

NEW EVIDENCE ON COLD WAR CRISES

Russian Documents on the Korean War, 1950-53

Introduction by James G. Hershberg and translations by Vladislav Zubok

More than five decades after combat ceased in the summer of 1953, the Korean War continues to animate scholarly interest both for its historical importance and its ongoing political relevance. More than a decade after the end of the Cold War, tensions persist between the U.S. government and the communist regime in Pyongyang, now ruled by the reclusive son, Kim Jong Il, of the man who led North Korea at the time of the June 1950 thrust across the 38th parallel. Of all the major events of the Cold War, the Korean War has also been among those to benefit most expansively from the opening of communist sources. Beginning in the late 1980s, Chinese materials began to emerge through *neibu* (internal) publications of biographies and documentary compilations of materials of leaders such as Mao Zedong. And since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian archives have coughed up treasure troves of documents, many of which have appeared in English translation through the Cold War International History Project's *Bulletins* and Working Papers.

The documents presented below emerged from the collection at the U.S. Library of Congress of papers of the late Soviet/Russian historian Dmitri Volkogonov which were transferred to Washington following his death in 1995.¹ As Volkogonov had enjoyed privileged access to Moscow archives while writing his biographies and profiles of Lenin, Stalin, and other Soviet leaders, his papers contained thousands of pages of photocopies of archival documents on a wide range of subjects spanning the entire history of the USSR. The Korean War documents translated here were among those included in materials from the Russian Presidential Archives (known formally as the Archive of the President, Russian Federation, or APRF), which the Library of Congress only opened in January 2000, after the rest of the collection.²

The first two documents, from late May 1950, further illuminate the secret coordination between Pyongyang and Moscow in the final weeks leading up to the North Korean attack across the 38th parallel on 24 June. In Document No. 1, the Soviet ambassador, Terentii Shtykov, relates a 29 May conversation with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung regarding preparations for the offensive against the south that Stalin had authorized during Kim's secret trip to Moscow earlier that spring. In addition to reporting on the arrival of promised Soviet military and economic aid and urgently requesting more, Kim displays his eagerness to attack, insisting that combat readiness would be sufficient by the end of June even though Soviet military advisers had suggested waiting until the troop concentrations and detailed planning had pro-

gressed further. Sensing his "mood," Shtykov endorses Kim's timetable, as well as his urgent requests for medical supplies and automobile gasoline—requests which Stalin, in Document No. 2, immediately vows to fulfill. More portentously, Stalin also generally accepts Shtykov's views, indicating approval of Kim's arguments that military preparations justify launching the assault on the south by the end of June.³

The third document, a coded 8 July 1950 telegraph from Stalin (using the *nom de guerre* Fyn Si) to Shtykov, gives some insight into the *vozhd's* sternness—and how nerve-racking it could be to work for him. By early July, the North Korean offensive had succeeded in driving the South Korean military out of Seoul and far south of the 38th parallel, but not everything has gone according to plan—the people in the south had failed to rise up against the Syngman Rhee regime, as Kim had foreseen (or at least hoped⁴), and the United States under President Harry S. Truman had intervened militarily, contrary to Kim's promises to Stalin that the war could be won quickly before Washington could make a difference. Nevertheless, the North seemed clearly to be winning the war—so it must have been jarring for Shtykov to receive a harshly-worded message from his tyrannical boss accusing him of having behaved "incorrectly" for promising Pyongyang Soviet advisers without permission, adding sarcastically that he should remember that he represents the USSR, not Korea. The promised advisors, Stalin adds rather blithely, could visit the front in civilian clothes disguised as "Pravda" reporters, but Shtykov would be held "personally responsible before the Soviet Government" if they were taken prisoner—an ominous phrase that must have made the ambassador gulp with terror.⁵

Documents No. 4 through No. 7 add further detail to one of the most crucial moments in the Korean War to be exposed by the opening of communist sources—the maneuvering between Stalin and Mao Zedong in October 1950 as U.S.-led forces crossed the 38th parallel following the successful Inchon landing in mid-September, Kim Il Sung's forces retreated in disarray and his regime teetered on the brink of collapse, and his Soviet and Chinese patrons pondered how to react, in frantic consultations that ultimately produced China's decision to enter the war.⁶ In Document No. 4, Stalin cables his chief political and military representatives in Pyongyang on 1 October 1950 in response to messages relating the increasingly dire straits of the North Korean forces as they were driven back across the 38th parallel, as well as a desperate appeal from Kim for direct Soviet intervention to save his regime.⁷ Once again, he sharply criticizes his underlings, blaming them for "erroneous" behavior by dodging

Kim's questions and failing to offer coherent or effective advice and thereby fostering "uncertainty" in the Korean leadership. Exhorting them to provide "firm leadership," Stalin (unrealistically, given the situation on the ground) demands that they establish defenses along the 38th parallel to prevent further American advance and even go on the offensive by organizing "guerrilla warfare" in the south behind enemy lines.

