the crisis and in turn was affected by the crisis' solution: second, the aftermath of the crisis, with the withdrawal of the US IRBMs from Europe, had lasting consequences for Italy's nuclear sharing plans inside of NATO.

The presence of the Jupiter missiles in Italy was stressed by the ExComm at its very first meeting, when National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy specifically mentioned the IRBMs in Italy and added that perhaps Khrushchev had decided to deploy the Soviet weapons in Cuba to "sort of balance" the "political, psychological" effect those other US weapons in Europe might have had upon the USSR.² In all the subsequent meetings, the missiles in Italy (and Turkey) were frequently mentioned in the discussions, either as a possible target of Soviet retaliation in case of a US strike against Cuba, or, later on, as a possible pawn to be traded if a compromise solution had to be worked out: on the 18th, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara mentioned this option for the first time, and on the 20th the President himself mused that "at an appropriate time" these missiles might have to be removed to ease a solution.³ President Kennedy, moreover, was also quite concerned that the missiles in Italy or Turkey could be fired without the proper authorization, and on the 22nd, before his television address, he asked that personal messages be sent to the commanders of the Jupiter installations "asking them to take special precautions."⁴ When the crisis became public, and no solution seemed to be in sight, Secretary of State Dean Rusk asked the US ambassador in Rome, Frederick

Reinhardt, what the Italians would think about a trade, and Reinhardt replied that, if properly handled, a swap with the Cuban missiles could be implemented, particularly if it was presented as a result of an Italian contribution to the solution of the crisis, thereby playing on the Italian government's craving for major international status.⁵

As for the Italian government, the crisis drove home that the presence of the missiles had really become a double-edged sword. Italy had been the first European continental country to accept the Jupiter missiles, and even before they were fully operational the government and diplomatic corps had already begun to regard them as a powerful tool to enhance the country's standing inside NATO by giving Italy a nuclear status of some sort. According to a number of Italian documents from the late 1950s, Italian diplomats were convinced that the presence of these weapons gave Italy the right to participate in whatever inner circle of nuclear decision-making NATO was going to set up. With the passing of time, however, the Italian government also showed a growing awareness of the risks involved in their presence on Italian soil: liquid-fuelled and land based, the missiles had clearly become a possible target of a Soviet pre-emptive strike. Khrushchev did not fail to make this point clear to Prime Minister Fanfani in their August 1961 meeting in Moscow. While not anxious to get rid of them at any cost, the government was clearly interested in replacing them with a more modern, sea-based weapon system which would remove the threat from Italian territory while still enabling Italy to participate in any future NATO nuclear-sharing arrangement. To this purpose, Italy had begun to modify the cruiser *Garibaldi* and had installed in it four launch tubes which might have been used for the new Polaris missiles if the US were going to share them with its allies.⁶

The Fanfani diary and the diary of Manlio Brosio (then Italy's ambassador to France, later NATO secretary-general), reproduced below, clearly show the ambiguity and the different perspectives inside the government about the presence of the Jupiter missiles at the time of the crisis. Fanfani talks openly with some of his diplomats about a possible trade of the missiles, even if in his notes he is very careful to attribute these ideas to his correspondents and interlocutors and not to himself. Of particular interest are the references to the cables from New York on the conversation about a possible missile trade between US Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai E. Stevenson and Italian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs

Carlo Russo, whom Fanfani had sent to the UN to keep a close watch on what was going on; and to the opinion of the Ambassador in London, Pietro Quaroni, who recommended that a deal could be accepted, but only if proposed by the US—something which might be interpreted to imply that there might have been a discussion whether Italy should volunteer to offer such a trade.⁷ The more conservative Brosio, on the other hand, was concerned at the idea of any US trade-off, which he saw as the symptom of a frightening US trend to seek an understanding with the Soviets at all costs, and the pages of his journal reveal a gloomy pessimism about the possible solutions of the crisis. Remarkably, however, Brosio did not seem to believe that there was an actual Soviet-American deal about the bases: when in January 1963 he was finally informed about the American decision to withdraw the Jupiter missiles, he saw this as the confirmation of his long-term concerns about a US-USSR entente, but not as the result of a specific agreement.

The extent to which Fanfani was actually willing to propose a missile trade himself has been the object of some controversy since the publication of the memoirs of Ettore Bernabei, one of Fanfani's right-hand men and the long-time Director General of Italian State Television (RAI). In his book, and in a number of interviews (including with this author), Bernabei tells the story of his trip to the United States in October 1962 to attend a special meeting to discuss satellite broadcasting. Bernabei then adds that at the height of the crisis Fanfani asked him to remain in Washington, keep in touch with Hombert Bianchi, Fanfani's Press Secretary, and to wait for further instructions. Without giving any evidence besides his own recollections, he goes on to state that Fanfani proposed to trade the Italian Jupiter missiles to both the Soviet and the American ambassadors, and concludes his narrative by writing that on 27 October he was actually received by Arthur Schlesinger inside the White House and given full assurance that Fanfani's proposal had been accepted.⁸ The story has a certain aura of plausibility, given Fanfani's propensity to act in favor of a peaceful resolution of the crisis, as well as the fact that Arthur Schlesinger was certainly the man inside the Kennedy administration who had the closest personal connections with the Italian political scene. Bernabei's narrative, however, features many gross factual mistakes, completely ignores the existing scholarship on the unfolding of the crisis, and finds no support either in the Fanfani diaries or in the available US documents—or, documents from elsewhere.⁹ In the Arthur Schlesinger papers at the JFK Presidential Library in Boston, there is significant documentation on the 27 October meeting, but what comes out from it is a completely different story. The record shows that Bernabei asked to see him even *before* arriving to the US

and *before* the crisis became public, on the 17th.¹⁰ According to Schlesinger's own report to the President, they did meet on the 27th, but Bernabei did not talk about the crisis at all. He told Schlesinger he had been asked to talk to some of the most trusted contacts inside the Kennedy administration to encourage the President to send to the US embassy in Rome a reliable diplomat who, acting confidentially and covertly, might develop a closer relationship with the Vatican and the new course opened by the Council and John the 23rd.¹¹ Bernabei and Schlesinger may as well have *also* talked about the crisis—after all it was on everybody's mind at the time—but unless any new evidence is found, the story about an Italian proposal to swap the missiles must be regarded as apocryphal, as an attempt to play up the role played by Fanfani—and by Bernabei himself—to ease the solution of the confrontation.

In light of Italy's interest in collaborating on a peaceful solution to the crisis, however, it is all the more remarkable that the Soviets asked for the withdrawal of the Turkish Jupiter missiles, and not the Italian ones. Fanfani's diary offers a possible explanation for this choice, but not a terribly convincing one. According to Frol Kozlov, the issue of asking for the dismantling of the Italian missiles was raised in the Soviet Politburo, but was eventually discarded as a sign of respect for Italy "on account of the memory" of Fanfani's (August 1961) visit to the Soviet Union. True or not, since 27 October the Italian Jupiter missiles stopped playing a central role in the discussions about the solution of the crisis, which focused almost exclusively on the missiles in Turkey. Nevertheless, even the Italian bases would be affected by the outcome of the crisis, as the Kennedy administration decided to shutter them in order to facilitate Turkey's acceptance of the withdrawal of their own Jupiter missiles under the pretext of a general package of NATO modernization of its weapons systems in the Mediterranean.

The crisis must also be seen from the perspective of the tense confrontation going on in Italian politics at the time concerning the so-called "opening to the left." After the stability of the early postwar years under the leadership of the Christian Democrat Alcide De Gasperi, Italy had entered a more troublesome course, in which the pro-Western forces enjoyed a flimsy majority against the largest Communist party in Western Europe (PCI) and a fellow-travelling Socialist Party (PSI) led by Pietro Nenni. One way out of the predicament seemed to lie in gradually drawing the Socialists away from the Communists, and in their eventual inclusion in the democratic camp. Such a change, which might isolate the Communists and promote social reforms at the same time, had been under scrutiny in Italian politics for quite some time under the name of an "opening to the left," but it

found many opponents both in Italy and in the US because of the heavy neutralist (if not entirely pro-Soviet) streak in the Socialists' foreign policy. The debate about the reliability of Nenni's Socialists lasted almost ten years, and reached a climax in the early 1960s, when some members of the Kennedy administration—Arthur Schlesinger in particular—gradually took a strong interest in the idea of a center-left government and started encouraging the PSI and the DC to form a reformist alliance that could isolate the PCI. In October 1962 the new alliance was cautiously taking its first steps, and the Cuban crisis was in a way a test of its trans-Atlantic reliability. Fanfani, as a matter of fact, took a relatively mild pro-US position, and—as he also makes clear in his Journal entries - both in his letter to Kennedy and in his speech to the Italian parliament he stressed the importance of acting through the UN to solve the crisis. This somewhat lukewarm position, which sharply contrasted with Fanfani's previously more clear-cut pro-American stances, was attributed by the State Department to his excessive concern with the domestic priorities of the new center-left majority and to the need to not alienate the Socialist Party. According to a number of later assessments, however, the risks for the US were very limited, and were more than made up for by the prospect of a new center-left coalition: “the desirability of drawing the PSI into the democratic coalition in Italy and of thereby strengthening Italy politically, socially, and economically may make some sacrifice of Italian open solidarity with us in fields of foreign policy matters a tolerable one, so long as the ultimate reliability of Italian adherence to the alliance is not compromised.”¹²

Finally, it is important to point out that the foreign policy the new Italian coalition would adopt might have been more attuned to the post-Cuban course of US foreign policy than the previous rigid Atlanticism Italy had displayed throughout the 1950s. As would become clear in 1963, the Cuban crisis was a real watershed that made the Kennedy administration opt for a policy of dialogue with the Soviet Union—difficult as it may have been—rather than a policy of confrontation which would involve reinforcing NATO through the nuclear sharing projects of the previous years. Disarmament and arms control initiatives would become a central feature of US foreign policy in the following months and years, and while this turn undermined any Italian hope for nominal nuclear status through a policy of Atlantic cooperation, it made possible for the new center-left coalition to support the US in its new search for a less confrontational attitude in the Cold War.

A Note on the Documents

The Italian archival situation offers a very mixed picture for

historical research on the Cold War years. In the last few years, a number of important personal collections of papers from some of the central figures in Italian postwar history—including Fanfani to Moro, Nenni, Gronchi, Andreotti, and Brosio—have been opened to research. Most of these collections contain not only personal papers but a vast amount of government records which politicians and diplomats stored away in their own files for their personal use. In addition, the State Central Archive (ACS, *Archivio centrale dello Stato*) has also opened up a number of collections which contain precious information about the evolution of Italian foreign policy, such as the papers of the Diplomatic Counselor of the Prime Minister (*Consigliere Diplomatico del Presidente del Consiglio*). Finally, there are the many Party archives which contain the official records of the DC, the PSI, and the PCI, which also offer an important contribution to our understanding of Italian politics. There is, however, one major gap, namely the Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: most of its collections are still open only through the late 1950s, due to a combination of scarcity of funds and sheer neglect. Clearly this situation makes it difficult to present a well-rounded picture of Italian foreign policy, as the documents we have collected for this special issue make clear enough. Both the Fanfani and the Brosio journals offer interesting insights into how the crisis was perceived, but scholars still need complete access to the existing documentation in order to develop a well-rounded picture of the initiatives that the Italian government may actually have implemented.

Italy and the Cuban Missile Crisis— Essential Reading

Books

Manlio Brosio, *Diari di Parigi 1961-1964*, edited by Umberto Gentiloni Silveri (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009)

Roberto Ducci, *I Capintesta* (Milano: Rusconi, 1982)

Agostino Giovagnoli e Luciano Tosi (eds.) *Amintore Fanfani e la politica estera italiana* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2010)

Evelina Martelli, *L'altro atlantismo. Fanfani e la politica estera italiana, 1958-1963* (Milano: Guerini e Associati, 2008)

Leopoldo Nuti, *Gli Stati Uniti e l'apertura a sinistra, 1953-1963. Importanza e limiti della presenza americana in Italia* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1999)

Leopoldo Nuti, *La sfida nucleare. La politica estera italiana e le armi atomiche, 1945-1991* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007)

Onofrio Pappagallo, *Il PCI e la rivoluzione cubana. La "via latino-americana al socialismo" tra Mosca e Pechino (1959-1965)*, (Roma: Carocci, 2009)

Articles

Ennio Di Nolfo, « L'Italie et la crise de Cuba en 1962 », in Maurice Vaisse (ed.), *L'Europe et la Crise de Cuba* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993), pp.123-157

Leopoldo Nuti, "Dall'operazione *Deep Rock* all'operazione *Pot Pie*: una storia documentata dei missili SM 78 Jupiter in Italia", in *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali*, vol. 11/12, n.1 (1996/1997) e vol.2 (1996/1997), pp.95-138 e 105-149.

L.N. «L'Italie et le missiles Jupiter», in Maurice Vaisse (ed.), *L'Europe et la Crise de Cuba* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993), pp.123-157

L. N., "Missiles or Socialists? The Italian Policy of the Kennedy Administration", in Douglas Brinkley and Richard Griffiths (eds.), *Kennedy and Europe* (New Orleans: Louisiana State University Press, 1999)

L.N. "The United States, Italy and the Opening to the Left, 1953-1963", in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 4, no.3 (Summer 2002), pp.36-55.

DOCUMENTS

The Amintore Fanfani Diaries

Covering his entire career from the late 1930s to the early 1980s, the Amintore Fanfani diaries are one of the most important primary sources for understanding a key figure of post-world war II Italian history. They are available at the Italian Senate Historical Archives [the *Archivio Storico del Senato della Repubblica*] in Rome and are about to be published in an integral version. This remarkable document, must be approached with care, as it alternates longer analyses and very fragmentary, sketchy information. According to one of the scholars who edited the Diaries for their final publication, Fanfani probably conceived them as a sort of personal notebook from which he could draw the necessary reminders

about his activities, rather than a place where he could muse at length about the meaning of what was going on.¹³ The few excerpts about Cuba are a good example of the importance of the diaries: not only do they make clear Fanfani's sense of danger and his willingness to search for a peaceful solution of the crisis, but the bits about his exchanges with Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlo Russo, with the Italian Ambassador in London Pietro Quaroni, or with the USSR Presidium member Frol Kozlov, help frame the Italian position during the crisis in a broader context.

22 October

Tonight at 20:45 [US Ambassador Frederick Reinhardt] delivers me a letter in which [US President] Kennedy announces that he must act with an embargo of strategic weapons against Cuba because he is threatened by missile bases. And he sends me two of the four parts of the speech which he will deliver at midnight [Rome time; 7 pm Washington time]. I reply to the ambassador wondering whether they may be falling into a trap which will have possible repercussions in Berlin and elsewhere. Nonetheless, caught by surprise, I decide to reply formally tomorrow.

I immediately called [President of the Republic Antonio] Segni in Sassari and [Foreign Minister Attilio] Piccioni in Brussels recommending prudence and peace for tomorrow's EEC [European Economic Community] meeting. I place a call to London and [British Prime Minister Harold] Macmillan says that he will send a message for me tomorrow.

23 October

The situation has generated great preoccupations. I call Segni on the phone and I advise him to get back [to Rome] within the day. I gather [Secretary of the Christian Democratic Party Aldo] Moro, [Secretary of the Social Democratic Party Giuseppe] Saragat, [Secretary of the Republican Party Oronzo] Reale, and I inform them, they approve the policy which I am going to present at the Senate and at the Chamber of Deputies tonight, after I have agreed upon the text of the declarations with Moro, [under-secretary for Foreign Affairs Carlo] Russo and the Chairmen of the Parliamentary Committees for foreign affairs.

I receive from Ambassador Ward a message from Macmillan, obviously critical of Kennedy's decision, and asking for an entente. I reply immediately suggesting an action for peace. I prepare my reply to Kennedy. I enjoin the PSI [Italian Socialist Party] not to associate themselves with the PCI [Italian Communist Party] and to take a moderate position, as it does afterwards under [Francesco] De Martino in

the Chamber of Deputies but not under [Emilio] Lussu in the Senate.

I send Russo to New York with the task of trying to make the UN take the situation under its control and solve it peacefully.

24 October

At 9:30 I see Segni, who has come back from Sassari yesterday evening, and I inform him of the events by reading him Kennedy's message, Macmillan's [message], and my own replies. He approves them, suggesting some corrections in my reply to Kennedy, which I will deliver at 12 to the US ambassador—something I could not do yesterday evening as I had to chair the meeting on the shipping yards in Leghorn until midnight, after the meetings at the Parliament. I see Piccioni, back from Brussels.

I inform Saragat about both messages. Moro knew about them since yesterday.

The French Ambassador [Armand] Berard expressed to some friends his appreciation for the speech I gave yesterday, which on the contrary worried [Soviet Ambassador Andrej] Kozjrev. In Moscow, TASS too interpreted it as pro-US, criticizing it. The Italian press in general welcomed it. Moro was satisfied with it. I solved the problems of the aqueduct in Paola and of the shipyards in Leghorn. I gave instructions that tomorrow at the NATO meeting in Paris Italy should not associate itself with the US proposal to suspend the supply of aid to the USSR, and to postpone the issue in order not to exacerbate East-West relations.

25 October

The Pope [John the XXIII] who has been informed about my activity for peace in the past days, lets me know about his satisfaction. At 11 am, at the Capitol, delivery of the Balzan Prize to the Nobel Foundation. Then at the Quirinale I talk with the King of Sweden, worried about the situation and critical of the Soviet decision about the blockade.

At 5 pm at Villa Madama reception of the Italian Episcopate. There are 22 cardinals and almost 400 bishops, most stressing their satisfaction at meeting the government which has honored them. How beautiful that this has crowned today's manifestations of peace, climaxing at noon with the Pope's radio speech in favor of negotiation at any level.

In the evening meeting with the ministers, about the hospitals. We conclude the project [draft] which we should approve. Piccioni has met both the US and the Soviet ambassadors, encouraging a peaceful resolution of the Cuban issue.

Soviet newspapers attack the position of the Italian government.

26 October

Russo cables me that he has seen [US Ambassador to the UN Adlai E.] Stevenson. S. thanked him for what I said in Parliament and then he asked him what we would think about an exchange between a withdrawal of the missiles from Cuba and a withdrawal of the missiles from the European bases, particularly if [the latter are] obsolete. Russo said it would be preferable to use the dismantling of the European bases in the framework of the conclusion of the disarmament negotiations. The Brazilians instead are proposing denuclearization [of] South America and Africa. In the evening comes the news about a stiffening in the US position. I have a call made to the US and at half past midnight I learn that there was a stiffening in the morning but that now it's been reduced a bit. I have lunch at Segni's and I find there [Chairman of the Senate Cesare] Merzagora and [Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies Giovanni] Leone who are trying to paint a black picture of the economic situation. When I compare that with the serene report presented by [CEO of the Italian Commercial Bank Raffaele] Mattioli to the Commercial Bank on the 19th, they fall back, saying they certainly do not want to open a parliamentary crisis, knowing full well that "they would be the ones who would have to replace me," and this modest prophecy changes the tone of the conversation completely.

I receive an anonymous express message from Milan with the announcement from the [unreadable] of a death sentence for me and my family if I do not resign within 48 hours. I give a copy of it to [Chief of Italian Police Angelo] Vicari and [Commanding General of the Carabinieri Giovanni] De Lorenzo.

27 October

From New York Russo cables that he has seen U Thant, and I learn that Cuba would be willing to dismantle the missiles under UN control, if the US would publicly declare that they do not want to intervene in Cuba any longer, [as well as] to close down the camps for training the Cuban exiles under UN control. I see Piccioni and I ask him to cable Russo that he should go back to see U Thant encouraging him and supporting him in his conciliatory actions. I ask him to instruct [Italian Ambassador to Moscow Carlo Alberto] Straneo and [Italian Ambassador to Washington Sergio] Fenoaltea to meet respectively with [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko and [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk encouraging them to find a solution for Cuba. [Italian Ambassador in London

Pietro] Quaroni does not overestimate the danger and agrees to stick to a close Austro-Italian contact. He would suggest that, in case of necessity and if asked by the US, we might as well consider a trade-off of the dismantling of the bases in Cuba with the dismantling of the US missile bases in Europe. After half an hour I learn that Khrushchev has suggested to U Thant a trade-off for the Cuban bases as well as the Turkish ones.

At 8 pm, [Ministry of the Interior Paolo Emilio] Taviani informs of his fears about the airplane of [ENI President Enrico] Mattei, which has not arrived in Milan at 7 pm. I order the necessary search to be carried out and unfortunately at 9 pm we learn that the plane crashed in Bascapè near Linate. Everyone's dead, including Enrico Mattei.

28 October

I order that Mattei be given a state funeral. For fifteen years he has given the republic powerful tools of progress and he has honored Italy everywhere. I still cannot accept that he may be dead, this intrepid pioneer of progress. His widow, that I visited together with [Fanfani's wife] Bianca, is in the same mood.

In the morning an alert for an unforeseen meeting of the Atlantic Council. But then at 3 pm the news from Washington that the USSR is willing to remove the missile bases from Cuba since the US does not intend to attack Cuba has generated new hopes. I have informed Segni. Then I waited for a confirmation and at 6 pm I let the US and the Soviet ambassadors know that we look upon with favor to the news and that we encourage both countries to draw useful consequences for peaceful restoration of the situation.

[...]

11 December

Dinner at the Russian Embassy where I find Kozlov, who at 6 p.m. paid a visit to Segni. I had met him in Moscow and he is gracious enough as to tell me that I have left a great impression there. He tells me that he visited Pompei, and that the ruins have deeply impressed him, make him imagine what the world would have become if on the 28th [of October] a nuclear war over Cuba had broken out. He recognizes that only the wisdom of Kennedy and Khrushchev has saved us from the abyss, twice very close. Now he believes that an understanding can be achieved. Some say that the document for Kennedy about Cuba initially included also the request to withdraw the missile bases from Italy. Then during the discussion in the Soviet government the idea prevailed of respecting

Italy on account of the memory of my visit [to the Soviet Union]. I reply that I was certain that they would not bring the Italian bases into the picture for [...] their discussion in a possible treaty between NATO and the Warsaw pact. He says it's a good argument.

The Manlio Brosio Diaries

The Diaries of Manlio Brosio span his entire career as a diplomat in the Italian foreign service (Ambassador to Moscow, 1947-51; Ambassador to London, 1952-54; Ambassador to Washington, 1954-61; Ambassador to Paris, 1961-64; Secretary General of NATO, 1964-71) and offer a unique insight into Italian foreign policy as well as into the evolution of the postwar international system. They are available at the Einaudi Foundation in Turin and have been published (not in their integral version) by Il Mulino, edited by Umberto Gentiloni Silveri. If Fanfani's notations are sometimes sparse and sketchy, Brosio's are quite the opposite: he ruminates for pages and pages about the events of his life, both the professional and the personal ones. The following pages come from *Diari di Parigi, 1961-1964* [*The Paris Diaries, 1961-1964*], edited by Umberto Gentiloni Silveri (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009), pp. 253-260.

Monday, 22 October

An eventful evening intrudes upon a colorless day. While [Director General for Economic Affairs at the Foreign Ministry, Egidio] Ortona arrives around 11 p.m., [Diplomatic Counselor to the Prime Minister Carlo] Marchiori calls me on the phone to have more news about what is going on in Cuba. The news [reports] are more and more dramatic. In Rome they are nervous. I get in touch with [General Secretary of the French Foreign Ministry Eric] De Carbonnel who informs me about the NATO meeting which is going on and tells me "Il ne fait pas de doute que la notre sera une attitude de solidarité." I phone this message to Marchiori and in the meantime I get in touch with [Italian Ambassador Corrado] Orlandi [Contucci]; later I get a call from [Italian Ambassador to the North Atlantic Council Adolfo] Alessandrini and I also inform [Italian Ambassador in Brussels Antonio] Casardi in Brussels where Piccioni wants to be informed too. After the NATO meeting Alessandrini tells me that Dean Acheson has arrived, and that the French have been the only ones to issue a strong declaration of solidarity. Alessandrini behaved "as a friend who asks some clarifications on a matter of common concern." I tell this to Marchiori and [Director General of Political Affairs at the Italian Foreign Ministry Giovanni]

Fornari who is also in Brussels. I speak again with Carbonnel. He refrains from giving any assessment about the measures adopted by Kennedy. In the meantime Ortona has listened to Kennedy's speech, intense and grave. My impression, as well as Ortona's, is that these are half-measures, an empty show of energy which will not produce any result. It will allow the Soviets to react with an offensive—once again with words—against the American bases. Kennedy looks to me more and more like the kid who wants to keep everybody happy: you do not resort to force by asking for the presence of the *carabinieri* and the assent of the timid ones. First you use it and then consent will come.

Before going to bed Ortona discusses with me his serious preoccupations about the Italian political and economic situation. There is a lack of confidence, nobody is investing, people fear a major crisis in six months. In the meantime, everyone is criticizing Fanfani and no one dares to challenge him. Ortona says this reminds him of the campaign against Greece: everybody was saying that we were running towards disaster but all hurried behind the Duce.

Tuesday, 23 October

The Cuban crisis dominates the day, but so far nothing particularly serious has happened. We wait for the meeting between the Soviet ships and the American fleet. The French are in favor of solidarity but they are critical of the lack of consultation. On the other hand, we once more witness the close interdependence among the different parts of the world as well as the impossibility for a great power to base its decisions—in an area that interests it directly—upon the consultation and the doubts of all the other ones. Among the others I have at lunch [...] the Norwegian Ambassador, who sees the whole situation exclusively from the viewpoint of the commercial fleet of his country. Thus it is necessary that, in its own sectors of interest, a great power decides by itself, and then she must take part in the decisions concerning those distant areas to which she has committed her own responsibility. This is what *de facto* happens: one grumbles about the principle, but then one toes the line. [...]

Wednesday, 24 October

Talk with [Secretary General of the Italian Foreign Ministry Attilio] Cattani and Alessandrini. Cattani is happy about the [EEC] meeting in Brussels. [...] As for Cuba, there was a clear French position of understanding more than of solidarity for the American initiative: understanding because the initiative does not regard the NATO zone, solidarity for the repercussions which it could have in Europe. Alessandrini has

reassured Cattani and he has asked for instructions. These will come, if possible. Cattani does not exclude a government crisis in Italy if the international crisis will get worse. Alessandrini has once again mentioned the issue of the Italian bases and of their transformation into mobile naval bases: Cattani believes that we cannot discuss the issue in Italy on a bilateral basis with Americans. We will have to wait for a multilateral solution. Cattani is concerned by Piccioni's absences. He goes into his office 15 minutes each day, and it is almost impossible to speak to him. It took a lot of effort to make him chair the meeting of the Six—after which, instead of rushing down to Rome (in light of the Cuban crisis) he wasted an afternoon in a carefree walk through the Waterloo battlefield. An excellent idea, if it hadn't been the symptom of a systemic crisis.

[...] At eleven p.m. the last news [bulletin] announces that part of the Soviet ships had turned back. Shortly before that, I had explained to [Italian Consul General in Paris Nicolò] Di Bernardo [...] that there would be no war, but that the Kennedy operation had been badly conceived as it raised to the level of the missile bases an issue which should have remained at the level of Cuba and Castro. After the news of the ships' withdrawal, we analyze the situation: my thesis is confirmed, there is a tactical success for Kennedy, a check for the Communists, but Khrushchev will not fail to get his payback with the European bases.

Thursday, 25 October

In fact this morning [US columnist Walter] Lippmann is already proposing to obtain the dismantling of the bases in Cuba by renouncing those in Turkey. It's the usual [...] I talk about it with [Italian Defense Minister Giulio] Andreotti who arrives during the morning. Then I have lunch with Andreotti and [French Minister of Armies Pierre] Messmer. Messmer's evaluation is clear and it matches mine: "Kennedy has had a success for the time being, but we will pay for it later in Europe, in Berlin, or in the other bases in Turkey, etc." Before that, at 8:30, I met [FIAT CEO Vittorio] Valletta: he said that Fanfani's speech was "most beautiful," yet he was worried about the government's position for its weakness towards the Socialists and the Communists, and about the economic situation [...] Andreotti later tells me that he has spoken with Messmer about the [French] *force de frappe* (which will not be discussed at the December NATO Council, it's too early) and of the nuclear submarine which we want to produce and for which we ask for support from both the Americans and the French [...]

Friday, 26 October

The Cuban accident is in a waiting phase, which however does not exclude tension. Kennedy does not seem inclined to accept the mediation terms proposed by U Thant. What does he want? In the evening at the Opéra I see [Head of Treaty Service and of Atomic and Space Affairs at the French Foreign Ministry, Jean] De La Granville who tells me that the Americans talk too much about the necessity to dismantle the Cuban bases. De La Granville is afraid that they want to invade Cuba, and this is clearly the impression at the Quai d'Orsay. He fears this solution, he does not want it: I reply that Kennedy is now emboldened by the Russian prudence, and that if the operation is not carried through to the very end it will not be a success.

[...]

Saturday, 27 October

I wake up early and I finish my report: basically I state that [French President Charles] De Gaulle is worried for the effects that Kennedy's action will have on Europe (bases in Turkey, etc.) and for the influence that the unilateral American decisions may have on his interests. There may be a tacit compromise between the two colossi, in the sense of tolerating reciprocal interferences. The respect for the spheres of influence is relative, since for Russia all of Europe is a sphere of influence. De Gaulle, therefore, is strengthened in his belief that Europe must be united and reinforced: with nuclear weapons, he means.

In the meantime the newspapers are writing that Kennedy wants to dismantle the bases and may as well invade Cuba. All the Italian left of course rises as one man in defense of Cuba, including the intellectuals.

Khrushchev tries to prevent Kennedy's action by offering him an exchange between the Cuban bases and the Turkish ones—QED. But Kennedy politely declines the offer contained in Khrushchev's message. He is now stronger than ever and it would be a disaster if he does not use it.

Sunday, 28 October

The referendum day. Three major events: Khrushchev unconditionally gives up the bases in Cuba, Mattei dies in a plane crash, De Gaulle wins the referendum [...] Why did Khrushchev, after demanding the dismantling of the Turkish bases, precipitously abandon his request unconditionally, while he could have still gained some time and kept the US under pressure? The answer is one and one only: because for him it was important to prevent an American landing in Cuba and the elimination of the Communist outpost in America. Why, on the other hand, did Castro shout and

demand conditions? Because he understood that Kennedy did not intend to attack him, and he started shouting like a child who is not scared any longer. Thus it's a success for Kennedy, but only a half one; and a subsequent trade-off for the bases cannot be excluded, as it may happen through the disarmament negotiations, as Kennedy promised. Why did Kennedy feel it necessary to grant Khrushchev a certificate of pacifism, after the latter had attacked him, insulted him, and was now withdrawing? Because the Americans keep aiming at a direct agreement with the Russians and they do not want to interrupt it. Only consideration: Kennedy condescended to hint to its allies. [...]

Tuesday, 30 October

[Italian journalist from the *Corriere della Sera*] Domenico Bartoli dropped by, he is all happy about the Kennedy victory. He is not worried by the fact that Castro is still in power: but he is wrong. I go to see [Charles] Lucet [Director of Political Affairs, French Foreign Ministry] in the afternoon. [...] We also talk about Cuba. The French are generally satisfied, uncertain about the reasons for Khrushchev's oscillations (they talk about the domestic opposition too) and still worried, even if less than before, by the development of a direct Russo-American dialogue. They too fail to understand that Kennedy has half-lost his battle by leaving Castro in power. There are already demonstrations in support of Castro in Uruguay and Argentina. Khrushchev preferred to lose face rather than losing Castro: here one must agree with [French Socialist intellectual] Suzanne Labin when she complains that the Americans underrate the cold war. [...]

Thursday, 1 November

[...] The Cuban crisis is fading into quibbles: Castro is posing his conditions, U Thant's mission is failed, [First Deputy Premier of the USSR Anastas Ivanovich] Mikoyan is arriving, the Republicans in Washington are asking Kennedy some embarrassing questions. Nothing can come out of this other than a bad compromise, or a new crisis without tragedies, in which Kennedy will yield a little more and will receive a little less...

Sunday, 13 January 1963

[Ambassador Mario] Toscano passes through Paris and he tells me that the Americans will withdraw their atomic bases from Italy and Turkey. It's a unilateral decision which Reinhardt has communicated to Piccioni on Wednesday January 9. The invitation from Kennedy to Fanfani had already been

made: Fenoaltea had informed about it from Washington [...] Toscano believes there is already an agreement between the Soviets and the Americans. I do not exclude it any longer: at the very least, the gesture is a development of an American foreign policy of decoupling from their nuclear commitments in Europe, but it may also be the sign of an agreement, of which I am not entirely persuaded yet. Nenni must know about it and probably is referring to it when he talks about serious foreign policy reasons which advise against a government crisis: he wants the merit of the closing down of the bases to be attributed to himself and to the center-left. Fanfani, in turn, by going to Washington will try to sell to the Italians the American gesture as the result of his own initiative and as his own success. Finally the Communists must know about it as well—through Nenni—because they are starting their demonstrations in Italy against the bases, to take credit for the initiative. Everyone wants to assume the sad merit of a foreign policy that does not exist. [...]

Monday, 14 January 1963

I go to see [French Foreign Minister Maurice] Couve [de Murville] to inform him about the American decision on the bases in Italy and Turkey. He does not believe it to be a Russo-American agreement; he believes in technical-military reasons, the obsolescence of the Thor and Jupiter missiles. I point out that the decision also shows a policy of concentrating nuclear weapons in American hands. He admits it. Couve is happy about the information: he will inform immediately Lucet and [Jean] Laloy [Minister of European Affairs, French Foreign Ministry], and the latter will remember immediately that on 27 October 1962, during the Cuban days, Kennedy asked [Supreme Allied Commander, Europe Lieut.-Gen. Lauris] Norstad (according to the latter's testimony) if abandoning the bases in Turkey would have been catastrophic from a military point of view. Norstad answered yes, both from a military and above all a psychological point of view. Thus he thought about it, but this does not mean that he negotiated with the Soviets, then or afterwards. Those were the days when one talked about it. In general, the withdrawal of the bases has made a strong and bad impression to the Quai d'Orsay. [...]

Roberto Ducci—*I capintesta* (The Big Bosses)

Ducci was another of the key Italian diplomats of the postwar period. Among his many important assignments, he chaired the Committee that drafted the 1957 Rome Treaties, was

posted as Ambassador to Helsinki (1958-62), Belgrade (1964-67), Vienna (1967-70) and London (1975-80). Between 1970 and 1975 he was appointed Director General for Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ducci did not keep a Diary but wrote a book of memoirs [*I capintesta* (Milano: Rusconi, 1982)] which fully reflects his witty, incisive and lucid understanding of Italian foreign policy and international affairs. The following pages (142-48) come from the chapter “La notte che non scoppiò la Guerra nucleare” (The Night when the Nuclear War did not break out) and vividly describe the atmosphere among some of the key Italian diplomats after Kennedy's speech of 22 October. In the early pages of the chapter, Ducci describes how by 22 October 1962, he had just arrived in Brussels as member of a delegation which included the top echelons of Italian foreign policy: Foreign Minister Attilio Piccioni, Undersecretary Carlo Russo, Secretary General of the Ministry Attilio Cattani, and a number of other key dignitaries, including himself, who at the time was at the head of the Italian delegation which negotiated the possible accession of the United Kingdom to the European Economic Community. They had all gone to Brussels for a week of meetings between the Six members of the EEC, and were engaged in a preparatory meeting for the work ahead, when the news spread that the situation between the US and Cuba was deteriorating and that President Kennedy was about to give an important speech.

While arguments often discussed were thrown around the table in the big dining room—with limited interest and attention—[Ambassador to Brussels Antonio] Casardi entered the room and whispered something in the ear of the minister. The President of the Council, Amintore Fanfani, was on the line from Rome and wanted to talk to the hon. Piccioni. Mumbling something in his thick Roman accent, (“And what does he want now?”), Piccioni stood up without enthusiasm and followed the ambassador in his study. We learned afterwards that Fanfani was furious, as he had placed several calls to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs searching for the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, the secretary general, the General Director for political affairs, and so on, without finding any of them; and as a first reaction he unleashed his wrath on the Minister of Foreign Affairs who had taken all of them with him to Brussels. He told him that a few minutes before he had received the US Ambassador, Freddie Reinhardt, who had asked to meet him to deliver him a message from Kennedy. [...] Fanfani asked Piccioni to try and get in touch with the authorities of the other European countries to find out how they intended to react to Kennedy's decision, a decision which, by provoking the most serious crisis for

world peace since the time of the Korean war, could lead to a confrontation with nuclear weapons between the superpowers, and involve all of Europe.

Piccioni told us that our meeting was over; all of those who had not been invited to dine at the Embassy were not encouraged to stay. We found him gloomier, but still affable and not nervous at all. Those of us who stayed were consulted by him mostly to discuss how we could implement Fanfani's directives. It was a dead afternoon, if one did not know what was going on across the Atlantic—the dramatic gravity of which many in Europe continued to ignore. As a starter we tried to get in touch with the Belgian authorities: from Rue de la Loi they informed us that the President of the Council was gone, at the Quatre Bras Palace neither [Foreign Minister Paul-Henri] Spaak nor his deputy, Fayat, could be found. Then Casardi called Dirk Stikker, the former Dutch Foreign Minister who had been appointed Secretary General of NATO, at his private residence in Paris: he had gone to the country. Brosio was given the task to find him and ask him if he intended to summon an extraordinary meeting of the Atlantic Council—even our best ambassador at the time had not been informed about the ultimatum. Time went by, spent in disappointing efforts to show ourselves that we were not completely reduced to impotence, until the wife of the ambassador told us that dinner was ready.

[...] Every once in a while, the waiter whispered something in the ear of the Ambassador, then either he or one of us left the table and went to talk on the phone. Stikker had been found: no, the Americans had not proposed an extraordinary meeting of the North Atlantic Council yet, and none of the other European Allies had requested it. Then Brosio called to tell us that De Gaulle, after having received the American Ambassador, had let the word spread around that France would stick together with President Kennedy, following its loyal duty as an ally. The Belgians had not much to say, their Council of Ministers had been summoned for the next morning. As the waiters were about to serve a dessert called an "ice bomb," one of Fanfani's counselors called from Rome: we told him what little we had learned, and he assured us that he would refer it immediately to the President, who was at his desk in Palazzo Chigi. [...]

After coffee, Piccioni told us he would have liked to play a hand or two of bridge, which was his favorite game. I sat at his table: he played with an inner passion, as a Tuscan peasant, and he clearly showed pleasure in having good cards in his hand. The man I was teamed with, at least once for that evening, had been the pupil of [Founder of the Italian Catholic Party Partito Popolare Don Luigi] Sturzo, the companion and the dolphin of [Italian Prime Minister Alcide] De Gasperi, but also someone who in World War One had volunteered as

a pilot in the Air Force and had been the instructor of [Italian World war I aircraft ace] Francesco Baracca; and the man who was said to have been a great speaker, the best together with [President of the Republic Giovanni] Gronchi, of the whole Catholic Party [...]. At around eleven p.m. he was called to the phone once again: Fanfani wanted to talk to him. "God knows what he wants: wait for me here." We did not wait for him at the gaming table, and followed him in the study. We gathered around him and heard his replies to the President of the Council, who was still in Palazzo Chigi. From them, and from what Piccioni told us afterwards, we could form a good picture of their dialogue. Fanfani had talked with a half dozen foreign ambassadors in Rome and with four or five of our own ambassadors abroad. He had even managed to get in touch with someone at the White House, where they had confirmed to him what Reinhardt had told him a few hours before. "You did well, Amintore," said Piccioni on the phone, "we have already informed you about what we were able to find out from here. What? No, ... I would not say so...". Fanfani wanted to send someone to Washington immediately to recommend, to exhort, to motivate... "No, I cannot, I have the meetings here..." Fanfani insisted, said that otherwise he would send Russo, together with Fornari, who was Director General for Political Affairs. "If you really think it is necessary... Then, tomorrow..." The "no" from the President of the Council was so energetic that leaped out of the microphone and reached our ears: no, immediately or with the first available aircraft which would enable them to catch the Pan American flight from Rome at one pm the next day.

We did not go back to the gaming table. We started looking for a flight to Rome, while Russo and Fornari were snorting. There was one bound to Congo which was making a stopover in Rome, leaving at six am. Piccioni decided that this was the one that the two should catch, and told them so by spreading his arms, as if to signify that as far as he was concerned it was totally useless. In the meantime someone had found a powerful radio, and we were assured that it would allow us to listen to Kennedy's speech. We gathered around that technological wonder, which would reveal to us what was going to be our fate. It was almost midnight, and from the device came a sequence of whistles and booms, as it always happens when one tries to tune in on a short wave length. Finally we found an American radio station: with the appropriate tone it announced that the President of the United States was about to speak to the American people. We all lent our ears, even Piccioni who did not speak any English: we were not about to listen to an oracle, but directly to one of the Gods, armed with the lightning which can incinerate the world. Kennedy's voice, which was always high-pitched, came out meowing and broken, interrupted by a frequent fading

which seemed to push it farther away into the ether. We did not understand much, not even Virginia [the Ambassador's wife] who had joined us: and this inability totally disheartened us, for the first time since we had realized the gravity of the crisis. Something immense was happening, but outside of us and in the name of a logic which we could understand as correct but from which we felt excluded. We understood, even if we did not share it, Fanfani's agitation: but who was luckier, he, to whom the possibility to act somehow gave the impression to be *in*, inside the story (which on the contrary was being written in a completely different place), or Piccioni, who accepted being *out* with great equanimity? Luckiest of them all was certainly De Gaulle, who did not hesitate for a moment in placing France side-to-side with the US in the hour of its supreme risk. After several attempts to improve the reception, Casardi raised his questioning eyes towards the Minister. "Let's go to bed," said Attilio Piccioni, "the ball now is in Moscow's court."

Russo and Fornari left after three hours of sleep; during the rest of the day, others left Brussels as well. Those who stayed accompanied Piccioni to the meeting with the Ministers of the Six, where we discussed the regime of Cyprus' tomatoes and potatoes in a Common Market enlarged to the UK. The news got worse by the hour: Moscow had not replied to the ultimatum, the US armed forces were being placed in a state of alert [...]

The morning after, I went upstairs to the second floor of the Embassy, where Piccioni's apartment was located. In the corridor I met to my great surprise Mr. Pace, the minister's valet, who was carrying two large suitcases. When I asked him, he replied with a Roman accent thicker than usual, which revealed his disappointment at the news "Don't you know? They informed us we must go back to Rome. But I say, couldn't they leave us here? What are we going to do in Rome, save the world? When will they ever realize that we have very little to say?" ...

The Italian Foreign Ministry assesses the causes and consequences of the crisis (December 1962)

[From a background paper prepared for the Italian Delegation at the December 1962 meeting of the North Atlantic Council:]

[...] Point 1. Analysis of the international situation.

A. 1) Trends of Soviet policy

The Cuban Crisis

The motivations that pushed the Soviet leaders to the Cuban adventure probably have their roots in the fact that by 1962 they had come to share the Western assessment of the strategic nuclear balance of power between the blocs: that is, that the balance is favorable to the West.

To re-balance the situation, the Russians had two options:

1. To overcome the Americans in the production of ICBMs and SLBMs based on submarines: a slow and expensive way for which the Soviet economy has less resources than the American one
2. To deploy IRBM launching pads next to the American territory.

Cuba seemed to offer the conditions required to adopt the second option. If the initiative had succeeded, the Soviet opportunities for an initial atomic strike would have grown so much as to reduce considerably the American capacity to retaliate, and with it, the effectiveness of the "deterrent."

It is also possible that Khrushchev intended to use the bases in Cuba for a trade-off against Berlin in the next few months.

The critical mistake the Soviets made in their calculation was about the American reaction, which turned out to be much different and much sterner than they had foreseen.

The Russians realized immediately that an American air strike against the bases in Cuba, with the consequent loss of Soviet lives, or an American landing, with the overthrowing of Castro's regime, would have left them with no other choice between a nuclear war—which they are not willing to face—and accepting a defeat much worse than the withdrawal of the missiles.

By accepting the latter, the Russians have actually decided to cut their losses. (The Soviet attempt to obtain in return the removal of the Turkish bases was promptly withdrawn, thanks to the American firmness.)

The fact that the Soviets gave in, however, must be interpreted as a withdrawal but not as a weakening or a substantial change in their military posture or political intentions. (And even the withdrawal was skillfully used by the Russians, stressing its peaceful nature.)

Furthermore, if it is true that the Cuban crisis has confirmed the role attributed to conventional weapons by Atlantic strategy, as the timing of the American actions was clearly based on the possible use of these weapons, it is also true that in other areas a conventional balance of power might

as well turn out to be more favorable to the Russians. Hence the need not to draw any general conclusions about the Soviet attitude.

The situation of Soviet inferiority in terms of strategic nuclear weapons, which was at the origin of the Cuban affair, has not been modified. In order to get out of this situation, therefore, we must expect the Russians to step up their defense program, which as a consequence will produce a worsening of the population's economic conditions. In the meantime, the Soviet government will probably continue to negotiate partial disarmament measures in order to gain time, but without searching for a real and definitive *détente* in its relationship with the West.

The domestic consequences of the Cuban issue inside Russia seem to be rather modest, if there are any at all. Khrushchev seems to be in full control of the situation without the need to adopt any specific measure against old and new opponents. Even the position of the USSR as the leader of the satellite countries does not seem to have been shaken after Cuba, as demonstrated by Khrushchev's convocation of all the leaders of those countries in order to impose his own leadership and break any possible resistance (see the energetic purge in Bulgaria).

In the Sino-Soviet context, on the contrary, Khrushchev's redeployment in the Caribbean has reinvigorated the diatribes between the two countries, even if a break such as the one with Albania does not necessarily seem imminent.

In conclusion, the Cuban affair has demonstrated:

a) The audacity and the unscrupulousness of the Soviet Prime Minister, as well as his self-control and his exceptional speed in recovering

b) The possibility that the Russians might drop their customary caution if the prize at stake seems to them a large one and if they overrate their chances of success

c) That world peace and security are indivisible and that any crisis hotbed, even outside of the NATO area, has immediate repercussions in the area of Atlantic commitments: hence the necessity to strengthen the consultations inside NATO in order to focus on those potential hotbeds

d) The necessity for the West to adopt a firm and united stand in time of an emergency

e) The serious danger for peace at any time when one tries to alter the balance between the blocs: which confirms the validity of the Western position on a gradual and balanced disarmament.

[...]

[Source: *Esame della situazione internazionale*, in *Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Fondo del Consigliere diplomatico della*

Presidenza del Consiglio, 1957-1962, box 8, Fascicolo R.I.C.A. allegato al Rapporto 7091 del 4.12.1962.]

Notes

1 I would like to thank Renato Moro and Evelina Martelli for their help with the Fanfani diaries.

2 "White House Tapes and Minutes of the Cuban Missile Crisis. ExCom Meetings, October 1962," *International Security*, Vol.10, No.1 (Summer 1985), pp.175-176.

3 John F. Kennedy Library (JFKL), Boston, President's Office File (POF), Presidential Recordings, Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings, October 18, 1962 afternoon meeting, transcripts available in Timothy Naftali, Ernest May, and Philip Zelikow, eds., *The Presidential Recordings: John F. Kennedy: Vols. 1-3, The Great Crises* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2001); Minutes of the 505th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, 20 October 1962, 2:30-5:10 p.m., in US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-1963, Volume XI: Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997). [Ed. Note: On the role of the Jupiters in the Cuban Missile Crisis, see Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).]

4 JFKL, POF, Presidential Recordings, Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings, October 22, 1962, morning meeting. Unofficial transcript available at the National Security Archive; Report by Frank A. Sieverts, *The Cuban Crisis, 1962*, p.89, in JFKL, National Security File: Country File (NSF:CO): Cuba Subjects, f. History of the Cuban Crisis, Memos 1/9/63-9/1/63 & Report, b. 49. Manned by Italian airmen of the 36th Air Brigade together with some 350 US personnel from the 7230th Support Squadron and the 7230th USAF Dispensary, the missiles were operated under a dual key system which required the insertion of a physical key by (in this sequence) both the Italian and the American Launch Authentication Officers (LAOs).

5 Rome (Reinhardt) to State, 26 October 1962 (tel. 936), in National Security Archive, Cuban Missile Crisis Collection, # 1963.

6 For a detailed reconstruction of the Jupiter story, see Leopoldo Nuti, "Dall'operazione *Deep Rock* all'operazione *Pot Pie*: una storia documentata dei missili *SM 78 Jupiter* in Italia", in *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali*, vol. 11/12, n.1 (1996/1997) e vol.2 (1996/1997), pp.95-138 e 105-149, and chapters 5 and 6 of my book *La sfida nucleare. La politica estera italiana e le armi atomiche, 1945-1991* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007). Coincidentally, the *Garibaldi* was in the US for testing at the time of the crisis.

7 According to another source, Fanfani also asked Russo “to maintain contact not only with the US representatives but also to talk to the Soviets,” something which Russo refused to do.” The same source, however, insists that “Fanfani here [in Rome] continued the bilateral approach.” Airgram A-824 from the US Embassy in Rome, “Conversation with On. Flaminio Piccoli,” 2 November 1962, released to the author through FOIA NN 93-429.

8 Ettore Bernabei, *L'uomo di fiducia* (Milano: Mondadori, 1999), pp. 169-170.

9 Arthur M. Schlesinger also denied the validity of this story in a personal communication to the author.

10 Gretchen Stewart note for AS, October 17, 1962, in JFKL, Arthur Schlesinger Papers, White House (WH) Files, Subject File 1961-64, box 23, f. Vatican.

11 Memorandum for the President, November 2, 1962, from AS, “Relations with the Vatican,” in JFKL, AS Papers, WH Files, Subject File 1961-64, box 23, f. Vatican.

12 W.H. Brubeck, Memo for Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “The Italian Center-Left Government and the Cuban Crisis: Lessons for American Foreign Policy,” November 30, 1962, in JFKL, NSF:CO:Cuba-General, box 37, f. 11/21/62-11/30/62.

13 Interview with Renato Moro, a member of the Diaries’ editorial board.

The Netherlands, the Missile Crisis, and Cuban-Dutch Relations, 1962-1964:

Documents from the Dutch Archives

Introduction by Rimko van der Maar¹

Documents obtained by van der Maar and translated by van der Maar and Bastiaan Bouwman

With regard to the Dutch perspective on the Cuban Missile Crisis, the following types of documents have been used: the diary of Prime Minister Jan de Quay, the minutes of the Council of Ministers, and coded cable traffic and other documents from the Dutch embassies in Havana and in Washington.² The first two types of documents show that the Dutch government, although a loyal NATO member and a strong supporter of close transatlantic relations, only reluctantly supported the United States during the crisis. Initially, Foreign Minister Joseph Luns refused to cut short his vacation on the French Riviera. He told Prime Minister De Quay that he totally disagreed with the American policy towards Cuba and he did not intend to make a declaration. However, pressured by parliamentarians who were very critical of De Quay's initial, hesitating statements on the matter and probably alarmed by the threatening situation in Cuba, Luns returned to The Hague. By then he had already accepted that an official communication would be issued, in which the Dutch government would express its sympathy and support for the US position.

The initial, reluctant Dutch attitude towards the Cuban Missile Crisis can partially be explained by Dutch maritime, commercial and colonial interests in the region and elsewhere (since 1954 Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles were autonomous parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands). In the months preceding the crisis, the Dutch government had already criticized the American embargo against Cuba, being afraid that supporting the US on this subject would damage the credibility of Dutch maritime transport, especially in countries associated with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). More importantly, in August 1962 the Netherlands had lost its last colony in Asia, New Guinea. Luns especially held a grudge against President Kennedy for failing to support his country in its long conflict with Indonesia over Netherlands New Guinea (later renamed Irian Jaya after being taken over by Jakarta and sometimes known as West Papua). Besides, the Dutch foreign minister and some of his colleagues reasoned that Cuba was outside of NATO territory and therefore none of their concern. However, as noted above, within a few days Luns altered his position and chose

to support the US. Still, Prime Minister De Quay was not satisfied, but he did not push the issue too hard. Astonished, he described the mood in his cabinet in his diary as "kind of indifferent" and that he would have liked to support Kennedy more strongly.

The Dutch ambassador to Cuba at the time of the crisis was Gideon W. Boissevain, a 65-year-old diplomat who had made a career in the Consular Service before becoming the envoy to Havana. Naturally, his informative cables and lively letters during and after the Cuban Missile Crisis were highly important to the Dutch government.³ In fact, his messages became a source of information for State Department officials as well. At the height of the crisis, the Dutch ambassador to Washington since 1950, J. Herman van Roijen, reported that several State Department staff members were very eager to learn more about what was actually going on in Cuba. He requested The Hague to redirect all of Boissevain's messages to the Dutch embassy in Washington. Being a former minister for Foreign Affairs and senior negotiator during the 1945-1949 Indonesian revolution, Van Roijen was highly respected and well-connected in American diplomatic and political circles and in October and November 1962 he visited the State Department many times. In his search for information about the US position, Van Roijen noticed that he was better informed about the situation in Cuba than some officials were, among others Ward P. Allen, then the director of the State Department's Bureau of Inter-American Regional Political Affairs.

In addition to the cables that included only the most important topics and developments, Boissevain's letters, which took a week to arrive in The Hague by air mail, offered background information about the internal political and economic situation in Cuba. Topics ranged from speeches by Fidel Castro, his brother Raúl, and Che Guevara, to Brazil's part in finding a diplomatic solution, to espionage activities in the Dutch embassy by the Cuban Secret Service and the possible construction of underground fortifications to hide offensive weapons. In the course of 1963, Boissevain informed the Dutch government specifically about Fidel Castro's ongoing attempts to strengthen Cuba's political and economic relations with Western European countries, including the Netherlands. He repeatedly told the Dutch ambassador that he admired his country for its agricultural and industrial achievements. Perhaps also in light of the recent Dutch-American confronta-

tion over New Guinea, he approached Boissevain in July 1963 with a remarkable proposition. Castro said that he felt obliged to pursue an agreement with the US, and he asked him to perform as a mediator. The Hague did not approve, however, and the ambassador received instructions to wait and see if Castro would bring it up at a later date. He never did. In his reports, Boissevain often described the impulsive Cuban leader with irony. During a reception at the Egyptian embassy in the summer of 1963, he witnessed Castro boasting to the Chinese and Soviet ambassadors about his decision to nationalize the former building of the US embassy. Boissevain reported to The Hague about this conversation: “The best response... would have been: ‘After you have already confiscated 1,000 million dollars worth of American property, why not throw the building in as well!’ and then speak of the taking charge of the administration of the refinery of Shell and so forth. It seems better, however, to use the ‘goodwill’ with regard to our country to induce negotiations about such matters.”



DOCUMENTS⁴

DOCUMENT No. 1

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 12 September 1962

Received: 19 Sept. 1962

No. 2024/489

Havana, 12 September 1962.

CUBA:
Politics.

The press has burst into jubilant tones, as the attached front page of “Revolución” shows, now that Moscow has finally delivered a statement containing a military guarantee in case of aggression against Cuba or against any other country that would ask for help. The “press of the button” which had been celebrated in Havana earlier—until the S.U. had caused the rejoicing to come to an end—has now become a reality because this time there can be no doubt: “...today Cuba cannot be attacked in the hope that this aggression will remain unpunished. If this does occur it will mean the start of the war....”

Foreign reactions to the statement are also being published including those from American senators who speak of “bluff,” “propaganda,” “no longer be browbeat,” and so forth.

If the Cuban leaders earlier addressed the US provocatively now they will be beside themselves. It therefore seems apparent to the observer there is a risk of a conflict with nuclear weapons.

Yet what has actually happened? President Kennedy has stated that he has no intention of attacking Cuba (although, according to the Cuban press, he used the unfortunate expression “not yet”), provocative firing at hotels and ships afterwards has been the work of Cuban counter-revolutionaries and this was followed by the request to Congress regarding the mobilization into active service of 150,000 men in relation to the situation in Berlin and Cuba, among other things. Therefore the warning from Moscow can be seen as a propaganda countermove: “You increase the size of your army, we send experienced troops home and replace them with recruits.....is the US that afraid of an attack from Cuba? and so forth.”

In order to be prepared for anything the Cuban government is alleging that Washington intends to use legionnaires (French and Spanish) in its next attempt at invasion. Of course they will attempt to persuade the Kremlin to accept the thesis that an attack by such troops would be equal to a landing by American marines. May those in Washington keep cool heads!

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 17318. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 2

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 21 September 1962

Received: 26 September 1962.

No. 2095/505

Havana, 21 September 1962.

CUBA:
Blockade?

During the past days a US senator has ventured to urge the imposition of a blockade of Cuba which would include hailing all commercial vessels which bring goods to the island and if they refused (by continuing on or refusing investigation) a warning shot and ultimately hitting the “mark.”

Such a proposition means a major step backward to the period in which H[is].M[ajesty]. Johan Maurits of Nassau [Prince of Orange] began to protect the Dutch shipping trade in the Mediterranean Sea against the arbitrariness of the Spanish or to that in which the 100 year “Pax Britannica” ended. Yet there are many ways to obstruct sea-faring.

During the “drôle de guerre” Japan had increasingly come to regard the Yellow Sea and the coastal area of Northern China and of course Manchuria and Korea as part of the Japanese sphere of influence. World trade and the shipping trade had resigned themselves to this and were limited to China south of Shanghai. When a Norwegian captain violated the unwritten rule by paying a commercial visit to northern ports the navy of the land of the Rising Sun so impeded his journey—without shooting—that he returned to Shanghai without having accomplished his aim and complained to the British Resident Naval Officer. The latter gave the Norwegian a lesson in practical maritime law: “Your country possesses 5 million tons of tonnage, the highest per capita tonnage in the world. Do you protect it? No, for as long as we can remember the existence of the British fleet has sufficed to function as a police force for all sea-faring nations, currently the situation has been changed: the Yellow Sea has become a Japanese sea.”

If the government of the US would embark on the misbegotten project of obstructing the shipping trade in any form such as that proposed by the abovementioned senator the sea-faring countries would not tolerate this, N.A.T.O. would be jeopardized and all this would pale in comparison to the abuse of accepted principles of the law of peoples which would result in an enduring loss for mankind.

When Cuban youngsters from Florida shoot at merchant ships in the Caribbean that is bad enough, let Washington not be tempted to lend its sanction to these antics!

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 17318. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 3

Minutes of the Council of Ministers, The Hague, 19
October 1962 (excerpt)

TOP SECRET

2. Foreign policy

a. America and Cuba

In a meeting with the mayor of Berlin, [Willy] Brandt, Assistant Secretary [of State Hans R.] Van Houten received some information relating to the former’s visit to president Kennedy. He had the impression, that he [the president—trans.] was extremely nervous. This was the result of information regarding the numbers of Russian military technicians, who had arrived on Cuba, coupled with the pressure from public opinion and congress to do something against this. Although president Kennedy himself was very firm about the situation concerning Berlin it appeared to Brandt that the Americans are looking for a solution to this matter, which nevertheless for now is unsolvable.

Minister [of Justice Albert Christian Willem] Beerman, in response to the troubles that the “Java” owned by the Royal Rotterdam Lloyd is having in an American port, inquires whether Foreign Affairs has determined a standpoint regarding shipping to Cuba. Assistant secretary Van Houten replies, that in the NATO council the Americans have said, that if a ship transports weapons to Cuba the ports of the US will be closed to all ships of that country. Furthermore a ship that carries other goods to Cuba will no longer be permitted to enter American ports. From our side it has been said, that we are prepared to adopt the measures to constrain shipping to Cuba, but that these should not be such, that the principle of the freedom of the sea is eroded. England, Italy, and a few other countries have taken a similar standpoint. The prime minister adds to this, that the Dutch government has no instruments of power to prevent Dutch ships from transporting goods to Cuba. Minister Beerman remarks, that the government can only prevent these ships from loading weapons in the Netherlands.

[...]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Minutes of the Council of Ministers, 2.02.05.02, 19 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 4

Cable from Washington (Schiff) via The Hague (CELER), 23 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 23 October 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 23 October 1962

TO: Havana

FROM: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

SECRET

On 22 October under 899 Schiff sent a cable from Washington “In response to press reports regarding intensive internal deliberations at the highest level with regard to [a] ‘New US Foreign Policy Move’ [in] relation to which highest government officials [have been] confined to Washington and president this morning summoned key leaders of Congress to Washington, regarding which it should [be noted] that secrecy is of a level rarely observed here. Attempts made at important departments [of] State to acquire at least an indication of the issue at stake, Berlin, Cuba [Cuba is underlined with pen—trans.] or India so far have been unsuccessful. On inquiry it became clear that neither British nor French embassy has any idea what is going on.

Kennedy has convened both National Security Council and cabinet this afternoon and will make a statement at 19.00 hours.”

CELER [on behalf of the minister]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 119. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 5

Dutch Prime Minister Jan E. de Quay, Diary, 23 October 1962

Will it be war? I cannot believe it, that would mean destruction; yet a precarious matter (...) if the West never says ‘Halt’, communism will always carry on.

[Source: State Archives, Den Bosch, archive J.E. de Quay, diary 48, no. 5296, p. 96-97, 23 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 6

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 23 October 1962

Received: 8 November 1962

No. 2337/545.

22 October 1962,

Havana, 23 October 1962.

C U B A:

Politics.

The speeches of Dr. Ernesto Guevara, Minister of Industry, are worth listening to because he does not mince words. If the hard truth needs to be told then “Che” will tell it.

In the past days he addressed the Cuban Youth Movement, since then changed by Fidel Castro into the “Union of Young Communists” [“*Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas*”], on the second birthday of this organization, with a speech that was only rarely interrupted by applause.

He described the task of the U.J.C., was of the opinion that its members ought to have showed greater initiative, turned against sectarianism and other faults of the past, pointed out weaknesses, amateurism and childish romanticism and then the Argentine medic flogged their more than mediocre labor performance. In the succeeding sentences of his argumentation the word “trabajo” [“work”] appeared six times. Now we all know that the U.J.C. was drummed up to harvest the coffee berries. The city was full of billboards with a drawing, representing a happily smiling figure reaching for the last berry of a bush with the caption: “so no berry is lost.”

Where are then these professional coffee pickers, one would be inclined to ask? They are on guard duty! A short

while ago the women's union was called upon to help pick coffee: the U.J.C. had not been able to pull it off on their own.....

23 October. Reflections on labor performance in general have by now become academic because of the general mobilization proclaimed yesterday. Moreover the airport is closed, one hopes temporarily, so that it is impossible to ascertain when these lines will reach Your Excellency.

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 7

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 23 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 23 October 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

General mobilization proclaimed, Fidel [Castro], who will speak today, probably waits for instructions [from] Moscow. Airport closed. Copy letter P.G. [permanent representative, trans.] Cuba V.N. [United Nations—trans.] to president V.R. [Security Council—trans.] sent to heads of mission by Cuban department Foreign Affairs.

Boissevain 66

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 82. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 8

Dutch Prime Minister Jan E. de Quay, Diary, 24 October 1962

He [minister for Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns] totally disagrees with the American step and does not want a communiqué.

[Source: State Archives, Den Bosch, archive J.E. de Quay, diary 48, no. 5297, p. 97-98, 24 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 9

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 24 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 24 October 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

Provocative speech [by] Fidel [Castro] offers no news. President [of] Brazil [João Goulart] has [instructed Brazilian] Ambassador Havana [Luis Bastian Pinto] to find out whether government Cuba would permit investigation concerning "offensive weapons," after which definitive negative answer. With this Rio touched the heart of the matter to prevent either fruitless name-calling or war.

Boissevain 67

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 82. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 10

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 24 October 1962

To His Excellency
the Minister of Foreign Affairs
in
The Hague

CONFIDENTIAL.

2345/550.

Havana, 24 October 1962.

C U B A:

Espionage.

Through my report No. 1671/418 d[ate]d 31 July 1962 I have informed Your Excellency with regard to attempts from the government to move Cuban members of the staff of diplomatic missions and the housekeeping staff to provide information concerning their employers.

In the French Embassy this has led to a resolute demarche by the Quai d'Orsay to the Cuban Ambassador who no doubt will have informed his government thereof. Notwithstanding this a second attempt was undertaken: a Cuban secretary, whose husband had previously been imprisoned on suspicion of anti-revolutionary intentions, was summoned at a police commissariat, supposedly for reading a compromising American text. When she attempted to show that the piece objected to was completely harmless an interrogator of the infamous Departamento de Seguridad del Estado (G2) appeared and told her that the accusation had only been a pretext for asking her what she was doing for the revolution or what she was prepared to do. Was there not a member of the embassy staff who spoke German? Indeed such was the case (the Alsatian Vogt). If yes, perhaps she could busy herself with the acquisition of information regarding the embassy of the Federal Republic [of Germany] and not the French....

When I was temporary deacon of the Corps Diplomatique I addressed a personal letter to Dr. [Raúl] Roa, the Minister of Foreign Relations, to complain about these practices on behalf of my colleagues (the nunciature had also voiced a complaint) and myself.

The reason was that the gardener of the official residence had been visited by a person who had made him propositions like the ones indicated above. He would among other things note the license plates of the automobiles of visitors to which the man responded that he

1. mostly carried out his work in the garden behind the residence and therefore was unable to observe arriving automobiles,

2. that his employers had treated him well, reason for him not to lend himself to such work.

Shortly thereafter three persons came to his house, took him with them in a car, subjected him to a harsh interrogation during which one of them struck him in the jaw and left him on the street, far from his house. Since then these agents have returned once more.

In my letter I argued that I thought it honorable for Cuba that all these persons had refused and—despite the dangers this presented them with—had reported the matter to their chefs, and that, as I trusted, this statement would result in the immediate cessation of these threats and bribery.

The response of the Minister was an “Es ist nicht wahr!” [“It is not true!”] My accusation was an offense to the Departamento de Seguridad del Estado (G2) which was incapable of doing such a thing. Perhaps agents of the Central Intelligence Agency had played a role in the events!

An oral demarche by the French Ambassador and myself to the vice-minister of Foreign Relations followed which, in the case of Burggraaf Du Gardier, has led to a tempestuous talk.

Today the gardener informed me that the same person who had “visited” him the first time had come to smooth things over: there had been a misunderstanding, protection of the embassies, good relations with the Netherlands.....

Could one be more naïve?

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: *National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.*]



DOCUMENT No. 11

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 24 October 1962

REFERENCE No. 10209

DATE OF DISPATCH: 24 October 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 25 October 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

Regarding Cuba

Since the period of strict secrecy was ended by Kennedy's speech last Monday [22 October] the press has of course embarked upon extensive speculation regarding both what preceded the quarantine decision and the considerations that laid the foundations for that decision and the further course of events. The article by [Max] Frankel in today's *New York Times* contains a fairly complete overview of the lines of argument that one can hear at [the] State [Department]. In response to the statement therein that if the Russians would be willing to negotiate about the dismantling of the base in Cuba "it was conceivable that the US might be willing to dismantle one of the obsolescent American bases near Soviet territory," the State [Department's] Western Europe department [head?] upon being asked stated categorically that there could be no such trade-off and that this was not being considered in the least: "completely and flatly untrue."

In my opinion it is not entirely inconceivable that at a certain moment they might still proceed to meet a Russian retreat on Cuba with the removal of a single American base, for which dismantlement had already been considered as an option. If this would indeed be the intention of course the value of such a gesture would be greatly diminished in advance by labelling such a base "obsolescent."

From the circles of the ambassadorial working group concerning Berlin it was heard that yesterday among other things they discussed the argumentation used by the Americans to announce the quarantine; apparently especially [French ambassador to the United States Hervé] Alphand pointed out that the argument of the offensive nature of the Russian missile installations is not very strong since after all the question whether a missile is defensive or offensive demands a purely subjective answer, while in fact strategic intentions determine the nature of the weapons involved. In the American reasoning for example [Soviet] ICBMs are by definition offensive while those same missiles clearly play a defensive role in the Western strategy. In the same way the Cubans can posit that the Soviet MRBMs and IRBMs are of a purely retaliatory nature and therefore in fact form a deterrent and not a threat. Consequently in the group it was said that the US would have a much stronger position if they would make the disturbance of the strategic equilibrium and therefore the status quo the centrepiece, in other words if they focus the attention on the unprecedented element brought into the international strategic relations by the Soviets.

Van Roijen 907.

(Source: National Archive, *The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP)

by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 12

Minutes of the Council of Ministers, The Hague, 25 October 1962

TOP SECRET

Council of Ministers
No. 3098

Minutes of the meeting
held on Thursday 25 October 1962 in the Trèves Room
commenced at ten o'clock in the morning

Present:

Prime minister De Quay and ministers Van Aartsen, Beerman, Klompé, Korthals, Marijnen, De Pous, Toxopeus, Veldkamp, Visser (partially) and Zijlstra
(Absent are ministers Cals en Luns)
Secretary: J. Middelburg

1. The Cuban issue

The prime minister—before proceeding to the actual subject of this meeting—raises the Cuban issue. The previous day he had a telephone conversation with [foreign] minister [Joseph] Luns, who will return to The Hague this evening. In the House of Representatives the chairman originally was to announce that the government could not yet make a statement about the Dutch standpoint, but he called the speaker shortly before the start of the meeting to ask if he would do so himself. [...]

Minister [of Home Affairs Edzo] Toxopeus also feels that the statement is too long. [Belgian Foreign] Minister Spaak, after a meeting with the ministers of foreign affairs of the Six, made a statement. Whatever one's opinion of the American action toward Cuba may be, the unity of the West demands, that it is supported.

The prime minister agrees with minister Toxopeus, that even if the government would not agree with the American government, it would still be obliged to be in solidarity. Speaker concludes, that the introduction should be greatly reduced in size.

Minister [of Transport, Public Works and Water Management Henk] Korthals remarks, that Cuba does not belong to NATO territory. Speaker has in a letter sent the previous day repeated his earlier request of 4 October to the ship owners to abstain from transporting weapons to Cuba. To this he has now added instructions for the captains not to cause incidents, should they be stopped by the American navy.

Minister [of Justice] Beerman asks whether it is right to mention NATO in the government statement, since the American government took the measures with no prior knowledge of the NATO Council. Minister [of the Treasury Jelle] Zijlstra remarks, that Cuba might not be in NATO territory, but that if a crisis were to ensue there, it would have repercussions for the Berlin issue. Speaker points out, that it was not possible for the American government to consult the NATO Council in advance; consultation will however be necessary regarding the offering of support, since that should be dealt with within NATO. Minister [of Social Work Marga] Klompé inquires as to what was discussed in the NATO Council. The prime minister answers, that the American representative in NATO has said, that there is no doubt, that offensive military bases have been constructed in Cuba. Furthermore it was said, that the NATO countries would be kept informed about the continuation of the American quarantine measures. From other NATO countries' side it has been stated, that Cuba falls outside of NATO's territory, but that all countries are politically very interested in this action. In the other NATO countries only a few special measures have been taken. Minister Beerman wonders what the American quarantine measure means. It cannot only consist of checking ships' papers, but must also include bringing ships into an American port.

[...]

Minister Zijlstra understands support for the American policy, with which the draft statement ends, in the first place to mean the effort to get the Dutch ships to cooperate with the American measures (which for the Netherlands with its large fleet could mean a sacrifice) and furthermore supporting the American standpoint in the UN by dismissing all other resolutions. The prime minister proposes, that he will once more attempt to get in touch with minister Luns, so as to tell him, that the Council of Ministers agrees with issuing the (shortened) statement. The council is agreed on this.

[...]

The prime minister later in the meeting announces, that has spoken to minister Luns on the telephone and that the

latter agreed with the statement that speaker will now send to the chairman of the House of Representatives.

[...]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Minutes of the Council of Ministers, 2.02.05.02, 25 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 13

Dutch Prime Minister Jan E. de Quay, Diary, 25 October 1962

[concerning a cabinet meeting:] The attitude is kind of indifferent. I think [US President John F.] Kennedy's act is good. I would like to support him more strongly.

[Source: State Archives, Den Bosch, archive J.E. de Quay, diary 48, no. 5298, p. 98, 25 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 14

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 25 October 1962

Received: 8 November 1962

No. 2355/553.

Havana, 25 October 1962.

C U B A:
Politics.

As I have noted in previous reports, in the speeches of Cuban government persons often what is not said is of greater importance than what is.

In his T.V. address Fidel Castro did not deny that weapons of the kind that the C.I.A. has suddenly discovered in Cuba,

would have arrived and been installed here. This denial has in fact been heard from Khrushchev these days. The impression these statements to and fro give is that they are probably building installations in Cuba which from the air look like the batteries of dangerous long-range “ground to ground” missiles which could possibly be fitted with nuclear warheads. The US however also knows that their full equipment will take some more time and therefore intends to prevent the supply of any necessary parts and materiel.

Apparently the Cuban government considers the recent development in the [United Nations] Security Council satisfactory because the Rancho Boyeros airport near Havana has been reopened to approved flights, to which the local representative of the K.L.M. [Royal Dutch Airlines] responded by proposing to his superior in Curaçao to make both flights on next Monday, 29 October go through.

In the current distressful situation, in which a heavy burden has been laid on the Cuban people, there has been one “note gaie”: the elephants, lions, tigers, and bears of the Soviet Russian circus are expected or have already arrived. In diplomatic circles the question is being considered whether these are defensive or offensive weapons. I have remarked that the smell of some of these animals is certainly highly “offensive”.....

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 15

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 25 October 1962

REFERENCE No. 10255

DATE OF DISPATCH: 25 October 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 26 October 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

Reference my 907.

During a talk with [Galen L.] Stone, deputy director [of the State Department's Bureau of] Western European Affairs, he gave a more detailed overview of the recent developments.

firstly Halfway through the summer it had become clear to Washington that Khrushchev was out to realize Russian objectives with regard to Berlin as soon as possible. In the opinion of the Americans Khrushchev had become so involved in the Berlin issue and the internal pressure had become so great that he could not afford to compromise and therefore was aiming at a showdown.

secondly The Soviets had first confidentially and then also publicly let the US know that they would engage the Berlin issue after the American [mid-term Congressional] elections.

thirdly Concerning Cuba the Soviets had firmly assured the US that they would not supply Cuba with offensive weapons and in this vein had even specified the range of the weapons which were being delivered. For instance TASS had in early October sent out an emphatic statement that the weapons stationed on Cuba could not reach the US.

Incidentally the statement by [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko on weapons delivered to Cuba referenced by Kennedy in his address on the twenty-second of this month had been read from paper by the former.

fourthly In a departure from what had previously been heard from [the Department of] State Stone stated that Khr[ushchev] during his talk with [US ambassador in Moscow Foy D.] Kohler on the sixteenth of this month had stated that he was “virtually decided” to come to the US during the second half of November.

fifthly The fact that the construction of the bases was carried out with such haste that no effort was made to apply camouflage, indicates that this construction was bound to a certain time limit.

All these facts had convinced the administration that the Soviets had the fixed determination to confront the US during Khr[ushchev]’s visit with the fait accompli of an operative missile base in Cuba and by this startling acute threat [against] the US bring the Berlin issue to the solution they desired.

The administration is convinced that the Western position concerning Berlin has now as a result of the initiative in the Cuban matter—through which the Soviets have lost a valuable trump card—been strengthened.

Van Roijen 910.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 16

Dutch Prime Minister Jan E. de Quay, Diary, 26 October 1962

This morning [Foreign Minister Joseph] Luns came to visit me, returned from vacation. He looked well, listened and was much calmer. At last he agreed with the support for the US.

[Source: State Archives, Den Bosch, archive J.E. de Quay, diary 48, no. 5299, p. 98, 26 October 1962. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 17

Cable from Dutch Foreign Minister Joseph Luns, The Hague, to Dutch Embassy, London, 26 October 1962

REFERENCE No. 7355
DATE OF DISPATCH: 26 October 1962
FROM: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].
ORIGINAL INITIALED BY: tb [not further identified]
TO: London
SECRET

On the 23rd of this month the British temporary envoy handed the interim minister of foreign affairs a personal letter from [UK Foreign Secretary] Lord [Alec Douglas-]Home to me, the text of which, with salutations left out, follows below “you will have heard what the president said to the public about Cuba, and received a report of what passed in the North Atlantic Council. I would be most grateful if you would let me know your thoughts. We shall, of course, do what we can to give support to the United States in the [UN] Security Council. At the same time, there may be repercussions not only in the Caribbean, but also in Europe and else-

where. We must surely keep in the closest touch when we see the Soviet government’s reaction.”

After returning from vacation I took note of this letter today the 26th of this month upon which I sent the following reply to Lord Home via the British embassy here.

“Thank you very much for your message of October 23rd. I agree with you that the government of the United States must be supported in its policy to prevent the Soviet Union from turning Cuba into an offensive military base. We intend to show understanding with regard to measures taken for this purpose. At the same time I agree with you that developments must be watched closely on account of repercussions which they might have elsewhere and of possible consequences for the North Atlantic alliance. I welcome your suggestion that we keep in the closest touch.”

Luns 134.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 18

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 26 October 1962

REFERENCE No. 10300
DATE OF DISPATCH: 26 October 1962
DATE OF RECEIPT: 27 October 1962.
TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].
FROM: Washington
Information copy sent to: New York
SECRET

Although the president in his address on Monday left no doubt that the policy of the US strives not only to stop the supply of offensive weapons to Cuba but also most certainly the removal of the missile bases there, the measures taken so far have been exclusively aimed at the former goal. This does not mean that there is not a very active effort to develop plans to also realize the second desideratum. Consequently Secretary [of State Dean] Rusk yesterday in an off-the-record press conference with a limited number of journalists very emphatically stated that the dismantlement of the bases and the removal of the missiles are essential. The reason is of

course that the president has through his announcement of the facts made it impossible for the Soviets to surprise the US with the announcement of the presence of bases on Cuba as part of a new approach to the Berlin issue, but that the acute threat to the US remains in existence and will weaken the negotiating position of the US at the critical moment.

[Francis E.] Meloy, [Jr.] director [of the State Department's] Western Europe [Bureau], confirmed again that the construction of the bases is being continued at a frantic pace and that as time goes on the threat to the US increases. The element of time is therefore of great significance. In response to a request for comment on a press release that "the State Department made clear today that further action of an unspecified nature is being considered to deal with the continuing Soviet missile build-up in Cuba" Meloy could not provide an answer. He merely pointed out that the use of force to remove the bases is not excluded, although of course this will not be resorted to save in the worst case.

By way of an elucidation of the above and the explanation by Stone contained in my [cable no.] 910 I believe to be able to summarize the American point of view as follows.

As a result of various circumstances Khrushchev sees himself forced to definitively address the Berlin issue in the short term, i.e. before the end of this year, of course with the intention to make the Soviet position prevail. To this end it is necessary for him to strengthen his negotiating position through a military threat. The latter would have to include the possibility for the Soviet Union to launch a first blow that would if not neutralize the American "second strike capability" then at least weaken it severely. Since the Soviet Union, which does possess a large number of MRBMs and IRBMs, does not possess enough ICBMs to achieve the stated goal, the Soviet threat lacks the necessary credibility. This lacuna will be filled by the installation of MRBM and IRBM bases in Cuba, where the missiles are "zeroed in" on the American retaliation bases. This threat would be serious in itself but the US would have been caught in an even more impossible situation if the announcement of the addition to the Russian "first strike capability" would by surprise have coincided with a Soviet initiative to acutely address the Berlin issue. The American action has struck the trump card of surprise from Khrushchev's hands yet the much more important trump card of the Cuban bases remains in existence and gains in significance the more those bases near their completion.

The preceding could confirm that the US indeed only very recently acquired indisputable evidence of the presence of the Soviet missiles and also explains the great speed with which the administration has acted. Furthermore more effective action in the short term would fit well into this line of reasoning.

Van Roijen 916 +

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 19

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 27 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 26 October 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 27 October 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

CONFIDENTIAL

Obviously State Department is showing great interest in messages from Havana about mood and developments over there. If [Dutch ambassador to Cuba G.W.] Boissevain still has the opportunity to report in writing, would you approve of redirecting not only his telegrams but also his letters to me?

Van Roijen 918

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 20

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 27 October 1962

REFERENCE No. 10319

DATE OF DISPATCH: 27 October 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 28 October 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

Cncerning the statement issued by the White House today regarding the latest proposal by Khrushchev [vide my 365 559] I learned the following from a very trustworthy and generally very well informed member of the press.

The fact that this statement was [tough] in wording must be attributed primarily to the fact the text of Khrushchev's message this morning, which before receipt in Washington had already been released in Moscow, was completely different from that of a personal message which Kennedy received last night from Khr[ushchev] and which amounted to complete capitulation, with no preconditions regarding the bases in Turkey.

The reason for this about-face can only be guessed at. My informant put forward the possibility that those close to Khrushchev, e.g. the military, pressured him to withdraw his first offer. Yet the present offer also includes such an element of capitulation [since the bases in Turkey that the US press referred to as "obsolescent" cannot equal the value the Cuban bases have to the Soviets] that one must wonder what moved Khr[ushchev] to this new move. It is possible that we are dealing with an attempt to create the greatest possible confusion, not as much in Washington as among the [Soviet] allies and sympathizers. Another possibility, which was put forward by *NY Times* correspondent [Max] Frankel, is that the Soviets are afraid of US action against Cuba and are attempting to gain time, in which regard the frantic pace with which the construction of the bases in Cuba continues can be pointed at.

In any case, it seems to me that Kennedy reacted in the right way by resolutely refusing to accept the offered "deal," while at the same time keeping the door open for consultations regarding the Soviet desiderata after the Cuban threat will have disappeared.

Van Roijen 920.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 21

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 29 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 29 October 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

With reference to tripartite agreement US-UN-SU Fidel declared that no guarantee sufficient unless, besides abolishing blockade, the following will be ceased:

- Firstly economic blockade
- Secondly aid to anti's and espionage
- Thirdly pirate attacks from US and Puerto Rico
- Fourthly flights over Cuba
- Fifthly dissolving [the US] base [of] Guantanamo

Boissevain 68

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 22

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 29 October 1962

Received: 8 November 1962

No. 2378/559.

Havana, 29 October 1962.

C U B A:

Worries about the future.

Many Cuban "gusanos" (counterrevolutionaries [lit. "worms"—ed.]) are presently worrying about the possibility that after the dismantling of the Russian missile sites in Cuba under the supervision of the U.N., the prospect of guarantees against an invasion put forward by Kennedy will result in a perpetuation of the Castro-regime and possibly even a restoration of trade relations with the US

They are beginning to wonder if, to put it crudely, "as on Playa Girón [i.e., at the Bay of Pigs—ed.] they will again be abandoned and have only been used as instruments to provide

the Democratic Party with the prestige it so urgently requires for the upcoming American elections.”

The statements of Raúl Castro (in a speech made yesterday at Santiago de Cuba shortly after the decision to dismantle) only 5 days after those of Fidel (the day after the quarantine was proclaimed in a television program on the 23rd of this month) are indeed reminiscent of a first step on the road to adjustment to the circumstances that underwent such change in this short time. Compare:

Fidel: “We do not even consider giving account to or asking advice from the august members of the Senate and House of the US about the weapons, which we consider it proper to purchase.”

“We purchase weapons for our defense at will and we take the measures we consider necessary for our defense at our discretion.”

Raúl mentions in passing the decision taken by Khrushchev to dismantle the missile sites as a run-up to new Cuban demands for guarantees, including those concerning the evacuation of the naval base of Guantánamo.

Fidel: “No one inspects our country, no one can come and inspect our country because we will never authorize anyone to do so and never will we give up our sovereign right that it is we who are in charge within our borders and that it is we who inspect and no one else.”

“Anyone who proposes to inspect Cuba, knows that he should show up in battle dress.”

Raúl does not mention a word about the arrival tomorrow of U Thant, who is coming to further arrange the supervision of the dismantling.

Fidel: “Opposite this policy of provocation and violence: our forceful, calm attitude of self-defense. The attitude of the Soviet Union: the calm, exemplary attitude. The answer of the Soviet Union has been a true lesson for imperialism, forceful, calm, loaded with arguments, loaded with reasons, which reveals the aggressive policy of Mr Kennedy.”