At the end of his message, Stalin alludes to the possibility of Chinese "volunteers" coming to North Korea's rescue, and notes that a response to Kim's appeal for Soviet armed support would be forthcoming in a few days. As previously released documents show, the Soviet leader hoped, and had reason to anticipate, that Beijing would provide the needed forces, and sent a message to the Chinese leadership that same day—1 October 1950—suggesting that China send at least five or six divisions of "volunteers" to Korea and confidently predicting that "our Korean friends" would be "glad" when they learned of Beijing's action.⁸ However, much to the surprise and consternation of the Soviet ambassador in Beijing, and then of Stalin himself, Mao had demurred, responding on October 2 that China had tentatively opted not to enter the conflict. His reasons included the U.S. advantage in military equipment, China's weakened internal condition following decades of civil strife, and the danger that a clash with America could drag the Soviets into the fray, triggering World War III. While speaking of the need for caution and the regrettable possibility that the North Korean comrades might have to convert their struggle into a partisan war, Mao left the door ajar by noting that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Politburo had not yet taken a final decision on the matter.⁹

Mao's startling message set the stage for one of the most dramatic documents yet to emerge from the communist archives—Stalin's strongly-worded response arguing that China should enter the Korean War, and brushing aside concerns about the risks of igniting a world war with the confident assertion—"Should we fear this?"—that the Soviets and Chinese together were stronger than the Americans and British, and if war were inevitable, better it happen now, before a rearmed Germany and Japan could contribute to the Western military alliance. Stalin also argued that Beijing could secure a broad range of advantages by entering the war and defeating the Americans, not just by precluding Washington's use of Korea as a "springboard" to threaten China but also by causing the Americans to make concessions with regard to Japan and Taiwan.

The *CWIHP Bulletin* published the first evidence of this momentous message from Stalin to Mao in early 1996—but at the time, it was only available in the form of an extended quotation in a message dispatched from Stalin to Kim on 7 October 1950, thereby leaving uncertain precisely when that message had been delivered to Mao and whether the version Stalin gave Kim had been complete or accurate.¹⁰ This ambiguity, in turn, contributed to confusion over what role, if any, Stalin's forceful message had played in pressuring, or convincing, the split Chinese Communist Party leadership to reverse the tentatively negative position toward military inter-

vention contained in Mao's aforementioned 2 October 1950 message to Stalin, and instead shift towards a commitment to enter the war. Chinese sources, while making clear that Mao had overcome serious divisions to convince the CCP Politburo to endorse in principle the idea of sending military forces to Korea, did not clarify precisely when the group endorsed that decision—which it formally if secretly ratified on 8 October 1950 putting Peng Dehuai in charge of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) and informing Kim of this move—and whether the decision preceded or followed the reception of Stalin's letter.¹¹

Documents No. 5 and No. 6 offer new evidence on the text and timing of Stalin's letter. In Volkogonov's materials from the APFR, a draft of the letter was found and is reproduced here with Stalin's handwritten insertions in italics. There is no marking to indicate how the earlier text had been produced, but it bears Stalin's imprint so clearly that one must suspect that it had been dictated to an aide, and then reviewed for further changes. A copy of the final message was also found, and this adds a small but interesting section which Stalin omitted when he quoted the communication afterward in his own cable to Kim Il Sung. That portion dealt with China's domestic affairs, in which Stalin alluded to Mao's prior citation, in his 2 October message, of his people's longing for peace and likely discontent if plans for peaceful reconstruction were ruined as factors in the CCP leadership's reluctance to join the war in Korea against the Americans. While politely acknowledging that Chinese leaders knew the situation better, Stalin hinted at a derisive view of Beijing's position—its communist virility, as it were—if it let "malcontents" and "bourgeois parties" prevent it from fulfilling its revolutionary duty. More to the point, the implication of weakness and inability to perform added to the pressure on Mao to live up to Stalin's standards as a loyal ally, less than a year after the signing of the February 1950 Sino-Soviet treaty. (Mao would later say that Stalin suspected him of being a second Tito and only trusted him after he intervened in Korea.¹²) Stalin also expressed readiness to receive Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao at his dacha on the Black Sea to discuss the whole matter face-to-face.

In addition to resolving questions about the text of Stalin's message, the documents finally clarify the matter of timing. A handwritten notation on the final version indicates that it was dispatched from Stalin's Black Sea retreat by high-frequency phone to comrade Nikolai Bulganin in Moscow at 11 p.m. on 5 October. And document No. 7, a ciphered cable from Soviet ambassador in Beijing N.V. Roshchin, dated 7 October, reports that he delivered Stalin's message to Mao at 10:30 p.m., Beijing time, on 6 October 1950. In a meeting that lasted past midnight, Roshchin read Stalin's message—he may not have provided the written text, which would explain its apparent absence from Chinese archives—and heard Mao express full agreement with Stalin's analysis of the international situation, including the danger of joint war against the United States, and evident enthusiasm for Chinese military involvement in Korea, with even more forces than Stalin had proposed—at least nine divisions rather than five or six. At

the same time, Mao enumerated various technical and numerical weakness that would hamper a military struggle against the Americans and made clear that Beijing would rely on Moscow for multi-faceted support, including air cover—a hint of the hard bargaining ahead, beginning with the forthcoming secret trip of Zhou (who attended this meeting) and Lin Biao to talk with Stalin personally. Regarding timing and strategy, Mao already had conceived the plan that would end in a stunning (if temporary) success—letting the Americans advance more deeply into North Korea, extending their supply lines, before the Chinese would level a damaging blow, which is what occurred in late November-December as the

eager to end the conflict as well, despite Zhou Enlai's insistence to Stalin in a meeting on 20 August 1952 that Mao favored a continuation of the war.¹⁴ Yet, in any case, Stalin's admonition to stick to a hard line in the Panmunjom talks precluded any real progress—brushing aside the suffering of his allies, he told Zhou that the “North Koreans have lost nothing” other than casualties, and enthused that the war was “getting on America's nerves.”¹⁵

In the conversation presented here, Stalin closely, and at times sharply, questioned the visiting North Korean and Chinese officials on the progress of the fighting, and showed particular interest in the combat qualities of the American

Once Stalin died, in March 1953, both Soviet and Chinese leaders immediately agreed on the need to liquidate the conflict even at the price of making concessions on the prisoner issue.

Americans were pushed all the way back to the 38th parallel.

Roshchin's report of his conversation with Mao does not entirely dispel the uncertainty over whether Stalin's message influenced China's ultimate decision to enter the war. Mao, evidently, had already come down strongly in favor of doing so, and hearing Stalin's ardent plea must only have confirmed his view that China's involvement was necessary for the good of the Sino-Soviet alliance on which he had risked so much as well as for the other advantages he could perceive from rebuffing the Americans—both to help consolidate the revolution against potential domestic enemies, as Chen Jian has argued¹³, and to head off a long-term security threat from an ascendant U.S. military presence on the border with Manchuria. It is still not clear, however, whether he had already prevailed upon the Politburo to endorse his course of active intervention in Korea, in which case Stalin's message was superfluous, or whether Mao was able to use this fresh evidence of strong Kremlin desire for Chinese entry to convince remaining holdouts of the necessity for this course of action. Only full contemporaneous notes or minutes of the CCP Politburo session could conclusively resolve the issue.

Jumping ahead to the latter stages of the war, Document No. 8 presents the Soviet record of Stalin's 4 September 1952 conversation with visiting North Korean leader Kim Il Sung and Chinese military commander Peng Dehuai. At the time, the Panmunjom negotiations between the warring sides begun the previous summer remained stalemated, especially over the issue of the mandatory repatriation of communist POWs, and fighting continued with the two enemy armies dug in on a front close to the 38th parallel, to which the US-South Korean forces had been driven back following Beijing's massive intervention in late 1950. By this point, previously released Russian documents make clear, the North Koreans were tiring of the war, particularly the heavy toll inflicted by American aerial bombardment, and probably the Chinese were