Raúl must have found it difficult to have to be the first to also say a good word about the gesture made by the Soviet Union “in the name of mankind,” which should serve as an example to the US “if indeed a good will exists and we should be allowed to believe that this (good will) can arise in the brains of the American leaders.”

Toward the end of his speech Raúl addressed his big brother “comrade Fidel, highest representative of the Party

and of the Government, founder of the first Socialist State of America,” with assurances that the people stand behind him as one and that it is “prepared to unconditionally accept and carry out the orders, which he will wish to give in name of the people of Cuba, of the Party, and of the Government, and as supreme commander.”

This is what is being worried about: that after the settlement of the conflict, Fidel, however sobered up inwardly, will in his familiar way manage to announce to the common herd that he has likewise “for the sake of mankind” abandoned some of his demands (including Guantánamo!); with the guarantees given to Cuba and the Soviet Union, which put an end to the economic boycott, to piracy, and to the violation of Cuban airspace, the country will however be able to freely work on its golden future in cooperation with its Marxist-Leninist brothers!

Whether this fear will prove justified, or whether after Fidel’s grandiloquence his “people” will still be inclined to swallow everything he puts in front of them, remains an open question. The fact is that after the exuberance of the first days of mobilization a silence has set in among the ranks of his supporters, an anxious silence that is shared by his enemies who live between hope and fear.

Most of my foreign colleagues believe that Fidel will emerge from the battle stronger than ever, be it without the missile installations.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 23

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 31 October 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 31 October 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

Rmc [Reference my codes message, trans.] 68. Statement [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa to the Brazilian Ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto] shows 5 points are not so much directed to the US but against the SU whose concession given around the Cuban government disturbed Fidel [Castro].

Regretful that from both sides [put] pressure on peace apostle [UN Acting Secretary General U] Thant: American press presents his mission meant for organizing inspection rockets installations; airport English declaration: “we support 5 points [of] Fidel.” Asked by Roa what he thought about the points, the Brazilian answered that Cuba asked too much, after which the minister said that these points are negotiable.

On short term dismantling [of] rocket bases in exchange for abolishing blockade. The rest is part of future settlement Cuban US conflict

Boissevain 69

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 24

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 1 November 1962

Received: 8 November 1962

No. 2387/562.

Havana, 1 November 1962.

C U B A:

Politics.

Although I cannot guess when an occasion for sending this report will present itself, I will nevertheless compose it by way of a kind of chronicle of the events that follow each other rapidly in this restless country.

In one of many anecdotes about [George] Bernard Shaw, during the performance of one of his plays, he said to a noisy “critic” in the gallery: “We appear to be in agreement Sir, but what is our opinion against that of the majority!”

In Cuba things are the other way around: not spontaneous support for government actions and a handful of opposition, but a “máximo líder” time and again more prominently standing out who is taking decisions and announces these in public

and then assures adhesion in the form of slogans, newspaper articles, poems, radio shouting, and telegrams from all countries of the Soviet bloc plus Bertrand Russell.

The ensuing step is a speech by Fidel wherein he gives the people a full explanation of what has already taken place.

Even the Soviet Union seems to have taken part in this game in the scene of the second act that was enacted just now: Tass has declared its [i.e., Soviet] agreement with the five points [of Fidel Castro] and Anastas Mikoyan is on his way to Havana as a “trouble shooter.” Is the Armenian coming as a “Dutch Uncle” or to eat humble pie? A third possibility is that he will inform Fidel about some deep game or another that the Soviet Union is playing with the United States.

Meanwhile Mr [U] Thant has returned to New York without accomplishing his aim, the blockade will probably be resumed, and in Cayo Hueso there is the same military busyness as everywhere in Cuba.

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 25

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 1 November 1962

REFERENCE No. 10448

DATE OF DISPATCH: 1 November 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 2 November 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

I would like to draw attention to the following points from a conversation I had today with one of the officials of the directorate far eastern affairs of the State Dept

firstly [My] informant said that the people at State were very pleased, at least so far, that Sukarno had not made any state-

ment in support of Castro in the Cuba crisis. The Indonesian president did have the occasion to do so, such as during a recent speech to students. According to [the] informant perhaps this wise forbearance from Sukarno's side could be read as a first indication of the salutary effect the firm and resolute course of action of the Kennedy government regarding Cuba will have—according to expectations.

secondly The US government intends to point out to Jakarta, as they hope superfluously, the way in which the S[oviet] U[nion] did not hesitate to abandon its friend India which had gone out of its way to curry Moscow's favour, once push came to shove in the conflict with China; "we hope the lesson won't be lost on Sukarno." I then gave as my opinion that Sukarno would continue untiringly in his attempts to play US and SU off against one another.

thirdly Informant said that my colleague [Indonesian Ambassador Zairin] Zain will soon pay a four to six week visit to Indonesia. Zain has lately devoted himself to procuring new economic support from the US to his country. He has taken steps to achieve this both at State and with other bodies. According to informant the US side is in principle willing to provide support in order to prevent Indonesia from slipping into chaos any further. At the same time they [the Americans] are determined only to provide this support if assurances will be obtained that the money for economic development will be usefully spent. To this end for example the International Monetary Fund could according to informant be engaged. Under no circumstances do they want to run the risk of later finding out, as recently happened in the case of Brazil, that the support/money ended up in the wrong hands.

Van Roijen 926 ++

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 26

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 2 November 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 2 November 1962
TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

Speech [on evening of 1 November by] Fidel [Castro] about conversations with [UN Secretary General U] Thant, of which second confidential, shows that Cuba refuses inspection; if UN accepts American guarantee of non-aggression then SU promise with regard to taking back strategic weaponry without inspection can be accepted. Mentioned his 5 conditions for peace and declared Cuba prepared to cooperate to reach true peace. Mentioned disagreement with SU but called for discipline, confidence in SU and its leaders and indicated weaponry property SU and supervised by Soviet technicians. Hinted that global politics which does not concern Cuba reason for Soviet concession. Have impression Cuban government determined and solution conflict extremely difficult.

Boissevain 71

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 27

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 2 November 1962

Received: 9 November 1962
No. 2398/566.
Havana, 2 November 1962.
C U B A:
Politics.

I could have written the speech made by Fidel Castro last night to report to the Cuban people about his meeting with U Thant before it was delivered. The people must be kept at boiling point to make the many sacrifices which are demanded of them and to forget the many hardships which are imposed on them as a result of anti-American policy and the shiftlessness of the people themselves. The interim [UN] Secretary General came to sound out the revolutionary government concerning a settlement of the burning issue which threatened the world with war, namely the Russian missile bases and the American blockade. Yet he was presented with a series of complaints which, however justified some of them might be, concern the long-term deterioration of US-Cuban

relations. According to my perception this can be traced back to the non-execution of the indemnification part of the agricultural reform law and the subsequent confiscation of American property in Cuba, also without indemnification. The ensuing development is only too well known. The case has turned into a kind of Corsican vendetta.

However much the prime minister has urged discipline, understanding for the world political problems of the Soviet Union, and the expression of friendship with Moscow and its leaders, followed by the exclamation, "above all we are Marxist-Leninists" (approving looks from the old communists and several minutes of applause), all Soviet flags and slogans have nevertheless disappeared from the streets, even the words of welcome to the astronaut [Yuri] Gagarin which still hung by the road to the airport in Spanish and Russian.

There is great disappointment that Fidel missed such an opportunity for blackmail and fussing. [Anastas] Mikoyan will have a hard time because the Cuban is as intransigent with the one side as he is with the other. But he has to be careful: if he goes too far or if an excited revolutionary does something imprudent with respect to the Armenian leader of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin might just leave him flat!

Fidel called the inspection of the dismantling of the missile bases an American attempt to humiliate Cuba. On this sole point Mikoyan could make a pacifying gesture by giving Washington the solemn assurance that the "strategic weapons" installed by Russia will indeed be removed. This would allow for a return to the "status quo ante" [before] the recent crisis. I do not dissemble that such would by any means lead to an amelioration of the relations between the US and Cuba in which the great stumbling block is the communism accepted by the revolutionary government which has brought the US to the mentality described in the verse:

"I do not like thee Dr. Fell, the reason why I cannot tell, but all the same I know full well, I do not like thee Dr. Fell."

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 28

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 2 November 1962

REFERENCE No. 10502

DATE OF DISPATCH: 2 November 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 3 November 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign]. A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

During the talk with [the] director [of the State Department's Bureau of] Inter-American Regional Political Affairs [vide my 935] I inquired as to further actions to be expected from the side of the OAS. [Ward P.] Allen said that although intensive consultations are taking place on the level of the OAS, in the near future probably only a decision to establish a sort of "unified command" can be expected in this regard he noted that the first Argentine warship is expected at Trinidad today or tomorrow where the admiral, charged with the execution of the quarantine, has set up his headquarters.

Concerning the attitude of the various Latinos Allen in the first place mentioned Mexico whose standpoint of course enjoys great recognition. About Brazil he remarked that the impression is that the Brazilian government displays a different attitude towards other countries than it does domestically. Finally he was full of praise for Bolivia which had in the hour of danger declared solidarity with the hemisphere, thereby stepping over its national grievances, and especially for the Bolivian representative who without instructions decided to attend the OAS meeting last week and to vote in favor of the US standpoint, without having the assurance that his action would be completely accepted by the Bolivian government.

It was apparent that Allen possessed very little information concerning the situation in Cuba itself. He was informed by me on the basis of Boissevain 69, for which Allen showed himself most appreciative.

Van Roijen 934 ++

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 29

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 2 November 1962

REFERENCE No. 10499

DATE OF DISPATCH: 2 November 1962

DATE OF RECEIPT: 3 November 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

SECRET

r u c [unknown abbreviation, presumably “reference your cable”—trans.] 593

Matter of the thirteen Cuban instructions sent in *currie* [unknown term/name—trans.] was taken up with [Ward P.] Allen, Director [of] Inter-American Regional Political Affairs [at the State Department]. He stated that the notice in question had come from Venezuela where a message had been intercepted by the government. In order to obtain more insight into the content of the instructions and in order to ascertain on the basis of the text whether the instruction was clearly intended for all pro-Castro organizations in Latin America they had asked for the text through the US embassy in Caracas, yet so far without avail. Although [the Department of] State therefore possesses nothing but the report from Caracas, Allen assumed it virtually certain that this was indeed an attempt by Castro to stir all Latino countries.

The reports from the various Latin American posts received so far did not yet enable State to infer whether a “pattern” of agitation and sabotage had in fact begun to emerge. They did establish that in the week of the 22nd of October, so immediately after the announcement of the quarantine, the size of the protests that occurred had been limited. It was not clear to what extent these demonstrations which antedate the abovementioned Cuban instructions, should be ascribed to the independent initiative of local communist and other pro-Castro groups, or to instructions from Havana or from Moscow. In any case informant was inclined to draw the conclusion that the communist following in Latin America was less sizeable, or at least less active, than is often thought. Incidentally he did not exclude the possibility of a significant role being played by the fact that in the various countries the police had been warned after the US embassies in the various capitals had prepared the governments for the possibility of troubles.

Van Roijen 935 ++

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 30

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 7 November 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 7 November 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

German embassy reports that in several places Russian weapons are hidden in holes or under cement after which yards photographed by helicopters probably for later identification. With regard to conversation [between] Fidel [Castro and Anastas] Mikoyan nothing new but Soviet [national] day celebrated with expressions of friendship and notification of 5 points by ex-communist [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez.

Boissevain

73

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 82. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 31

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 9 November 1962

REFERENCE No. 10705

DATE OF DISPATCH: 9 November 1962.

DATE OF RECEIPT: 10 November 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

SECRET

Today I had a talk with my British colleague [UK Ambassador David Ormsby-Gore] from which I should like to mention briefly the following:

With regard to the question of how Moscow will react to the defeat suffered in the Cuba crisis, Ormsby-Gore currently distinguishes two tendencies: on the one hand those who are of the opinion that Khrushchev will, if only to restore his prestige, be compelled to make a powerful countermove; on the other hand those whose judgment is that Khrushchev has finally understood that the Americans in fact are willing to fight for their vital national interests, has drawn the necessary lessons from this and in his further cold war policy will proceed with the necessary prudence.

My colleague himself, and as he said his government as well, is inclined to believe that the Kremlin will not take any more major risks in the current circumstances and is more likely to operate in a circumspect fashion. "All straws in the wind seem to point that way." [In this regard it should be noted that [Llewellyn E.] Thompson, former ambassador of the US in Moscow and presently advisor for Soviet affairs of the secretary of state, today told one of my other Western European colleagues that he personally did not believe that Moscow will make a countermove in Berlin.] In the meantime Ormsby-Gore agreed with me that it was yet far too early to form a well-grounded opinion about this with any certainty [since in Moscow too a re-assessment is taking place] and that especially that NATO should be prepared for anything and take precautions for all eventualities.

My British colleague agreed with me that one of the most critical moments during the Cuba crisis had probably been the moment between the announcement of the quarantine measures against Cuba on Wednesday morning, the 24th of October and Thursday the 25th of October when it became clear that the Soviet ships had received orders to change their course. We had both established that at the time in government circles in Washington possible incidents involving Russian ships and which through a chain reaction could have led to a nuclear war were very seriously reckoned with.

During a recent meeting at the State Department, at which both Ormsby-Gore and our [West] German colleague [Karl-Heinrich] Knappstein had been present, the latter had made a passionate speech about the possibility that the Russians or Cubans would hide missiles and other weapons in the caverns of the island. The Brit had countered that aerial reconnaissance had so far not detected any suspicious activities or traces near the caverns and furthermore that it was not very probable that the Russians after having been caught red-handed and having been forced to retreat would now risk

a second fiasco with the purpose of hiding a few weapons inadequate to truly threaten the US clandestinely.

Informant responded affirmatively to my question whether he was not also convinced that the US government would not compromise regarding her demands concerning the removal from Cuba of the Ilyushin-28 bombers and regarding the verification within Cuba itself.

Van Roijen 960.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 32

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 19 November 1962

Received: 30 November 1962

No. 2510/583.

Havana, 19 November 1962.

Cuba "on a war footing."

I have the honor of offering Your Excellency, apart from the latest edition of "Verde Olivo" d.d. 18 of this month, the attached page of the Sunday supplement of the daily newspaper "El Mundo" with pictures of various posters that currently brighten up the townscape of Havana. Below a translation of the texts of these posters:-

"Supreme commander: command!"

"On a war footing"

"We are going to crush them and we are going to fire at them with every mortar and every cannon"

"To destroy the enemy!"

"Camilo—We will drive them back!"

"Death to the intruder!"

"The attack on Cuba will be the beginning of the end of imperialism" (loosely after Winston Churchill!)

“We will stop the intruders, drive them back and bury them”

“We are all one”

“To arms”

“Cuba will prevail”

“Against the blockade—More production”

“Every building, every labor center—a trench in defense of the fatherland”

“And... your blood will save a life.”

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 17318. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 33

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 20 November 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 20 November 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

Derive from the following firstly presidential farewell dinner for [Anastas] Mikoyan secondly absence Fidel [Castro] who was supposedly seen drunk elsewhere thirdly Fidel's letter to [U] Thant in which concession with regard to Soviet bombers IL 28 (...), that Armenian [i.e., Mikoyan] finally got concession and with this accomplished mission.

Air raid on Cuban cargo vessel apparently intended to intimidate, after all Rio Damuji undamaged after 11 bombs, only understandable as expansion of quarantine towards a boycott of all shipping to Cuba which inevitably will result in hostilities.

Boissevain

78

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 34

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 21 November 1962

2517/585.

Havana, 21 November 1962.

C U B A:

Politics.

This is the country of heroic postures and noble slogans. When one sees a notice at a workshop, factory, or agricultural enterprise: “we support Fidel's five points” or “we will increase production in fraternal competition with x,” then it seems as if Mario, Pedro, and Ramón have been asked for their opinion and this has been put into writing. In reality of course the reverse is true. Mario, Pedro, and Ramón are reading—as far as they are able to read—what they are supposed to be thinking.

Since Fidel has brought in the Spartan mothers (he had read a book again) tensions have been rising because of the lack of a satisfactory settlement of the dispute. Now that President Kennedy has ended the “quarantine” the motto is: 1st no indiscretion about military affairs; 2nd despite the end of the illegal blockade, keep the powder dry or as it is literally called: “la guardia en alto.”

In the meantime the island has become almost completely isolated and already practice has shown that orders in Europe cannot be shipped or are received with considerable delays.

This does not however keep the revolutionary government from participating in popular movements elsewhere and the attached badge⁵ proves this.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv.

82. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 35

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 26 November 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 26 November 1962

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

CONFIDENTIAL

Farewell speech [was given by] Mikoyan which [was a] “pep talk” without contents showed that he did not succeed in getting further concessions from Fidel [Castro], which was confirmed by manifesto [of the] rev. reg. [revolutionary government—trans.] in which 5 points [were] repeated, inspection [was] turned down, and the US [was] provoked.

Boissevain
79

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 36

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 26 November 1962

2528/588.

Havana, 26 November 1962.

C U B A:

Politics.

As [I reported to] Your Excellency through another channel, Anastas Mikoyan made a speech on the evening before his departure [from Cuba] consisting of communist platitudes and expressions of admiration for the Cuban people

in its struggle against imperialism and its love for world peace. Time and again he covered himself with the mantle of Khrushchev’s name and he repeatedly mentioned Fidel Castro. Like Achilles the latter has withdrawn into the tent of the University, where he basks in the admiration of students of both sexes.

What the “máximo líder” has concocted was revealed on the morning of the long-awaited departure of the first vice-prime minister of the Soviet Union, namely a manifesto printed as: Cuba’s answer to Kennedy.

Apart from a repetition of the familiar five points this piece contains the provocative demand that the U.N. launch an investigation in the United States into the sites where attacks on Cuba are being prepared and that it accomplish the dismantling of the camps where volunteers are trained.

Cuba reserves the right to acquire any kind of weapons for its defense. “As Marxist-Leninists we defend peace out of conviction and as a principle.” The naked assurance of non-aggression does not satisfy the revolutionary government: she has as little faith in the words of President Kennedy as she has fear for his threats.

The die is cast! Unless the Soviet Union, which has abandoned or been forced to abandon friends in the past, pressures Cuba, for which means are available in abundance, I fear that the crisis will continue as will the boycott on the shipping trade with which the government and labor unions of the United States wield a powerful economic weapon.....

Now the jokes about the length of Mikoyan’s stay are subsiding.

Mr [James] Donovan was supposed to arrive to negotiate a ransom for Mikoyan⁶; the Armenian would not leave over sea, nor by airplane, but “con el caballo” (= Fidel Castro). What can the members of the bourgeoisie, who at the moment are not even able to leave, expect other than a steady deterioration of their living conditions?

For the Cuban people an anxious time begins!

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 37

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 28
November 1962

VIA AIR MAIL
F 15445/62

SECRET.
No. 2549/590/GS.91

Havana, 28 November 1962.

Hiding of offensive weapons? [the following line is in handwriting:] vide van Roijen 1021 (copy attached) regarding construction of underground fortifications, to which Cuba-distribution has been given. [unknown initial (BD? RD?); first number of date hardly legible but probably a "1":] 10/12-62

I have the honor to hereby present Your Excellency with a translation of some confidential information from the same trustworthy source as referred to in my GS.101 and 103 of December last year.

In this instance I have again chosen not to inform friendly missions, leaving it to Your Excellency's better judgment to pass this information on to the suitable foreign governments and international institutions.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain



[document begins with a sketch of a concrete arch, approximately 2.60 by 10 metres, on the back of a semi-trailer—trans.]

Over the past months several hundred concrete arches like the one sketched above have been spotted being driven through Caibarién (N.coast Las Villas province), loaded onto semi-trailers a few at a time, most likely because of the weight that these can carry.

This traffic was interrupted during the days of the crisis, but resumed from 21-23 November on, be it on a smaller scale. During these days for the full 24 hours great activity was observed near the hill of Viñas, located right of the road from Bartolomé (south of Remedios) to Central Adela, where work has already been going on for months. On the 23rd, 14 large

trucks loaded with stone and sand were counted, en route to this location, which has been closed off as a military zone.

At 1 KM. distance right of the road, which leads from Bartolomé in southern direction to Zuluete there is another hill of little height named "San Ramón," where during the past days there has also been much activity.

These low hills belong to the series of hills called Bamburanao, which stretches out as far as the surroundings of Yaguajay and Mayajigua (N.E.tip of the Las Villas province). Throughout this region there was great activity until the 24th, especially on this last day, which was participated in by a large number of Russians, who during the days of the crisis wore the uniform of the militia.

Just beyond Tapaste (Havana province), by the San José de las Lajas highway to Jaruco, are the so-called caves of the priest (Cuevas del Cura) and during last week (18-24 November) a large amount of army truck traffic took place in the direction of these caves. These trucks were all carefully covered, so that their cargo could not be ascertained; in the proximity of the caves the Cuban drivers hand them to the Russians, who drive them the remaining distance to the caves, where they are unloaded to subsequently be returned to the Cuban drivers.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 38

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 13
December 1962

Received: 7 January 1963
No. 2658/615
Havana, 13 December 1962.
C U B A:
Cold war.

The current climate here with a decrease in temperature to 13° matches the political and economic condition. The

cold war with the United States continues as long as on-site inspections are denied. Notwithstanding government promises of extra distribution of all kinds of tools and utensils, toys and provisions, scarcity is all too apparent. The Cubana [de Aviación] maintains a precarious service to Mexico City which is dogged by interruptions and delays, and the shipping trade from the West is limited to Cuban and Spanish merchant ships and vessels under flags of the Soviet Union and satellite states.

The latest address by President Kennedy provides the glum prospect of even greater troubles and hardships.

Which means, will Washington use to move Castro to reason?

An indication was given to me today during a return visit to the Japanese Ambassador who received me shivering with the cold in his official residence (Mr [Rokuzo] Yaguchi was “en poste” in Burma) and told me about pressure being exerted on his government by Washington to cease or at least limit the significant Japanese import of Cuban sugar, against which Cuba buys car parts and other much-needed items.

It would surprise me however if this was all that is to come, since such measures only herald a period of “attrition” which could last a long time.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 17318. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 39

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 14 December 1962

REFERENCE No. 11586

DATE OF DISPATCH: 14 December 1962.

DATE OF RECEIPT: 15 December 1962.

TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

Information copy sent to: New York

SECRET

Concerning C u b a

Director UN political affairs [at the] State [Department], [Joseph] Sisco, while requesting utmost discretion informed me that State is currently proposing to let the Cuban affair quietly come to an end. This would boil down to the US and the SU “agreeing to disagree,” which leaves the question whether such could be done while going around the v r [veiligheidsraad; (UN) Security Council].

According to Sisco the SU is very keen on having a final round in the v r [Security Council] both to make propaganda for the fact that Khrushchev has kept all his promises and to pin the US down to a concession that Cuba will not be invaded. Furthermore it can be assumed that the Cubans themselves would like to have the opportunity to come down on America in the v r [Security Council].

State tends toward the view that there should not be a v r [Security Council] debate, among other things because the US of course is not willing to make said concession as long as the conditions for inspection and assurances have not been met. Sisco affirmed again that, although it would have been important to make a communist country accept UN inspections, the current situation is not unwelcome to the US since on the one hand no promise of non-invasion has to be made [I assume that this is not disagreeable to Kennedy from the point of view of domestic politics either] and on the other hand American surveillance can continue quietly.

Sisco also confirmed that a “firm commitment” has been acquired from the Soviets that the Soviet troops will be withdrawn from Cuba. According to Sisco this concerns eight thousand men who primarily had the duty of “servicing” the various installations which have now been removed so that their stay is of no further use. This does deviate from information indicating that this Russian personnel was organized into military units [vide my 971].

Van Roijen 1041 ++

[Source: Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, The Hague, 2.05 118 inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 40

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 27 December 1962

REFERENCE No. 11807
DATE OF DISPATCH: 27 December 1962
DATE OF RECEIPT: 28 December 1962
TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].
FROM: Washington
Information copy sent to: New YorkSECRET

During a tour d'horizon with Rusk this afternoon he said that the Cuban issue still worried him, especially with reference to the situation in Havana. It is being considered that the celebration of the takeover by Castro on the coming second of January, for which occasion a large number of militia members would be concentrated in Havana, will preface events of far reaching nature. Although they are not sure exactly which direction things will go Rusk said he saw the following possibilities:

A. Castro may announce a "change of policy" which would boil down to a break with the Russians followed by a reorientation either in the Chinese-Albanian direction, or a Titoist line.

B. The extreme militant wing of the Cuban communist party could overthrow Castro with the aid of the Russian troops.

C. The moment could be seized for a revolution which would be directed not only against Castro but also against the Russians present.

Especially the latter possibility gives the US much cause for worry since it could lead to a situation as in Hungary in 1956, with the difference that this time the US [in my opinion also for domestic political reasons] would have to intervene.

During a brief review of the Cuban crisis Rusk pointed out that Kennedy although forceful had nevertheless acted very prudently especially by always leaving Khrushchev a way out. For instance the US had first addressed the removal of the missiles [Rusk here noted that indications neither of the presence of nuclear warheads nor of the preparation of missiles for launch in the direction of the US were ever received; if the latter would have been observed the US would have struck immediately] only when the issue of the missiles had been dealt with was withdrawal of the bombers demanded and only when the the IL-28[s] had been removed, had the withdrawal of the Russian troops been tabled. He confirmed that Khr[ushev] had conceded withdrawal of the troops, albeit without committing himself to a definite time limit.

Van Roijen 1057 ++

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, MFA 2.05 118 inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 41

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 27 December 1962

DATE OF DISPATCH: 27 December 1962
DATE OF RECEIPT: 28 December 1962
TO: Min[ister]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs]
FROM: Washington
Information copy sent to: New York
SECRET

During my talk with [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk [vide my 1057] Rusk, in relation to his remark on a possible reorientation of Cuba toward China, revealed that he was factoring in new Chinese initiatives. These could occur as a direct reaction to possible events taking place in Havana, e.g., by a military demonstration against the off-shore islands. He however also saw the possibility of Chinese action in North Korea and furthermore singled out North Vietnam as a possible area for Chinese activities, which could cause the unstable situation in Laos to collapse. Such a Chinese initiative would, according to your colleague, face Moscow with the highly difficult choice of abandoning an ally or getting involved in a war. Therefore the relationship with Beijing is not only a "long-term worry" for Moscow but certainly also a short-term worry.

Regarding the possibility of action in Korea Rusk made clear that the US would in case of emergency this time not hesitate to use nuclear weapon at once.

Van Roijen 1058 ++

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.169, inv. 119. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 42

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 19 March 1963

551/119 Havana, 19 March 1963.

CUBA:

Russians.

The presence in Cuba of a large number of military and economic experts from the S[oviet].U[nion]. has aroused a good deal of controversy. Their number, their task, the fact that their presence could result in the outbreak of a world war and so forth. Dr. Castro too has used the Russians for demagogic effect for instance when during the recent crisis he painted them as heroes who would either triumph or perish together with the Cuban people as if the poor Russians had a choice!

Currently the “question brûlante” is if and at what pace they are disappearing from Cuba. I do not know what has happened during my absence travelling on duty but am certain that during last weekend a thousand of them left the country. I personally saw a series of open trucks, stuffed with blond Slavs drive toward the harbor and a friendly embassy with a chancellery on the sea shore has been able to follow the embarkation and.....photograph it.

Of course rumors and unverifiable tips have been plenty: it was said that Russians were taken away in the harbor in cuffs; supposedly Cubans had clashed with Russians inland and killed some.

For the average Cuban their departure is a relief and probably for most Russians likewise.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 119. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 43

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 1 July 1963

DATE OF DISPATCH: 1 July 1963.

FROM: Havana

ORIGINAL INITIALED BY: GWB

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

BY COURIER.

CONFIDENTIAL

With respect to my message sent via a different channel and a note included in the “Brief Cuban Notices” of this week I will allow myself a few more remarks.

The noon meal at the Embassy, where Dr. Castro was present as a guest of honor, was followed by his appearance two days later—again at the fixed hour!—as the enunciator at the reception given on the occasion of the induction of H.H. Pope Paul VI.

One of his close staff members stated that the prime minister would, if possible, gladly accept like invitations. Although this may well be one of Fidel Castro’s whims, it seems more probable this is a purposeful attempt at rapprochement with the West, bearing in mind that this may replace the US in matters of economy. Khrushchev giving a nudge in this direction is also a possibility: it would reduce the burden on the Soviet Union and vex the US.

Fidel inquired after Dutch export products and breeding cattle, which was utilized to send him a number of books and booklets. During his presence at the Embassy I had drawn his attention to the fact that there still are Dutch experts in the area of sugar planting—Cuban sugarcane is “descendant” from the testing station in Pasuruan—and that complete sugar factories can be supplied (Stork) [a major Dutch machine factory].

The plans which the prime minister had for the industrialisation of the island seemed to me only partially economically responsible, unless they intend to transform this country “à la Russe” into a closed economic region with high prices and an advanced form of mercantilism or autarky. I therefore remarked that Cuban sugar, for which the Soviet Union pays 6 cents per lb., is sold to the Soviet people for 46 cents (what democratic government would dare to do so!?) and compared such a situation with that of the Dominican Republic under Trujillo.

Fidel Castro recounted that during his visit to the Soviet Union he had the opportunity to observe the effect of [a] megaton of bombs.

Before lunch an officer of the security service appeared in order to inspect the residence with regard to security [one word illegible, presumably to the effect of “of the prime minister”]. This window had to be shut, who lived in that house, where would Fidel Castro sit at the table, etc.

I was reminded of the attempts by that same service to move my gardener to espionage (see letter No. 2345/550 d.d. 24.10.1962⁷).....

My servants, who are all disgruntled about the current situation, were nevertheless very excited and when Fidel Castro before departing made his habitual visit to the kitchen, from the streets too there were "sounds of jubilation" from the public at large.

BOISSEVAIN 29.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 44

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 8 July 1963

DATE OF DISPATCH: 8 July 1963.

FROM: Havana.

ORIGINAL INITIALED BY: GWB

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

TOP SECRET.

Yesterday in [the] seaside resort Varadero Fidel Castro told my spouse [I had stayed in Havana with [a] severe cold] he [is] convinced ideals must sometimes [be] tested against reality; he feels obliged [to] pursue agreement with US yet would like [to] use me as middle man. Since Fidel, after clear language from my side, cannot harbor illusions regarding my feelings I personally am willing but of course only if mandated by You. For now [I] await demarche from Cuban side and Your instructions. As Fidel requested to communicate regarding this matter not with BB [*Buitenlandse Betrekkingen*, i.e., (Minister of) Foreign Relations Raúl Roa] but with doctor [Rene] Vallejo⁸ I consider, given the man's mentality, personal action without prior knowledge [of] P.U.R.S.C. [the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution] possible. Since Fidel currently probably expects some initiative from me quod non⁹ please respond expediently

BOISSEVAIN 33

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archive of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 45

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 8 July 1963

DATE OF DISPATCH: 8 July 1963

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

TOP SECRET

With reference to my 33 second question is whether SU was consulted which appears to me as likely, third question why not the Swiss or Czech ambassador in Havana and Washington respectively [where they represented US and Cuban interests - ed.].

Be noted that Fidel [Castro] told my wife that Cuban government [has] too large [a] debt to Soviet bloc, only the US able to provide aid but nevertheless he was determined to continue revolution and this is the bottleneck.

Boissevain
34

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 119. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar.]



DOCUMENT No. 46

Cable from Dutch Foreign Minister Joseph Luns, The Hague, to Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 9 July 1963

DATE OF RECEIPT: 9 July 1963
TO: Havana
FROM: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service,
The Hague]

TOP SECRET

Have read Your 33 and 34 with interest.

As statements by Castro related by You give insufficient grounds for determining status and significance thereof [I] share Your judgment that You should by no means take initiative: utmost reserve is called for. Should Castro approach You directly with [a] similar proposal I should like to be informed.

On our part the US Embassy here will be most confidentially informed of Your telegrams and the above.

Luns 25.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archive of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 47

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 24 July 1963

1348/263.

Havana, 24 July 1963.

C U B A:

Fidel and the Netherlands.

After the latest doings by Dr. Fidel Castro I wonder if, had he received instead of “Das Kapital” the Bible and met a preacher or priest, the “máximo líder” would have become a devout Christian with all the ramifications thereof for the course of the revolution and relations with the US.

The above thought came to me as a result of Fidel delivering a two hours long lecture at the University on the subject of..... the Netherlands. Apparently he was so struck by the contents of the books and booklets which I had sent to him that he wanted everyone to partake in his discovery.

Yesterday evening, at the reception given by the U.A.R. [Egyptian] Ambassador, the prime minister was already busy saying goodbye when he saw undersigned and inquired where

the Swiss T.Z. [chargée d'affaires] was (he had already left). He had wanted to inform Mr. [Charles] Masset of a decision by the Cuban government which entailed nationalisation of the former building of the US embassy, currently in use by the Swiss embassy acting as the representative of the interests of the US. As if he intended to provoke a reaction by me, while the Ambassadors of the Soviet Union [Aleksandr Alekseyev] and China [Shen Jian] stood guard on both sides, he elaborated to me most vividly about this retaliation for the freezing of Cuban assets in the US, during which he tapped my arm and—before he was unfortunately called to the telephone—had the air of one who is boasting to a trusted friend about how he has crossed an opponent.

The best response to the announcement in question would have been: “After you have already confiscated 1000 million dollars’ worth of American property, why not throw the building in as well!” and then speak of the taking charge of the administration of the refinery of Shell and so forth.

It seems better, however, to use the “goodwill” with regard to our country to induce negotiations about such matters. I repeat my request to be sent a magnificently illustrated work about the Netherlands to present to Dr. Castro, to ensure that his current appreciation of our country remains undiminished.

The Ambassador,

[BOISSEVAIN]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archive of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 48

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Reinink), 16 August 1963

DATE OF DISPATCH: 16 August 1963.

FROM: Havana.

ORIGINAL INITIALED BY: KWR. [K.W. Reinink, First Secretary of the Embassy]

TO: NERECODI. [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

BY COURIER.

CONFIDENTIAL

Despite the positive press in Cuba about the Moscow test ban treaty one gets the impression that this is more a case of “lip-service” and that the enthusiasm of the party leadership is less great than public commentaries would lead one to believe. From a conversation I had with a high-level official of the Ministry of Foreign Relations one could infer that especially the “new communists” have strong reservations about the agreement. According to informant, who himself belongs to the group of the neo-communists, Havana intends to accede, although not soon. The “new communists” in the party leadership, among whom are Fidel and Raul Castro as well as Ernesto Guevara, apparently do not much like the idea of an agreement of which one of the most important authors, Washington, is obstinately resisting a modus vivendi with Cuba. According to informant sixty percent of the party leadership shared this opinion. The “new comrades” have criticized Khrushchev at party leadership meetings, openly displayed their agreement with the position of Mao [Zedong] and even ventured to praise the forcefully negative attitude of [French President Charles] de Gaulle against the agreement, even if they did so half in jest. The pro-Chinese disposition of many “new communists” and the fear of Soviet-American agreements around Cuba analogous to the arrangement between Moscow and Washington that brought a solution to the October-crisis of 1962 seem to be the basis of said critical attitude. Nevertheless, taking into account the economic dependency which marks Cuba’s relationship with Moscow, it is doubtful whether Havana will in the long term be able to withstand Soviet Russian pressure to accede to the agreement. Furthermore it does not seem unlikely that Havana, apart from certain ideological and political objections, will gladly let Moscow entreat it in the hope of making a positive reaction conditional upon further economic and/or political concessions.

Reinink 47.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 119. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 49

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (POS), 19 September 1963

CONFIDENTIAL.

1824/346.

Havana, 19 September 1963.

Cuba’s foreign policy.

One does not get the impression that Havana’s foreign policy has been subject to substantial change over the past months. The much discussed “politics of the smile” does not seem more than a tactical maneuver by Castro which is principally aimed at improving economic relations with those “capitalist” countries here accredited and to soften Cuba’s political isolation. In the recent past these attempts have manifested themselves in certain advances to the representatives of the Netherlands, England, Canada, France, and the Vatican. As part of this Castro among other things accepted an invitation for a déjeuner at the home of my predecessor and by the British and Canadian Ambassadors while he made an appearance at a reception by the Temporary Envoy of France and the Nunciature. It is known that the Cuban Embassies in the “capitalist” countries have received orders to contract experts in the most far-flung technical and scientific areas. Ambassador Maristany in The Hague has proven himself active in such matters. The Minister of Industry, “Che” Guevara recently approached my first staff member with the question whether the Netherlands would be willing to deliver goods of non-Dutch patent to Cuba. Clearly this referred to American-produced goods. As has been relayed the vice-minister of said Ministry asked me if the company Tomassen in De Steeg would be willing and able to supply a 3000 horsepower gasturbine for the ESSO oil refinery that was nased [nationalized—trans.] in 1960. In this case however it should be assumed that Havana has so far not succeeded in procuring this vital equipment from the USSR or from another country of the “peace camp.” Also some days ago a visa was issued to a highly placed member of the Revolutionary Army, “comandante” Félix Paulino Torres González, and to an official of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, Jaime Enrique Medina Sierra, who, after visiting the USSR, China and other communist countries, will travel to the Netherlands to study some “technical agrarian questions.” This at least according to an announcement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here. During the visit I paid to Dr. [Raúl] Roa to hand him a copy of my credentials, he emphasized the desirability of strengthening economic ties with the Netherlands.

[document continues]

[R.H. Pos]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archive of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 50

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 1 November 1963

REFERENCE No. 7694

DATE OF DISPATCH: 1 November 1963

DATE OF RECEIPT: 2 November 1963

TO: Min[istry]. o[f]. F[oreign].A[ffairs].

FROM: Washington

SECRET

During my meeting with Rusk this morning he on being asked informed me that currently no military Soviet units remain in Cuba. There are still some technicians and instructors but the US believes that all combat units have departed. Over the past forty days two thousand Russians have left Cuba and the expectation is that the instructors will likewise leave as soon as the training is completed.

Rusk in this context noted the tense relationship between Moscow and Havana, among other things as a result of the refusal by Castro to sign the treaty regarding the suspension of test explosions, only a few days after Gromyko had informed Rusk that Cuba would indeed sign.

The secretary of state emphasized the highly confidential nature of the statements set out in the first paragraph of this message and I would request you to use these with utmost discretion.

Van Roijen 698.

[Source: National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 28913. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 51

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Pos), 11 November 1963

2248/411-GS.60

Havana, 11 November 1963.

SECRET

Espionage in Dutch Embassy.

With reference to letters from our part d[ate]d 30 June 1962 and 24 October the same year, resp. no. 1395/359-GS.67 and no. 2345/550 confidential, it is my honor to report the following to Your Excellency.

Today the gardener of the Embassy, Mario HERNANDEZ, reported to Dr. Reinink that on the 7th of this month upon leaving the Embassy he was invited to take a seat in an automobile without license plates in which there were four persons employed by the Cuban secret service. He recognized one of the passengers because he had been present at a first interrogation which was the subject of aforementioned letter of 24 October. Two of the passengers belonged, according to Hernández, to the white race while the other two were mulattos.

In contrast to the first time Hernández said this time he was not taken to a secret service office. During a ride through town Hernández was, according to him, urged to render certain services for Cuba and his revolution in his capacity as gardener of the Embassy. He could make himself truly meritorious by closely observing which Cubans and foreigners frequented the chancellery of the Embassy and by noting the numbers of their automobiles, if any.

As he did the first time, Hernández this time too forcefully denied the request of his interrogators and stated that he was, given his work, not only unable but moreover not willing to act as a spy against his Dutch principals. Thereupon they had offered him money for such services but Hernández said he did not accept this offer either. Finally they had urged him not to let the Embassy know of this conversation. If he would nevertheless do so—and they claimed to have means to discover this—he would come to regret this. Hernández told Dr. Reinink he had then made clear to his interrogators that he indeed would be reporting about this matter immediately.

The Embassy council has thanked Hernández for his report and his firm attitude yet at the same time advised him to be prudent and to avoid that the Cuban agents in question

would as a consequence of overly emotional reactions from his side be more agitated than would be strictly necessary.

For the record it is to be noted that the conversation related above took place in the garden of the Embassy.

The Ambassador,

Dr.R.H.Pos.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archive of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 52

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Pos), 17 March 1964

S E C R E T.

493/122-GS.21.

Havana, 17 March 1964.

Meeting with Castro.

With reference to earlier notice from our side through a different channel, below a note from Dr.Reinink [First Secretary of the Embassy] containing some particulars of his recent meeting with Fidel Castro.

The Ambassador,

Dr. R.H. Pos.

Note attached to letter no.493/122-GS.21.

S E C R E T.

On 11 March around half past two René Vallejo, Fidel's personal physician, had called me to say that Castro wanted to talk to me and would receive me at four o'clock. Vallejo himself would come to pick me up. A few minutes before the agreed time Castro's sphinx-like physician appeared in front of the Embassy behind the wheel of an Oldsmobile and invited me to sit next to him. In the back was a soldier with a sub-machine gun resting on his knee. We slowed down in front of the entrance to a street in the same district that contains the Dutch and a few other Embassies. The entrances had, as had

been established on earlier occasions, been blocked and were guarded by sentries. After the sentries had recognized Vallejo they raised the barrier and a short while later we stopped in front of an apartment building the entrance of which likewise was guarded by soldiers. Vallejo led the way up the stairs to the third floor. The door of the apartment that accommodated the "Supreme Leader" was opened before we had even reached the end of the stairs and just afterwards I found myself in a spacious, but not luxurious, flat, probably previously inhabited by someone from the upper-middle class. Castro has several of such apartments. Primarily out of safety considerations he never stays at the same address for long. As such he is someone with no regular place of [illegible, presumably "work"] or residence.

Vallejo led the way to the kitchen where Castro, this time smoking a pipe, dressed in an undone pajama top from which his chest hair protruded and in uniform pants, was busy stirring a pan of milk. Without removing the pipe from his mouth Fidel greeted me with an "hola" ["hello"], slapped me on the back, and explained that he was undertaking an attempt to make ice cream. The prime minister had apparently only just gotten up. At least he looked unwashed and uncombed. The young woman who was also present in the kitchen looked rather more groomed but I was not introduced to her. Dressed in a fashionable red dress and scuttling about on sharp spike heels she let herself be commanded by Castro and helped him, as far as her attire permitted, with the stirring and mixing. Occasionally Fidel took a draft of his brew and asked me to do the same. After it had been finished and put in the refrigerator the prime minister took me to the living room, offered me a chair, and himself sat down in a rocking chair.