soldiers. Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai, the commander of the “Chinese People's Volunteers” in Korea, had been summoned to Moscow in the midst of a series of conversations between Stalin and Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai in order to give the Soviet leader a clearer picture of how Pyongyang and Beijing viewed the military situation, particularly in light of Zhou's statements that North Korean morale was faltering.¹⁶ Stalin immediately interrogated his guests on this point, extracting an affirmation that the mood was “good” and the military situation “favorable” and only then the rather significant qualification—“if you do not include the bombing.” Obviously trying to buck up the North Koreans, who complain of being “grossly undersupplied,” Stalin tries to meet their requests for additional support, but then homes in on the question of whether a divergence exists between Pyongyang and Beijing over how to handle the negotiations with the Americans. After Kim minimizes the dispute (while admitting he and the Chinese desire an armistice “as soon as possible”), Stalin offers some tactical advice on the prisoner issue, mostly to gain the upper hand in international opinion, but then shifts the question to something that seems closer to his heart—how do the Americans rate in combat? In his earlier talk with Zhou Enlai, Stalin had disparaged the US soldiers as “weak,” “merchants ... obsessed with buying and selling.”¹⁷ Now he probes for further details, wondering whether they fight “with inspiration, with skill, or with numerical superiority”—almost as if he were sizing them up as potential adversaries in a World War III showdown he knew he had the power to ignite, and must often have imagined. Near the end of the conversation, Stalin turns the conversation in a more critical direction, letting an associate ask some skeptical questions about optimistic battlefield reporting, needling Peng Dehuai as to whether Chinese pilots were “afraid” to engage in combat operations without Soviet guidance, and condescendingly lecturing General Peng to institute a “system of rewards and decorations” in the “anar-

chist-like” Chinese army. One suspects that the Chinese commander left the meeting with gritted teeth. In sum, it is a document that not only offers further insight into Stalin’s mindset during his final year, but additional justification for the observation that he was happy to fight the Korean War to the last North Korean or Chinese, even as he carefully sheltered the USSR from direct clashes with the Americans.

Once Stalin died, in March 1953, both Soviet and Chinese leaders immediately agreed on the need to liquidate the conflict even at the price of making concessions on the prisoner issue.¹⁸ The final armistice was not signed, however, until 27 July 1953, after some final maneuvers by both sides, including Syngman Rhee’s sudden release on June 18 of more than 25,000 North Korean POWs without notifying Washington, a move that threatened to torpedo a potential deal and exacerbated growing US irritation with Rhee.¹⁹ Document No. 9, a cable from Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov to the Soviet Ambassador in Beijing for transmission to Chinese leaders, offers some insight into the comparatively mild communist response to these events, and to Moscow’s perception of the increasingly tense US-South Korean relationship. Already consumed with both internal and external crises in the wake of Stalin’s demise—including, in past weeks, an uprising in East Germany and the arrest of Lavrenty Beria—the Kremlin evinced little interest in reigniting the Korean conflagration. Instead, it applauded a draft Chinese-North Korean communication to the head of the U.S. delegation at Panmunjom that, while “[a]rgumentative and occasionally bordering on being insulting,” agreed to continue the armistice talks. Molotov’s message also complimented Beijing for not falling into Rhee’s trap, allegedly set in cahoots with aggressive U.S. “ruling circles,” of using provocative actions to undermine the armistice talks; instead, the moderate Sino-North Korean position had helped isolate the Americans and the Rhee “clique” in world public opinion and frustrated bellicose American designs both abroad and at home. Encouraging the Chinese not to be diverted from the path to the armistice, even as it launched a last mini-offensive, the Soviets added a warning that Kim Il Sung should not attend the final signing ceremony (he didn’t) due to the danger that he might fall victim to the “dangerous tricks” of the Seoul regime—a harbinger of the mutual ill-will and distrust that would characterize both the signing at Panmunjom and the tense military standoff that would ensue for more than half a century, the last frontier on the globe where the Cold War never really ended.

James G. Hershberg is Associate Professor at George Washington University and editor of the CWIHP Book Series (Stanford University Press/ Woodrow Wilson Center Press); Vladislav M. Zubok is Associate Professor at Temple University.

DOCUMENT No. 1

Telegram from Soviet Ambassador in Pyongyang Terentii Shtykov to Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Vyshinsky (for Stalin), 30 May 1950

CIPHERED TELEGRAM 30 May 1950

Top secret

Distribution: .1 - Stalin

2. - Stalin

3. - Molotov

4. - Malenkov

5. - Beria

6. - Mikoyan

7 - Kaganovich

8 - Bulganin

9 - Vyshinsky

10 - Gromyko

From Pyongyang, No. 16030, received at 13: 40, 30 May 1950.

16033 16044

Special no. 408-410

SPECIAL, OUT OF ORDER

To Vyshinsky (for the Instantsia [Stalin])

On 29 May I had a meeting with Kim Il Sung at his request. In the beginning of the conversation Kim Il Sung informed me that the armaments and ammunition he had requested during his stay in Moscow had largely arrived. The armaments have been sent to the newly formed divisions and by 1 June all the arms will be distributed among soldiers. Then he informed that he toured the new divisions, familiarized himself with the military preparations and believed that the divisions would be in full combat readiness by the end of June.

Kim Il Sung said that the head of [the North Korean] general staff completed at his request the principled decision for the offensive. The scheme of this decision was reported to him jointly by the head of the General Staff and the adviser General Vassilyev. He approved the decision and the choice of directions of the main offensive during the campaign. He asked me to meet, together with him, with the head of the General Staff and the adviser General Vassilyev, so that we could look at this decision together. I avoided such a joint meeting by saying that I could see the adopted decision at General Vassilyev’s.

Kim Il Sung then said that they are wrapping up on the organizational issues on the Army by 1 June. The Navy is somewhat lagging behind, since it has not received from the [Soviet] Union one trailer and one large destroyer [*bolshoi okhotnik*]. The crews of these ships have been manned, but cannot be trained in the absence of the ships. [Kim Il Sung]

asked me to take appropriate measures to speed up the arrival of the ships. I replied that according to our information the ships will be delivered to Korea in early June. After this Kim Il Sung pointed out that [North Korean] infantry troops were ready for combat. 8 divisions out of 10 infantry divisions are already fully prepared for the offensive. A tank brigade and a motorized regiment are also prepared. Three new rifle divisions will finish preparations in June. This suits them since they are intended for the second echelon.

Then he pointed out that the Southerners have no complete data on the situation in the People's Army and its combat readiness. However, they are now undertaking a number of measures to reinforce their army, although there are no big changes in the South Korean army. Considering that the people's army is ready for combat operations, he would like to begin military actions against the South at the end of June. There are two reasons why it is not advantageous for the Northerners to postpone the beginning of military actions. First, the Southerners might disclose their intentions and take measures to reinforce their army. Second, there could be rain in July, and then one would have to put off the offensive until September and this would be highly undesirable. Then Kim Il Sung pointed out that, according to the report by the head of the General Staff, they will need 16 days for concentration of troops. Therefore, they should begin deploying the troops in the area of concentration on 8-10 of June. Kim Il Sung pointed out that he has not discussed this question officially with the members of the Party's Political Council and intends to do it in the next few days, depending on the timing for the beginning of military actions. I evaded a direct answer about the timing for the beginning of military actions, saying that this is a serious issue and he should seek the counsel of the military about how much time they would need for preparation of troops, and consult the members of the Political Council, and only then take a final decision.

Footnote [*primechaniie*]

After the conversation with Kim Il Sung on these issues I fetched the advisers Generals Vassilyev and Postnikov to find out what they think about the readiness of troops and the feasibility of beginning military actions at the end of June. Generals Vassilyev and Postnikov believe that concentration of troops and detailed work on the operation with the commanders of divisions and regiments would take much time. Therefore it would be inappropriate to begin the campaign in June. However, considering the possibility of rain in July and [the danger that] the Southerners, if they discover the preparations of the Northerners for military actions, might start reinforcing their army, they are inclined to support [the idea] that one could complete preparations of the troops of the people's army and launch the campaign at the end of June.

My opinion is the following:

Since Kim Il Sung is in the mood to launch the campaign at the end of June and one could complete preparations of troops by that time, we should agree with this deadline.

After this Kim Il Sung reported that [North Korean Foreign Minister] Pak Hon Yong and he discussed the plan of political measures that envisage a proposal to the Southerners for a peaceful reunification of the country. At first they plan to appeal to them on behalf of the Fatherland's Front, and then on behalf of the government. He asked me to receive Pak Hon Yong and helped him to compose these documents. I agreed.