While he laboriously filled his pipe I had the opportunity to look around. The room led to a spacious terrace onto which a valuable parquet floor had been laid. Apparently this was where Castro performed gymnastics. There was a rowing machine and weights; in one of the corners stood a buck, and opposite hung a skip rope. The living room itself was furnished frugally but [in a] modern [style]. Here and there a submachine gun and some heavy caliber handguns were scattered about. The doors to some of the bedrooms were open. A number of them contained camp beds, clearly intended for the members of his bodyguard. Although the terrace was located on the side of the street, any opposite neighbors did not have a view of it as this was obstructed by about six closed cubicles which looked like little dressing rooms but probably were also intended as sleeping space for Castro's bodyguards.

Rocking back and forth vigorously Castro began to speak and started with an account of his economic policy. Sugar, agriculture, and cattle breeding were currently priorities in

Cuba. At the beginning of the Revolution he had made some mistakes which included neglect of the traditional Cuban cultures in favor of an industrialization for which the country was not yet ripe or for which it did not possess the raw materials. This misconception however now belonged to the past. No country could develop properly without taking into account and making an appeal to the international division of labor. Cuba possessed excellent products which were unique and which given the necessary rationalization and mechanization would for example in the area of sugar production make it second to none. The USSR-designed machines for the cutting and loading of cane were most satisfactory and would more than counterbalance the shortage of professional reed cutters. Through additional scientific methods and good soil nutrition it would easily be possible to harvest ten million tons of sugar in 1970. 1970 was even a conservative estimate. Most likely this amount would already be reached earlier, possibly even already in 1968. The world demand for sugar was rising steadily so that Cuba would for the time being be assured of high prices on the international market; in any case such would be the case until approximately 1965. After this year prices would probably go down. Nevertheless for Cuba this could never be a disaster because it had assured sales to the USSR of 5,000,000 tons for the years 1968, 1969, and 1970, at a price of 0.06 USD per pound. I asked him if this contract did not mean he had become very bound and if perhaps it would not have been better to reserve large quantities of sugar for the international market, especially since he was so sure of rising demand. Castro responded that he had taken this risk gladly. The USSR would always continue to supply high-quality products such as oil and oil derivatives at a price lower than that of western oil companies; tractors and other agricultural machinery, chemicals, trucks, and so forth. Certain risks just had to be taken. As far as he was concerned he was prepared to immediately come to a like agreement with the Netherlands for example for the period 1965–1967.

Cuba would of course not remain an agrarian state. Based on its sugar it would gradually build a sucro-chemical industry and also develop other sectors of its economy. Yet this required money and technical expertise. Financially the outlook was considerably more positive than at the time of his coming to power. They possessed currency reserves of about 100,000,000 USD and this amount would increase significantly as a result of sugar sales in the international market. They had no great obligations of supply to the Asian “socialist” sphere. The Chinese People’s Republic would receive only 600,000 tons in 1964, equal to the amount of the previous year. With the exception of the Soviet Union, Cuban trade with the Eastern European countries had now been dramatically changed. This trade was now mainly conducted on the

basis of cash. Although Fidel did not delve into this subject any further it was clear that he meant that countries, especially Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany, and Hungary would only be able to obtain sugar if they were prepared to pay the world market price in US dollars. They had made a concession to Bulgaria by enabling this country to buy approximately 250,000 tons against a price of 0.06 USD for its canning industry.

Castro said he did not intend to save the foreign currencies he had acquired or to let them flow back to Moscow, in the way countries such as Japan saw their dollars disappear back to Washington. He planned to spend the money on capital goods. A substantial percentage of the Cuban income in convertible assets had already been and would also in the future be spent in Western Europe, next to the United States the most strongly industrially developed part of the world. They were already doing good business with England, Canada, Spain, and France. As far as England was concerned, he recollected the recently signed Leyland contract. Cuba would order future industrial equipment there, such as chemical plants. In France they had placed orders for trucks—Berliot—and equipment for road construction. Spain would supply freight and fishing ships, for the time being amounting to a total of 400,000,000 USD, of course if Madrid would remain firm in maintaining its commercial relations with Havana. To help it resist the pressure it was presently receiving from Washington Havana was prepared to let a certain percentage of the payment for its sugar shipments to Spain run via the treaty account [*verdragsrekening*].

Relations of Cuba with the countries of Western Europe are currently being cleared of the obstacles that for the most part had been brought into existence by the Revolution itself. Especially during the first years the Cubans had in a sort of hubris and inexperience oftentimes needlessly offended Western Europe, among other things by way of a nationalization policy that eventually could not but cause a negative effect. The Cuban Government understood this perfectly well and already began making a serious effort to pay its old, pre-revolutionary debts while also offering compensation to Western European companies for the branches that were nationalized [*genaast*] here, such as Shell. Castro did not say whether or not Shell had responded positively to this probing. He did add that he was also willing to indemnify Standard Oil and Texaco for their nationalized refineries. Responding to my question why he had not brought this to the attention of the interested parties themselves he remarked that he wanted to wait until after the [November 1964 presidential] elections in the United States before making a concrete proposal. To do so now could have politically unfortunate consequences. Washington would probably continue

to cross Cuba until the elections. After that perhaps the conversation could become more pleasant. In any case he would have to come to an agreement with the US sooner or later. A solution of what he referred to as the “only small remaining problem” with the United States was vital to secure for Cuba the peace and quiet it needed. For this reason it was convenient for Cuba to lay the material foundations for such a solution. Incidentally it did have to be taken into account that, as more time went by, Cuba’s interest in a resumption of commercial ties with America would decrease. Trade with Eastern Europe had now been reasonably well consolidated and Western Europe would also take an increasingly important position in Cuban foreign trade. Washington could or would not see that its policy toward Cuba was not only doomed to fail but in addition irritated its allies. The measures against the shipping of the United States’ allies would come to backfire both for Washington and for its allies. After all, it forced Cuba to build a trading fleet of its own and thereby would make it less and less dependent on foreign tonnage for its overseas connections.

Not only Cuban sugar cultivation but also agriculture and cattle breeding had to be thoroughly modernized. Especially dairy production presented a serious problem. There was a severe scarcity of milk and milk products. Thus from the perspective of the abovementioned international division of labor the Netherlands could take an interesting position here. Castro said that one should not take too literally his remarks viz. that Cuba would in a certain amount of time surpass the Netherlands in the area of dairy production. He meant here to take the Netherlands as an example, as a model of an agriculturally highly developed country that, although small in surface area, had managed to secure an important position in the world both in the areas of agriculture and cattle breeding and the area of industry. What Cuba was especially lacking was technical-scientific “know-how.” [...]

As part of the modernization of the sugar industry and the plans to come to a production of ten million tons of sugar Castro explained that here too he would like to appeal to Dutch goods. [...]

Next the prime minister suggested that Philips would resume its transactions with Cuba, particularly in the area of radio, television and electronics. I reminded Castro that this company had for many years had a good market here as well as some commercial and technical branches the latter of which had however been nationalized by his regime in March of 1961. Yet according to Castro, this belonged not only to the past, but it was simply part of the “socialist” system. All the same, he said, this did not mean that Philips should not be indemnified for the losses suffered here. [...]

The impression the prime minister made on me during this long meeting was that of a dynamic, indefatigable man who is not only aware of his great power but also wishes to exercise it even in areas that would normally belong to the competencies of ministers. He is conscious of the inexperience and the bureaucratic disposition of a large number of his technical institutions. This explains why he urged me to send any possible communications not via the “bureaucratic apparatus” of Foreign Relations [i.e., the foreign ministry—ed.] but present them directly to him. It is hard to avoid the impression that one is dealing with a restless, almost chaotic man. He hates regularity, fixed working hours, and a fixed working place. A prime minister, also first secretary of the Party, who at four o’clock in the afternoon is in the kitchen in his dressing gown making ice cream and then takes out almost three hours for a conversation with a foreign diplomat certainly does not seem to attach much value to a normal schedule. Nor can one ascribe to Fidel Castro an exaggerated interest in protocol and etiquette; he is more boorish than informal, more roughly jovial than amiable. Yet he is by no means naïve but rather a cunning Galician who, when necessary, displays a tough tenacity and is prepared to use any means necessary to achieve his goal. He knows little about the West, at least too little to form a proper image of it. His convictions about the “capitalist society” come across as antiquated. Incidentally he also seems to have only a superficial impression of the reality of the communist world, primarily shaped by tendentious literature and information from his own Eastern European advisors. He does now seem to have woken up to the fact that that the one-sided economic orientation of his country toward the “socialist” camp has serious drawbacks and that the trading practices of these countries cannot always be reconciled with the so loudly proclaimed principles of “proletarian solidarity.”

The Cuban economic advances are now also directed at the Netherlands. By formulating the abovementioned desiderata personally Castro wanted to take the shortest route and prevent the Cuban propositions from being treated or dismissed as not being very serious.

From this point of view some of them seem attractive, particularly the suggestions regarding the purchase of Dutch cattle, veterinary medical supplies, and installations for the preparation of dairy products. The execution of large projects, such as the supply of sugar plants, seem to be of a more complicated nature because these may involve more than only commercial and financial factors. The proposals concerning Philips, especially those regarding the question of indemnification, seem to merit serious consideration, as do those which aim to bring about a resumption of trade transactions in non-strategic products and goods.

Perhaps unnecessarily I should like to note that I mostly limited myself to listening to Castro's discussions and confined myself to remarking that his interesting suggestions would be expediently taken cognizance of by the competent Dutch authorities.

K.W.R. [Reinink]

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]



DOCUMENT No. 53

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Reinink), 15 June 1964

DATE OF DISPATCH: 15 June 1964.

FROM: Havana.

ORIGINAL INITIALED BY: KWR [K.W. Reinink, First Secretary of the Embassy]

TO: NERECODI [Dutch Government Code Service, The Hague]

BY COURIER.

SECRET

Regarding the visit by Fidel Castro, vide my 30, the following should still be relayed.

The prime minister arrived unannounced. The streets in the vicinity of my house had been cordoned off for his arrival. Castro's car was followed by four others filled with soldiers armed with submachine guns. The car in which he was seated also contained a four-man bodyguard. When they reached the front door Fidel jumped out of his Oldsmobile and kept his finger on the bell until the girl who was on duty and had been dozing in the noon heat opened the door. He entered and asked if I were at home. The girl confirmed this but said I had just a short while ago gone to take some rest. "When?" Fidel asked, and, when he heard this was about an hour ago remarked that this was long enough and instructed her to call me.

Usually the prime minister is accompanied by René Vallejo, his personal physician and confidant. However

Vallejo had been sick since about a week, said Fidel, who had already installed himself in the living room and had also already undertaken a search for my cigars. He did not want whisky but tea because the evening before, with the British, he had drunk enough alcohol. At the reception given by Ambassador Watson on the occasion of "Queen's Birthday" Castro had already approached me twice: the first time with a question about the whole complex of Dutch-Cuban relations with regard to the extensive talk I had with him in March of this year and the second time more specifically about matters of agriculture and cattle breeding. Yet a serious conversation had not proven possible at those times, because of the heterogeneous company present and not least due to the inseparability of Aleksandr Alekseyev, the Soviet Ambassador, who is in the habit of not losing Fidel from his sight for an instant, as if he were his aide.

Under his arm Fidel carried the Spanish translation of André Voisin's "Sol, herbe, cancer," a scientific treatise intended for veterinarians. In this he had read that the Dutch professor Seekles (Utrecht) had remarked in a presentation at the Congress for Comparative Pathology in Madrid in 1952 that the livers of more than half of the Dutch cattle showed a serious shortage of copper. Voisin had made a rather alarming comment about this fact. Fidel had made some remarks about this at the British Embassy. Upon coming home he had however wondered if his remarks might not have offended the Netherlands, especially because perhaps by now a remedy had been found for the ailment in question and therefore the problem need not be acute anymore. It had by no means been his intention to make offensive remarks with respect to the Netherlands, which he esteemed highly because of its achievements in the areas of agriculture and industry. The Netherlands were an example for Cuba to follow. I tried to ease the prime minister's mind by assuring him that the Netherlands were not offended and that his remarks at the British Embassy would in no way be considered negative criticism. Yet Castro urged me to inform him as soon as possible of the current state of affairs regarding the disease observed by Seekles. He would then make the necessary corrections in public and announce those pieces of information from the Netherlands that could also be of importance to his cattle breeders. They could and would learn much from the Netherlands. Any cattle imported from the Netherlands would, he had decided, be brought to Isla de Pinos [Isle of Pines], an island near the south coast of Cuba. There it would be easier to control it and isolate any possible cases of foot-and-mouth disease. In Cuba there was great anxiety for this illness and thus his institutions kept stubbornly resisting the import of sperm from the Netherlands for the artificial insemination that is practiced here too. Yet he wanted to

procure Dutch cattle and said he hoped that the appropriate [or “qualified”—trans.] Dutch exporters would display the requisite activity. I said that I imagined only few prime ministers would be so intensively engaged in all these specificities of their economy. According to Castro this might be the case but that was the result of there being only few prime ministers who, like him, had so few experts at their disposal. Therefore it was necessary for him to busy himself with all aspects of the national economy and read the necessary books. He would like to take on a large number of experts from the Netherlands both in the areas of agriculture and cattle-breeding as in the area of industry. Perhaps it would also be possible to have a number of Cuban agricultural engineers take a course in the Netherlands.

Fidel requested an extensive briefing about the Dutch reaction to our talk of March this year. I pointed out that the Netherlands does not have state trade and that the government therefore plays a much more passive role in regular trade than for example in the communist world. The contents of the mentioned talk had immediately been brought to the attention of the Dutch Government which, as I explained, had so far as possible informed potentially interested commercial circles. This had essentially meant the end of the government’s task. Fidel immediately scented something politically suspicious. He said he understood very well that the Dutch authorities in most cases could do little more than publicize information they possessed. He, from his side, wanted to trade with the Netherlands “without noise and publicity,” analogously to the trade with Spain. Cuba had signed contracts with Spain for the purchase of sheep for a total of 60,000,000 USD and not a letter had appeared in the press. The case of the Leyland-contract had been mishandled by the British. It had been written and talked about in England from the outset which had needlessly politicized the issue. As far as relations with the Netherlands were concerned this had to be avoided, especially [the risk] that The Hague would be subjected to pressure from Washington.

He again extensively discussed the desiderata regarding trade with the Netherlands formulated earlier. There was an urgent need for dairy installations, equipment for the projected sucro-chemical industry, parts for the existing, partially antiquated sugar plants, and at least one new, large sugar plant. I repeated that his wishes were known in the Netherlands yet Castro insisted that I again present his suggestions to the Dutch Government and personally keep him informed of all that could interest him with regard to Dutch-Cuban relations. He noted my private phone number and said that I need not call him but that he would be in touch.

After an hour Fidel Castro said goodbye and left his copy of Voisin’s treatment about pathological symptoms in cattle as

a gift. I got even by offering the prime minister two Edammer cheeses. Fidel drove away, followed by his bodyguard, amidst loud cheering and applause from a crowd of scholarship students who had gathered near my house.

Castro made a tense impression. It is clear that he, to put it graphically, is fighting a losing battle, drowning in the countless problems which his internal and external policies have caused. As he had done during the first meeting, this time he again complained about the inexperience of staff members and technical and official institutions. He does not only want to be the *spiritus rector* [a Latin expression meaning “guiding spirit”—trans.] in the most divergent of areas of his society but also thinks he must gain in-depth knowledge of all related technical and scientific aspects. He does not only want to bring his agriculture and cattle-breeding to a higher level but also master the specialized knowledge of agronomists, phytopathologists, and veterinarians. In the same way that Khrushchev was for a long time—and perhaps still is—obsessed with the growing of corn, Castro is possessed by agriculture and cattle-breeding. A few days ago he even had a complicated book about certain agricultural questions distributed to his ministers and other high officials which they, as the vice-minister of Foreign Relations told me, are now diligently studying because they know that Castro can subject them to a sort of examination at any moment.

Castro also made the impression of a restless fairly lonely man who enjoys the occasional company of others than his usual flatterers and unquestioning admirers. There seemed to be no immediate, concrete reason for his visit this Saturday afternoon. He could have summoned me at any time that suited him. Moreover I had upon being asked already let one of his confidants know that I had no important notifications for the prime minister. I had then informed said confidant of the Dutch position in the same way as I now explained it to Castro himself.

It is also clear that the prime minister realizes that in matters of economy he cannot expect more from the USSR and the other communist powers than what they are currently willing and able to do for Cuba. He is aware of the many drawbacks associated with his one-sided orientation toward the “peace camp.” Castro is therefore striving, most likely with full consent and support from Moscow, for a substantial improvement of economic and political relations with Western Europe and even seems to want to force such an improvement.

Fidel Castro’s behavior displays the same traits that secured him success in the underground struggle against Batista: audacity bordering on recklessness, willpower and an almost maniacal doggedness and tenacity. He is, however, psycho-

logically not very stable, intelligent but hurried, impatient, and short-tempered. His unstable state of mind and irritability probably explain why he believes the Netherlands to be offended by a public remark about lack of copper in the liver of our cows and his impatience to apologize for this.

Reinink 31.

[Source: National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 120. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.]

Notes

1 Rimko van der Maar is Researcher, Research Institute for History and Culture, Utrecht University, and lecturer, University of Amsterdam. Together with Hans Meijer (University of Groningen), he is currently writing a biography of J.Herman van Roijen, a long-time Dutch diplomat and ambassador to the United States, forthcoming in 2013.

2 In addition, the following article has been consulted: J. Ploeg and P. van der Vlies, 'Zal dat oorlog geven? Nederland en de Cubacrisis, oktober 1962', in D.A. Hellema and G.T. Witte, eds.,

'Onmachtig om te helpen': Nederlandse reacties op de socialistische dreiging (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 65-77.

3 Some of the later translated documents from Havana were produced by R.H. Pos, Dutch Ambassador to Cuba, 1963-1964, and K.W. Reinink, First Secretary of the Dutch Embassy in Havana, 1963-1965.

4 To simplify reading, punctuation of the documents has been altered in some cases—ed.

5 Not further identified—ed.

6 The joke alluded to the lawyer who was negotiating with Castro terms for the release of Cubans taken prisoner during the Bay of Pigs invasion—ed.

7 Reproduced above—ed.

8 Rene Castro Vallejo was Castro's physician and aide at the time—ed.

9 A Latin phrase meaning "which is not the case," i.e., Boussevain did not plan to take an initiative to contact Castro to pursue the mediation idea, at least not without instructions—ed.

The Cuba Crisis of 1962—As Seen through Danish Intelligence Sources

by Peer Henrik Hansen¹

When the Cuban Missile Crisis—or the Cuba Crisis as it is called in Danish literature—was at its most acute in late October 1962, the Danish Defense Intelligence Service (DDIS) delivered its contribution to give a sound and clear picture of the conflict and the Soviet threat. And it was because of two main factors that Denmark played no small role. First of all, the geographical position of Denmark made it possible to follow the Soviet vessels to and from Cuba very closely. Secondly, the DDIS had made a name for itself among its Western colleagues as a service that was able to deliver excellent intelligence, sometimes on demand.

Gatekeeper of the Baltic Sea

For several centuries Denmark has been the gatekeeper of the Baltic Sea. During the Cold War it was the Danish Defense Intelligence Service that kept NATO informed about the latest developments in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Poland, and parts of the Soviet Union. Denmark had an important geographical position. As former intelligence officer and historian Hans A. Schröder states: “Denmark’s geographical location—only a few-minutes flight from East Germany and Poland—and the fact that large ships on their way into and out of the Baltic Sea are forced to pass through the Sound or the Great Belt, meant not only that Denmark was extremely vulnerable in case of attack, but also that Denmark had a unique opportunity to monitor any training activities in and over the Sound.”²

Controlling the Danish sounds and straits—and thereby the entrance to the Baltic Sea—was of great importance to both East and West. Within NATO Denmark was given the responsibility to keep eyes and ears open regarding enemy activities in the Baltic. The Danes were asked to follow all kinds of activities in the air and at sea. A large number of Soviet, Polish, and East German ships passed through the Danish straits when they left or entered the Baltic Sea. The rules about the Danish sounds and straits dictated that submarines had to be on the surface when passing through. This provided several opportunities to take good photographs of new Soviet submarines on their way to, for example, the Atlantic Ocean. Vessels and planes from the Danish navy and air force followed them closely. Merchant ships and fishing vessels were actively used by the Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian intelligence services to obtain information

from the Baltic Sea area. According to the Danish service, the Danes had provided 35 per cent of pictures in one secret NATO book about the Soviet navy. The reason for this was Denmark’s geographic location.³

The Role of Danish Intelligence

The Danish Defense Intelligence Service delivered daily, weekly, and monthly intelligence briefs on the situation. More comprehensive reports were delivered every three, six, and twelve months. Signals intelligence was the Danish speciality, but “legal travellers” were also used to collect intelligence behind the Iron Curtain. Whenever the Warsaw Pact held exercises, Danish intelligence would follow them closely and afterwards produce reports on these exercises. And whenever there was an observation of new planes at a Polish military airfield or new SAM sites near an East German port, it was scrutinized and published in the Danish intelligence briefs.

The intelligence service was able to create a “status of normality” which showed whenever it was “business as usual” in the Warsaw Pact. HUMINT and SIGINT were the cornerstones in the creation of that status. And the situation behind the Iron Curtain was followed closely. As a front line state, Denmark had a natural interest in being able to put its defense on alert as soon as possible, and the intelligence service therefore would use great portions of its capabilities to study and follow the Warsaw Pact countries and their military activities. “The military activities in the Eastern Bloc is seen as normal for this time of year and there is seen no preparations for an attack,” the intelligence service wrote in August 1962.⁴

Developments in the Eastern Bloc following each conflict or change in political, economic, and military affairs were analyzed by the Danish service. The situation of Berlin and the Soviet leadership were recurring topics in the Danish briefs. When Nikita Khrushchev returned to the Soviet Union in May 1962 after his first trip abroad in about a year, the Danish intelligence service made a comprehensive analysis of his stay at the Black, his health, and his officially known illnesses.⁵

If the Cold War turned into a confrontation, Danish waters were secured with underwater microphones and hydrophones, which made the intelligence service able to follow all naval activities in and out of the Baltic Sea. The service kept a watch over the passing of ships through Danish waters as part of the Danish Surveillance- and Early-warning

Service. This took place around the clock through the use of ships, aircraft, radar-stations, lookout-stations, and under-water stations that located and identified any individual passing ships. Along the coasts, several observation posts from which Warsaw Pact vessels could be followed, photographed, and tape-recorded. Denmark had its own small version of the American SOSUS (Sound Surveillance System, underwater listening posts in the North Atlantic). Danish submarines would sneak their way into the deepest corners of the Baltic Sea and record the sound of the propellers and engines.⁶ In this way, Danish intelligence could supply NATO with an audio fingerprint of Soviet vessels. And the Danes could help identifying “new” Soviet vessels as, now and then, the Soviets would rebuild old ships to make them look new. But the sound of the engines and propellers would give the vessels away and reveal that they were just in fact old ships which the Russians had tried to disguise to confuse NATO.

Tracking the Enemy

Danish pilots were often sent on assignments over the Baltic Sea for the purpose of capturing Warsaw Pact ships on film.⁷ Patrolling the Baltic Sea area was not only a matter of “marking one’s territory” but indeed also a matter of collecting intelligence about the Eastern bloc navies and air forces. Here the Danes quickly developed a solid reputation within the NATO alliance. The Danes delivered a vast number of photographs of Soviet, Polish, and East German planes and naval vessels throughout the Cold War. Writes one expert:

*The Danes, who have an excellent reputation within NATO for the gathering of intelligence in the Baltic area, have a magnificent collection of photographs of the latest Soviet aircraft, including various versions of the Tupolev Backfire bomber.*⁸

Danish pilots would now and then act a bit aggressive towards their Eastern counterparts and go very close to the enemy airplanes. A few episodes got a bit more exciting than necessary and would later on lead to that the Danish pilots got a reminder of the existing rules of interception and engagement.⁹

The Summer of '62

The Danes followed Soviet ships long before anyone ever knew that a crisis would arise. From outposts along the Danish coast, from navy vessels, and from radar stations, Soviet ships were followed closely. Months before the Cuban Missile Crisis in late 1962, the Danish air force followed the

Soviet merchant vessels carefully and photographed them every time they passed through Danish waters. The Danish Air Force used RF-84F Thunderflash planes to capture the Soviet ships on film.

On 31 July, the pilot L. Poulsen flew over the Soviet cargo ship Sovetskaya Gavan in his RF-84F Thunderflash and photographed four crates on the deck. The length, span, height, and shape of the crates indicated that they were holding torpedo boats of the KOMAR-class. US planes later photographed the same ship close to Cuba.¹⁰

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, Danish Defence Intelligence Service wrote in its weekly brief:

In UO 41/62 a delivery of 12 missile motorboats to Cuba is noted. It can now be established with certainty that these boats have been delivered from the BALTIC SEA area. The boats were carefully covered. It has hitherto been established that the boats were built at the PETROVSKIJ shipyard in Leningrad at a fairly limited pace.

*It is worth noting, that CUBA is the first country outside of the Soviet Union, which have received this type of boats. Before, the SOVIET UNION, Northern Fleet, delivered patrol-craft of the KRONSTADT-class and MTB's of the P-6 class.*¹¹

On 2 August, a Danish plane taking pictures overflew another Soviet ship. Alexandra Suvorov was transporting four P-6 torpedo boats on the deck.

The Danish pilots had reported everything during the summer and fall of 1962 but it was not until US President Kennedy’s famous TV speech that they realized what they had been part of. Nobody had told them anything about the use of the collected intelligence.¹²

The delivery of intelligence from the Danes has been mentioned in US sources. On 29 August 1962, the same day the first Soviet SA-2 SAM’s were discovered on Cuba, a meeting was held of the US Intelligence Board on Soviet ships on their way to Cuba. General Marshall Carter and Ray Cline, both deputy directors of central intelligence (DDCIs), raised the question about receiving information and pictures from Denmark and Turkey quicker. It was of course surveillance on Soviet vessels in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea that the two were interested in and hoped to have delivered more quickly.¹³

The Crisis Emerges

The Danish surveillance service in October 1962 was normal. During the summer and fall of 1962, several Soviet ships passed through Danish waters on their way to Cuba. It was standard procedure to send out Danish planes to photograph the passing ships. The events around Cuba did not have any

direct influence on Denmark. Prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis several dozen Soviet ships passed Denmark on their way to Cuba but it wasn't until the last half of October that the Cuban situation found its way into the weekly intelligence briefs. From then on and through the rest of the year, Cuba was mentioned almost every week, just as the struggle for Berlin had been all through the Cold War.

On 21-22 October a number of Soviet merchant-ships—M/S Krasnograd and M/S Kasimov—were observed on their way out from the Baltic Sea through Danish waters. The ships were loaded with military equipment destined for Cuba. There was nothing out of the ordinary in that. The televised speech in which President Kennedy announced, that the United States had “irrefutable evidence, that the Soviet Union has constructed nuclear-rocket bases on Cuba” had not yet been aired.

Early in the morning on 24 October the crew at an observation post at the Danish naval fortress Langelandsfort made an interesting observation. Early in the morning the crew reported, that M/S Krasnograd had turned around and was passing by the observation post on its way back to the Baltic Sea. The next day M/S Kasimov did the same. Vice-chief of the DDIS, Commander P. A. Mørch, forwarded the observations of the Soviet ships to the Danish Prime Minister Jens Otto Krag and both were relieved by the Soviet reaction.¹⁴

Both observations were immediately reported to NATO. The report on the M/S Krasnograd was one of the first pieces of evidence that the Soviet Union had understood Kennedy's warning. It was seen as a sign that Nikita Khrushchev was not ready to go all in to keep the missiles in Cuba. More observations were made through November and December.¹⁵ Afterwards the DDIS chief in 1962, Col. Hans M. Lunding, revealed in his memoirs “when it was discovered that certain ships turned around and headed south for the Baltic Sea, it was of course of utmost importance and a momentous knowledge for US president Kennedy in the tense situation.”¹⁶



DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT No. 1

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief
(Excerpts), 25 October 1962

Danish Defense Intelligence Service

Weekly Brief

25 October 1962

[excerpts]

Political

World-political activities of the Eastern Bloc: The first days in the reported period proceeded “normally” and without any important derivations from the usual foreign-political routine. President Kennedy's speech on the night between 22 and 23 October [i.e., 7 p.m., Washington time, after midnight, European time—ed.] did not provoke any immediate reaction from the Eastern Bloc; the content was briefly mentioned in the early hours the following day and only a couple of comments were added. It was not until Tuesday, [23 October,] 14.00 hours Danish time, that the Soviet Government released a lengthy statement, which was subsequently broadcast every hour on Moscow radio and later in the people's-democratic radio-stations. The statement was characterized by general phrases without any concrete counter-propositions and ended with the words “The Soviet Union will take the necessary precautions in order to give a proper answer to the actions of the aggressors.” What these “necessary precautions” actually entail is unknown. However, the Soviet Union has on its own accord asked the UN Security Council to take up the issue, which could possibly be interpreted as a wish for negotiations. It is however too early to say anything concrete about the attitude of the Eastern Bloc. The willingness to “mediate” in the conflict between India and China could possibly be seen as a sign that Moscow, under the prevailing conditions, wishes to avoid any warlike complications. Concerning developments in US-Cuban relation, see below. (Finished Wednesday the 24 [of October], 03.10 pm.)

(...)

Cuba, the chronological political development since 1959.

The following is a description of the political developments in Cuba since 1959, to serve as a background for the events which have recently occurred in Cuba:

On the 26th of July [1953,] the 27-year old lawyer Fidel Castro leads a revolt against the dictatorial regime of Batista. The revolt fails and Castro and his followers are sentenced to 15 years of forced labour. He is already pardoned in 1955, after which he and a group of followers flee to Mexico. Here he founds the revolutionary “26th of July Movement.” Approximately one year later (in December 1956), Fidel Castro along with his brother Raul and 80 of their supporters, land illegally in Cuba, where they establish a partisan unit.

This partisan unit fights with increasing success against the Batista regime. At first the Communists denounced the “26th of July Movement,” calling them a “bourgeoisie movement,” but when the Batista regime began to show signs of weakness under the pressure from the Castro-partisans, they decided to approach the “26th of July Movement.”

On the 1st of January, [1959,] Batista flees; Castro appoints Dr. Manuel Urrutia as President and takes control of the armed forces himself. The Communists have in the meantime occupied the key positions in the trade-unions in Havana, and their party, “The Popular Socialist Party [PSP],” becomes the only party to be officially allowed next to “26th of July Movement.” Communists, who had fled abroad during the Batista regime, returned home and with the help from the trade-unions they are given leading positions in Havana. These returned emigrants support Castro, but without any enthusiasm for his movement; they wish to be able to act independently. Castro himself declared in an interview, that “...the “26th of July Movement” is a radical, but not Communist movement...” And three months later, in April 1959, he adds in a TV interview that “...if there by chance should be any Communists in my government, there is exactly zero...”

This open non-communist tendency in the Castro movement continues, although several original Castro supporters claim that the “26th of July Movement” is slowly being infiltrated by Communists. Thus Castro’s former partisan-comrade and chief of the air-force flee in July 1959 in protest against the communist infiltration, and for the same reasons President Urrutia is forced to abdicate, with [Osvaldo] Dorticos becoming the new President. The Communists (“Popular Socialist Party”) is now under the leadership of the general secretary Blas Roca, who in August 1959 in the international communist organ “Problems of Peace and Socialism” announces a hard communist line on Cuba.

In the meantime the relations between the USA and Cuba are deteriorating on a monthly basis. In June 1959 a land-reform is adopted, which heralds the confiscation of all American-owned land without compensation. The United States protests; Cuba responds by claiming that the United States is supporting an anti-Castro-revolution. In February 1960 [Anastas] Mikoyan arrives in Cuba in order to open a Soviet exhibition. At the same time a credit and trade deal is made (mostly Soviet oil for Cuban sugar). In May 1960, some months after Mikoyan’s visit, Cuba re-establishes diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union, which had been severed in 1952, and at the same time a Cuban ring of control is established around the American naval base at Guantanamo (leased for 99 years by the USA in 1903). The United States proclaims the suspension of all economic aid, which is countered [by the

Cubans] with the confiscation of all American hotels and oil companies in June 1960.

Coinciding with the break between the United States and Cuba, the [Cuban] relationship with the Soviet Union is strengthened, which among other things manifests itself in Khrushchev’s words on the 9th of July 1960:

“...we (the Soviet Union) will do anything to support Cuba in its struggle. More plainly said, the Soviet artillerymen can if necessary come to Cuba’s aid with rockets...”

On 21 September 1960, Castro meets Khrushchev during the UN general [assembly] summit in New York, and one month later the Soviet deliveries of weapons begin. The United States begins an embargo against Cuba. In December the same year, a Soviet-Cuban agreement is made concerning expanded trade and increased technical aid. At the same time, all remaining non-communist elements are removed from the trade unions. In January 1961 Castro demands a drastic reduction of the American embassy personnel, which is in turn answered by the United States with the cutting of all diplomatic connections. (Eisenhower: “There are limits to what Americans can endure...”) On the 1st of February, Castro among other things declares:

“initially we mistrusted the communists... but later we learned to know each other and to understand each other and began to work together...”

To this, President Kennedy replied on the 3rd of April by describing Cuba as a dangerous bridgehead for international communism. On the 17th [of April 1961] the “invasion” (Bay of Pigs) begins. But it collapses on the 20th.

In May that same year during a victory parade, Castro proclaims Cuba to be a socialist state, and the country is mentioned in the communist may-paroles immediately after the list of people’s-democracies, as a state on its way toward socialism. Subsequently, the establishment of a totalitarian regime is begun. The communists along with the “26th of July Movement” create a unified party, and Castro professes himself to Communism:

“I am a Marxist-Leninist and shall remain as such to my death”, he declared on 1st of December 1961.

Subsequently, action and counteraction rapidly follow one another. On the 22nd of January [1962], on the suggestion of the USA, the Organization of American States (OAS) in

Punta del Este (Uruguay) adopts a resolution (the original suggestion had been severely limited), which said that a profession to Marxist-Leninism was irreconcilable with the inter-American system. On the 4th of February, President Kennedy broadcast the provisions for the import and export embargo of Cuba—excluding medical supplies. On the 7th of March the communist Enrique Lister becomes the military adviser for Castro, following the takeover of the land-reform by another communist (Rodriguez) a couple of days earlier. On the 9th March, a politburo is established for the unified party (the communists and the 26th of July Movement was unified to a single party in August 1961), consisting of 25 persons, including 10 professed communists. These try to take power from the inside, pushing Castro in the background. He fights back, after which [Anibal] Escalante, the general secretary for the unified party, flees to Czechoslovakia on the 26th of March. Castro calls Escalante a leftist sectarian. Moscow and Peking approve of Castro's steps 14 days later.

On the 2nd of July, Raoul [Raúl] Castro travels to Moscow where he obtains the commitment of increased military aid, after which an agreement is signed on the 2nd of September for the delivery of weapons and military instructors. This is regarded by the United States as a threat, and President Kennedy is given the authority to call in 150,000 reservists in case of a crisis. This is perceived as a war-threat by the Soviet Union, and it is added that an attack on Cuba will be answered by the Soviet Union with, among other things, a counter-attack with rockets. On the 20th of September, Congress gives Kennedy the authority to use military force against Cuba. Subsequently, the Soviet Union signs a "fishery-agreement" with Cuba on the 25th of September. The agreement includes the construction of a Soviet fishery harbor in Cuba.

The decision to establish a Soviet "fishery-base" on Cuba provoke a strong reaction in the United States. During his campaign for re-election [sic; actually the mid-term Congressional elections—ed.], President Kennedy is repeatedly urged to "act" and is accused of being "soft" on the Cuban issue. The American request to the Western merchant shipping companies not to ship weapons to Cuba, is referred to in the Soviet press as "anti-Cuban hysteria," and [the Soviets] repeatedly threaten that "an attack on Cuba will mean a world war with nuclear weapons."

Other similar declarations followed, and it is underlined that the fishery harbor, which is supposed to lay in Havana, "has no military purpose." The foreign minister of the Soviet Union, [Andrei] Gromyko, assures President Kennedy during their talks on the 17th [actually 18th—ed.] that the Soviet weapons deliveries only consist of weapons for self-defense. This assurance apparently prompts the President's

National Security Advisor, [McGeorge] Bundy, to declare on a television-broadcast, that the military deliveries from the Soviet Union presented no immediate threat against the United States.

However, it is apparent in Kennedy's speech on the 22nd, that after receiving new intelligence about the Soviet deliveries and "technicians," the United States regards Gromyko's assurance as "untrue." It is therefore decided to take precautions, as President Kennedy said in his speech. The new developments are at the current time (the 24th, 03:00 PM) very unclear and vague, and the world press is furthermore shedding light on it from all angles, so that one can only get the background information from these sources.

[...]

ARMY

A. SOVIET UNION.

Extension of service-time and cancellation of leave.

SISC no 170 N

Confidential

Minister of Defence, marshal [Rodion] MALINOVSKIY, issued the order on the 23rd of October 1962 to cancel all leave for the armed forces. Furthermore, the impending returning home of the personnel of the rocket forces, the air defence and submarine fleet is suspended. These measures are done as a quick response to the American actions around Cuba.

It is therefore not a case of a general extension of the service-time of the armed forces; it only concerns the forces which—also under normal circumstances—are under maximum readiness.

Thus, it seems that the demobilization order issued by the Minister of Defence on the 7th of September 1962 is still standing for all other personnel of the armed forces.

B. WARSAW PACT

Readiness.

SISC no 222 M/C

Confidential

Simultaneously with the above-mentioned order from the Soviet Minister of Defense, the chief of the Warsaw-Pact unified command, Marshal [Andrei] GRECHKO, gave the order to increase the level of readiness for all Warsaw Pact forces.

The increased state of readiness can be seen as a result of the increased readiness of the American forces.

There has to date (24 October, 06:00 PM) not been seen any special activity among the Soviet forces in East Germany and Poland, nor from any of the satellite states. A heightened state of readiness has been seen before during periods of political tension. It is also seen implemented during the conduct of a major NATO-military manoeuvre.

100. CUBA'S MILITARY STRENGTH

SISC no 200 12E

Confidential

See appendix 1 to this paper.

[...]

C. Miscellaneous.

1. In UO [*Uge-Oversigt*—Weekly Brief].41/[19]62 a delivery of 12 missile motorboats to Cuba is noted. It can now be established with certainty that these boats have been delivered from the BALTIC SEA area. The boats were carefully covered. It has hitherto been established that the boats were built at the PETROVSKIJ shipyard in Leningrad at a fairly limited pace.

It is worth noting, that CUBA is the first country outside of the Soviet Union, which has received this type of boats. Before, the SOVIET UNION, Northern Fleet, delivered patrol-craft of the KRONSTADT-class and MTBs of the P-6 class.

2. On 22 October, the Soviet merchant-ship KRASNOGRAD passed out through Danish waters, carrying about 12 vehicles on its deck, en route to CUBA. On 24 October the same ship passed back through into the BALTIC SEA via STOREBÆLT, carrying the same cargo on its decks.

As this ship has been sailing for a longer period from the BALTIC SEA to CUBA, and as it seems that the voyage went normally without any incident or accidents, the ship's return can be connected to the situation around CUBA.

[...]

REVIEW OF CUBA'S MILITARY FORCES

(Time: October 1962)

A. DEFENSE SYSTEM

1. Defensive Alliances.

No direct defense alliances with the Soviet Union or any other country, but agreements of weapons-deliveries and military advisors with the Soviet Union, China, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany.

2. Base of recruiting

Army:)

Navy:) recruiting.

Air force:)

Militia: "Volunteer" arming of men and women (workers, students and peasants).

3. Division of the Armed Forces

Army and militia.

Navy.

Air force.

4. Defense Leadership

FIDEL CASTRO's brother, RAOUL [RAUL] CASTRO, is chief of the Cuban armed forces.

5. Military aid from other countries.

August 1960: CZECHOSLOVAKIA delivers rifles.

June 1961: Combined communist weapons aid is estimated to be about \$100,000,000.

January 1962: Combined communist weapons aid is estimated to be about \$175,000,000.

September 1962: Combined communist weapons aid is estimated to be about \$225,000,000.

The 64-year old Soviet-General ENRIQUE LISTER (LISTYT SIN), known from the Civil War in Spain (commander of "The International Brigade"), has from 10/3 [10 March] 1962 been on CUBA as leader of the EAST-military missions (is mentioned as the leader of the entire CUBAN defence).

Furthermore, the Soviet-General ALBERTO BAY (trained in MEXICO as part of CASTRO's original small guerrilla-force) is on CUBA.

USSR-technicians on CUBA, 5000-6000 (among these are probably also other personnel than technicians).

USSR-military mission)

East German-military mission)

Czech-military mission) on CUBA.

Chinese-military mission)

B. ARMY.

1. Strength.

a. Peacetime forces.

38,000 (1961) in the regular army, including police.
(Ca. 6,000).

b. National Guard and paramilitary forces.

Militia:

8,000 in 1959,

250,000 in 1961, made up of students, peasants and workers (men and women).

2. Materiel.

A lot of American materiel exists from before the revolution.
65,000 new Belgian FN-rifles.

125,000 Czech automatic weapons,
(including CZR semi-automatic rifles with folding bayonet, ZB.R-2.30 calibre.)

75 T-34 tanks (Soviet)

25 JS-2 (-3) tanks (Soviet)

100 T-54 tanks (Soviet) with infra-red battle and driving equipment.

100 mm cannons (Soviet)

Armored personnel-carriers (Soviet)

Light artillery, 85 mm, cannon (Eastern Bloc)

Heavy artillery, 155 mm, self-propelled cannon (60 km/H).