At the end of the conversation Kim Il Sung requested that I take appropriate measures to accelerate the delivery of medical supplies they requested from the Trade Office [of the USSR], for they have not yet received them, and also the delivery in June-July of 10-15 thousand tons of oil. Kim Il Sung underlined that they were in a grave crisis with automobile gasoline. I promised him that I would take measures.

I support the request of Kim Il Sung, since they have a dire need for medical supplies and automobile gasoline.

I am waiting for urgent instructions on the discussed issues.

30 May 1950. SHTYKOV

[Handwriting at the bottom of the page]



DOCUMENT No. 2

**Telegram from Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister
Andrei A. Gromyko to Soviet Ambassador in
Pyongyang Terentii Shtykov, 31 May 1950**

CIPHERED TELEGRAM

No. 9849, received at 22:30 and sent at 23:55 on 31 May 1950.

To Pyongyang, Soviet Ambassador.

Urgent, out of turn

In reply to your no. 408-410

The Instantsia [Stalin] approves your proposals. Delivery of medical supplies and oil will be accelerated.

GROMYKO

DOCUMENT No. 3
Telegram from Stalin to Soviet Ambassador in
Pyongyang Terentii Shtykov, 8 July 1950

Ciphered telegram # 36275.

Copy no. 2
To be returned after 6 days
Top Secret
8 Department of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of
the Union SSR.

Only by wire

[in handwriting at the very top] for Cde. Stalin.

8 July 1950

To Pyongyang, Soviet Ambassador

It appears that you behave incorrectly, for you promised the [North] Koreans to give them [Soviet] advisers, and did not ask us for permission.

You should remember that you are a representative of the USSR, not of Korea.

Let our advisers go to the front headquarters and into army groups in civilian uniforms as correspondents of "Pravda" in the required numbers.

You will be personally responsible before the Soviet Government that they would not be taken prisoners.

FYNSI [Stalin]

Typed in 3 copies:

NO. 1 - for Stalin
No. 2 - for Stalin
No. 3 - for Bulganin

Typist Budanova 8 July 1950, 19:35

Correct: head of dispatch of 4th Division 8 Department of the GSSA.

Colonel Gonchar.

DOCUMENT No. 4
Telegram from Stalin to Soviet Officials in
Pyongyang, 1 October 1950

CIPHERED TELEGRAM # 75352
1 October 1950

To be returned after 6 days
Top Secret
8 Department of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of
the Union SSR.

To Pyongyang – SHTRAUS [pseudonym for Soviet Amb. Shtykov], MATVEEV [pseudonym for M.V. Zakharov, Stalin's personal military envoy]

We have received your cable of 30 September and 1 October. These cables show that cde. KIM IL SUNG and other comrades from the Korean leadership pose before you a set of questions and that you dodge these questions. We consider your behavior to be erroneous. In the emerging grave situation it is natural for the Korean comrades to solicit advice and assistance, but cde. SHTYKOV keeps silent and thus contributes to the sense of uncertainty in the Korean leadership. Cde. MATVEEV was sent to Korea not for transmitting summaries on the events in Korea, which we kept receiving anyway. Until now he has not yet presented to Moscow [authorities] his detailed assessment of the military situation in Korea, not to mention any suggestions or advice that may flow out of this situation. Thereby he makes it more difficult for us to take this or that decision on Korean matters. Cde. MATVEEV does little to assist the Korean leadership which is revealed by the fact that the Korean leadership still lacks any plan of defense of the republic along the 38th parallel and Northbound, and does not have a plan of withdrawal of troops from South Korea.

Keep these directions in mind in your subsequent activities in Korea.

Immediately visit KIM IL SUNG and PAK HON YONG and tell them the following:

First. Will the enemy advance to the North of the 38th parallel? We should base ourselves in this question on the worst-case scenario, that is, that the enemy will try to capture North Korea. Therefore one should without delay mobilize all forces and prevent the enemy from crossing the 38th parallel, that is, to be prepared to fight the enemy to the North of the 38th parallel.

We should not underestimate the strength and capabilities of the Korean republic in the matters of organizing defense. There is a big potential and resources for mobilization in the Korean North. Under the present difficult circumstances one should at any cost and in the shortest possible time resolve the task of creating combat-ready armed forces, both through reinforcement of the existing troops as well as through formation of new ones. We will fully supply all these troops

with armaments.