Multiple barrel rocket launchers (Soviet).

1,000 pieces of field artillery.

Vehicles of the jeep type.

Radar-equipment (Eastern Bloc)

Signal-equipment (Eastern Bloc)

2,000 Anti Aircraft Artillery (30-40 mm—SKODA)

Czech ZPU-4 LVMG in quad mounting.

12 batteries of Soviet SA-2 anti aircraft missiles (Guideline),
(radar corrected—altitude 60,000 feet, distance 40-50 km, angle of impact 30°).

3. Training.

80,000 soldiers (and militia?) have received two months of training and discipline with the help of Czech, Russian, East German, and Chinese military advisers.

All soldiers are equipped with automatic weapons.

4. Order of Battle.

2 Air defence missile batteries, SA-2:

1 Battery (with 6 launching ramps) (operational) in BAHIA HONDA 70 km

West of HAVANA.

1 Battery (with 6 launching ramps) (under construction) 100 km East of HAVANA in MATANZAS.

Anti aircraft batteries on the PINE-islands [Isle of Pines—ed.].

5. Miscellaneous

Many of the 5-6,000 Soviet technicians have manned the radar-installations for the SA-2 missiles.

Other Russians are manning the large radar-installations, from which they can “eavesdrop” on Cape Canaveral. It is also from here [that] Soviet cosmonauts are directed.

Czech ZPU-4 LVMG in quad mountings are positioned around the Soviet camps.

C. NAVY.

1. Strength. (in 1961)

380 officers

220 NCO's

5,000 men.

2. Materiel.

Frigate “CUBA” (is mentioned as a cruiser) launched in 1911 in the United States, modernized in 1936-37 and 1956.

Frigate “ANTONIO MACEO”

ex. USN PF-type

-’- “JOSE MARTI”

--

-’- “MAXIMO GOMEZ”

-

Patrol-escort craft “CARIBE”

ex. USN PCE-type

-’- “SIBONEY”

--

Patrol-vessel “BAIRE”

ex USN PC-type (anti-submarine)

4 coastguard-motorboats “HABANA”, “LAS VILLAS”, “ORICUBA”, “PINAR DEL RIO”.

1 coastguard-motorboat “LEONICIO PRADO”

Auxiliary coastguard-motorboats “DONATIVO”, “MATANZAS”

Motorboats “R 41”, “R42”, “R43”

ex. USN motortorpedoboats.

Auxiliary patrol-vessels “SV 7”, “-8”, “-9”, “-10”, “-12”, “-14” and SV 1, -2, -3, -4, -5 and -6.

Auxiliary craft “GRANNA”

10 rescue-vessels.

CUBA has furthermore received a number of Soviet motor-torpedo-boats of the KOMAR-class (the figure 100 has been mentioned, but that is impossible—10 is the more likely amount of vessels). It is possible that CUBA in 1961 received two Soviet destroyers, for the time being crewed by Russians, until a Cuban crew has been trained. The two destroyers might be a mistake, however, and it could just be two coastal patrol vessels.

3. Combat strength.

The Navy might be unreliable, since it was not put into action during the rebel invasion in 1961.

4. Bases.

Frigate observed in MARIEL in may 1962. Fleet academy in MARIEL.

5. Miscellaneous

Agreement with POLAND for deliveries.

1960—a number of motor-torpedo-boats

-2- minesweepers

-2- coastal vessels

1961—a floating dry-dock.

If any of these deliveries has ever arrived in CUBA is unknown.

D. AIR FORCE.

1. Strength.

Ca. 200 pilots

2. Materiel.

25 MIG-15

45 MIG-17

20 Supersonic MIG-19

25-30 MIG-21

24 MI-4 helicopters

20 AN-2 air-planes

8 IL transport-planes

3. Training.

The Ca. 200 pilots are trained in Czechoslovakia.

4. Morale.

In 1961, a few air force officers helped the rebel forces, as they took off from CUBA, bombed CUBAN ammunition depots, and then landed in the USA.

5. Bases.

San Antonio de Los Banos (air force)

Havana/Campo/Columbia

Mariel (Naval air-planes)

Mendoza/San Julian (air force)

Camaguey (civilian)

Santiago de Cuba (air force/civilian)

Varadero (civilian/air force).

There is furthermore the airfield at PLAYO SALADO (possibly one of the above mentioned, which has its location only roughly mentioned.). In May 1962, work on the lengthening of the take-off strips [runways] was observed.

OVERVIEW OF SOVIET PERSONNEL ON CUBA

Locality

Number—type—occupation

BAHIA HONDA A group of technicians, who have manned the radar of the air defence missile-battery. (arrived on the Soviet ship MS “KHABAROVSK”).

SAN JULIAN

400 men with 35 pieces of heavy guns.

QUIEBRA HACHA

(East of CANABAS)

2,000 men in a Soviet military base.

DEL CANO

(South of HAVANA)

3,500 soldiers and technicians in the old reformatory at TORRENS.

MATANZAS-province

Probably 3,000 men.

CLIMONAR and near the coast

at RIO CAMINAR

LAS VILLAS-province

1,000 men

CASILDA harbour

NB. The number of the personnel might be too high (most of the information is not confirmed).

[Source: Danish State Archive, Copenhagen, Archives of the Danish Defense Intelligence Service. Translated by Henrik Brandt.]



DOCUMENT No. 2

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief
(Excerpts), 1 November 1962

Danish Defense Intelligence Service

Weekly Brief

1 November 1962

[excerpts]

SUMMARY

(for the period 25-31 October 1962)

The only conclusion which can be made with any certainty at the moment following the Cuba-crisis, is that the Soviet Union does not wish a Third World War. The ultimate goal, world dominance, has not been abandoned. This is amply illustrated by the fact that the Soviets have given up Cuba as a military base, but seek to keep it as a political base. It should be noted, that among the reasons for the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Cuba was the fear, as the situation developed, that the United States should gain unwanted insight into Soviet missile data.

The cancellation of the sales of weapons and material to India by the Soviet Union, must, in the light of the Chinese-Indian border dispute, be regarded as a wish not to worsen Soviet-Chinese relations.

Both the Cuban and the India-China crisis will probably make it more difficult for the Soviet Union to penetrate into ASIA, AFRICA, and LATIN AMERICA.

Four more nuclear test detonations have been conducted in the Soviet Union.

An expansion of certain roads in East Germany may have a military purpose.

A certain degree of readiness is maintained in the Eastern Bloc, especially among the strategically important forces (rocket troops, air defence, etc.) as well as internal security forces in the Warsaw Pact countries. The latter is apparently in order to maintain internal order.

An intensified patrolling of the western and eastern parts of the Baltic Sea can be observed.

Apart from this, no abnormal dispositions can be observed.

Only limited training activity has yet been observed in the newly discovered areas, which have been sealed off for military purposes.

On the fronts between China and India, the Chinese attack has stalled, and Indian forces have begun a counter-attack.

POLITICAL

The world political activity of the Eastern Bloc: The reported time period is marked by the Cuban-American-Soviet conflict concerning the bases on Cuba. Perhaps as a consequence of the crisis, the Soviet Union has furthermore taken a friendlier stance in the Indian-Chinese conflict.

Moscow's latest step in the Cuban conflict is estimated in the following account of the chronological development since Wednesday the 24th:

24 October, 15:00 hours Danish time: the American naval quarantine is initiated. Several Soviet ships nearing the quarantined zone change course. Khrushchev sends a non-publicized message to President Kennedy, in which he supposedly warns the United States and remarks, that the blockade could trigger a nuclear war. He simultaneously answers Bertrand Russell and declares that the Soviet Union does not intend to act unpremeditated and is willing to participate in a summit conference to avoid a war. U Thant urges the Soviet Union to stop its weapons transporters and the United States to lift the quarantine.

25 [October]. A Soviet tanker is stopped, but is then allowed to continue, after it had been ascertained that it did not contain any offensive weapons. The ship was not boarded. Khrushchev accepts U Thant's plea. Kennedy declares that the United States is ready to negotiate. However, according to a US spokesman the quarantine is to be maintained, as long as the construction of the rocket bases continues. The UN Security Council asks U Thant to mediate in the matter. According to unconfirmed messages, Kennedy has sent Khrushchev an extremely serious warning and assured him, that the United States will act, if the construction of the bases is not stopped immediately. There is a dramatic clash between [Soviet UN ambassador Valerian] Zorin and [US UN ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson in the UN Security Council.

26 [October]. Polish radio and press thank both Khrushchev and Kennedy for their positive attitude to U Thant's request, and there is talk about "judicial" consequences in the eventual boarding of a Polish ship. East German radio mentions Kennedy in positive terms. Khrushchev agrees that Soviet ships must stay away from the forbidden zone. Kennedy promises that the United States will try to avoid direct confrontation with the ships for a couple of days. The US spokesman declares that if the building of the bases continue, "further action will be justified." At the same time Washington announces that the construction of the bases

“continues at a rapid pace.” U Thant mediates between the parties.

27 [October]. Khrushchev’s second message to Kennedy. He suggests the removal of the rockets from Cuba in exchange for the Americans doing the same with their rockets in Turkey. The United States rejects the “deal,” but displays a willingness to negotiate, if the construction of the rocket bases on Cuba is stopped.

28 [October]. Radio transmissions from the Eastern Bloc are dominated by declarations about how Khrushchev is unwilling to let himself be provoked into making rash actions. At 3 PM Danish time, Khrushchev sends his third message to Kennedy that the Soviet Union is prepared to dismantle and ship home the Soviet Rockets, which are in the care of Soviet officers on Cuba. If Cuba will allow it, this removal could be done under the supervision by the UN.

29 [October]. Soviet press and radio hail Khrushchev as a “champion of peace”; also the “sensible” approach by Kennedy is mentioned. U Thant declares that he, accompanied by military and political advisers, will travel to Cuba on the 30th to negotiate about the UN-supervised removal of the Soviet rockets.

30 [October]. The United States suspends the quarantine and aerial reconnaissance during the time U Thant is staying on Cuba. U Thant arrives on Cuba along with 17 advisers, including several officers. He negotiates with Castro for 2 ½ hours. From the Cuban side it is declared that the negotiations did not lead to any results, whereas U Thant says that the talks were “extremely useful.”

31 [October]. During the afternoon at 4:00 PM Danish time, the negotiations are continued. The Western powers have given the United States diplomatic and moral support during the action and the Organization of American States (OAS) has approved Kennedy’s steps and denounced both Cuba and the Soviet Union. India has not taken any direct stand on the matter and has only uttered general statements, whereas Cuba has supported China in the conflict with India.

If one tries at this early moment to get an idea as to why the Soviet Union suddenly gave in, one should probably regard the following reasons: 1) The disagreement expected by the Soviet Union among the Western countries failed to materialize. 2) Poland probably gave voice to its concerns for the Warsaw Pact not to overreach themselves. 3) The concern that the blockade and in the event of a US invasion of Cuba, Soviet classified information about missiles and their propul-

sion could fall into American hands. (This is probably also the why they want to hurry up the dismantling of the rockets, so that the UN observers won’t get any information about the Soviet rockets.) 4) Moscow apparently does not [believe that the] time is good for starting a major conflict, maybe because of the major restructuring of the political and economical life in the Eastern Bloc.

The Soviet Union has apparently already from the start of the crisis been willing to initiate a “flexible withdrawal,” which goes parallel with their stand on the Indian-Chinese border-conflict. Here the Soviet Union, maybe because they did not want to deepen the antagonism towards China, took an almost anti-Indian stand. In the Cuba-United States conflict, the politics used by the Soviet Union was not exactly in harmony with the wishes of Castro. Confronted with a grave situation, Moscow chose to preserve its friendship with communist countries, at the expense of the non-communist countries India and Cuba. It has to be said that it is far too early to make a reliable analysis of the events; they can after all hardly be regarded as being definitively over yet. Therefore, the views presented here must only be seen as an attempt on a preliminary assessment.

[...]

ARMY

A. Soviet Union

Readiness.

SISC no. 222 N

Confidential

The consequences of the ordered readiness of the armed forces mentioned in the last weekly brief, including the cancellation of leave, has only been observed in certain regions, especially those in the South and South East of the European part of the SOVIET UNION (CAUCASUS and the BLACK SEA region).

Note: It is unknown, if the above state of readiness still exists following president Khrushchev’s radio-broadcast at 15:00 hours on 28 October.

The combat readiness only seems to include (have included?) the forces, who are deployed close to TURKEY as well as the rocket forces and the air defence. It can not be ruled out that these measures were part of Khrushchev’s proposal for a barter trade for the rocket-bases in TURKEY.

[...]

C. Miscellaneous.

For Official Use

1. There has in the period in question been observed a great deal of Soviet trawlers in the waters around SKAGEN. About three fishery-motherships are also present in the area, and it is therefore probable that just like the previous years there will be established a fishery base here.
2. The following Soviet merchant-ships have passed through Danish waters destined for CUBA and have later returned to the BALTIC SEA with cargo:

KRASNOGRAD

Northbound 22 October

Southbound 24 October

KASIMOV

Northbound 21 October

Southbound 25 October

KISLOVOPSK

Northbound 15 October

Southbound 29 October

BOLSHEVIK SUKHANOV

Northbound 17 October

Southbound 30 October

METALLURG KURAKO

Northbound 16 October

Southbound 30 October.

[Source: Danish State Archive, Copenhagen, Archives of the Danish Defense Intelligence Service. Translated by Henrik Brandt.]



DOCUMENT No. 3

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief
(Excerpts), 8 November 1962

Danish Defense Intelligence Service

Weekly Brief

8 November 1962

[excerpts]

Summary

(for the period 1-7 November 1962)

Foreign policy this week has been marked by the negotiations about the inspection of the dismantling and shipment of the Soviet missiles and bombers on and from Cuba. The negotiations have apparently reached their conclusion at the closing of this period.

Of note this week is Khrushchev's successive bilateral negotiations with the communist leaders of all the individual Eastern European countries. Especially the attitude of Poland has been interesting.

On the Berlin/Germany issue, it is noteworthy that the word "separate peace" has, at least for the time being, disappeared from official East European vocabulary.

The Soviet Union has during the week conducted 6 nuclear-weapons test explosions, including two in high altitude. The testing will continue until 20 November.

The heightened state of readiness inside the Warsaw Pact, introduced because of the Cuban crisis, has been lifted. The East German army, however, is keeping up a certain level of combat readiness, and the Soviet, Polish, and East German established patrolling in the western part of the Baltic Sea, including regular circumnavigations of Zealand, continues.

Some of the Soviet merchant-ships that were on the way to Cuba, have after a very short stay in Baltic Sea ports continued their journey toward Cuba. It is assumed that sensitive material has been unloaded.

In the reported period an increased Eastern Bloc trawler activity in the waters east of Skagen.

The activity is deemed normal for the time of year.

[...]

POLITICAL

For Official Use

World political activity of the Eastern Bloc: The period covered in the report has been dominated by Cuban-problems. The chronology is as follows:

31 October: U Thant's negotiations with Castro ends without results, as Cuba stands firm and refuses to allow any inspection on Cuban soil. At the same time Moscow supports Castro's "5 demands" to the United States (including the abandoning of the Guantanamo base), and "Pravda" present new charges against the United States for "hatching new attack plans against Cuba." In the Chinese party-organ "Renmin Ribao" [*People's Daily*], a fierce attack is aimed at Khrushchev, who is accused of having "bowed to the imperialist aggression."

1 November: [Anastas] Mikoyan leaves for Cuba via New York, where he negotiates with the United States and representatives of the UN. At the same time the Eastern Bloc once again attacks the “reactionary anti-Cuban propaganda, which tries to sow doubts about the gravity of president Kennedy’s obligations.” The pro-Cuban campaign in China continues, and the Chinese foreign minister Chen Yi gives the Cuban Chargé d’affaires a note with support for “the great leader Fidel Castro.” The United States initiates once again their blockade, which had been lifted during U Thant’s visit in Havana.

2 November: Mikoyan arrives in Cuba after having supported Castro’s demand of an abandonment of the Guantanamo base before his departure from New York. Simultaneously the United States and the Soviet Union agree to use observers from the Red Cross, partly to determine which of the ships on the way to Cuba is carrying offensive weapons, and partly to keep the parties informed about the progress of the dismantlement. Castro once again sharply rejects any form of inspection as a violation of Cuban sovereignty. Kennedy informs in an address to the nation, that the dismantling of the rocket bases is progressing with great speed, but promises that the situation will be watched closely, until an inspection on site has been made. At the same time, the Soviet Union is reminded through a grave warning, that the “dismantling and return” must also include all the IL-28 bomber planes, which are present on Cuba.

3 November: The Red Cross in principle agrees to inspect the ships bound for Cuba. Mikoyan meets Castro twice, but nothing is divulged about these conferences.

4 November: Mikoyan continues his negotiations with Castro, but any practical results are still kept in the dark. The United States continue its inspection flights over Cuba and firmly sticks to its demand for inspections of the sites themselves, whether by the UN or the Red Cross.

5 November: U Thant has a meeting in New York with the Soviet Vice-Foreign minister [Vasily V.] Kuznetsov, who is thought to have provided the [UN] Secretary-General with an overview over the negotiations between Mikoyan and Fidel Castro. Over 1 million Chinese demonstrate in Beijing in support for Castro (and thereby indirectly against Khrushchev).

6 November: [US UN Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson negotiates for 5 hours with Kuznetsov and hands him a written note (no. 2) with the demand to withdraw all IL-28 bombers.

After the conference, Stevenson declares that the talks have not produced any concrete results. Based on aerial reconnaissance, the United States announces that 20 IL-28 [bombers] are still operational, and that there is evidence that more are being assembled. A couple of hours later it is announced that Soviet technicians have stopped assembling the remaining IL-28s. Cuba agrees to let the Red Cross do the inspections of ships en route to Cuba for the duration of one month. U Thant negotiates the technicalities of the inspection with the Red Cross. Mikoyan continues the negotiations with Castro. Nothing leaks out. The Chinese make declarations which strongly support Castro.

7 November (until 12:00 hours Danish time): U Thant informs the United States and the Soviet Union about the negotiations with the Red Cross.

The issues which still remain unsolved are the following: 1) the control on Cuba itself, 2) the dismantling and return of the IL-28 planes, 3) control [i.e., inspection—ed.] of the ships, which leave Cuba, 4) Castro’s “5 points” and 5) the duration of the control. How these issues are to be solved can not be seen at the moment; there are signs, however, that Moscow—presumably with the promise of increased financial aid and/or the threats of cutting it—will make the attempt to “persuade” Castro to give in. It is complicated, however, by strong support by the Chinese, which can probably increase Castro’s resistance to the wishes of the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev’s position of power: Both the information about the Soviet Union’s rocket-bases on Cuba and Khrushchev’s rapid decision to have them removed apparently came as a surprise for most of the leaders of the people’s-democracies, who presumably had not been consulted. This procedure must have produced tension between Moscow and the capitals of the people’s-democracies (especially Warsaw), making it necessary for Khrushchev to explain the situation for his—somewhat disoriented—allies. This can be seen by the fact that all the leaders of the people’s-democracies in the period of 29 October to 5 November, one by one, have been to Moscow and negotiated with Khrushchev. By this unusual form of East Bloc-consultation, Khrushchev has probably tried to avoid any “group formations” that a combined East-conference might have produced. Most of the people’s-democracies leaders seem to have accepted his policy. This was expressed among other places in [Polish leader Władysław] Gomulka’s article in “Pravda” on 5th [November] and in the statements the other leading Communists gave during the Cuban crisis. However, the statements from East Germany and Czechoslovakia showed some reticence.

The cleansing [purge—ed.] in Bulgaria can be seen as the underlining of Khrushchev's position as leader in the Eastern Bloc, since the ousted party-leaders all belonged to the Stalinist (pro-China) wing of the party. In Hungary this wing was already removed from the party a couple of weeks ago. Stalinist elements can therefore only be found in the parties of Czechoslovakia and East Germany; these countries' somewhat "lukewarm" attitudes toward Khrushchev's Cuba-policy seem to reflect the influence of the Stalinists. However, the coming congresses in both countries could—as was the case in Bulgaria—lead to in-depth reorganization of the party-leadership in favor of the Khrushchev wing. Also Yugoslavia has given absolute support during the crisis period, whereas China, North Vietnam, and North Korea (but not Outer Mongolia) have taken a decidedly anti-Khrushchev attitude.

Inside the Soviet Union itself, Khrushchev has apparently won great popularity in the wider population with his swift decision to let the rocket-bases be dismantled ("he has saved the peace"), which can maybe counter potential opposition from the dogmatist-group's side. That such a wing probably exists can be seen in an article in "Pravda" from 4 [November], signed by Marshal [Kliment] Voroshilov. In it he (who has himself been accused of Stalinism) supports Khrushchev by emphasizing, among other things, his view that nuclear war would lead to total destruction, as opposed to the dogmatist and Chinese view, that only "the corrupted capitalist" countries could be [destroyed] in a war with nuclear weapons, whereas the "socialist countries" would survive. The article can be a sign that Khrushchev with the help of Voroshilov, whose name resounds well in military circles, will seek support among officers and old Bolsheviks against potential, China-supported, opponents.

Poland: Gomulka travelled to Moscow on the 3rd [of November] and back again [to Warsaw] on the 4th. As far as it known, he was contrary to the other leaders alone and he left an article in "Pravda", which strongly supports Khrushchev's policies, especially on the Cuban issue. It also contains sharp attacks against the United States.

It seems it was very important for Gomulka to make as clear as possible [a statement] to underline Poland's stand on the issue of the time, first and foremost to the Soviet Union, but also to the opposition at home. Competent sources say that that the Polish government had not been notified about the Soviet rocket-bases on Cuba. When the situation had been solved, the government acted very cautious and with restraint. The American notes were not rejected, no restrictions were put on the American diplomatic corps, and no demonstra-

tions [took place] in front of the American embassy. On the contrary, the relations between the representatives of the government and the staff of the American embassy remained on a friendly note during the Cuban crisis. The press and the propaganda apparatus limited itself to only demand for a peaceful solution to the crisis. The usual reliable sources tell about open demonstrations against the Soviet rocket-bases on Cuba, and in several businesses there were even notes of sympathy toward the United States; one case saw students openly express their opinions. Inside the Party, the open and secret expression of sympathy has aroused serious concerns. It was therefore greeted with great relief, when the news of Khrushchev's decision to back off was received, also because a continuation of the crisis would have caused trouble because of the overwhelming amount of hoarding among the population.

[...]

ARMY

A. WARSAW PACT.

1. Readiness.

SISC no 222 M/C

Confidential

The combat readiness, which was observed inside the Warsaw Pact during the height of the Cuban Crisis, has been gradually stepped down for all forces; only the East German army is retaining a certain level of readiness.

[...]

E. CUBA.

Confidential

1. The prelude to the crisis.

During the first half of the year the United States received several reports about heavy military construction activity on CUBA, including digging, construction of bunkers, roads and the extension of runways on airfields. At the same time, a close watch was kept on the supply of weapons and personnel from the SOVIET UNION and other Eastern Bloc countries.

But it was not until in September 1962 that reports about major fortification works both above and below ground in isolated areas, where only Soviet personnel was allowed, suggested, that something special was going on.

Soon afterwards reports were coming in about the unloading in Cuban ports of electronics, cargo-containers for specialized fuel (presumably for rocket fuel), “towers” or ramps, which looked like missile launch-ramps, and large containers (presumably containing missile-parts), and in one instance an observer saw several parts of a missile during transportation. At the same time, information was received about large truck convoys to the aforementioned closed-off areas. Only Soviet personnel were occupied with the unloading and transportation, which was shrouded in secrecy and often protected by jeeps with civilian Soviet personnel armed with rifles. There was also news about Soviet camps with up to 500-600 men in each. One particular camp was reportedly housing 6000-7000 men.

It is probably because of these reports that the United States decided to start its photo-reconnaissance of CUBA.

2. The photo-reconnaissance missions.

Soon the picture became more clear. They were building missile bases for medium range missiles, and both the missiles and the launching equipment had arrived to CUBA and was in the process of being deployed. The reconnaissance flights also revealed, that the many Soviet technicians which had been reported about earlier, were in fact for the most part regular Soviet troops. It is thus believed, that two Soviet regiments—one infantry regiment and one armored regiment—have been confirmed to be present on CUBA.

Marked on the following map are the bases for medium range missiles that were revealed by reconnaissance flights. It is made up of 40 launch-ramps spread out on 4 bases, which are:

SAN CHRISTOBAL (west-Cuba)

SAGUALA GRANDE (central-Cuba)

GUAN AJAY(near Havana)

REMEDIOS (Island off Santa Clara)

3. The dismantling of the missile-bases

The missile equipment is now being dismantled by Soviet personnel, but there has still not been reached any agreement on a control [i.e., inspection—ed.] of this dismantlement and the shipping of the equipment. It is

estimated that at least 6 special ships are needed for the transportation for the missile equipment alone.

It should be noted, that a large amount of the materiel can be hidden in large, subterranean tunnels and sites that are known to have been constructed during the last year on CUBA in connection with the establishment of the bases.

[...]

3. The following Soviet merchant-ships have during the period covered by this report sailed into the BALTIC SEA after having been en-route to CUBA:

1 November	POLTAVA	
passed out from the BLACK SEA		14 October
3 November	YURIY GAGARIN	
passed out from the BLACK SEA		11 October
3 November	KIMOVSK	
passed out from the BALTIC SEA		13 October

Furthermore has the following ships passed out, probably en-route to CUBA, after a short stay in the BALTIC SEA:

3 November	BOLSHEVIK SUKHANOV	
passed into the BALTIC SEA		29 October
5 November	POLTAVA	
passed into the BALTIC SEA		1 November

[Source: Danish State Archive, Copenhagen, Archives of the Danish Defense Intelligence Service. Translated by Henrik Brandt.]



DOCUMENT No. 4

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief
(Excerpts), 15 November 1962

Danish Defense Intelligence Service
Weekly Brief
15 November 1962

[excerpts]

POLITICAL

For Service Use

World political activity of the Eastern Bloc: The period covered in the report has once again been marked by Cuban problems. The chronology is as follows:

07 November: Washington announces that arrangements are being made with the Soviet Union concerning the inspection of the Soviet ships that are leaving Cuba on their way back with the dismantled rockets. Continued disagreement between [US UN Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson and [Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily V.] Kuznetsov concerning the inspection of ships sailing to Cuba.

08 November: The first Soviet vessel is stopped and inspected by an American naval ship. The inspection is conducted in a friendly atmosphere.

09 November: The concentration of naval forces in the Caribbean Sea is maintained, while the United States continue to insist on its demand on inspections on Cuban territory; Khrushchev sends a new letter to Kennedy, but nothing is divulged about its content, however; furthermore, it is reported that also the Soviet technicians are on their way home. American inspections on high seas continue.

10 November: After staying for a week in Havana, Mikoyan has still not achieved any noteworthy results. The Americans continue to demand the removal of the IL-28 planes.

11 November: The Soviet Union still haven't agreed to the demand by the United States, that the control inspection period of the Red Cross should last for 30 days. At the same time it is reported that the United States might have to abandon its demand for an inspection on Cuban soil. To the American demand for the removal of the IL-28 planes, Kuznetsov argues that these planes are of an obsolete model, and that they have already been taken over by the Cuban air force.

12 November: [US] Vice Defense Minister [i.e., Deputy Defense Secretary Roswell] Gilpatric reports, that 42 of the [Soviet] rockets have been removed [from Cuba], but that the American aerial reconnaissance over Cuba will continue; simultaneously, security work on the Guantanamo base continues. After a meeting of the National Security Council, it is declared that the United States is steadfast in its demands for an inspection on Cuba and the withdrawal of the Soviet bombers. For the second day in a row, the Cuban newspapers are quiet about the negotiations between Mikoyan and Castro.

13 November: Mikoyan delivers a speech at Havana university, in which he strongly supports the Cuban point of view and Castro's "5 demands" to the Americans. Concerning the IL-28 planes, it is stated from Soviet side that the planes are Cuban property. Heated negotiations are taking place, partly between Stevenson and Kuznetsov, and partly between U Thant, Kuznetsov, [Soviet UN Ambassador Valerian] Zorin and the Cuban delegate, Carlos Lechuga on the other. After the negotiations Stevenson declare, that his talk with Kuznetsov has been "constructive," and a spokesman for U Thant says that the Soviet Union and Cuba in unison has proposed a solution to the Cuban-situation. Furthermore, it is decided to shelve the plan for the inspections of the shipping to Cuba by the Red Cross. From Cuba it is reported of an arrest of an American agent, it is supposedly the leading man of the American intelligence on Cuba, who was arrested during a sabotage action. This is rejected by the Americans, however, as being a mere propaganda stunt.

14 November until 12:00: The American-Soviet negotiations are expected to continue. To date, 35 ships have passed the American line of blockade on their way to Cuba. The naval units who enforce the blockade are joined by two destroyers from Venezuela as well as several other ships from Argentina and the Dominican Republic.

Summary:

Since the Soviet Union and the United States at the current moment have reached on an agreement about the inspection of the transports to Cuba, two issues are left unsolved, that is, the issue of an inspection on Cuba itself and the removal of the IL-28 planes. With regards to the inspection on Cuban territory, it seems like the negotiation efforts of Mikoyan have been in vain. And as for the removal of the Soviet planes, Moscow has expressed itself very negatively, since the planes now are regarded as Cuban property.

[Source: Danish State Archive, Copenhagen, Archives of the Danish Defense Intelligence Service. Translated by Henrik Brandt.]



DOCUMENT No. 5

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief
(Excerpts), 22 November 1962
Danish Defense Intelligence Service

Weekly Brief

22 November 1962

[excerpts]

OVERVIEW

(For the period 15-21 November 1962)

One of the dominating foreign-political features has been the gradual lessening of the tensions of the Cuban-crisis. The contours of a more general period of détente can be faintly discerned.

Another remarkable feature has been the development in the Indian-Chinese conflict. The proclaimed withdrawal of the Chinese can have several possible reasons (Soviet, political and financial pressure, as well as Chinese supply problems). It is however too hasty to talk about any real détente in this area yet.

The week brought another Soviet nuclear test in Central Asia, probably the last of the series.

The period covered by the report exhibits the normal activity and the normal amount of training activities for the season of the year.

The readiness measures prompted by the Cuban-crisis are still active. However, among the East German forces, a degree of easing up of the tension can be traced.

The reinforced patrol- and surveillance-service in the western Baltic Sea, including the occasional circumnavigation of Zealand, has continued unabated, but is expected to be cancelled.

On the 21st of November, [Soviet Defense Minister] Marshal [Rodion] Malinovskiy received instructions to call off the readiness measures taken.

One of the few new items demonstrated during the parade on the Red Square on 7 November was a naval missile, which could possibly be a ballistic-missile for submarines.

Both the PVO [(Soviet) Air Defense Forces] and the rocket-troops have received new chiefs, respectively Marshal V. A. STUDETS, former commander of the tactical air-force, and Marshall S. S. BIRYUZOV. The latter is a member of the Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet.

[...]

POLITICAL

For official use

World political activities of the Eastern Bloc: The development around Cuba:

14 November: Stevenson negotiates with U Thant and commented after the meeting, that the Cuban-issue must be concluded in the Security Council, where it had started. It is considered whether to hinder the supply of fuel to Cuba.

15 November: Cuba [i.e., Castro] sends a message to U Thant, wherein he threatens to shoot down American reconnaissance planes over Cuban territory.

16 November: As an answer to Castro's threats, Washington answers that the aerial-reconnaissance will be continued, and that the planes if necessary will be protected by fighters. Any fire will be returned. Moscow repeats its bartering proposal with regards to a mutual dismantling of rocket-bases.

17 November: The negotiations concerning Cuba are once again at a stalemate.

18 November: In order to keep the airspace above Cuba open for military flying and to counter the American reconnaissance, Castro orders the suspension of all civilian air traffic over Cuba. Washington makes it apparent, that Kennedy, if Khrushchev does not declare himself willing to full-fill his obligations with regards to the withdrawal of the IL-28 bombers from Cuba, will give the order for initiating harsher measures. This will probably mean a strengthening of the blockade with the objective to cut Castro off from further fuel deliveries to the aforementioned bomber-planes.

19 November: The threat to shoot down American reconnaissance planes is repeated by the Cubans. Of the foreign airlines, only the routes to Prague and Mexico City will be kept going. In the evening Mikoyan has a two hour meeting with Fidel Castro, after which the text for a letter from Castro to U Thant is publicized on Havana radio in the night between the 19th and the...

20 November: In the letter it says, that Cuba is prepared to send the IL-28 planes, "that are obsolete and is moreover the property of the Soviet government," back to the Soviet Union. It is furthermore said in the letter, that Cuba does not accept a "unilateral" (i.e. American, but possibly international) inspection of Cuban territory. Minister-president Khrushchev informs President Kennedy in a brief, that all IL-28 bombers will be withdrawn inside the next 30 days, and that it will be allowed to put the removal of the planes under surveillance, as they are leaving Cuba. President Kennedy informs during a press conference about Khrushchev's letter and adds, that the surveillance of the Cuban military activities will continue (from the air), but that on the 21st [of November] at 05:00

PM (Danish time) the blockade will be lifted. The President adds, that the negotiations with the Soviet Union concerning the technicalities of the settlement of the Cuban-crisis will continue, after which there be a created the proper foundation for further negotiations concerning the other world-political problems.

21 November, 12:00: The press and radio of the Eastern Bloc refers to the events such, that they have “forced the USA to lift the aggressive blockade,” and they celebrate Castro’s decision to send back the bombers. The Americans inform that there will be a military maneuver named “Sunscreen” in order to discern how fast paratroopers can be transported to places where their military deployment is needed.

Based on the available information about the turn of events, it can perhaps be drawn the conclusion, that the Eastern Bloc once more (as had been the case between the 26 and 28 of October) has given in to a firm American statement, this time formulated through the declaration, that President Kennedy on the 20th [of November] would make a proclamation concerning Cuba, one which would probably be about an active intervention on the part of the United States, if the IL-28 bombers were not removed. The President’s suggestion of an opportunity to negotiate about the other world-political problems after the definitive conclusion of the Cuban-crisis could be viewed in the light of the rumors about new Soviet proposals to the United States and the United Kingdom about possible solutions of world-political problems through mutual concessions.

[Source: Danish State Archive, Copenhagen, Archives of the Danish Defense Intelligence Service. Translated by Henrik Brandt.]

Notes

- 1 PhD., Head of the Cold War Museum Langelandsfort.
- 2 Hans A. Schröder, *Det sku’ være saa godt – Danmarks Luftforsvar under Den Kolde Krig* (Copenhagen, 2002), p. 278.
- 3 Søren Nørby, *Danske ubåde 1909-2004* (2005), p. 186. Thede Palm, *Några studier till T-kontorets historia* (Stockholm, 1999)

pp. 52-53. Olav Riste and Arnfinn Moland, *’Strengt hemmelig’ – Norsk etterretningsteneste 1945-1970* (Oslo, 1997). For the English version of this, see Olav Riste, *The Norwegian Intelligence Service, 1945-1970* (London, 1999). Wilhelm Christmas-Møller, *Obersten og Kommandøren* (Copenhagen, 1995). Hans Davidsen-Nielsen, *Spionernes Krig* (Copenhagen, 2008), pp. 69, 82.

4 Danish State Archive. Archives of the DDIS, weekly reports for week nr. 20, 22, 34 and 37 (1962). For more on US-Danish intelligence relations, see Peer Henrik Hansen, *Second to None – US Intelligence Activities in Northern Europe 1943-1946*, Dordrecht (2011).

5 When Nikita Khrushchev visited Denmark in 1964 the Danish intelligence service went quite far in order to confirm or deny the rumor that Khrushchev suffered from bad kidneys. The service had altered the plumbing at the hotel where the Soviet leader stayed and was thereby able to secure his urine and feces and analyze them. The results showed that Khrushchev was rather fit for a man at 70. Hans Davidsen Nielsen (2008). See also <http://politiken.dk/inland/ECE588747/danske-spioner-stjal-khrushjovs-affoering/>

6 The sound of a ship propeller is – just as the sound of the engine – unique for every ship and can therefore be seen as the fingerprint of every ship. According to a former Danish chief of intelligence the Soviet Union would rebuild some of its ships in an attempt to deceive the Western intelligence services. The sound of the propeller and engine would disclose that it was in fact an old familiar ship of the Soviet navy that had been rebuilt.

7 Jørgen E. Larsen, *Hawkeyes – og hvad de så!* Karup (2004), p. 51.

8 Dick van der Art, *Aerial Espionage*, Shrewsbury (1985), side 109.

9 Hans A. Schröder (2002), p. 280. Dick van der Art (1985), pp. 106-108. For an example regarding an important Soviet vessel, see *Flyvehistorisk Tidsskrift*, number 1, March 2004.

10 http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/9.jpg

11 DDIS. Weekly Brief 25 October 1962.

12 Jørgen E. Larsen (2004), pp. 15, 42, 51, 57.

13 ”Chronology of Specific Events Relating to the Military Buildup in Cuba”, udateret rapport. Punkt 67-68. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/chron.htm

14 See telegram number 49 dated 24 October 1962 and telegram number 53 dated 25 October 1962.

15 The Danish observations regarding Soviet ships continued. In December 1962 M/S Kasimov returned from Cuba carrying Soviet IL-28 Beagle planes on the deck. It was photographed when it passed through Danish waters.

16 Bob Ramsing *Den Hemmelige Tjeneste*, Copenhagen (1980), p. 90. *Jyllands-Posten*, 26 July 2005. H.M. Lunding and Otto Lippert, *Stemplet Fortroligt*, Copenhagen (1970), p. 144. Helge Hjortdal, *Tre Røde Konger – set fra sidelinjen*, Copenhagen (1999), p. 225.

Our Man in Havana: When a Local Danish Newspaper was Able to Report from Cuba

by Peer Henrik Hansen¹

On the 28th of October 1962, Danish journalist Jørgen E. Petersen took off by plane from the Czechoslovak capital of Prague heading for Havana. Together with four Swedish colleagues, he hoped to be able to report from Cuba and work as a free journalist. But as soon as the plane had arrived, the Scandinavian journalists were arrested. They were placed in house arrest at Hotel Capri and were placed on the 13th floor. From the windows, the journalists would follow movements on the streets below and document them by writing articles, filming the activities, or taping radio programs.

Rumors said that Petersen and his Swedish friends were about to be expelled. Petersen wrote several articles and pointed out that the situation of the Cuban Missile Crisis had strengthened the Cuban dictator and people had armed themselves in order to defend the country against an American invasion. But he couldn't get his articles back home. After a couple of days under house arrest, Petersen grabbed the phone and asked to be connected to a receiver in Denmark. The operator went silent before replying "one minute, please." And then the most incredible thing happened. The operator put him through to New York where Petersen explained to an American operator his peculiar situation. She forwarded him to Denmark and he tried to establish contact with his editor and to his story to the newspaper. But this did not happen. He tried several times to repeat the phone call but without any luck. He eventually got through to Danish national radio and went on the air live for twenty seconds before the Cubans cut him off.

Swedish journalist Sven Öste reported how he had been jailed for 24 hours and spent time in a Cuban prison cell together with several others. The Cubans claimed that Öste was an American spy and that his passport was forged. He was placed in a cell "where prisoners apparently are placed and then forgotten...." All contact with the outside world was cut off by the polite but rough prison guards. After being released, Öste soon discovered the great disappointment among the Cubans towards Nikita Khrushchev and the Soviet decision to remove its nuclear missiles. Propaganda posters with slogans such as "[the] Soviet Union is behind us" and "We are not alone" were being torn apart and removed from the walls

around in the city. The Cubans were frustrated about the outcome of the conflict.

Three of the Swedish journalists were expelled and they smuggled out a tape that Jørgen E. Petersen had recorded while observing the streets of Havana from his hotel room. Shortly after it arrived in Copenhagen, the tape was played on the radio. But he stayed in Cuba. Petersen was given a working permit and released from house arrest and was able to move around the city of Havana. In the first ten days of November, Petersen was able to send back home several articles about the conditions in Cuba before he flew back home on the 10th of November. Among the articles which he was able to send home was an interview with member of the Cuban government, the 1st Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Pelegria Torras, which was printed in the newspaper *Demokraten* (*The Democrat*) and is reproduced in translation below:

The Democrat, Friday 9 November 1962

First free interview from Cuba

Deputy Foreign Minister states the views of the Castro-government

HAVANA, Thursday, correspondent of *The Democrat*, Jørgen E. Petersen

As the very first journalist [in Cuba] since the outbreak of the Cuban crisis, I have been received by a member of the Cuban government, the 1st Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Pelegria Torras, a 49-year old former university professor. The prerequisite for the talk was that the statements of Dr. Torras should be seen as reflecting the official standpoint of the Cuban government.

- How is the Cuban foreign policy going to look in the future?
- Dr. Castro's Five Points form the foundation. The formulation of these points shape the effective guarantees

for Cuba.

- Will Cuba pursue its own policy or that of the Soviet Union?
- Cuba has always pursued its own policy, a policy based on peace and peaceful co-existence. This is not a question of tactics. We desire peace to rebuild our society. Socialism needs peace in order to do its constructive work in agriculture and industry. We also wish to be among the countries who wish for peace because we are a small country. This policy has been clearly formulated by Dr. Castro and it has been formulated in the UN. This policy is almost the same as in the Socialist countries. Our principle is the one of Socialism. Socialism is our foundation, but with a distinct national character.
- There are three choices in the world today: the Western bloc, the Eastern bloc and the neutral. Does Cuba want to be in the Eastern bloc or in the Neutral?

Differences, not a division

- There is a difference between the Socialist camp and the Capitalist bloc. The Capitalist bloc is also opposed to certain neutral countries. The Socialist isn't. The Socialist bloc emphasizes, that it isn't opposed to any bloc in any country. Coincidence has brought us into unison under these principles.
- Fidel Castro said in his speech last Tuesday [actually Thursday, 1 November 1962—ed.], that there was a divide between the Soviet Union and Cuba?
- Fidel Castro said that there were differences, but not a rift.

Cuba and Scandinavia

- How does Cuba view Scandinavia?
- There is a difference between the Scandinavian countries, with neutral Finland and Sweden on the one side, and Denmark and Norway as NATO members on the other. But we appreciate that there is a difference between the politics of the Scandinavian countries and the Imperialist bloc.
- What about the negotiations with [Anastas] Mikoyan?

- I can't give any details, but the talks are conducted in a fraternal spirit.

The Trade with the East Countries

- Is Cuba going to receive more support from the Eastern European countries?
- There will surely have been trade-policy negotiations these days with Mikoyan and his people.
- What are the terms for a Cuban reconciliation with the United States?
- The Five Points, that Cuba demands, are necessary for our sovereignty.

Respect for our sovereignty

- What if the United States agrees to them?

With a smile: - That would be a complete abstraction. But it would mean a major change in the foreign policy of the United States. In that case we would be willing to discuss the differences. All we want is respect for our sovereignty and the wishes of our people. But the reality is that the United States continues its aggression with the blockade, even though Kennedy has already admitted that the rockets are on their way out. However, this does not prevent Cuba from receiving a lot of friendly support from all over the world.

- If the Five Points are recognized, will Cuba then accept the Red Cross inspection of the rocket-dismantlement?

Cannot accept inspection

- At the moment, it is the Cuban government's standpoint, that it cannot possibly accept an inspection.
- But if the Five Points are accepted?
- Then maybe we would allow the Red Cross to inspect the dismantling of the American base on Cuba. In the Cuban terminology, Guantanamo is Cuban territory. If we should allow an inspection of the dismantling, then we

would have agreed to an inspection on Cuban territory.

- Might it not be possible to extend this, as a one-off event, to including an inspection that the rockets are dismantled and gone?
- In that eventuality, it should of course be considered. Today, however, the answer has to be no. Cuba prefers negotiation and peace, but only in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The Cuban people today therefore wait with weapon in hand for this right to live in peace.

[Translated for CWIHP Henrik Brandt.]

Notes

1 Ph.D., leader of Cold War Museum Langelandsfort. Sources consulted for this article include the Danish newspapers *Demokraten* (30-31 October, 5, 8-9, 11-12 November 1962); *Jyllands-Posten*, (30 October, 2 November 1962); *Politiken* (30 October, 1 November 1962); *Information* (31 October 1962); *Aktuelt* (1 November 1962); and *Land og Folk* (3 November 1962); and the television documentary “Cuba-krisen 1962” as part of the series *Danmark i den kolde krig* (Denmark in the Cold War), aired 29 September 2000.

Switzerland and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Documents obtained, translated and introduced by Stephanie Popp

Chocolate, cheese and neutrality are some of the things Switzerland is most known for. While people generally love chocolate and cheese, not everyone likes neutrality. At the end of World War II, Switzerland experienced biting criticism for remaining neutral from the nations that had fought in the war. Alfred Zehnder, a Swiss diplomat, recalled, “we were classified as blockade runners, arms dealers, and gold hoarders, in short as war profiteers.”¹ It was not surprising that, when the formation of the United Nations was discussed in San Francisco, France proposed a clause that would bar neutrals from joining.² Switzerland was thus in a position where it had to prove its worth as a neutral state in an interconnected world.

Max Petitpierre, who was elected to the Swiss Federal Council in 1944 and who led the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the next seventeen years, set out to change this hostile international perception of Switzerland. Living in a world that was increasingly divided by the oncoming Cold War, he advocated the policy of “Neutrality and Solidarity.” In a 1948 exposé he explained that:

Switzerland’s neutrality rests on two elements: the first is the voluntary act by which the Confederation proclaimed its neutrality... Switzerland does not want to be mixed up in foreign countries’ disputes. The second gives Switzerland’s neutrality its contractual character... it is the declaration of the Vienna Congress [1815]... by which Switzerland’s neutrality was recognized as being in the true interests of Europe... there is also the declaration of London [1920], by which Switzerland’s neutrality was recognized again as being in the interest, not only of Europe, but of peace.³

As a result of the London Declaration, Switzerland had a duty to help where it could to promote peace. Hence, Petitpierre advocated the nation’s role as a mediator. In this manner, Switzerland provided its good offices in the conflict between France and Algeria and participated in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission that was established at the end of the Korean War.

Referring to the threat posed by communism, Petitpierre maintained that “we are now in a position where, if we remain neutral, we, in fact, take side,” because this would play into the hands of the Communists.⁴ He emphasized that:

Our moral position could become untenable, and we risk exposing ourselves to reproach - which has already been formulated - that we believe in the same values as other democratic countries, that we have the same interest as them, that we are threatened by the same danger as them, but refuse to associate with their efforts, in the hope that, if the threat becomes a reality, they will save us, without having wanted to assume the risk of undertaking the common resistance.⁵

Based on these assumptions, Petitpierre concluded:

I do not believe that we should renounce our neutrality, or the policies that follow from it... But we have to realize that it will become more and more difficult to conduct this Janus-faced policy: one being the neutrality, the other being solidarity. The margin to maneuver will become increasingly narrow. I believe that solidarity... is today the more efficient mean for the realization of our goal: to guard our independence... It is thus no longer on neutrality that we have to put our focus in the immediate future, but on solidarity. This does not mean that we will renounce our neutrality - but it serves primarily to not let us participate in any political or military alliances on the one hand, and, on the other, to keep commercial relations (the only ones possible) with the states of the East.⁶

Consequently, Petitpierre’s policy of “Neutrality and Solidarity” advocated remaining out of political and military alliances while joining the Western democracies in the containment struggle. Under Petitpierre’s auspices, Switzerland became more involved internationally, while staying true to the principles of political and military neutrality.

Switzerland’s image before the world improved over the years as a result of its redefined focus that emphasized solidarity. In October 1960, when US-Cuban relations soured, the US inquired from Switzerland if it would be willing to take over US interest in Cuba if need be. Document 1 illustrates Switzerland’s positive response to this entreaty. On 27 October, the Swiss Foreign Ministry filed for authorization from the Federal Council to inform Washington of Switzerland’s readiness to provide its good offices and represent the US in Cuba. The Foreign Ministry emphasized that Switzerland customarily accepted such requests and pointed out that earlier that month Switzerland had approved

a similar inquiry from the Federal Republic of Germany. The Federal Council responded promptly on the following day and granted the authorization.⁷ When the United States withdrew its entire diplomatic corps from Cuba on 3 January, 1961, Switzerland took over US interest as it had been agreed on the preceding fall. Switzerland's increased responsibility in Cuba was the backdrop against which the Cuban Missile Crisis arose.

Switzerland's readiness to get involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis has so far been underappreciated by the historical scholarship. The Swiss historian Thomas Fischer has authored two articles on this subject. "Die guten Dienste des IKRK und der Schweiz in der Kuba-Krise 1962," published in 2000, investigates the different roles the International Committee of the Red Cross and Switzerland played in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Fischer argues that while the ICRC was eager to help, Switzerland was "unavailable" and not willing to get involved.⁸ His conclusion could be due to the fact that, according to his own statement, Fischer was unable to draw on pertinent sources from the Federal Archives in Switzerland, as these were still classified. "Talking to the Bearded Man: Mandate to represent US interests in Cuba, 1961-1977," Fischer's working paper of 2010, addresses Switzerland's role as the US's protecting power in Cuba. In this more recent article, Fischer portrays Switzerland as more active and more involved than he did in his earlier piece. Yet, in regard to the Cuban Missile Crisis, he confirms his previous conclusion "that the Swiss did not play a major role in these events beyond their classic assignments as protecting power."⁹

Documents from the National Security Archive in D.C. and particularly from the Swiss Federal Archives in Berne and from DoDiS, an online collection of Swiss diplomatic documents, demonstrate that Switzerland's neutrality of the 1950s and 1960s did not imprison it in a state of isolation from global affairs. In accord with Petitpierre's policy of "Neutrality and Solidarity," the Swiss realized that they had a responsibility as a member of the world community and could no longer hide their heads in the sand. In this manner, Switzerland expressed a willingness to engage in the Cuban Missile Crisis and to provide its good offices in a manner consistent with its redefined position of neutrality.

Document numbers 2 and 3 address how the news of the missiles reached Switzerland. The Swiss first learned about the crisis at 6:30 p.m. (1:30 p.m. Washington time) on 22 October when US Ambassador Robert McKinney met with Secretary General Pierre Micheli. Compared to other nations this notification was relatively early.¹⁰ The fact that the Swiss were representing the US diplomatically in Cuba might explain this peculiar timing. However, it seems more likely that Switzerland was not intentionally briefed so early,

but that it was a mistake on the part of an overzealous US ambassador. At the time McKinney visited Micheli, the text of Kennedy's speech had not even fully been decoded yet. McKinney was, therefore, able to provide only the first part of the speech and he returned at 9:00 p.m. with the rest. By then, he had been specifically instructed to hold on to the speech until one hour before Kennedy's public appearance. The Ambassador, however, orally related the most pertinent points, and the Swiss received the complete speech later that night.¹¹

Like the ambassadors of other neutral nations, the Swiss ambassador to Washington, August Lindt, was called to the State Department that evening to be briefed by Dean Rusk. Due to the unique position Switzerland held as the US's diplomatic placeholder in Cuba, he received an additional, so to say a pre-briefing, briefing. William Tyler, assistant secretary of state for European affairs, asked Lindt to come half an hour early for a special session, in which Tyler wished to communicate additional information. Thus Lindt learned a number of important points. Tyler, for instance, related that the missiles in Cuba were pointed at the United States and would be able to hit most of the urban centers in the nation. He, furthermore, expressed uncertainty in regards to the nuclear warheads but mentioned that, given the "great quantities of Soviet cargo planes [that] have landed in Cuba over the course of the last few days, it can be assumed that the 'war heads' were brought to Cuba that way."¹² Tyler explained that the US did "not know how, where and when Khrushchev [was] going to react"¹³ and speculated about Khrushchev's motives for deploying the missiles. Finally, Tyler mentioned the possibility of a meeting between the US and Soviet heads of state, but underscored that this was still undecided.¹⁴

At the end of the day, Switzerland had received a substantial amount of information on the crisis through different channels and had enjoyed the United States' special confidence. Swiss officials understood the seriousness of the situation when the Federal Council met the following day. While the Swiss executive government organ reacted with concern to the crisis, they also showed approval of the US measures. McKinney cabled to the State Department:

Acting Foreign Minister Micheli [Foreign Minister Friedrich Traugott Wahlen missed the meeting because he was attending an EFTA conference in Oslo¹⁵] and Chief Western Section [Raymond] Probst regard quarantine measure as maximum course available short of risking war. US action greeted as evidence [that] US [is] not merely reacting or readjusting to Soviet moves[,] but is now taking initiative... [the] Swiss [are] obviously grateful [for] our efforts [to] keep them advised. President [of

the Confederation, Paul] Chaudet in personal talk with Ambassador said: “Kennedy speech [was] clear, energetic. Time has come to take a stand. Personally[,] I welcome quarantine; personally[,] I would be happy with world ‘barrage’ against Communism. But objective analysis must be that chances of accidental war [have] now materially increased. I would think that with respect to Cuba[,] Soviets might lie low for a while, at least to see what US actually does. But they might act from fear or rage. I ask myself, would they attempt counter action in Berlin, and find [that] I cannot answer. Happily I am not a prophet.”¹⁶

Addressing broader responses, McKinney related that “Embassy officers have received unanimous congratulatory reactions from Swiss contacts. Assistant to Swiss Air Force Commander opened conversation with Air Attaché by saying ‘congratulation.’ Swiss Chief of Staff quoted as saying US faction [sic.] comes late but better late than never.”¹⁷ These statements distinctly illustrated the fervent anti-Communist and pro-Western attitude of the Swiss and underscored their strong support for the United States. The Swiss reaction, moreover, demonstrated that military and political neutrality did not automatically entail neutrality in spirit.

Document number 4 illuminates here for the first time how Dean Rusk tried to take advantage of the Swiss’ disposition to approach Castro. After the briefing of the neutral ambassadors on 22 October, Rusk took Ambassador Lindt aside and clandestinely inquired about the possibility of having the Swiss Ambassador in Cuba, Emil Stadelhofer, emphasize to Castro the danger Cuba was in and relate the advantages of breaking away from the Soviet Union. Rusk, referring to an apparent speech by the president, explained that the US would be willing to talk with Castro if Cuba were not aligned with the Soviet Union. Lindt listened carefully, but characteristically for a diplomat, refrained from taking a concrete position.¹⁸

The Foreign Ministry in Switzerland was faced with a dilemma upon receiving Lindt’s report of this encounter with Rusk. Rusk’s suggested initiative was, on the one hand, very risky in terms of Switzerland’s neutrality. Rumors and concerns had already emerged that the Swiss neutrality had been impaired by its strong leaning towards the West in the Cold War struggle.¹⁹ Swiss officials were aware that once the nation’s neutrality and impartiality were blemished, it would be very hard to regain the world’s confidence. Yet, on the other hand, Switzerland did not like to turn down an opportunity to help and potentially make a difference in the emerging crisis. The Foreign Ministry, therefore, reacted by expressing reservation, but at the same time, gave the ambassador free rein to seize the opportunity to influence Castro

if it arose—of course “without any reference to Berne or Washington.”²⁰ Document number 5 shows that the Foreign Ministry followed up on its earlier telegram. It related to Stadelhofer the official Cuban position on the US blockade as it had been explained to them by José Velasco, the Cuban ambassador to Switzerland. It is noteworthy that the Foreign Ministry highlighted which passage would be a particularly fitting reference point for a conversation with Fidel Castro. It appears that the Foreign Ministry was not disinclined to see such a meeting materialize.

Documents numbers 6 and 7 relate that Stadelhofer, making use of the leeway he had been given, went to the Cuban Foreign Ministry on 24 October in the hope of soliciting a meeting with Castro. To his dismay, no one was available to organize such an appointment. According to Stadelhofer, all apposite officials were preoccupied with an urgent meeting at the presidential palace. Stadelhofer, however, did not get discouraged and he returned in the morning of 25 October. This time Raúl Roa García, Cuba’s Foreign Minister, was available and the two met. Stadelhofer then asked him for an audience with Castro under the pretext of wanting to gain a better understanding of Castro’s viewpoint and to improve his reporting to Berne. Stadelhofer also must have mentioned some of the talking points Rusk had highlighted, because he cabled to Berne that Roa did not know about the point relating to negotiations that Kennedy had allegedly made.²¹ One has to wonder whether Stadelhofer did not inadvertently show his hand when he brought up Kennedy’s apparent statement and requested an audience with *el líder máximo* in the same conversation.

Stadelhofer returned to the Cuban Foreign Ministry the following day to meet with the Cuban chief of protocol for an unspecified “different matter.”²² During this visit he learned that the chief of protocol had been informed that he would potentially be asked to pick Stadelhofer up and bring him to the audience with Castro. Stadelhofer’s frequent visits to the Foreign Ministry and particularly his conversation with Roa on the 25th seem to have stirred some concern in Ambassador Lindt in Washington. Document number 8 shows that on 27 October, Lindt cabled the Foreign Ministry and suggested that Rusk’s idea might already be outdated, since some conditions had changed. Lindt no longer thought that Castro could be lured away from the Soviet Union. He underscored that any initiative along these lines, like Stadelhofer had made, could ultimately be very dangerous.²³

Lindt’s cable seems to have had a temporary effect on the Swiss Foreign Ministry. It relayed Lindt’s concerns to Stadelhofer and told him not to push the issue further about the audience with Castro. It did not, however, express any serious or concrete opposition to a meeting. Instead they

cautioned Stadelhofer to be very cautious if a meeting with Castro were to materialize and instructed him not to offer any good offices.²⁴ Document number 9 illustrates that Stadelhofer tried to allay their concerns by explaining that, in any case, he did not expect a response from Castro until the Cuban had learned of the reaction to the invitation he had extended to U Thant. The ambassador, as per his own statements, followed the orders and did not further pursue an audience with Castro, that is, for a while at least.

The Soviet Union did not make an overture to the Swiss as explicit as the one Rusk had made, but the Soviet Chargé D’Affaires in Berne, Sergej Loginov, did visit Foreign Minister Wahlen on 25 October. Document 10 number gives insight into this meeting, during which Loginov attempted to convey the Soviet point of view. He also emphasized that “he hope[d] that Switzerland will do its best to maintain peace.”²⁵ Even though Loginov refrained from concretely asking the Swiss for help, his statement illuminates the Soviet perception of Switzerland as a potential mediator. Wahlen responded by “remind[ing] him of Switzerland’s policy of peace.”²⁶ The Foreign Minister’s choice of words is noteworthy, as he specifically utilized the phrase “policy of peace” rather than “policy of neutrality.” This nuance is significant as the former traditionally called for a slightly more active role than the latter. Wahlen’s response to Loginov was thus another manifestation of Switzerland’s redefined foreign policy.

The same day, the Swiss ambassador to Moscow, Max Troendle, sent two letters to the Foreign Ministry. Document numbers 11 and 12 shed light on the Swiss interpretation of Khrushchev’s Cuba policy and its evaluation of the situation in the Soviet Union. In number 11, Troendle analyzed the official declaration of the Soviet government and shared his understanding that Khrushchev wanted to focus on Berlin rather than Cuba. He outlined other possible readings of Khrushchev’s actions in Cuba and explored potential consequences of the Soviet premier’s response to the US blockade in document number 12. In both cables Troendle addressed the state of the Soviet population, describing them as calm yet worried, and not fully understanding recent events and underscored his belief that Khrushchev did not want to go to war in Cuba.

Two days later Attorney General Robert Kennedy met with the Soviet ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, and offered him a secret Cuba-Turkey missiles swap. The following morning, on Sunday, 28 October, Khrushchev announced that he would withdraw the missiles from Cuba over Radio Moscow. The immediate danger of the Cuban Missile Crisis had thus already abated when on 7 November, the eager Ambassador Stadelhofer was invited to a reception at the Soviet embassy in Havana. Stadelhofer recognized the

chance to resume his quest for an audience with Fidel Castro, who also attended this event. The Swiss ambassador seized the moment and initiated a dialogue with the Cuban leader. To Stadelhofer’s dismay, there were too many people around to conduct a serious conversation. He was particularly discomfited by the company of President Osvaldo Dorticós and Che Guevara, minister of industries, who, as Stadelhofer felt, were eavesdropping on his discussion with Castro. The conversation ended after five minutes without having achieved much. Castro did, however, tell Stadelhofer that he would like to speak to him some more “either immediately after the Soviet reception if it ended early or otherwise in the next few days.”²⁷ Castro even inquired about the location where Stadelhofer could best be found. In spite of these promising words, Castro never did visit the Swiss ambassador.²⁸

On 17 November, Stadelhofer finally concluded that the basis for Rusk’s entreaty had changed since he had made it several weeks before.²⁹ Rusk’s initiative thus fizzled out and bore no direct results. It was, nevertheless, an important episode in the history of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Stadelhofer’s tireless attempts to turn Rusk’s suggestions into action and the fact that the Foreign Ministry did not prevent him from doing so, demonstrated Switzerland’s desire to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Rusk’s proposal is significant because it illustrated the effort of the Kennedy administration to pursue a diplomatic solution to the crisis with Cuba directly. A similar approach through the Brazilian government has been examined by historian James Hershberg.³⁰ Talking about the various courses of action that were available to Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Hershberg has pointed out that these plans to influence Castro through foreign intermediaries have been mostly overlooked by the historical scholarship. The evidence presented here demonstrates that secret feelers were extended to Castro, not only through the Brazilians, but also through the Swiss. The fact that there is another example of this strategy further highlights the significance the Kennedy administration attributed to this diplomatic course of action during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Rusk’s inquiry was not the only instance where Switzerland considered getting involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Over the course of the ensuing conflict, Switzerland, still trying to prove the worth of its neutrality, showed a disposition to lend its good offices. Another example was the question about the makeup of the UN’s inspection team that was to examine the missile bases in Cuba. By 29 October, the Swedish had already been asked to help.³¹ Neutral Switzerland would also have been a fitting match, but it had not yet been approached by the UN.

Document numbers 13 and 14 present the two cables that Ernesto Thalmann, the Swiss observer to the United Nation in New York, sent to Berne on 29 October regarding this issue. Thalmann had heard from Agda Rössel, the Swedish ambassador to the UN, that the final composition of the team had not been determined yet and that it was possible that the Swiss would also be asked to help with the inspection. Rössel, however, had also mentioned that it seemed to him like U Thant preferred the “UNEF” (the United Nations Emergency Force) or the “ONUC” (the United Nations Organization in the Congo) to participate in the expedition.³² Thalmann hoped to learn more details about the makeup of the teams once U Thant returned from his trip to Cuba. Accordingly, Thalmann merely related this information without much additional comment on his part. Later that same day, he followed up with another message. In the meantime, Thalmann had heard rumors that the inspection team was to be made up of Swedish, Mexican and Swiss citizens. These rumors further claimed that the Swiss were hesitant to accept the entreaty due to the potential conflict of interest as the diplomatic representative of the US in Cuba. A number of delegates, likely spurred on by these speculations, went to Thalmann for verification of what they had heard. Thalmann, himself completely ignorant about this potential mandate, inquired about the official Swiss position from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³³

Document number 15 shows that the Ministry, likewise, knew nothing about the potential participation of Swiss citizens in the inspection of the bases in Cuba. It responded that if Switzerland were to be asked to provide officers, it would “examine the request with benevolence in the framework of our constant policy of lending our services wherever they may be of use.”³⁴ The Swiss officials indicated that they would seriously consider such a proposal and would not dismiss it off hand. Switzerland, however, never got a chance to participate. U Thant’s visit to Cuba did not bear the expected fruits. Castro was ardently set on denying any kind of inspection in Cuba. Hence the Swedes did not get to go to Cuba and the UN never even requested Switzerland’s assistance.

While the Swiss government was not approached to take on any duties related to the inspection in Cuba, the International Committee of the Red Cross was. The UN was looking for an entity, acceptable to all parties involved, which would board ships coming into Cuba and examine them for offensive weapons, and also inspect the missile sites in Cuba to ensure the complete removal of offensive weapons that had been brought to the island by the Soviet Union. As the UN was considering these points, the ICRC extended a general offer to help. In the evening of 25 October, Roger Gallopin, the delegate general of the ICRC, went to see Martin Hill,

Personal Representative of Secretary-General to Specialized Agencies, at the UN and told him that he “had been asked by Mr. Boissier, the President of the International Red Cross, to convey to us informally the Committee’s readiness and desire to help the Secretary-General in any way in its power, should the need arise.”³⁵

Document number 16 demonstrates that the need did arise and ultimately the UN asked the International Committee of the Red Cross to take on this mission on 29 October. Ernesto Thalmann cabled Berne the following day that Chakravarthi Narasimhan, chef de cabinet at the UN, had informed him that Pier Spinelli, director-general of the United Nations Office in Geneva, had approached Boissier and asked him for the help of the ICRC in the Cuban crisis. To this, Thalmann related, Boissier responded with general acceptance, under the condition that Castro would agree to this solution.³⁶ At the time, there was some confusion as to how this demarche to the ICRC came about. US officials as well as the American media believed that the Soviets had made the initiative. The Soviets, however, emphasized that the UN had offered them the choice between three alternative entities for this undertaking. The three options were the UN itself, neutral states or the ICRC, out of which the Soviet Union chose the Red Cross.³⁷

The exact nature of the mission the ICRC was asked to take on changed over the course of the next few days. Initially, the ICRC was to inspect incoming ships that had departed from bloc countries and survey the launch pads in Cuba once the missiles had been removed.³⁸ The first part of these duties would then allow for the ceasing of the US quarantine around Cuba. A State Department memo recorded that “inspection of incoming vessels would make possible suspension of enforcement of quarantine, but US ships would stay on attention.”³⁹ By demonstrating a willingness to be replaced by the ICRC as the executioners of the quarantine, the United States hoped to show their goodwill and to “lower [the] temperature.”⁴⁰ The second duty entailed in the ICRC mission, the inspection of the missile bases, however, was undercut by Castro, who rejected all forms of on-site inspections in Cuba. The Cuban leader, moreover, opposed the examination of the Soviet ships that were leaving Cuba in Cuban ports.⁴¹ Therefore, the UN initiated negotiations with the ICRC to also take on the task of boarding outgoing ships and examining their cargo to determine if the Soviet Union was removing all the offensive weapons it had previously deployed to Cuba.⁴²

Clearly, the nature of this proposed mission went beyond the humanitarian assistance that the ICRC was generally known for. The ICRC, however, had adopted the “Declaration of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross” at the meeting of the International Red Cross in Prague in 1961.⁴³ This declaration now provided the organization with

enough leeway to provide its good offices in this case.⁴⁴ The ICRC's statement of its principles included a phrase, stating that the ICRC "promotes mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peacing [sic.] amongst all peoples."⁴⁵ The ICRC could thus get involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis, because in so doing, it would promote peace between the involved parties.

The ICRC, however, did not yet officially accept the mission and its officials were a little uncomfortable with their potential new role. On 6 November, Paul Ruegger, a former ICRC president, flew to New York to discuss the details of the ICRC's mandate with U Thant.⁴⁶ Ruegger's hesitance showed as he initially agreed to use the Red Cross emblem and then, as the enthusiasm waned, he gradually changed his mind.^{47,48} Ultimately, the ICRC refused to fly its flag and advocated using the UN's.⁴⁹ Likewise, the ICRC insisted that it "would not assume direct responsibility for these inspections."⁵⁰ Thus the ICRC became the "executive agent of the UN," with the UN bearing the ultimate responsibility.⁵¹ The Red Cross underscored the need to comply with international law and accordingly declared it would not force the boarding of any ships that did not voluntarily submit to inspection.⁵² It insisted that all three parties affected, the United States, the Soviet Union and Cuba, had to agree to this mission.⁵³ Ruegger particularly emphasized the need for Castro's approval.⁵⁴

Although the ICRC proceeded with great caution, it did get to work and began planning the potential mission. Its representatives proclaimed that the ICRC exclusively would choose the corps that was to undertake the mission and stated that this team was to be made up of Swiss citizens.⁵⁵ These, in turn, were to be flown to New York, where they would be instructed in more detail on their assignment.⁵⁶ The ICRC emphasized that "it would be necessary for general instructions to be given by the UN to this corps to be first communicated 'in advance' to the Red Cross. This is to ensure that such instructions are in accord with Red Cross principles."⁵⁷

It was not long before the first challenges to the ICRC's mission began to surface. The first was of its own making. Due to its refusal to take on the responsibility, U Thant felt that there was little reason to have the ICRC do the inspection, since ultimately the UN would be responsible. He thus inquired from the Soviets if they would not agree to UN, instead of ICRC, inspection. In response, the Soviet delegate at the UN merely commented that he would forward this to his home government.⁵⁸

The second, and ultimately fatal, challenge was timing. On 5 November, the Soviet Union highlighted in regard to outgoing ships that "dismantling will be completed and all offensive weapons will have been shipped out of Cuba by Nov. 12. Some necessary Sov[iet] ships are already in Cuba

and remainder will arrive during current week. There is therefore no reason for continuing Red Cross system more than ten days from today."⁵⁹ Platon Morozov, Soviet UN ambassador Valerian Zorin's deputy, underscored that "if the proposals he was putting forward were not accepted, particularly that of duration of ICRC operation, objections would have to be taken up at a higher level."⁶⁰ The Soviet's sense of timing clashed with the US's schedule. The US, in contrast, underscored that "no specific date for the termination of Red Cross system could be fixed at this time. Red Cross inspection is temporary substitute for US quarantine, which [the] President had agreed would be lifted when the Sov[iets] had withdrawn [the] offensive weapons, this withdrawal had been verified and satisfactory assurances had been given against reintroduction [of] such weapons."⁶¹ On 7 November, Morozov responded by emphasizing the illegality of the quarantine as well as by underscoring that the "Red Cross inspection is not a substitute for the quarantine" and he advanced the termination date of the Red Cross mission to 10 November.⁶²

An additional complicating factor was the ICRC's insistence on getting Castro's approval for its mission, which he did not grant until 9 November.⁶³ Ruegger explained that it would probably take a week until the ICRC was logistically ready to assume its role in the Caribbean.⁶⁴ It quickly became evident that by the time the ICRC could begin the inspection, the Soviet deadline would have had already passed. Hence there was no reason to further pursue this plan and hence ended the ICRC's mission before it even began. Ruegger returned to Switzerland on 10 November.⁶⁵

As all this was happening, the Swiss government did not sit by idly. The ICRC, while being an independent, international organization, had strong historical ties to Switzerland and its headquarters are located in Geneva. Moreover, all ICRC members, including the officials involved in the Cuban mission, Boissier, Ruegger and Gallopin, were Swiss citizens, as were the people that were to be recruited for the inspections. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the Swiss Federal Council discussed the matter and developed an opinion about the mission.

Document number 17 illustrates the Swiss officials' initial responses. Secretary General Pierre Micheli and Jakob Burckhard, chief of the Division for International Organizations at the Foreign Ministry, believed that it was hardly possible for the ICRC to turn down the UN entreaty. Foreign Minister Wahlen, however, held the view that the Red Cross should not accept the mission and expressed concern about the ICRC's venturing into the political sphere.⁶⁶ There was more to it though than Wahlen initially revealed. At the Federal Council meeting on 9 November, Wahlen

showed the true reason behind his opposition to the ICRC mission. To his colleagues, he expressed his regret that the ICRC was already involved. Now, he explained, “it cannot well withdraw [from the mission]... It would have been better if it had refused from the beginning.”⁶⁷ Then, Wahlen, who was a defender of Petitpierre’s policy of “Neutrality and Solidarity” emphasized that “if one wants a neutral control, it would be better to address Switzerland than the ICRC.”⁶⁸ Wahlen’s comments demonstrate that he was not generally opposed to the mission, but that he did not like that the Red Cross was the one undertaking it rather than the government of Switzerland.

Hans Schaffner, minister of economic affairs, who had taken over the Free Democratic Party’s (FDP) Federal Council seat after Max Petitpierre retired, was even more candid. In this manner he stated that “one should look to exercise an influence on the ICRC, through the mediation of Mr. Petitpierre for example. We should help the ICRC to make a retreat. We could say that Switzerland would be prepared, as necessary, to take on a mission, in the place of the ICRC.”⁶⁹ Schaffner, just like Wahlen, expressed a willingness of the Swiss government to take on responsibility in the ensuing conflict and to provide its good offices. Schaffner further declared that “if one wants a neutral control, it should be taken to the Swiss and the Swedes – or only the Swiss – because they exercise a reliable control.”⁷⁰ Schaffner apparently did not think highly of the ICRC and believed that they would not do a good job. Switzerland, on the other hand, Schaffner argued, would be a much better match. Schaffner’s blunt statement raises the question whether the Federal Council might have been piqued because the UN had asked the ICRC to lend its good offices and not Switzerland. The other five Council members did not contradict Wahlen and Schaffner and they too voiced their unanimous displeasure with the possibility of ICRC taking on this mission.

Throughout the crisis, Switzerland demonstrated a readiness to at least seriously consider, if not willingly accept entreaties, for its good offices. Since Rusk’s initiative had fizzled out and Switzerland had not been approached in regard to inspections, it jumped at the opportunity when U Thant asked it to help with bringing the body of Major Anderson, the American U-2 pilot that had been shot down over Cuba on 27 October, back to the US. U Thant obtained the permission from Castro to return the deceased pilot during his trip to Cuba.⁷¹ The Secretary General had offered the Cuban leader the selection of using a Cuban plane to bring Anderson back or to submit it to the UN, the ICRC, Switzerland as the US representative, or just Switzerland, out of which Castro chose the last option.⁷² Switzerland accepted the mission on 1 November.⁷³ In document number 18, Stadelhofer described

the mission in detail. The Swiss ambassador related that the negotiations with the Cubans about the details of Anderson’s transport were quite onerous. He, for instance, had to contact the Cuban authorities nine times to get everything lined up. Likewise, Stadelhofer kept in close touch with Ambassador Lindt in Washington and together the two managed to successfully organize the undertaking.⁷⁴

Initially it was planned that the Swiss would bring Major Anderson’s remains to Guantanamo. However, as Stadelhofer explained, there were logistical issues that would have made this difficult, and, more importantly, Castro did not agree with this plan, as he felt it was an affront to Cuba’s national honor. Instead, the parties involved decided that the body of Major Anderson was to be transported directly to Florida. To accomplish this, Ambassador Lindt organized a US cargo plane and had it repainted so that it displayed the Swiss Cross. In the afternoon of 4 November, Stadelhofer went to Rancho Boyeros airport, located outside Havana, to accept Anderson’s remains.⁷⁵ While Stadelhofer ran into some last-minute administrative difficulties, he underscored that the transfer went well and that Anderson was granted “a simple, but fairly dignified” ceremony.⁷⁶ Switzerland’s first official involvement in the Cuban Missile Crisis was therefore a success.

Shortly after, Switzerland got the chance to take on a second, albeit much smaller, task. The Soviet ambassador to Cuba inquired from Stadelhofer, if he could obtain permission for Anastas Mikoyan, first deputy premier of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, and five Soviet experts to enter the United States, because they wished to stop in New York on 10 November on their way back from Cuba to the Soviet Union. Stadelhofer stated that “this [was] not within the Swiss Mandate, but in view [of the] delicacy surrounding [the] entire Cuban situation[, he] did not want to take formalistic actions.”⁷⁷ Hence it was agreed and the Swiss took on its second mission in relation with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Like their government, Swiss citizens demonstrated a readiness to take part and help during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Document number 19 illustrates that a large number of Swiss citizens “wanted to volunteer their services” to the ICRC to help with the inspection of the missile bases in Cuba.⁷⁸ The policy of “Neutrality and Solidarity,” conclusively, did not just pertain to a few officials in the government, but indeed to “numerous” citizens as well.⁷⁹

Throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Swiss government as well as the population expressed its willingness to become involved and lend its good offices where they may be of need. Rusk’s initiative posed the first opportunity for the government to participate in the Crisis. Swiss officials in Berne were a little reluctant to grant authorization, though Stadelhofer in Cuba was highly enthusiastic, and

they ultimately decided to proceed cautiously. The Swiss government would also have been willing to consider helping with the inspection of the missile dismantling, as it related to Thalmann. The Federal Council, likewise, would have liked to see the UN ask Switzerland for its good offices in this regard. In accord with the policies put forward by Max Petitpierre, Switzerland did not turn down a single entreaty when asked and when it was not, it expressed sincere regret. Throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis Switzerland tried to put its neutrality to good use and work in the interest of peace.

Swiss Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis
Translated by Stephanie Popp



Document Number 1

Notes on Swiss Agreement to Represent US Interests
in Cuba if US-Cuban Diplomatic Relations Are Broken,
27-28 October 1960

1833

Secret Friday, October 28, 1960

Potential assumption of representation
of the United States of America's interest
in Cuba

Foreign Ministry. Petition of October 27, 1960 (Enclosure).

Based on the petition of the Foreign Ministry, the Federal
Council has
d e c i d e d:

The Foreign Ministry is authorized to:

1. Inform the American State Department through our
embassy in Washington that the Federal Council is willing to
take over the representation of American interests in Cuba in
the case of a break in diplomatic relations between the United
States of America and Cuba.

2. At the same time, point out to the American State
Department that it goes without saying that the Federal
Council can, should the situation arise, only take on the
observation of American interests in Cuba, after the Cuban
government has previously given its approval.

Protocol excerpt to the Foreign Ministry (5 copies) and to the

Federal Chancellery for execution.

Verifying accuracy of excerpt,

the Secretary:

[Illegible signature]

Berne, October 27, 1960

o.840.USA.Cu.

- CR/st

Distributed

p.B.24.Am.2.

Secret

To the Federal Council

Potential assumption of representation

of the United States of America's interest in Cuba

On 26 October, the American State Department sounded
out our Chargé d'Affaires in Washington [most likely refer-
ring to Ambassador August Lindt], if Switzerland would
possibly be willing to represent the American interests in
Cuba. Even though the Americans do not want to take the
initiative, a break in relations between the two states has to
be considered a possibility. Currently, there are about 4,000
American citizens in the country, whereas in the case of a
break in relations, there would probably hardly be 1,000
left. The majority of American companies have, by the way,
already been seized.

On 21 October, the Federal Council has approved our
petition to take over the representation of the [West] German
interests in Cuba, should the German Federal Republic break
off her relations with Cuba. Traditionally, we have never
turned down such mandates, even if they entailed – as was
regularly the case – certain disadvantages and inconveniences.
Such a disposition is, in our opinion, also to be taken in
respect to the American entreaty.

We are taking the liberty to petition the Federal Council to
authorize the Foreign Ministry to:

1. Inform the American State Department through our
embassy in Washington that the Federal Council is willing to
take over the representation of American interests in Cuba in
the case of a break in diplomatic relations between the United
States of America and Cuba.

2. At the same time, point out to the American State
Department that it goes without saying that the Federal

Council can, should the situation arise, only take on the observation of American interests in Cuba, after the Cuban government has previously given its approval.

Federal Foreign Ministry.

Protocol excerpt to the Foreign Ministry (5 copies) and to the Federal Chancellery for execution.

[Source: Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland, www.dodis.ch, doc. 14974, Petition from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Federal Council, 12/28/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 2

Orientation of Swiss officials on 22 October 1962 through the US Embassy in Berne, 24 October 1962

FYI Hans Schmidlin

p.B.73.Cuba.O. U'Ch.- PO/mh

Berne, October 24, 1962

Memorandum for the record

Cuba mission USA.

Orientation through USA. Embassy

1. On Monday afternoon, 22 October, Ambassador [Robert] McKinney asked for an audience with Secretary General [Pierre] Micheli. He is received in the presence of the signatory at 1830h and hands over the beginning of the speech that President Kennedy will give at midnight [7 pm, Washington time]. From this it is already apparent that it relates to Cuba and the Soviet missile bases. The American measures, however, are not evident yet. Regarding the – longer – rest of the text, it was still being decoded. It is agreed that the Ambassador will audition again at 2100h to hand over the rest.

2. McKinney, accompanied by the Secretary of Legation [Warren P.] Blumberg, auditioned on 22 October at 2100h, with the Secretary General and the signatory. McKinney now has the entire speech. In the meantime, however, the instruction from Washington has been received to hand over this text no earlier than one hour before the speech will be given to the President of the Federal Council,

if he is not available to the Head of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if he is also not available then to the “highest ranking senior officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” To simplify the matter it is agreed that Mister Blumberg will visit the signatory between 2300h and midnight to hand over the speech. The Ambassador, anyway, already hinted orally at the basic points (Partial blockade, calling a meeting of the [UN] Security Council etc.).

3. Blumberg’s visit at the house of the signatory on 22 October between 2300h and midnight. Handing over of the entire text. Short oral commentary in accordance with instructions from the State Department (compare my separate note of 23 October).

4. Three more information-flashes from [Swiss Ambassador to Washington August] Lindt arrive over the course of the night (briefing through Secretary of State Dean Rusk etc.), of which the signatory is notified by the telegram office.

5. Ambassador Micheli briefs the President of the Federal Council [Paul Chaudet] on 23 October between 8 and 9h on the basis of the received texts and dispatches, so that he can report on this to the Federal Council at this morning’s meeting.

6. On 23 October at 1700h Ambassador McKinney auditions again to hand over the two attached supplementary documents.

7. In the evening of October 23, the Secretary General and the signatory inform the Head of Department [trans. note: Friedrich Traugott Wahlen], who just returned from Oslo (EFTA conference).

2 attachments

[Signed: Raymond] Probst

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Memorandum for the record, 10/24/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 3

Telegram from Swiss Ambassador in Washington Lindt regarding briefing by Assistant Secretary of State William Tyler, 23 October 1962

FYI to: 112 110 108 113 149 152
p.B. 73.Cuba.O.U'Ch
152 154 155 157 247 DZ JD
Original for handling to: 217

Washington 23.10.61
12.45
cable 308

[...]
11

Half an hour before this briefing [translator's note: the briefing of the neutral ambassadors by US Secretary of State Dean Rusk at 8 p.m. on 22 October 1962], [William] Tyler, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, had asked me to come see him. After he expressed thanks on behalf of the USA for what Switzerland has done, and will yet do in the future, for the American interests in Cuba, he said that he wished to inform me more extensively than Rusk would be able to do in front of the assembled group of ambassadors.

1. All missiles stationed in Cuba are targeted north with an angle that would make it possible to hit most of the American cities. We, however, do not know if the missiles have been mated with nuclear warheads. Since great quantities of Soviet cargo planes have landed in Cuba over the course of the last few days, it can be assumed that the "war heads" were brought to Cuba that way.

2. "We do not know how, where and when Khrushchev is going to react." The telegram that has just arrived from the American Ambassador to Moscow [Foy D. Kohler] only mentions a radio text, which talks about an imminent American declaration of war on Cuba without mentioning a Russian reaction. Currently, any reaction is possible, even nuclear war.

3. There are indications that the Soviets were informed that the US could detect the missiles. This raises the question, why Moscow, if it in fact means war, warned the Americans by erecting the missile bases, which foils the surprise effect. Personally X [probably Tyler—trans.] believes that Khrushchev is trying to practice diplomacy by military means. He might be thinking in terms of trading the American forward bases for the Russian bases in Cuba.

4. It is certain that Khrushchev fully realizes the challenge his Cuba policy represents to the US and to Kennedy personally. In his meeting with [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko [on October 18], Kennedy read the part from his speech where he stated that he cannot tolerate an offensive buildup in Cuba. Whereupon, Gromyko pulled a note out of his pocket and said that he had instructions to read the following "the Soviet Union intended under no circumstances to provide offensive weapons to Cuba." Khrushchev possibly believed that the Americans would take the affront [of deploying the missiles] without protest. This would have empowered him to push his Berlin solution. At any rate, it [sic—most likely "he"] is a too calm a "Berliner" [translator's quotation marks] to not also have prepared itself [sic—most likely "himself"—trans.] for the current reaction.

5. The possibility of a summit between Kennedy and Khrushchev has, today, not yet been eliminated, but neither has it consolidated.

In his conversation with the American Ambassador Kohler, Khrushchev hinted, in a convoluted manner, at the possibility of a meeting with Kennedy, without, however, setting a place or time. The conversation between Gromyko and the President did not lead to any clarification either.