We hold as erroneous the opinion that North Korea cannot offer resistance along the 38th parallel and to the North of it. The Korean government possesses forces, it only should organize them and utilize all resources for defense. It must do everything to speed up formation of divisions and units - the armaments for them are already on the way to Korea. At the same time it is necessary to take more energetic measures towards withdrawal of troops from the South, having in mind that there is no solid front-line in the South, therefore troops have good chances to reach the North. This matter should be done in a hurry, for the Americans will certainly attempt to deprive the troops of this possibility in the nearest future.

Second. In the South, behind the enemy's lines, one should make a transition to guerilla warfare, in the shortest period of time to develop energetic guerilla activities, using to this goal, along with the guerilla fighters from the local population, the remaining armed units when their advance to the North is precluded. The guerillas should have a task - to disrupt and terrorize the area behind the enemy's lines by disrupting roads [*kommunikatsii*], destroying headquarters and lines of communications, attacking the enemy's officers and soldiers and through other active measures.

Third. The emerging situation requires firm leadership and its restructuring [*perestroiki*] in the light of new tasks of organization of sturdy defense. To this end one needs, above all, to put an end to the existing mood of uncertainty in the leadership, to define sharply and strictly the duties of the leading comrades by assigning to each one specific tasks and responsibilities on select issues of the country's defense. With merciless and immediate measures one must break the neck of the reaction and ensure order behind the frontlines. For the struggle with paratroopers - terrorists of the enemy one should create the elimination units of local self-defense from among reliable people. The government must have at its disposal, wherever it is located, a strong military fist consisting of the reliable people loyal to the government. One should undertake all measures without delay to mine major ports and areas of possible landing of the enemy; here we will render the needed assistance.

Fourth. As to the question posed in the letter of cde. KIM IL SUNG to cde. FYN-SI on the assistance with armed forces [to North Korea], we consider as a most appropriate form of such assistance to be the assistance by volunteer units. On this question you have to take consultations, first of all, with Chinese comrades.

You will receive in a few days the answer to the letter of cde. KIM IL SUNG.

FYN-SI [STALIN]

2 copies - 1 - cde. Vasilevsky

2. - cde. Fyn Si, 13.11.50

Correct: head of dispatch of 4th Division 8 Department of the GSSA. Colonel Ogurtsov.

Typed by Budanova 2.10.50, 6:00 [am]

[Handwritten across the document] "The answer is [agreed upon?]" "I" [Stalin]

INSTRUCTION OF THE CC VKP(b)

Draft

The question of Korea

To accept the proposed draft telegram to cde. Shtykov and cde. Matveev

SECRETARY CC

Accepted on 1. Oct. 1950

Voted FOR:

Cde. Beria

Bulganin

Kaganovich

Malenkov

Mikoyan



DOCUMENT No. 5

Draft Message from Stalin to Mao Zedong, 4 October 1950 (italicized passages inserted and bracketed passages deleted by hand)

[DRAFT CIPHERED TELEGRAM] First original version

TO BEIJING, SOVIET AMBASSADOR

FOR MAO ZEDONG

5 October 1950

I received your response.

I considered it possible to turn to You with the question of [sending to Korea a] *minimum* five-to-six Chinese volunteer divisions because I was well aware of a number of statements made by the leading Chinese comrades regarding their readiness to move several armies in support of the Korean comrades if the enemy were to cross the 38th parallel (and the enemy has already crossed, as is known, the 38th parallel in several places). There could be no doubts that, without such declarations by the Chinese comrades, I would have deemed it impossible to address You with the abovementioned question, *and, incidentally, I explained the readiness of the Chinese comrades to send troops to Korea by the fact that China was interested in preventing the danger of the transformation of Korea into a USA springboard [platz-d'arme-trans.] for the USA or for a future militarist Japan [against China].*

While raising before You the question of dispatching troops to Korea, I was basing myself on the following considerations [in the area] of international [situation] character: 1) the USA, as the Korean events showed, is not ready at present for a big war; 2) Japan, whose militaristic potential has not yet been restored, is not capable at present of rendering any military assistance to the Americans; 3) *In view of this*, the USA will [would] be compelled [in the view of that] to yield in the Korean question, i.e. agree to such conditions of resolving the Korean question that would be advantageous for Korea and that would not give the enemies a possibility to transform Korea into their springboard; 4) *I believe that* the USA would be compelled to return Taiwan to China and, ultimately, [5]. The USA would be compelled to give up also on the separate treaty with Japanese reactionaries as well as the conversion of Japan into its satellite. [6] The USA will have to agree to the presence of the representatives of the Central People's government of China at the UN and the Security Council].