Embassy of Switzerland

[Source: *Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Telegram 308, from the Swiss Embassy in Washington, 10/23/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.*]



Document Number 4

Telegram from Swiss Foreign Ministry, Berne, to Swiss Embassy, Havana (Stadelhofer), 23 October 1962

p.B.73.Cuba.O.U'Ch. - PO
Original to: [Handwritten:] 155
Copy also to: [Handwritten:] 113, 152

Telegram no. 49

23.10.1962 09h10

Embassy of Switzerland

Havana

FLASH To Ambassador [Emil A.] Stadelhofer. – Top Secret

1.) Following the briefing of the neutral and neutralistic ambassadors on Cuba-mission on Monday night, the American Secretary of State took [Swiss] Ambassador [August] Lindt aside and told him – in a very serious manner – approximately the following:

“I am talking to you on a purely personal basis, and what I say should not be associated with my name. The situation is so serious that your country could also become affected. Would it not be possible that your ambassador in Havana ask Castro on his own initiative and denying any instruction on my part how he pictured Cuba’s future. Because it is Cuba that would suffer first from possible developments. Could he not remind him of the speech Kennedy gave, whereby the US could negotiate about anything with Cuba, provided that Cuba is not allied with the Soviet Union and that is does not accommodate Soviet bases on its soil? Think about it.” Lindt remained completely noncommittal. He was under the impression that the Secretary of State considers negotiations with an independent communist Cuba possible and [that it] even wishes, insofar as Castro is still able, to break away from Russia.

2.) Forwarding you this suggestion with considerable reservation. We absolutely want to avoid the impression of an inappropriate and hasty demarche that could lead to misunderstandings. But believe that we cannot keep Secretary of State Rusk’s thoughts from you just in case. In our opinion, you should not take a conspicuous initiative to strike up such a conversation. If, however, the opportunity should arise to do so without causing a sensation, or if Castro, which cannot be ruled out completely, possibly brought up problems pertaining to the future by himself, you could, insofar as the atmosphere seems appropriate to you, personally and without any reference to Bern or Washington, drop remarks along these lines.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Copy to: - Mr. Minister Burckhardt

- Mr. Minister Bindschedler

(cleaned up version after discussion with the department chair)

A. 2453

[Source: Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland, www.dodis.ch, doc. 19007, Telegram no. 49, from the Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/23/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 5

Telegram from Swiss Foreign Ministry to Swiss Embassy in Havana (Stadelhofer), 26 October 1962

p.b.73.Cuba.o.(U’Ch.) – PO

Original to: [Handwritten:] €Đ [handwritten letters illegible]

Copy also to: [Handwritten:] 152, 113

Telegram no. 50

26.10.1962 11h00

Embassy of Switzerland

H a v a n a

Flash: Secret. – For Ambassador Stadelhofer.

Your 34 and 35. Yesterday, the Cuban Ambassador [José Ruiz Velasco] brought a written statement from his government concerning the US blockade measures to the Head of Department. Following, the most important parts:

“Cuban government condemns the naval and aerial blockade, it considers it a criminal act that infringes on human rights and violates the charter of the United Nations. Letting you know that people are willing to give their life to defend the sovereignty and integrity of the homeland. Paragraph. In these times, when the United States pose more than ever a threat of war to Cuba, government solemnly declares that it desires peace and is always willing to negotiate any dispute by peaceful means as long as they do not damage its sovereignty. Paragraph. All the people must know that the reckless acts decreed by the United States against Cuba and free navigation in jurisdictional waters of a country that is not in a state [of] war is a flagrant [act of] piracy and represent one of the most dangerous steps to triggering nuclear war.”

Particularly the second paragraph might be of interest to you and might possibly also offer a connection for conversation with Fidel Castro.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Copy to: - Mr. Minister Burckhardt

- Mr. Minister Bindschedler

A.2503

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Geheim. Telegram no. 50, from Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/26/1962. Translated from German and French by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 6

Message from Swiss Embassy, Havana (Stadelhofer), to Swiss Foreign Ministry, 25 October 1962

Original to: [Handwritten:] 155
Copy also to: [Handwritten:] 112, 110, 113, 152

Telegram no. 34
Havana, 25.10.1962. 12h45
Foreign Ministry
B e r n e
F l a s h

Today at 10h00 I had a conversation with [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa, who promised to do everything to make a meeting with Castro happen quickly. I mentioned emphatically that this was my own initiative with the goal to enhance and improve my reporting on Castro's relevant explanations in public speeches to Berne and to, given the current situation, get an authentic interpretation. Roa is not familiar with Kennedy's statements that you mentioned. I am reserving more flashes.

Embassy of Switzerland

Communicated over the phone to M. Probst, 21.h30 BZ
E . 2 4 7 4
25.10.62.o
21h30 T.lo.

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Geheim. Telegram no. 34, from Stadelhofer to Foreign Ministry, 10/25/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 7

Letter from Swiss Ambassador to Cuba (Stadelhofer) to the Secretary General of the Swiss Foreign Ministry (Micheli), 17 November 1962

[Handwritten note:] Mr. Head of Department
Embassy of Switzerland
Havana, November 17, 1962
In Cuba
B.44.USA. – Std/p
SECRET

Mister Ambassador P. Micheli

Secretary General of the Swiss
Foreign Ministry

B e r n e
Mister Ambassador,

In reference to the possibility that was mentioned on 22 October in the form of a question to Ambassador Lindt, I am taking the liberty to supplementary report to the earlier quick exchange of messages that I first went to the Foreign Ministry on the 24th of the previous month, without, however, being able to relay anything. Everybody, who would have come into consideration to arrange talks with Fidel Castro, was at the Presidential Palace for an urgent meeting. The following day, on 25 October, I had the conversation with Foreign Minister Roa that you already know about, where I, while noting that I was acting on my own initiative, cautiously mentioned a few points, which might be interesting to address if a meeting were to materialize. On Friday, 26 October, the Chief of Protocol, whom I had visited formally for a different matter, mentioned that he had been asked by Dr. Roa to pick me up from the Embassy with his car and to bring me to the location of the talks, should the situation arise. Afterwards, in accord with your instructions, I took no further steps.

On the occasion of a big reception that took place on 7 November at the Soviet Embassy, I was able to, after the Russian Ambassador introduced me to First Deputy Chairman Mikoyan, talk for about 5 minutes with Fidel Castro. Since the conversation took place directly next to the table reserved for members of the government and since President [Osvaldo] Dorticós and Minister of Industries, [Ernesto] Che Guevara, were listening in, I had to refrain from addressing issues of importance. On his own initiative, Fidel Castro told me that he wanted to see me either immediately after the Soviet reception if it ended early or otherwise in the next few days and he asked if he should come to the Quinta Avenida (location of

the Embassy) or to the new residence. So far, no such visit has occurred and until proven otherwise, I am not expecting one. The Cuban Prime Minister was, meanwhile, extremely polite and made, like Mister [Anastas] Mikoyan had done before, some very flattering remarks about our country.
[...]

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Letter from Stadelhofer to Micheli, 11/17/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 8

Telegram from Swiss Foreign Ministry, Berne, to Swiss Embassy, Havana (Stadelhofer), 27 October 1962

p.b.73.Cuba.o.(U'Ch.) – PO

Original to: [Handwritten:] €Ð [handwritten letters illegible]
Copy also to: [Handwritten letters illegible]

Telegram no. 53

27.10.1962 11h00

Embassy of Switzerland

H a v a n a

Flash:

Secret. – For Ambassador Stadelhofer, continuation of our cables 49 and 50. Lindt just cabled:

Quote #1. Have so far not been able to locate Kennedy's public speech that would correspond with the wording of Rusk's quotation. Stevenson's speech before the UN general assembly responding to Dorticos contains the following part: "If Cuban regime is sincere in its request for negotiations and wishes to lay its grievances before appropriate forum – the Organization of American States - I would suggest the Cuban government might start by some action calculated to awaken the confidence of the inter-American system. Obvious place to begin would be the severing of its multiple ties to the Soviet bloc."

#2. Cuban statements are following the Russian line completely, they even go beyond by denying the existence of nuclear bases. It appears to me that Rusk's initiative was made based on preconditions that have changed in the meantime. In this superpower confrontation, Cuba has more and more lost its right of self-determination. We should avoid anything that could give the impression that we want to try the impos-

sible and, in terms of the policy of neutrality, dangerous – the separation of Cuba from the Soviet Union. Unquote

In the face of these new developments we recommend you to act with the utmost caution. Most of all, please refrain from soliciting an audience with Castro in case this takes a long time to materialize. Rather wait, until Castro potentially seizes the opportunity himself to start a conversation with you, which would have to be conducted with much restraint. In any case, it were to be refrained from even hinting at an offer of good offices.

Foreign Ministry

a.2454

[Source: Schweizer Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Geheim. Telegram no. 53, from Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/27/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 9

Telegram from the Swiss Embassy in Cuba to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 27 October, 1962

p.B.73.Cuba.O.-U'Ch. - PO

Original to: [Handwritten:] †55-[handwritten note illegible]

Copy also to: [Handwritten:] 112, 110 113, 152

Telegram no. 36

27. 10. 1962 2107

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

B e r n e

Urgent Secret. – Regards your 53. I absolutely share your opinion. I will strictly keep to it. I am under the impression that Castro wants to await the reaction to the invitation [translator's note: extended to] U-Thant to Havana, before he takes a position on the prompting to receive me.

Embassy of Switzerland

B. 2503

28.10.1962 – 0900

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Telegram no. 36 from Embassy of Switzerland in Cuba to Swiss Foreign Ministry, 10/27/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 10

Notes on the visit of Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, Loginov, with Foreign Minister Wahlen, 25 October 1962

MC/hd

Berne, October 25, 1962

[Handwritten:] [Sergej Tichonovic] Loginov
Visit of the Chargé d'Affaires of the USSR* with the head of the Foreign Ministry

[Handwritten:] 25. 10. 1962

The Chargé d'Affaires of the USSR read to Mister Federal Councilor [Friedrich Traugott] Wahlen the Russian declaration regarding Cuba and gave him the text in Russian. This text is identical to the one already published by the press.

The head of the [Foreign] Ministry thanked [trans. note: the Chargé d'Affaires]. It should be noted that the Russian declaration was already known to him and that he had given it his attention.

The Chargé d'Affaires said that, given the seriousness of the situation, his government had found it necessary to give notice of this statement to the Federal Council. He hopes that Switzerland will do its best to maintain peace.

Mister Wahlen reminded him of Switzerland's policy of peace. This [trans. note: policy] hopes that a solution will be found between the two parties.

The Chargé d'Affaires said that he was well aware of Switzerland's policy of peace. He hopes that the declaration will help [trans. note: the Federal Council] to better understand the Soviet point of view. He alluded to the American bases in the proximity of the Soviet border. He mentions specifically those in Norway. The USSR did not use this as an excuse to establish a blockade around that country. He added that Cuba conquered its independence and that it did not pose a threat to the United States. In return, the United States have threatened Cuba's independence continuously. In

Latin America, the opposition that manifests itself against the United States is but the consequence of the European policies. (The text of the declaration was given to Mr. Schmidlin)

[Handwritten signature:] Micheli

CC: Embassy of Switzerland, Moscow

Eastern Section

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2804 (E): 1971/2, UdSSR (Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken). Conversation between Federal Councilor Friedrich Wahlen and the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, Sergej Loginov, 10/25/1962. Translated from French by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 11

Political letter from Swiss Ambassador in Moscow Max Troendle to Secretary General Pierre Micheli, 25 October 1962

EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND

Moscow, October 25, 1962

IN THE USSR

B.12.1.(132). – AN/cm

Political letter

Mister Ambassador Pierre M I C H E L I

Secretary General of the Federal Foreign Ministry

B e r n e

C u b a

Mister Ambassador,

I have the honor to herewith give you for your information, the text of the declaration of the Soviet government of 23 October.

In addition to the commentaries that I have already cabled to you, I am adding that this declaration demands that the Cuban crisis be submitted to the Security Council. The editorial of Pravda of 23 October is even more insistent on this subject: "In this decisive moment, the United Nations are seriously being tested. The question is, whether they will fulfill the mission that was given to them by the people and whether they will justify it, otherwise they will suffer the fate of the League of Nations and will face the widespread contempt of the peoples. There is no third way."

The 25 October telegram from Khrushchev to Bertrand Russell (annex 3), which is being broadcast, concludes by recognizing the benefits of a summit meeting.

It seems that on Cuba, the Soviets want to avoid meeting the American challenge, that they want to negotiate, talk, and not to face a showdown.

Going back to the declaration of the Soviet government, you will find that its legal argumentation is solid. But it is vitiated, since it keeps silent about the discovery of medium range missiles in Cuba, which was the cause of the American decision.

It also seems, from the meager echoes of the public opinion that I could gather, that the Soviet population does not understand why the crisis has suddenly worsened. It [trans. note: the Soviet population] is aware of an imminent danger, but for it [trans. note: the danger is] inexplicable. As a consequence it seems more depressed than exalted.

I am under the impression, as I have already told you, that the Caribbean is not a terrain favorable to the Soviet Union and that it will refuse the fight. This impression is shared by the majority of Western diplomats. Moscow will seek to win the second round in Berlin, this is in my opinion probable. But on this point, the opinions of my colleagues differ much. Please accept, Mister Ambassador, the assurances of my distinguished consideration.

[Trans. note: Ambassador Max, handwritten:] Troendle
Referred to annexes
(1 copy)

[Source: *Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2300 (E): 1000/716, Moskau, Politische Berichte und Briefe, Militärberichte, 1962. Political letter from Ambassador Max Troendle to Secretary General of the Federal Foreign Ministry, Pierre Micheli, 10/25/1962. Translated from French by Stephanie Popp*]



Document Number 12

Political letter from Swiss Ambassador in Moscow Max Troendle, 25 October 1962

[Handwritten:] p.B.21.31.Moskau
FYI to:
112 110 108 113 149 152

153 154 ~~152~~ 157 ~~217~~ DZ JD

Original for handling to: 217
Moscow, 25.10.62 1800 cable 165
Political letter (b.12.1 – 133)
[Stamped:]
Destroy confidentially

after reading

1. The population of Moscow is calm in the face of the Cuban crisis. [Trans. note: There are] no signs of a panic, but [trans. note: there are] worried faces everywhere. The demonstrations in front of the American Embassy have been insignificant, and the police warned the few hundred demonstrators over loudspeakers not to disturb the traffic. In the big companies, the workers appear to have been asked, given the situation, to stick together and to increase performance, without inflaming the national sentiments by underscoring an imminent threat of war. This allows for the assumption that the Soviet government does not intend to “march.”

2. The attacks on the United States in the daily news are published in a milder form in today’s editorial of the Pravda, which is probably due to the positive response that Premier Khrushchev has given U.N. General Secretary [U Thant].

3. a) Some diplomatic missions in Moscow tend to think that the Soviet government could intend to sell their position in Cuba for Western concessions in Europe and elsewhere or that it [trans. note: the Soviet government] will strike a blow against Berlin or against Turkey.

b) Israel’s newly arrived ambassador, Joseph Tekoah, who is familiar with the conditions in Latin America from his own experience, believes, however, as do other colleagues, that Cuba is too important for the Soviet Union as a foothold for the Central and South American sphere of influence as that it could consider to trade this position for an advantage on a different front, nor for Western concessions in terms of the Berlin question, regarding which time is working against it [trans. note: the Soviet Union] anyway.

c) For the sake of completeness, I am mentioning the not very convicting version, according to which Moscow consciously provoked the American reaction, because Fidel Castro’s regime was near political bankruptcy and because it would have been better, in the interest of

conserving the “ideological Castroism,” if it were to be brought to fall by an “imperialist” intervention rather than by its own failure.

4. Since the Soviet government is keeping its ships out of the danger zone to avoid incidents and [trans. note: since] it appears in principle to be willing to settle the dispute in the forum of the United Nations or [trans. note: since it] might tend towards a summit meeting, it is possible that its yielding will be interpreted as weakness by the opposite side and that those will appear to have been correct, who advocate a policy of strength. An aggravation of the situation could result out of this due to Moscow’s desire for prestige. My Israeli colleague contrasts this eventuality with the significant advantage that the Soviet Union gets, that it can provide evidence to the neutralistic states with its provisional yielding to the sincerity and the trustworthiness of its policy of peaceful coexistence.

[Max] Troendle

e. 2491
26.10.1962 19h00 t. lo

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2300 (E): 1000/716, Moskau, Politische Berichte und Briefe, Militärberichte, 1962. Political letter from Ambassador Max Troendle, 10/25/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp]



Document Number 13

Cable from Swiss observer at the United Nations (Thalmann) to the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs 29 October 1962

[Handwritten:] p.B. 58.2 Cuba
[Handwritten illegible notes in the upper right corner]
[Handwritten:] F-ONU
ORIGINAL to: [Handwritten:] 217

For acknowledgement to: 112 110 106 113 149 152
[Handwritten:] p.B.73.Cuba.O.U'ch.
153 154 155 157 217 DZJD

New York
29.10.1962
12.30 cable no. 151.

Cuba. From the Swedish Ambassador [Agda] Roessel I have learned that the composition of the inspection team has not yet been decided. The fact that Sweden has been asked, does not mean that the team will be made up solely of Swedes. Misses Roessel was welcomed first by the Secretary General last night, because the team of 6 people that will accompany U Thant to Cuba tomorrow, includes a Swede, who, in this case, holds the position of a UN functionary. Roessel does not exclude the possibility that the appeal could also be made to us, he is, however, under the impression that U Thant seems to be thinking more in terms of consulting with observers from onuc and unef. A definitive decision will possibly not be made until after U Thant’s return to New York. Thalmann.

e. 2517

29.10.62 1930 t.lo

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 151, from Thalmann to Foreign Ministry, 10/29/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 14

Cable from Swiss observer at the United Nations (Thalmann) to the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29 October 1962

[Handwritten:] p.B. 58.2 Cuba
[handwritten illegible notes in the upper right corner]
[Handwritten:] F-ONU
ORIGINAL to: [Handwritten:] 217

For acknowledgement to: 112 110 106 113 149 152
[Handwritten:] p.B.73.Cuba.O.U'ch.
153 154 155 157 217 DZJD

New York 29.10.1962 18.00 cable no. 152.

Cuba. The message distributed this afternoon through UPI [United Press International], according to which the team for the supervision of the dismantling of the Soviet bases was to be made up of representatives from Sweden, Mexico and Switzerland, whereas our country was hesitant, regarding

its representation of American interest in Cuba, to accept the mandate, led to numerous delegates inquiring about the Swiss position from my colleagues and me. I would appreciate it, if you could inform me of your position on this matter. From what [UN aide C.V.] Narasimhan tells me, the UPI message is, by the way, incorrect except for the part on Sweden. (Compare my 151). The definite composition of the team will not be decided until after U Thant has returned from Havana. Thalmann.

e. 2521

30.10.62 0800 t.lo

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 152, from Thalmann to Foreign Ministry, 10/29/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 15

Telegram from Swiss Foreign Ministry, Berne, to Swiss Mission, United Nations, New York, 30 October 1962

p.b.73.Cuba.O.U'Ch.

Original to: [Handwritten:] D

Copy also to: (See below)

Swiss Observer
N e w Y o r k

Berne 30.10.1962
18h45 t.lo.
cable no. 163

Your 151 and 152 stop can respond to your eventual interlocutor that if UN Secretary General asked for participation of Swiss officers in a surveillance team for the dismantling of the Soviet bases in Cuba, and if the conditions of the mandate are acceptable, we will examine the request with benevolence in the framework of our constant policy of lending our services wherever they may be of use.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Copy sent to:

- Mr. Minister Bindschedler
- Mr. Minister Burckhardt
- Mr. Diaz
- Mr. Janner
- Mr. Jaeggi

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 163, from Foreign Ministry to Thalmann, 10/30/1962. Translated from French by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 16

Telegram from the Swiss observer to the United Nations (Thalmann), 30 October 1962

Copy also to:

Original to: [Handwritten word illegible] to [Roger-Etienne] Campiche [two handwritten words illegible]

New York
30.10.62 11.15
cable no. 153.

U r g e n t

Cuba. I have just learned from [U Thant aide C.V.] Narasimhan that [UN Geneva office director Pier P.] Spinelli contacted [Red Cross president Leopold] Boissier last night and this morning to negotiate ICRC participation in Cuba. In connection with the removal of the quarantine, the Soviet Union has declared that it would be willing to let representatives of the ICRC inspect its ships bound for Cuba. The USA has proclaimed its agreement with this right away. Although the initiative could set a precedent, Boissier expressed general willingness, on condition that Castro agrees as well. U Thant will negotiate with him about this today. About 30 ICRC representatives (Swiss), i.e. 6 for the 5 ports of entry, would be required to carry out this plan.

Please keep me informed. [Ernesto A.] Thalmann.

[Handwritten note:]

In consultation with Misters Micheli and Burckhardt, Campiche will call B [rest of the name illegible], so that we are up to date. The Committee meets tomorrow.

[Illegible signature]

e.2526.

30.10.62 . 1745. tlo.

[Source: Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 153, from Thalmann, 10/30/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 17

Note on the potential ICRC mission, 31 October 1962

o.- BJK/etc

October 31, 1962

[handwritten:] p.B.73.Cuba.O.U'ch IKRK

Note

I. Phone call with Mister L. Boissier, President of the ICRC.

I told him that we had been informed by [Swiss Observer at the United Nations] Mister [Ernesto A.] Thalmann of Spinelli's demarche to him regarding the potential acceptance of the mission to inspect ships bound for Cuba. In Mister Ambassador Micheli's and my opinion it would be difficult to reject the mission if it suits all interested powers. The Department, however did not want to influence the Committee's decision in any way. I asked B. to inform us of their decision and to keep us posted.

B. confirmed the information, as Thalmann had reported it to us. He particularly pointed out that he told Spinelli that the acceptance of the mission would only be considered, if in addition to the USSR and the USA, the Cuban government also gave its consent. U Thant will look into this on his trip

to Cuba. The Committee will address the matter in today's meeting. B. will recommend accepting the mission if the conditions are met. The mission was a matter that serves to uphold peace and from which the Committee could hardly withdraw, all the less so because the offer was evidence of the acknowledgement that was shown to the ICRC.

He would, should the situation arise, ("re")inquire of Ambassador Rügger or potentially Director Fröhlich if they would take on leading this mission. Furthermore, 30 Swiss experts, most likely from the field of transportation, had to be found.

II. Conversation with Messrs. Federal Councilor Wahlen and Ambassador Micheli.

Mister Federal Councilor [Friedrich Traugott] Wahlen tends to think that the ICRC should reject the offer. The task was beyond the framework of its humanitarian mission. If it were accepted, it could cause serious difficulties for the ICRC. It could become the "arbiter" (translator's note: arbitrator) in a political situation, which could get more compromising than the exercise of its functions in a humanitarian sense.

III. -

I will call B. again with the purpose of correcting the statement of this morning and to inform him of Mister Federal Councilor Wahlen's opinion, while emphatically remarking that the Head of Department does not want to intervene in the decision of the Committee.

B. confirmed that he had, in the meantime, received official statements of agreement by the USA and USSR. He was still waiting to learn about Fidel Castro's decision. This would, in any case, if the ICRC decided to accept the mission, be undertaken with all the necessary precautions and with emphasis that this was an exception. It would, by the way, probably be the first case of a mission for peace as the bylaws provide for. He said "L'affaire est grave." ["The affair is serious"—trans.] It would be easier to reject than to accept, but the easier way was not always the right way. After initial soundings the views of the members of the Committee were divided.

[Illegible stamped signature]

[Source: BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Inspizierung russischer Schiffe die nach Kuba fahren durch Vertreter des IKRK. (Schweizer). Note on potential ICRC mission, 10/31/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 18

Report from the Swiss Ambassador to Cuba (Stadelhofer) to the Division of Political Affairs, Swiss Foreign Ministry, about the transfer of the remains of Major Anderson, 7 November 1962

Embassy of Switzerland
Havana, November 7, 1962
In Cuba
B.44.USA. – Std/p

To the Division of Political Affairs
of the Swiss Foreign Ministry
B e r n e

Transfer of the remains
of Major Rudolf Anderson

Mister Ambassador,

Following up on my quick report on the 5th of this month, I am taking the liberty to inform you further on details that seem important.

1. Reason and sense of the engagement of this embassy is still not fully clear to me even after the termination of the mission. There was probably, despite the apparent agreement between all the parties involved, a persistent misunderstanding. It appears that Secretary General U Thant and the American entities viewed the acceptance of the coffin by the embassy for the transfer to Guantanamo base as the most practical solution. It is about 130 km from the province Pinar del Rio, which is located in the West of Cuba, and where the remains were, to Havana. The distance Havana – Santiago de Cuba is 1000 km and from there to the American naval base it is about another 80 km. Since the Cuban domestic air traffic was interrupted and the train connections between the capital and the Eastern province are complicated, it would have required a 1100 km long road trip, for which, besides the fact of the enormous expenditure of time, there was not a single official car from the American inventory of the Foreign Interests Service that would have been in sufficiently good conditions.

Decisive was that, which various discussions showed with clarity, the Cuban government for political reasons

and referring to its national honor, was unwilling to allow the transfer to the naval base. Therefore – and that was also practically easiest – the transfer to the nearby American mainland was the only option.

2. Settling the matter required 8 audiences with the [trans. note: Cuban] Foreign Ministry, three of which were with Dr. Roa, plus one long phone conversation with him, as well as six phone conversations with Washington. Dr. Roa expressed already during the first conversation on Friday, 2 November, and during the one on Sunday with significant pungency, that he gave U Thant the Cuban consent to enlist me as the Swiss representative, but not the embassy as protecting power for the USA. He added that the Cuban government preferred Switzerland's appointment with the repatriation modalities over the U.N. and the ICRC because of the high reputation that our country enjoys.

3. To be sure and to prevent unpleasant last-minute surprises if possible, I explicitly asked the question on Saturday, 3 November, if the Cuban side desired to have a record of delivery drafted, I added that I would be happy to waive such a document, since some photographs would fulfill the same purpose. Dr. Roa asked me thereupon to prepare a draft, which I handed over in the afternoon (see attachment III). Although the final drafting per se was planned for Sunday 10 a.m., the Chief of Protocol could not inform me over the phone of the amendment the Prime Minister required until 13.10. It boiled down to the fact that the description of the cause of death should have been determined bilaterally, i.e. covered by my signature. In extraordinarily tough, but never hurtful negotiations that lasted almost an hour, I was able to achieve the version of the fourth paragraph that is known to you. [...]

4. Due to the negotiations with Dr. Roa I did not arrive at the airport on Sunday, 4 November, until [UN aide] General [Indar Jit] Rickhy [Rikhye], the envoy sent by Secretary General U Thant, was preparing to leave the airplane, i.e. at exactly 3 o'clock. The Chief of Protocol, who had to wait for the fair copy of the delivery record, arrived at about 15.45. The transfer ceremony was simple, but fairly dignified. Although, it was originally planned to allow either the foreign correspondents also or no one from the press, there were some Cuban journalists and photographers. They were, however, not called up by the Foreign Ministry, but had gained access on their own initiative. The local press gave wide publicity to the affair and also printed the Cuban version of the record of delivery. [...]

5. The fact that Ambassador Lindt managed, in the shortest time, to organize a cargo plane, contributed crucially to the success of this mission. The point that the upper part of the plane was newly painted and endowed with the Swiss Cross made a strong impression on the [trans. note Cuban] Foreign Ministry and moreover on the public.
[...]

The Swiss Ambassador

[Handwritten signature: Stadelhofer]

Attachments:

1. Conformation note of 3 November, 1962
2. Informally submitted questions
3. Draft of the record of delivery from the Embassy
4. Copy of the record of delivery

[Source: *Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland*, www.dodis.ch, doc. 30384, Report from Stadelhofer on the transfer of Major Anderson's remains, 11/07/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]



Document Number 19

Note for the Division of International Organizations regarding ICRC involvement in the Cuba inspections, 20 November 1962

Copy for Mister Ambassador Micheli

[Stamped:] Swiss Foreign Ministry

[Handwritten:]

Political Affairs [signed: Probst]

p.B.Cuba.O.U'Ch.

(IKRK) PO/mb

Berne, November 20, 1962

[Stamped:] [illegible] 20. Nov. 62 [illegible]

Note for the Division of International Organizations

Involvement of the ICRC
in the Cuban inspection

During our discussion, Dr. [Andre] Amstein, Chief of the federal police, mentioned the notifications the ICRC received, according to press releases, over the last weeks from numerous Swiss, who wanted to volunteer for the Cuba inspection. In Dr. Amstein's opinion, it would be expedient if the ICRC would, in the event, forward the names of such candidates prior to appointment to the federal police for a "screening" either directly or through your division.

This thought seems correct to me. If the ICRC were in fact to send an inspection team of Swiss into Cuban waters, one would have to be sure that these would only be reliable and especially politically unobjectionable constituents.

Although the Cuba mission no longer seems an issue at the moment, I wanted to inform you just in case of this thought which you probably have considered yourself already.

[Source: BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, *Inspizierung russischer Schiffe die nach Kuba fahren durch Vertreter des IKRK (Schweizer)*. Note for the Division of International Organizations, 11/20/1962. Translated from German by Stephanie Popp.]

Notes

1 Quoted in: Paul Widmer. *Schweizer Aussenpolitik und Diplomatie* (Zürich: Ammann Verlag & Co., 2003), p. 384.

2 Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland (hereafter DoDiS), doc. 30470, Speech by Federal Councilor F. Wahlen: Quelques aspects des relations extérieures actuelles de la Suisse, Conférence de M. F. T. Wahlen à la Société Académic de Genève, 11/22/1962.

3 Documents Diplomatiques Suisse, volume 17, 1. VI. 1947 – 30. VI. 1949, ed. Antoine Fleury (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 1999), doc. 61, Exposé, Head of the Foreign Ministry, M. Petitpierre, to the Swiss Federal Council, 8/9 March, 1948, p. 199-200.

4 Ibid., p. 203.

5 Ibid., p. 203-204.

6 Ibid., p. 204.

7 Paragraph after DoDiS, doc. 14974, Request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Federal Council, 12/28/1962.

8 Thomas Fischer. Die guten Dienste des IKRK und der Schweiz in der Kuba-Krise 1962. Center for International Studies, Zurich, *Beiträge*, no. 30 (October 2000), p. 12.

9 Thomas Fischer. Talking to the Bearded Man: Mandate to represent US interests in Cuba, 1961-1977, *Working Papers in International History and Politics*, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, no. 5 (August 2010), p. 4.

10 In *One Minute to Midnight*, Michael Dobbs relates that "[m]ost foreign governments, including the Soviet one, would hear the news at 6:00 p.m. Washington time, an hour before Kennedy went on television. A few close allies, such as Britain, Germany, and France, received advance notice from special presidential emissaries." (p. 39).

- 11 Paragraph after DoDiS, doc. 14974, Request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Federal Council, 12/28/1962.
- 12 Schweizer Bundesarchiv (hereafter: BAR), 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Telegram 308, from the Swiss Embassy in Washington, 10/23/1962.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Paragraph after: BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Kuba-Aktion USA, Orientierung durch USA-Botschafter, Memorandum for the record, by Raymond Probst, 10/24/1962.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 National Security Archives (hereafter: NSA), Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, doc. 00637, Cable no. 185, from McKinney to Secretary of State, 10/23/1962.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Paragraph after DoDiS, doc. 19007, Telegram no. 49, from the Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/23/1962.
- 19 DoDiS, doc. 30438, Exposé by Dr. A. Lindt, Washington, 01/25/1962.
- 20 DoDiS, doc. 19007, Telegram no. 49, from the Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/23/1962.
- 21 Paragraph after BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Letter from Stadelhofer to Micheli, 11/17/1962.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Second part of the paragraph after BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Geheim. Telegram no. 53, from Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/27/1962.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 BAR, E2804#1971/2#309*, UdSSR (Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken). Conversation between Federal Councilor Friedrich Wahlen and the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, Sergej Loginov, 10/25/1962.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Letter from Stadelhofer to Micheli, 11/17/1962.
- 28 Paragraph after ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 James Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962," pts. 1 and 2, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and 6:3 (Summer 2004), pp.5-67.
- 31 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 151, from Thalmann to Foreign Ministry, 10/29/1962.
- 32 First part of the paragraph after Ibid.
- 33 Second part of the paragraph after BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 152, from Thalmann to Foreign Ministry, 10/29/1962.
- 34 DoDiS, doc. 19007, Telegram no. 49, from the Foreign Ministry to Stadelhofer, 10/23/1962.
- 35 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Memorandum from Martin Hill to C.V. Narasimhan, 10/26/1962.
- 36 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Beteiligung Schweizer Offiziere am Ueberwachungsteam zur Aufhebung der Sovietischen Basen in Kuba. Cable no. 153, from Thalmann, 10/30/1962.
- 37 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Cable no. 159, from Thalmann to the Foreign Ministry, 11/05/1962.
- 38 Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited, NSC Executive Committee Record of Action, 10/29/1962.
- 39 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Memorandum from Martin Hill to C.V. Narasimhan, 10/26/1962.
- 40 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1635, from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/05/1962.
- 41 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of Meeting between U-Thant, President Dorticos, Premier Castro, and Foreign Minister Roa, 10/30/1962.
- 42 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 19, 11/03/1962.
- 43 http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_Nov-1961.pdf
- 44 Thomas Fischer. Die guten Dienste des IKRK und der Schweiz in der Kuba-Krise 1962. Center for International Studies, Zurich, *Beiträge*, no. 30 (October 2000), p. 15.
- 45 http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/RC_Nov-1961.pdf
- 46 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Inspizierung russischer Schiffe die nach Kuba fahren durch Vertreter des IKRK. (Schweizer). Cable no. 170, from Foreign Ministry to Thalmann, 11/06/1962.
- 47 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Secretary General's meeting with Paul Ruegger, 11/06/1962.
- 48 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and American Officials, 11/07/1962.
- 49 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1688, from Stevenson to Secretary of State. 11/08/1962.
- 50 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Secretary General's meeting with Paul Ruegger, 11/06/1962.
- 51 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1166, from Dean Rusk to United States mission to the United Nations, 11/01/1962.
- 52 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and American Officials, 11/07/1962.
- 53 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Secretary General's meeting with Paul Ruegger, 11/06/1962.
- 54 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and American Officials, 11/07/1962.
- 55 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1688, from Stevenson to Secretary of State. 11/08/1962.
- 56 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, CIA Memorandum, The Crisis USSR/Cuba, 10/31/1962.

57 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and American Officials, 11/07/1962.

58 Paragraph after NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1688, from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/08/1962.

59 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1635, from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/05/1962.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and Soviet Officials, 11/07/1962.

63 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1703 from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/09/1962.

64 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Minutes of the Meeting between United Nations, ICRC and Soviet Officials, 11/07/1962.

65 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Cable no. 1703 from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/09/1962.

66 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Inspizierung russischer Schiffe die nach Kuba fahren durch Vertreter des IKRK. (Schweizer). Cable no. 153, from Thalmann to Foreign Ministry, 10/30/1962.

67 DoDiS, doc. 30390, Minutes of Federal Council Meeting, 11/09/1962.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ramses Nassif. U Thant in New York. 1961-1971, A Portrait of the Third Secretary General (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 35.

72 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Telegram no. 446, from Stadelhofer to Foreign Ministry, 11/05/1962.

73 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Telegram no. 1605, from Stevenson to Secretary of State, 11/02/1962.

74 DoDiS, doc. 30384, Letter from Stadelhofer to Division of Political Affairs, Foreign Ministry, 11/07/1962.

75 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Politische Auswirkungen nach der Rede von Präsident Kennedy vom 22. Oktober 1962. Telegram no. 446, from Stadelhofer to Foreign Ministry, 11/05/1962.

76 DoDiS, doc. 30384, Letter from Stadelhofer to Division of Political Affairs, Foreign Ministry, 11/07/1962.

77 NSA, Collection: Cuban Missile Crisis, Telegram no. 221, from McKinney to Secretary of State, 11/06/1962.

78 BAR, 2001 (E): 1976/17, Inspizierung russischer Schiffe die nach Kuba fahren durch Vertreter des IKRK. (Schweizer). Note for the Division for International Organizations, 11/20/1962.

79 Ibid.

French Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis

Introduced and translated by Garret J. Martin

Like many other European countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain, France only played a marginal role in the Cuban Missile Crisis. France was neither involved in the US decision-making process, nor did it facilitate the denouement of the crisis. But the confrontation in the Caribbean certainly did have an important long-run impact on French foreign policy, and in particular on Franco-American relations.

While only a secondary player throughout the Cuban Missile Crisis, France did assist its American ally by providing important information thanks to its diplomatic and intelligence presence in Cuba. As pointed out by Maurice Vaisse, the French intelligence services were among the first to provide hints of the arrival of nuclear missiles in Cuba to the United States. French Colonel Houel, stationed in Washington, had heard reports of the missiles thanks to contacts within the Cuban resistance. The French authorities then contacted the US Air Force, which overcame its doubts and decided to send spy planes to investigate the claim.¹ During the crisis and after, French Ambassador to Havana Roger Robert du Gardier gave valuable insights into Cuba's internal situation (see documents two and four).

Moreover, if the United States did not include France in its decision-making process during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Washington did maintain consultations with Paris. President John F. Kennedy sent former secretary of state Dean Acheson to solemnly inform French President General Charles de Gaulle about the presence of nuclear missiles in Cuba and the initial American response. The seriousness of the situation led de Gaulle to pledge his full and unconditional support to the United States (see document one). Kennedy's national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy, also met soon after the end of the crisis with the French ambassador to Washington, Hervé Alphand, to share their analyses of the confrontation in the Caribbean (see document three).

Finally, the lessons France drew from the Cuban Missile Crisis would prove very significant (see document five). While de Gaulle fully supported the United States during the crisis, he also felt that the whole episode vindicated his beliefs on the improbability of a superpower confrontation in the nuclear age. The Cuban Missile Crisis thus marked a turning point in his mind because it seemingly demonstrated that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union – especially the latter – wanted war.² “Russia would never dare” became a leitmotiv for the General, opening up the prospect that

Moscow might be willing to consider peace, especially as the Cuban Missile Crisis also confirmed to Paris the weakness and turmoil within the Communist camp. At the same time, since the Americans only informed their European allies of their decisions, instead of actively consulting with them, and since the United States appeared hesitant to risk a nuclear war to defend Europe, this provided, in the General's view, the best justification for his policy of independence and the establishment of a national deterrent.³



DOCUMENTS

Document No. 1:

Meeting between General Charles de Gaulle and Dean Acheson⁴, Elysee Palace, Paris, 22 October 1962, 5 pm

Very Secret

M. Dean Acheson hands General de Gaulle a letter on Cuba from the president of the United States, which the General reads.⁵ He also hands over the first part of the speech (the only part that has yet reached the United States embassy) that President Kennedy will pronounce the same evening at midnight (Paris time). The rest of the speech will be sent to the Elysee once the embassy receives it.

Invited by General de Gaulle, in line with a passage from President Kennedy's letter, to provide further information, M. Acheson first indicated, in line with M. Kennedy's desires, the importance that the latter attaches to the final passage of his letter in regard to the close contacts that should be maintained between Washington and Paris, and the interest he attaches to General de Gaulle's viewpoints.

To sum up, the President will announce the following decision: starting immediately, subject to a grace period of twenty four hours expiring at midnight (Paris time) on the 23rd October, a naval blockade – and maybe even an aerial one (M. Acheson is not sure) – will be put in place around Cuba. This blockade will first affect all types of weapons; within a short delay, it will also include oil products, and if necessary, it could later on become a complete blockade.

It is likely that what has already arrived in Cuba will not be withdrawn; but it seems that the weapons systems being

currently built are not finished. In particular, no nuclear warheads have been spotted on any photography. The aim is to prevent the delivery of those.

President Kennedy had first contemplated more draconian measures: relying on surprise, an attack by bombers could have destroyed all the missiles in place. The President had given up on the idea because the United States' European allies would have faced a high risk of reprisals; in addition, the high number of Soviet technicians that would have been killed in such a bombing attack could have led M. Khrushchev to react excessively. Responding to a question from General de Gaulle, M. Acheson explained that the mission would have involved bombers flying at low altitude, using conventional bombs, and targeting installations that are based far from cities, which would have helped to prevent civilian victims.

It is clear that the situation will become very tense once the blockade comes into force. Several scenarios are possible. Maybe the Russians will try to force the blockade with or without the use of submarines; in this case, the situation will rapidly escalate to a massive attack against Cuba.

It is more likely that the Russians will try to force the United States to fire the first shot, which would allow them to respond elsewhere: Berlin? Quemoy? South-East Asia? Korea? Or maybe all these locations at the same time.

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

It is with this perspective in mind that the Secretary of State will speak tomorrow to the Organization of American States, in view of guaranteeing Latin American moral support for the United States. Furthermore, the main Latin American governments have been warned about the risks that riots could break out in their countries, and they have been promised that American forces could be put at their disposal to put down these riots.

In addition, M. [Adlai E.] Stevenson will refer matters to the United Nations Security Council in order to pass a resolution condemning Soviet policy in Cuba. M. Acheson pointed out that in his mind this was a “prophylactic” step, whose sole outcome could be to prevent the Russians from taking the initiative.

In concrete terms, planning for a possible extension of the operations in Cuba, the American air forces are in a state of alert, the navy is mobilized to organize the blockade, and important army units are ready to intervene.

What goal is M. Khrushchev pursuing in Cuba? First, it is likely that he is trying to use this affair to force the United

States to pay elsewhere for a favorable evolution of the situation in the Caribbean.

Second, we have to clearly admit that the direct Soviet threat against the United States has become seriously more acute with the installation in Cuba of maybe up to 36 M(edium) R(ange) B(allistic) M(issiles), with a range of 1,100 miles or more.

There is also a political goal: weakening the morale of the Western hemisphere.

Finally, diplomatically, M. Khrushchev has given himself the option to say: “let us talk about removing all military bases on foreign territories.”

M. Acheson added that the clues on this growing offensive potential on Cuba are barely a week old: the first worrying pictures were taken on 12 October, and the following pictures two days later. Many pictures have been taken since then, and in the last three or four days, we have the feeling of seeing the situation as it is.

General de Gaulle carefully read President Kennedy's letter and what he was showed of his speech; he listened to what M. Acheson said with the same attention. It seems that for the first time, the United States are directly threatened, since the missiles that were spotted can only be targeting the United States. President Kennedy wants to react immediately. France cannot object, since it is normal for a country to defend itself, even with preventive measures, once it is threatened and it has the means to defend itself.

The planned measure is a blockade. How effective will it be? It is hard to say: will it be unbearable enough to push the Cubans to remove the missiles that are already installed? In any case, it should prevent any new weapons from arriving.

General de Gaulle cannot appreciate the result of a presentation in front of the Organization of American States: how will these states react? It is normal in any case that the United States consult them.

As for the Security Council, a referral is in line with American policy. For his part, the General sees no practical value as there will be debates, discussions, and nothing else. The only positive fact remains the blockade.

If there is a blockade – and once again France is not objecting as the United States are threatened – the Soviets will react. Maybe they will react in Cuba, more likely they will do so elsewhere and in particular in Berlin.

If they blockade Berlin, the three responsible powers will have to take the needed measures. Counter-measures have been planned. They will have to be implemented. It is possible that there is also among the Soviets – and maybe even in the United States – a desire to relax the situation in order to clarify it through talks, and quite likely high level talks between M. Khrushchev and M. Kennedy. Those could focus

on Cuba and Berlin. Khrushchev is surely thinking about this, maybe M. Kennedy as well.

As for France, if a crisis breaks out in Berlin, it will act in concert with its partners, especially if there is a war. General de Gaulle does not think there will be a war, but there could be difficult moments with threats and counter-threats, which is a pity, because this will increase tension.

He appreciates M. Kennedy's message, even though it is a notification and not a consultation, since the decision has already been taken. He will respond. It seems essential to maintain a close contact in Washington through [French Ambassador in Washington] M. [Herve] Alphand, whom he trusts completely, and soon in Paris where [the new US Ambassador] M. [Charles] Bohlen is expected.⁶

Two CIA representatives were then brought in. They showed the General maps and photographs that highlighted on the one hand the installation, spotted since early August, of defensive equipment (including some MiG 21s), and on the other hand, the transport and then the installation of the Illyushin 28, capable of carrying nuclear missiles, and especially MRBMs with a range of 1,100 to 2,200 miles. Four and maybe eight of these missiles seem ready to be launched; the activation of the others will take place by the end of the year, when 36 missiles would be ready to be fired, with each ramp having the possibility of a second launch four to six hours later.

Based on the studies that claim that the USSR has 70 I(nter) C(ontinental) B(allistic) M(issiles) [that] are operational [and can reach] the United States, the installation in Cuba could improve by 50% the arsenal aimed towards the United States.

This last point is underlined by M. Acheson when the meeting resumes.

General de Gaulle believes that M. Khrushchev has planned a vast maneuver around Cuba that could allow for talks on military bases as well as Berlin, that could lead to direct Russo-American talks and which could impress the Latin American states. This is a serious affair, since the United States had guaranteed Europe's defense to prevent Europe from becoming an anti-American base, and now such a base exists in America.

After hearing that the only three governments which received such notice were the French, British and [West] German governments, General de Gaulle asked M. Acheson, who is returning to Washington tomorrow, to transmit his regards to the President of the United States.

[Source: Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1962, Tome II (1er Juillet-31 Décembre), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1999), pp. 315-19. Translation by Garret J. Martin.]



Document No. 2:

Roger Robert du Gardier, French Ambassador in Havana, to Maurice Couve de Murville, French Foreign Minister, Telegram number 538-540⁷, 23 October 1962

While announcing, in big headlines, that the nation is ready for war, and that the Prime Minister will speak to the nation tonight, the morning newspapers have not published any in-depth commentary on the speech given last night by M. Kennedy.

On the radio, the propaganda specialists relied on their usual blustering when referring to the speech in question, but they have certainly not received the necessary guidelines to develop new propaganda themes on this subject.

The lower cadres of the revolution seem preoccupied and worried.

As early as 5 pm yesterday – before the broadcast of President Kennedy's speech – the reserve militias had been mobilized and all the defense posts on the island had received maximum reinforcement.

On the opposition side – or at least the few people who dare to claim to be – the declaration of the American President caused a strong feeling of relief.

Mixed with this, however, is a certain anxiety due to the likely harsh police measures or precautionary measures that will undoubtedly be taken against all of those who have not taken an active part in the regime's demonstrations.

For the moment, the population remains calm as a whole and traffic is normal in the capital.

[Source: Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1962, Tome II (1er Juillet-31 Décembre), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1999), p. 320. Translation by Garret J. Martin.]



Document No. 3:

Hervé Alphand, French Ambassador in Washington, to Maurice Couve de Murville, French Foreign Minister, Telegram number 6179-6185⁸, 1 November 1962

The long meeting I had on 1 November with M. McGeorge Bundy inspired in me the following thoughts:

1. Before examining in detail the possible consequences of a Cuban settlement, M. Kennedy wants first to focus on ending the current crisis, which in his view is not over yet. It is likely that the Russians want to fulfill the promises made in M. Khrushchev's letter. A Soviet general in Havana gave guarantees to M. Thant's Indian military adviser [Gen. Indar Jit Rikhye] that the missiles would be dismantled on Friday 2 November. But until now, the aerial photographs have not been able to prove these statements. We do not know yet whether the pictures made today will provide any decisive indications on this subject. Moreover, if Castro remains intransigent, it will be very difficult to organize an inspection that could both allow to check the departure of the missiles and the absence of offensive nuclear weapons on the island. The administration is considering what methods it could implement (international inspection at sea, aerial surveillance, etc...). No decision has been taken yet, and this problem presents political and technical challenges.

2. It is clear that Castro is furious and he is very bitter with his Russian friends for having abandoned him without consultation. M. McGeorge Bundy thinks that M. [Anastas] Mikoyan is coming to Havana⁹ to try to make Castro understand the situation. The Russians have their "Phoumi" [a right-wing Laotian military and political figure allied to the United States] and the current episode will maybe show them that some satellites, be it in the East or West, are not always docile.

3. M. Bundy described Khrushchev's behavior in the Cuban affair in line with the explanations that I have already reported (in my telegram 6106-6111¹⁰). He added that maybe the military leaders, especially [Soviet Defense Minister] Marshal [Rodion] Malinovsky, pushed him to build nuclear bases in Cuba so as to try to catch up in the arms race. Thus M. Khrushchev would, to a certain extent, have been victim of the carelessness of his generals.

Since we ignore the state of Khrushchev's relations with the other members of the Presidium, it is important not only to not compromise him by making him appear as a friend of the West, but to also to not humiliate him in front of his colleagues. The President is very conscious of this psychological problem

4. Does Soviet behavior in Cuba already amount, as some commentators claim, to an important turning point on the international stage? A drop in the prestige of the USSR and its leader could, of course, have very important consequences not only for East-West relations, but also vis-à-vis the peoples of developing states and within the communist bloc itself. But it is very difficult to predict how events will unfold. It is possible

that tomorrow the Soviet leaders will once again launch into their usual themes about the "free city of Berlin," general and complete disarmament, a moratorium on nuclear tests, etc... It is also possible that an era of real negotiation in a spirit of détente will emerge.

5. In this case, the gap that separates Russia from China will widen further. China will try to present itself even more as the leader of the communist world, determined not to seek any compromises with the Western imperialists. It could provide further evidence of its intransigence by pursuing its invasion of India, and by supporting throughout the world, in Cuba as in South-East Asia or Africa, the demands of the extremists. The evolution of the situation in India will be the main test for the evolution of Sino-Soviet relations.

6. The Cuban adventure highlights the strategic concepts of the nuclear era. It appears to M. McGeorge Bundy that it has underlined the necessity of conventional weapons to avoid a thermonuclear conflict. It proves also that, despite what [NATO Commander] General [Lauris] Norstad claims, medium range missiles placed on the ground and easily detectable are of little use when facing an invulnerable nuclear deterrence carried by planes and placed in submarines.

[Source: Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1962, Tome II (1er Juillet-31 Décembre), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1999), pp. 358-60. Translation by Garret J. Martin.]



Document No. 4:

Roger Robert du Gardier, French Ambassador in Havana, to Maurice Couve de Murville, French Foreign Minister, Telegram number 610-611, 15 November 1962

Since I have the unexpected opportunity of using a diplomatic pouch, which is heading to Mexico and then on to France, I want to put to good use the few hours that remain before the departure of the diplomatic pouch to give the Department a general impression on the Cuban crisis up to now.

I am purposefully using the word "impression." My European colleagues and I, indeed, are facing imprecision and uncertainty regardless of our efforts to get clear and verifiable information. The meetings of M. Mikoyan¹¹ are taking place in great secrecy – if there are any more meetings at all: some feel, indeed, that in the last few days, the Soviet first

Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers has run out of arguments and topics of conversation, and that he is only kept here as a sort of “shield” against an eventual American invasion. Once again, they are announcing his departure for the end of the week – tomorrow even, for the most convinced of the rumor spreaders – but there is no apparent reason for this to be true, as there is no apparent reason for this to be false either.

As I signaled in several of my previous messages, the great majority of the population is more apathetic than ever, despite the kicks given periodically by the professional agitators of the regime. It seems that the sudden discovery of medium range Russian launchers stunned most Cubans, be they revolutionaries or not, and that they are still in shock. It is a fact that for a country that has claimed to be, in the last four years, completely free, sovereign and independent, admitting that foreigners organized, on their own, important strategic bases on their soil must be particularly painful. This, combined with a nearly general mobilization and the vigor of the political police, can easily explain the state of stupor of the island's population.

While in the last few days, the trenches built along the coast are quite bare, the military transports are very active: not only do we constantly see them in the city, but they are spotted in all parts of the countryside. From various sources, we are also hearing that soldiers and militias are continuing to hide, with great caution, very large cement containers in natural caves, or alternatively in man-made excavations that are then covered with earth, sand, and vegetation. It does not seem that they are trying to hide light infantry weapons, or even coastal defense and anti-air canons, since such weapons are absolutely normal for the defense of any country; unless these are part of an “excess” supply of weapons that is put in reserve for the day where the Americans would have imposed a new regime in Cuba, and Fidel's supporters would need to reclaim power.

Among the many rumors that are circulating, there is one, in my view, that presents a certain interest even though it cannot be verified: when the medium range missiles and their accessories were unloaded, the Russians or Eastern Europeans who led the operation did so with great precautions, with some of them wearing asbestos masks and suits, while for the reloading of these same missiles, no such precaution was shown by those leading the operation, who were all simply wearing shorts and short sleeve shirts. We can speculate, obviously, that the key elements of the missiles – combustible liquids and launching devices – or even nuclear warheads – have remained on the island, and only frames have left. This would explain why, according to the same sources, the Russians so easily agreed to withdraw their famous missiles.

Maybe there is in this case, on the part of certain Cubans who are tired of the regime, a more or less tacit desire to see a serious international inspection of the island's territory. It does seem, for many of my colleagues and myself, that the rumors in question are too diverse and too numerous for us to ignore. It is a fact, in any case, that we can hear, throughout the island, muted explosions that seem to be part of underground works. This is the case, in particular, near my residence which is on the north flank of a hill that is supposedly full of labyrinths like those in the rock of Gibraltar.

The authorities, for their part, are very worried. The visit of the General Secretary of the United Nations [U Thant], and then the one of M. Mikoyan, did not lessen this obvious feeling of concern, nor does the news from the United States incline one to believe that an agreement is now possible between the main opponents: Dr. Fidel Castro and his team do not seem to have a clear conscience, nor are they ready to trick either their enemies or their allies.

Once more, these are only speculations and hypotheses, more or less supported by pieces of information of irregular value, but from which we feel we must draw a “median” that is as reasonable and logical as possible: the activity of the political police and the constant suspicion that we face, us, the “Westerners” and our last free Cuban friends, does not allow us, indeed, to become exposed to accusations of spying which are quite recurrent here.

Even though, since the start of the week, M. Mikoyan and Fidel Castro have been shown side by side several times, public opinion continues to believe that discord persists between both men, as it does between their governments. It is a fact that Dr. Fidel Castro appears constantly worried and even irritated while M. Mikoyan, once he has finished smiling for the photographers, adopts the look of the severe mentor that he wants to project here.

The old guard or the strictly loyal communists – noticeably the Dr. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez – do laud and praise the Soviet first Deputy Chairman, but the public, including the revolutionaries, is far more reticent than they are, when it is not hostile.

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

In terms of the relations between the government and the Western embassies, the situation remains tense and my European colleagues and I have the feeling that the regime

is ready, at any moment, to accuse us of the worst crimes and, of course, of spying... That said, the population, even when “engaged” – excluding the “wholehearted” supporters of the regime and the professional agitators – is not normally hostile: I would even mention cases of members of the famous “Committees for the Defense of the Revolution” who were friendly or helpful towards certain Westerners who were labeled as particularly pro-Americans: these are likely some simple “counter-insurance plans” in case a still possible American invasion is successful, but it still remains that such an attitude is not compatible with the spirit of hatred that the official propaganda is trying to instill with the “masses” against all that is “Western,” “capitalist,” “colonialist,” or “imperialist.” If one day we have to face a crowd that is animated by hostile intentions towards us, it will only be, and I am convinced of this, on the basis of precise orders from authorities...

Lacking any serious information on the evolution of M. Mikoyan’s mission or on the eventual removal of the 42 Illyushin 28 that are claimed to be here, I am giving these indications to the Department, through this ‘summary of the general atmosphere,’ in response to the request that was made by its message on 2nd November.¹²

[Source: Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1962, Tome II (1er Juillet-31 Décembre), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1999), pp. 424-27. Translation by Garret J. Martin.]



Document No. 5:

M. Couve de Murville to various French diplomatic posts, Circular Telegram number 9613, 10 November 1962

Very Secret

You will find below some remarks from the Department on the main aspects of the Cuban crisis.

I. *Origins and meaning of the Crisis*

Everyone admits that the Soviets miscalculated. It remains hard to define their real aim. Many facts are still unknown. We ignore whether the Soviet military reinforcement to Cuba was in response to a Cuban demand or a Soviet initiative. We do not know whether the works were kept hidden until early October and then hurriedly led into the open, or if they were always led without great precaution. We know nothing of the discussions that could have taken place in the USSR, the only

hints being the changes in the Soviet high command in the spring of 1962.¹⁴

Considering these inevitable uncertainties and many others, we can put forward the following hypotheses.

- a) The decision to install medium range missiles in Cuba cannot be solely explained by the desire to defend the island. A strong anti-aerial defense, and if need be a naval defense, would have been sufficient for that end.
- b) These missiles, once installed, would have seriously improved the strategic position of the USSR. The United States could have, certainly, destroyed or neutralized them, but in order to do that, they would have needed to resort to force in a very dangerous context.
- c) The Soviet installation in Cuba was not aiming, it seems, to capture an opportunity to launch a devastating war; the missiles did not sufficiently change the balance of power to allow the destruction of the opponent without any retaliation.
- d) The Soviet bases in Cuba seemed to aim, first and foremost, to improve the political and military situation of the USSR, either in view of a great debate with the United States, or for a more precise objective, such as Berlin.
- e) What remains striking is that this initiative, with such high stakes, was led in such a cavalier fashion. One cannot understand, in particular, why no potential maneuver was ever planned, a case where the United States reacted. One cannot understand why the very clear warnings of President Kennedy in September were ignored. One cannot understand why the experience of Berlin, especially during the air corridor affair of February-March 1962, was not put to good use. If, despite all these uncertainties, we try to make a judgment, we can say that the Soviet leaders, through a complete psychological misreading of the situation, tried to gain a trump card for a policy of claims and movement, if not of expansion. That essential fact, hidden by the current amenable words of M. Khrushchev, inspires reflection. Ten years after the death of Stalin, the Soviet Union, while negotiating with the United States and claiming to pursue a policy of peace, took an enormous risk in order to weaken American positions, and with that those of the West as a whole, in view of pursuing a new initiative, either in Europe, the Americas, or elsewhere. To those who, for a long time, have claimed that the Soviet Union has traded its old military threats with political and economic challenges, the Cuban crisis provided a strong rebuke. The political-economic challenge complements the military threat. It is not a substitute.

II. *The Unfolding of the Crisis*

Some observations can be made already.

- a) The decision of the American government to establish a blockade and to avoid, at least in the initial phase, a direct confrontation with the USSR through a surprise attack against the bases, is inspired by the strategic doctrine of flexible response. The blockade was merely the symbol of American will. Behind the blockade lay the threat of a bombing attack, which became more and more likely as days went by. The two key elements of deterrence were combined in the American attitude in Cuba, that is to say incrementalism and continuity. By taking calculated risks, the American leaders sent a clear 'message' to Moscow. No doubt the current administration will reach conclusions that reinforce its belief that the nuclear game is only possible with a minimum number of actors. Even though it is too early to draw all the lessons from this crisis, we can note in any case that in Cuba, the advantages were on the side of the government which, via a 'conventional' initiative (bombing attack or invasion), would have placed the opponent in a position of choosing between a nuclear response or a collapse. These considerations cannot be systematically applied to other situations or theaters.
- b) The Soviet government clearly showed that, in a situation where the other camp has the initiative and events are moving fast, it loses some of its confidence. Soviet diplomatic action struggled to follow the train of events. So M. [Valerian] Zorin [Soviet permanent representative at the UN] was visibly surprised by the question of M. [Adlai] Stevenson during the Security Council debate. M. Khrushchev contradicted himself in his correspondence with M. Kennedy. He did not consult with Castro. He had not informed his communist allies.

More importantly, the Russians proved incapable of 'horse-trading' their withdrawal. The American promise not to invade, regardless of its value, is only a promise, while the missiles are already on the boats. At no time, with the exception of the unexplainable Turkish episode¹⁵, did Moscow try to trade. Berlin was not mentioned. On the 11th of September, however, in the communique announcing the sending of weapons to Cuba, Berlin had been mentioned several times. It is at this moment that a delay of two months had been granted by M. Khrushchev. All of this indicates that between the 24 and 28 of October, the Soviet leaders improvised when facing the threat of nuclear war. The telegram number 4244 of M. [Geoffroy Chodron] de Courcel [French

Ambassador in London], sent on 7th November, provides an interesting detail on this point.¹⁶

- c) Vis-à-vis its allies, the United States government only kept us informed. As the crisis accelerated, it kept us in the loop. It remains that, if as was feared for a while, the USSR had created even minor difficulties in Berlin, the Alliance would have faced far greater strains than it did. It thus appears that political consultation among the fifteen [NATO] members is a tool that does not work well at all.
- d) Vis-à-vis the United Nations, the United States government, while clearly stating that it would not be deterred from its actions, was careful not to hurt the pride either of the organization or of the non-aligned world. It clearly showed that it considered the acting Secretary General [U Thant] a useful tool for communication and dialogue, as long as his action took place within a clearly defined framework.
Giving U Thant this both secondary and useful role, and the fact that the Third World delegates may have viewed the Burmese diplomat as their representative in the crisis, helped avoid the United States some embarrassing difficulties with the non-aligned powers.
- e) Combined with China's invasion of India, the Soviet action in Cuba profoundly shocked the non-aligned world. Castro was treated as dispensable. The USSR revealed how it views smaller countries. These episodes will have profound consequences which do not seem to have been analyzed in Moscow.

III. *Consequences*

- a) The agreement is not complete. The missiles are being sent back to the USSR, under American naval surveillance. Soviet ships going to Cuba are inspected by the Red Cross, acting under United Nations authority. This inspection will likely not last long. As to the installations in Cuba, the Cubans are opposed to their inspection, and we can imagine that M. [Anastas] Mikoyan is butting heads with Castro on this point. The United States will thus maintain their aerial surveillance and their 'quarantine.' New incidents can occur. As a whole, however, the affair is ending with a clear success for the United States; for the Russians, this is a setback; as for the Cubans, this leaves them in a precarious situation.
- b) The Organization of the American States was strengthened, the Atlantic Alliance was reassured, American prestige has increased, even though the legal basis of the American action was greatly criticized at the beginning.
- c) The 'socialist' camp, on the other hand, faces a new crisis.

The dogmatic Chinese, the Albanians and others, are unhappy. The leaders of the European satellite states are relieved, but there again, some criticisms are emerging, especially in Bulgaria. These troubles do not visibly alter M. Khrushchev's position. In fact, he still seems to dispose of a great margin of action to withdraw. The way in which he caved to American will leads one to think that in other crises where the stakes are less high for both parties, M. Khrushchev will also dispose of a certain freedom of action.

- d) Khrushchev's situation in the USSR does not seem weakened for the moment. We noted no signs of discord during the 7th November celebrations. It is true that in the USSR, internal crises only emerge slowly. Without more precise information, we can attribute little value to the explanations according to which Khrushchev became dragged into this adventure reluctantly, or even ignored part of its unfolding. These rumors are too much in the current interests of the First Secretary to be seen as credible. It seems more realistic to us to leave Khrushchev with his responsibilities in this affair and its outcome.
- e) At the current time, the Soviet leaders do not seem to want to start a new crisis. On the 7th November, they spoke moderately on Berlin.¹⁷ In India, they are trying to favor a compromise; there remains the disarmament domain. In the exchange of letters between M. Kennedy and M. Khrushchev¹⁸, they mentioned not only an agreement on banning nuclear tests, but also 'a more general entente relating to other weapons categories,' 'the relations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact,' 'larger questions on European and global security,' 'the problem of disarmament on a global scale and in certain regions where the situation is critical,' and 'the proliferation of nuclear weapons on earth and in space.' M. Khrushchev has underlined that coexistence demanded 'reciprocated concessions.' The Soviet leaders seem to be moving towards new talks.

If we can make a first assessment of these events, we are inclined to think that the Western powers have an interest in not rushing to have these talks. Indeed, it seems that the Russians, during 1962, under-estimated the United States' capacity to retaliate. If, once the crisis is over, Moscow is offered vast options for negotiation, these illusions might resurface. We must, moreover, be conscious of the role that strategic considerations have played and play for the Soviet leaders. The current period should be used to draw common conclusions from this crisis. Future problems can then be considered, noticeably during the meetings in Paris in mid-December.¹⁹

[Source: Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1962, Tome II (1er Juillet-31 Décembre), (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1999), pp. 399-403. Translation by Garret J. Martin.]

Notes

1 Maurice Vaisse, "La France et la Crise de Cuba", *Histoire, économie et société* 13:1 (1994), p.187.

2 See Charles de Gaulle-Roland Margerie meeting, 4 June 1963, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Français, Cabinet du Ministre, Couve De Murville, Vol. 375; Maurice Couve de Murville-Gerhard Schroeder meeting, 12 November 1965, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Français, Cabinet du Ministre, Couve De Murville, Vol. 381.

3 Jean Lacouture. 1986. *De Gaulle: vol. 3 Le Souverain*, Paris: Seuil, 387; Maurice Vaisse. 1993. "Une hirondelle ne fait pas le printemps": La France et la crise de Cuba', in Maurice Vaisse (ed.), *L'Europe et la Crise de Cuba*, Paris: A. Colin, pp.104-5.

4 Dean Acheson was sent by President Kennedy on a secret mission to inform General de Gaulle in advance of the measures that the United States was planning to take towards Cuba.

5 In this letter, President Kennedy explained that the Americans had evidence that the Soviets had built military bases for offensive rockets and added: "I do not need to draw your attention to the possible consequences that this dangerous Soviet initiative ... could have on the situation in Berlin."

6 Bohlen was about to succeed General James M. Gavin as the American Ambassador in Paris.

7 This telegram was forwarded to Washington and New York.

8 This telegram was sent to New York, and via the department to Bonn and London.

9 Mikoyan would arrive in the Cuban capital on 2 November.

10 In this telegram on 30 October, Alphant agreed with the French Ambassador in Moscow as to the likely causes of the Soviet attitude in the outbreak of the Cuban crisis: an attempt to suddenly change the balance of power in order to gain compensation from Washington. M. Alphant then gave his opinion on the mistakes committed by Khrushchev and the resulting failure: underestimating president Kennedy's character, the United States' determination to maintain bases in the world in the absence of a general disarmament agreement, and of the essentially bilateral nature of Soviet-American confrontation in Cuba. From this, what had been the impact of all this on the authority of the head of the party and the head of the Soviet government?

11 Mikoyan arrived in Havana from New York on 2 November. He would have several meetings with Fidel Castro.

12 Referring to the telegram number 183 sent to Havana, where the Department requested information on the destination planned by the Cubans for the missiles and military material that came from the bases that were being currently dismantled.

13 This circular telegram was sent by courier to the posts in Abidjan, Bangui, Brazzaville, Buenos-Aires, Cotonou, Fort-Lamy (now N'Djamena), Libreville, Luxembourg, New Delhi, Niamey, Nouakchott, Ouagadougou, Rio de Janeiro, Tananarive (now Antananarivo), Tokyo, Yaoundé, and to the French permanent representative to NATO. It was also sent to the posts in Belgrade, Bern, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dakar, The Hague, London, Madrid, Moscow, New York, Oslo, Ottawa, Rabat, Rome, Tunis, Warsaw, Vienna, Washington.

14 On 28th April, a decree from the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet promoted a certain number of high officers and created a title of admiral of the navy, awarded to Admiral Sergei Gorghkov. On 21st May, General Alexei Epichev was named as the head of the central political administration of the Soviet armed forces.

15 Reference to the trade proposed by Khrushchev: the withdrawal of missiles in Turkey in exchange for the withdrawal of those in Cuba.

16 With his telegram number 4244 on the 7th of November, the French Ambassador in London mentioned a meeting between Lord Alec Douglas-Home [British Foreign Secretary] and the Soviet charge d'affaires on the 25th October. The Foreign Secretary told his interlocutor that no proposal

from Moscow was likely to be accepted in Washington as long as the decision had not been taken to stop the works in Cuba and to proceed with the dismantling of the installations that had already been set up. The Foreign Office believed that the Soviet diplomat had received instructions to convince the British government to act as a mediator and propose a meeting between Khrushchev and Kennedy. Faced with the attitudes of Douglas-Home, who had stuck to the question of the nuclear weapons in Cuba, his interlocutor had given up on fulfilling his instructions.

17 On 7 November, during a reception in the Kremlin, Khrushchev declared in regard to the international situation: "We live on the basis of mutual concessions. If we want peace, we will have to base peaceful relations on the basis of acceptable mutual concessions." Mentioning the Cuban affair, he had acknowledged: "We were very close to a thermonuclear war." He did not believe that a summit conference was needed for the moment.

18 On 28th October, the letters essentially addressed the Cuban affair.

19 This is a reference to the NATO ministerial session, which is scheduled to take place in Paris on 13-15th December.

Israeli Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis

Documents obtained, translated, and introduced by Guy Laron

As was the case in other key moments of the Cold War in the Third World, during the Cuban Missile Crisis Israel had the status of an anxious onlooker. At first blush, Israel had much in common with other Third World countries. Like them, it was a post-colonial country and a late industrializer. Nevertheless, it was in conflict with the Arab world – a powerful voting bloc in international forums such as the U.N. – and was therefore treated as a pariah by countries such as China and India.¹ It was, however, able to win some influence and recognition in Africa and Latin America due to its extensive foreign aid program. The budget of the Israeli program was miniscule compared to Cold War aid giants such as the US, the Soviet Union, and even China, but it had a large impact. Israel was a development success story, it specialized in semi-arid agriculture and the advisors it sent were considered sturdy, efficient, hard-working and down to earth. For all these reasons, several Third World countries welcomed Israeli technical advisors, and Israel was able to successfully use foreign aid as a vehicle to open new markets and establish diplomatic relations in Africa and Latin America.

This explains why some of the most revealing documents in this short section originated from contacts with Brazilian diplomats. According to historian Edy Kaufman, already “[i]n 1961, the director general of the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture, Itzhak Levi, studied the possibilities of technical assistance to Brazil. Both countries signed the Recife Treaty for technical cooperation, and Israel began with agricultural aid (special cornstalk and other projects).” In the late 1960s Brazil was Israel’s second largest trade partner in Latin America.² The Israeli telegrams, included in this collection, depict a Brazilian government trapped between popular demands for an independent or a neutralist foreign policy, fearful of Cuban activity in Latin America as well as the prospect on armed conflict between Cuba and the US, and wary of demands from the conservative opposition to strengthen ties with the US. The Brazilian attempt to mediate between Cuba and the US during the crisis—which followed nearly three years of efforts to play the middleman between Washington and Havana—was an attempt to have it both ways.³

In contrast to the abundance of information that Israel received from the Brazilians, Israel knew very little about the internal Cuban deliberations in Havana. Despite the fact that Israel was an American ally, Castro seemed to have a soft spot for the Jews, seeing them as the great victims of World War II while maintaining relations with Israel after taking power

in 1959. Despite Cuba’s increasing radicalism and a pro-Arab foreign policy, Havana did not formally break those relations until 1973. When the Cuban Missile Crisis took place, Israel had a resident ambassador in Havana, Dr. Jonathan Prato, but relations between the two countries remained low key and trade ties negligible.⁴ As a result, Prato had no contacts within the Cuban government and virtually his only source of information was the Brazilian ambassador. In short, Israel’s ability to gauge the goings-on in the Caribbean circa-October 1962 was enabled or circumscribed by its aid program: where it succeeded in creating adherents, information was plentiful; when countries shunned Israeli aid, relations remained cool and domestic politics as well as the foreign policies of these countries remained opaque, at least to Israeli eyes.



DOCUMENTS

Report from Cultural Attaché, Israeli Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, “Brazil-Cuban-Latin American Relations,” 18 January 1962

As part of Brazil’s recent drive to become Latin America’s leading country, Brazil is about to propose in the foreign ministers conference which the OAS [Organization of American States] set for 22 January, this year, in Punta del Este, [Uruguay,] a plan for Latin American policy toward Cuba.

It is assumed that Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, Chile and Bolivia would support this proposal.

The Cabinet adopted a plan on January 11th and 12th. The foreign minister, Santiago Dantas, presented the proposal during a meeting of Brazilian ambassadors that took place at the ministry.

The details of the proposal are as follows:

Cuba would agree to become a neutral country (“like Finland”) and OAS members would work with US and Cuban officials to create a list of “obligations.” This would ensure Cuba of non-interference in its internal affairs. On the other hand, Cuba would commit to certain things regarding the sources of its weapons and propaganda in the continent.

Viz. [Cuba] would [commit to] not sign agreements with non-continent countries [i.e. the Soviet Union] and would not try to spread its ideology in the continent. In Brazil's opinion, the granting of neutral status to Cuba is better than any other proposal that might bring about interference in Cuba's domestic politics that, in turn, might create a situation of constant lack of trust between Latin American countries.

After hearing the foreign minister's presentation, Cuba's ambassador to Brazil, Joaquin Hernandez Armas, said that the proposal was "splendid and brilliant" and emblematic of Brazil's desire to maintain, during the [forthcoming OAS] conference, a position that supports Cuban independence and non-interference in Cuban affairs, "the only formula that can bring peace to this region."

According to the ambassador, Cuba would fully accept the Brazilian proposal to create a committee that would examine the possibility of a "modus vivendi" with the Cuban government.

Four former Brazilian Foreign Ministers: Jose Carlos de Macedo, Joao Neves de Fontoura, Vincente Paulo Francisco Rao, and Horacio Lafer, wrote a memo to the Foreign Minister (for submission to the Prime Minister) proposing that the government together with other countries in Latin America take a position which would isolate Cuba by severing diplomatic relations. [Such a position, the former foreign ministers argued,] would not impinge on the non-interference principle. This position should isolate dictatorial Castroist Cuba from the OAS because it was wrong to shirk commitments that had already been taken using the pretext of "neutralism." It is interesting to note that the Foreign Minister responded by saying that this memo "showed unanimity on the principle of non-interference."

Best,
Shmuel Benizi,
Cultural attaché

[Source: File MFA 3440\16, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Cable from Israeli Foreign Ministry (Arad) to Israeli Embassy, Washington, 24 October 1962

The PM-Barbour [Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion—US Ambassador to Israel Walworth Barbour] conversation was devoted to the crisis in Cuba. Barbour did not add much to what you already had heard from the Secretary [of State Dean Rusk]. [Barbour]...did not succeed in discussing issues in US-Israeli relations; he felt the Prime Minister's concern over the the international situation...

The PM told Barbour that with regard to the Cuban Crisis we [Israel] had nothing better to do than pray.

Barbour reiterated the State Department's instruction asking Syria and Israel to maintain order along their border in view of the [tense international] situation. The PM replied that Israel is trying to maintain peace.

Barbour told me later that he was impressed by the PM's ability to focus on the crux of the matter...

[Shimshon] Arad [Head, North America Desk, Foreign Ministry]

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Cable from Israeli Embassy, Prague, to Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, 25 October 1962

The Crisis in Cuba is causing public panic. Yesterday until late hours there were long lines in front of the stores. Many products such as oil, sugar, salt, etc. were sold out. In all workplaces party meetings accepted a resolution supporting Cuba and denouncing the US

On a wall across from the American embassy someone wrote: "1939-Hitler 1962-Kennedy."

In the American embassy they expect a demonstration in front of their gate.

Ha-Zirut (Interests Office)

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Cable from Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, New York (Komey), to

**Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, 28
October 1962**

I told [Adnan] Kural, the Turkish [representative] about our talk with the Secretary General [U Thant] and his opposition to a Cuba-Turkey deal. Kural thanked me and told me it was a very important piece of news. He [Kural] went to [US Ambassador to the UN Adlai E.] Stevenson and got a promise from him that the US would not agree that Turkey should come up in the [US-Soviet] talks. [Kural] decided against approaching the Secretary General because he did not want to create the impression that Turkey wanted to become a party [to the talks]. Until I talked to him he did not know what the Secretary General's response was to Khrushchev's offer...

[Michael] Komey [Israeli ambassador to the U.N.]

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



**Cable from Israeli Foreign Ministry,
Jerusalem (Lvavi), to Israeli Embassy,
Moscow, 30 October 1962**

[Soviet ambassador to Israel Mikhail] Bodrov met with the [Israeli] Foreign Minister [Golda Meir] and submitted to her the Soviet announcement on Cuba from the 23rd. During the ensuing conversation, he said that Soviet ships were ordered not to get into the crisis zone. But Khrushchev in his last letter to Kennedy pointed to the need to end the quarantine within a month at the latest... the Soviet government[, said Bodrov,] appealed to the Israeli government to use its influence to forestall a military holocaust. The minister said that Israel had a well-known position that supported peace negotiations. Israel's influence in the current circumstances was limited. Nevertheless, Israel would do whatever it can as a U.N. member to encourage negotiations and avoid military confrontation...

[Arie] Lvavi [Head of the East European Desk, Foreign Ministry]

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



**Telegram from Israeli Embassy, Havana
(Prato), to Israeli Foreign Ministry,
Jerusalem, 1 November 1962**

Following a conversation that I had with the Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto] who kept in close contact with the [Cuban] President, Prime-Minister and Foreign Minister since the crisis started:

A. The Brazilian government had been making strenuous efforts to convince Castro to accept observers [i.e., inspectors] from the U.N. or any other party which would monitor the dismantlement of the bases. [Brazilian leader João] Goulart's personal envoy [Albino Silva], who reached [Havana] on the 29th went back yesterday to Brazil empty-handed. His mission was also related to domestic Brazilian issues.

B. The [Brazilian] ambassador saw [UN Acting Secretary-General] U Thant and his colleagues after their first meeting with the Cubans on the 30th and found them surprised by Castro's insistence on rejecting the proposal to allow observers [into the island]. In view of his refusal, several other proposals were aired which were not prepared in advance just to keep the negotiations going, but all for naught. The content of the meeting on the 31st was secret and both sides promised not to leak any details.

C. U Thant said that the Americans insisted on sending observers, and the Cubans did not fully understand this fact.

D. On the night between the 27th and the 28th, the President [Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado] called the Brazilian ambassador to tell of an imminent US attack within the next 24 hours and asked for Brazil's intervention. The very same night, the ambassador received a cable from Goulart repeating the same story. Following an instruction to approach the Cubans, he asked them to accept observers as the only alternative to an American invasion, but the Cubans were not willing to agree. The attack did not materialize probably because of Khrushchev's last message to Kennedy on the 29th [sic-28th].

E. The Kennedy-Khrushchev deal irritated Castro. The Foreign Minister [Raul Roa] explicitly said so to the [Brazilian] ambassador and added that they would not agree to any settle-

ment that did not involve Cuba even if the Soviets supported that arrangement. So much for what the ambassador had said. My assessment: Castro's rigid position possibly emanates either from a sense of despair or a feeling of strength. After he understood that the Soviets were unwilling to confront the US over Cuba, he [Castro] was trying to exploit their [i.e. the Soviets'] interest in reaching a compromise and extort them [to give concessions or rewards] by putting forward extreme positions which foil their plans.

F. The points Castro presented as a sufficient guarantee for the security of his country against the US attack were actually demands from Moscow that went behind his back and agreed to dismantle the bases in exchange for the US non-intervention. The fact that [Anastas] Mikoyan was coming showed that the Soviet Union could not allow itself to alienate Castro in its deal with the US. This was a propaganda victory for Castro. The game is very dangerous right now because there is no way of telling Castro's response.

[Jonathan] Prato

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Letter from Arie Meyron, Counselor, Israeli Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, to the Head of the Latin American Desk, Israeli Foreign Ministry, "Brazil-Cuba", 7 November 1962

... I am most interested in your query regarding Brazil's initiative to create a nuclear-free-zone in Latin America. It is worth while talking about it because at first blush it seems that the source of this initiative are domestic issues as well as a quest to gain publicity...

It all started with a declaration by an OAS conference which took place in Washington during early October this year when the danger that the Cuban Communist activity posed for this region was first discussed. As you might remember, Brazil, at that time, supported the declaration made by Dean Rusk while explaining that that support does not impinge upon Cuban sovereignty etc...

Meanwhile events unfolded the way they did and on 23 October 1962 the OAS council convened to approve President Kennedy's declaration regarding a blockade over Cuba. In addition to that decision, several Latin American

countries (Argentina, Columbia, Costa-Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Panama) issued a statement saying that they would be willing to help the US blockade over Cuba by sending their navies as well as using other measures.

Although Brazil was not part of that group it did join the 23 October 1962 decision and by doing so put in doubt its former declarations regarding sovereignty etc. One should note that at that time a certain rumor had spread according to which the Brazilian ambassador to the OAS, who participated in the council meeting on 23 October 1962, allegedly voted for the joint decision although he received no instructions from his government as to how to vote. However this rumor was quickly disproved when the Brazilian ambassador [to the OAS] traveled to Rio a day after the vote [in the OAS council] – they said [at the time] that he was summoned in order to be reprimanded – and explained publically that he had acted under instructions and in full coordination with the government. Moreover, sources close to the ambassador had explained that he would not have dared voting without instructions from the prime minister and foreign minister. The rumors had been evidently spread because of the contradiction in which Brazil found itself.

But if we look at the whole affair objectively we will see that there is no contradiction. The Brazilians said what they said in early October when the issue that was discussed had only regional implications. During the next three weeks events developed in a completely different fashion and Cuba became a Cold War issue... In these circumstances Brazil had to stand with the rest of Latin America to support the West. It was no longer a question of different shades of neutrality... That said, Brazil is still looking for ways, essentially for domestic reasons, to sweeten the [bitter] pill and create the impression that there was continuity [in its foreign policy] from early October [up to now]...

[Source: File MFA 3394\19, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, to Israeli Embassy, Havana, 16 November 1962

[Israeli Ambassador to Brazil Arie] Eshel sent a telegram from Rio reporting the following:

I had a meeting today with ambassador [Carlos A.] Bernardes [Brazilian] deputy minister of foreign affairs. I

started by expressing our appreciation for Brazil's valiant efforts to mediate in the Cuban crisis and asked him how they saw things. Bernardes said that although the immediate danger of a military confrontation had passed, a formula still needed to be found to tackle Castro's wounded pride and anger over the deal that the US and the Soviet Union made behind his back. The Brazilians are working on an initiative according to which all Latin American countries would agree to create a nuclear free zone including an effective inspection regime. Such an arrangement would allow Castro to admit inspectors [to Cuba] without losing face.

Bernardes said that their embassy in Havana was unable to lift the veil of secrecy that currently surrounded the discussions between the Soviet and the Cubans. He also said that they planned to pass a resolution at the Security Council declaring Latin America, Africa and the Middle East nuclear free zones but were unable to do so due to French opposition. They now intend to bring this issue before the General Assembly. The Brazilians think that the Americans would be willing to take their bases out of Turkey; a step which would aid in declaring the Middle East a nuclear free zone. I did not respond other than pointing out that we have always been against the introduction of any weapons to the region.

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Telegram from Israeli Embassy, Moscow (Tekoah), to Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem, 28 November 1962

Naval British attaché told me that at the height of the crisis the US was making preparations to conquer the island and by his assessment the Soviet Union would not have responded.

[Yosef] Tekoah [Israeli Ambassador to Moscow]

[Source: File MFA 3440\20, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]



Cable from US Desk, Israeli Foreign Ministry, to Israeli Embassy, Washington, 21 December 1962

According all available reports it seems clear that the aim of Robert Kennedy's surprising visit [to Brazil on December 17] was to explain to [Brazilian President João] Goulart, and Brazilians as a whole, what were the implications of the Cuban Missile Crisis for Brazilian foreign policy (i.e. that the Soviets had accepted the fact that Latin-America was an American sphere of influence.) This pulls the rug under the idea of Brazil conducting "an independent foreign policy." American aid money would, from now on, be conditioned upon Brazilian compliance with American wishes.

[Source: MFA 3394\19, Israel State Archive (ISA), Jerusalem, Israel; obtained and translated from Hebrew by Guy Laron.]

Notes

1 Jacob Abadi, *Israel's Quest for Recognition and Acceptance in Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 67-95, 257-285.

2 Edy Kaufman, "Israel's Foreign Policy Implementation in Latin America," in Michael Curtis and Susan Aurelia Gitelson, eds., *Israel in the Third World* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1976), pp. 132-135.

3 See James G. Hershberg's two-part article, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962," in the *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and Vol. 6, No. 3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67.

4 Allan Metz, "Cuban-Israeli Relations: From the Cuban Revolution to the New World Order," *Cuban Studies* 23 (1993), pp. 113-118.