I do not believe that China could obtain these concessions as a result of passive temporizing and patience. I believe, on the contrary, that without serious struggle and without new imposing display of its force China will not obtain these and similar concessions, as well as it will not obtain Taiwan, which the Americans keep in their hands in fact not for Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi] who has no chance to succeed, but for themselves or for a militaristic Japan of tomorrow.

[It is not excluded, although unlikely that sending five-six divisions] *One can suppose, that the USA, despite its unreadiness for a big war, could still be drawn into a big war, which in turn would drag China into the [big] war, and along with this draw into the war the USSR, which is bound with China by the Mutual Assistance Pact.* [But one should not fear this] *Should we fear this? In my opinion, we should not*, because together we will be stronger than the USA and England, while the other European capitalist states, without Germany which is unable to provide any assistance to the United States now, do not present a serious military force.

Such were considerations of a foreign policy nature that I proceeded from when I was requesting a *minimum* of five-six divisions from You, while believing that You would find it possible to send these divisions to Korea, because earlier You had declared about your readiness to send Chinese armed forces to Korea.

But Your reply contains a consideration that is new to me, the one on the domestic situation of China which, in my opinion, is of decisive significance. You assert that, in case of a new war with regard to Korean events there will be very many malcontents in the country, that there is strong longing for peace in the country. *I understand it in such a way that the bourgeois parties that are part of the Chinese coalition may, in case of war, exploit discontent in the country against the Chinese communist party and its leadership* But this means that China, with regard to its internal situation, is not ready for a new war. [In such a big country as China, the future of the people is decided not by foreign

policy factors, but by *the factors* of domestic situation. Of course, You should know the domestic situation in China better than anybody else.] If the internal situation in China does not allow You to risk such steps that might lead to a new war, then one should think *in general* if one should undertake such a risk. Therefore I fully understand You and [your position] *Your predicament.*

As to the arrival of comrades Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao, I would be happy to meet them and to have a conversation with them.

Respectfully PHILIPPOV [STALIN]

4 October 1950

2nn



DOCUMENT No. 6
Final Message from Stalin to Mao Zedong, 5
October 1950 (new sections italicized)

[Stalin reproduced most of the text of his message to Mao in his cable to Kim Il Sung on 8[7] October 1950, translated by Kathryn Weathersby and Alexandre Mansourov and published in CWIHP Bulletin no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), p. 116. The comparison between the documents reveals that only the date, an introductory phrase, and the final two paragraphs were omitted.]

From cde. PHILIPPOV

October 5, 1950

I received your reply [...]

Your reply contains one consideration about the domestic situation in China that is new to me. You insist that, in case of a new war with regard to Korean events there will be many malcontents in the country, that there is strong longing for peace in the country. I understand it in such a way that the bourgeois parties that are part of the Chinese coalition may, in case of war, exploit discontent in the country against the Chinese communist party and its leadership. Of course, you should know the domestic situation in China better than anybody else. Would it be, however, possible to overcome the difficulties of internal situation in China or it would be impossible - only the Chinese comrades can decide it.

As to the arrival of comrades Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao, I would be happy to meet them and to have a conversation with them.

Respectfully,

PHILIPPOV

5 October 1950

[Handwritten] Dispatched to cde. Bulganiin via VCh [high-frequency phone] at 23 hours, 5 October.

**DOCUMENT No. 7**

Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to China, N.V. Roshchin, to Stalin, 7 October 1950

CIPHERED TELEGRAM NO. 25348

SECOND CHIEF DIRECTORATE OF THE GENERAL
STAFF OF THE SOVIEV ARMY

Top Secret.

7 October 1950

Copies to: 1 - cde. Stalin
2 - cde. Stalin
3 - cde. Molotov
4 - cde. Malenkov
1. - cde. Beria
2. - cde. Mikoyan
3. - cde. Kaganovich
4. - cde. Bulganiin

Received from Beijing on 11: 55 on 7 October, 1950.

URGENT [*vne ocherednaia*]

To FILIPPOV [STALIN]

In response to Your no. 4676

On 6 October, at 22:30 of Beijing time I visited MAO ZEDONG and passed to him your reply.

After listening to me, MAO ZEDONG declared that:

1. He is in full agreement with your assessment of the current international situation and the prospects for its possible evolution.
2. He is very glad that your answer speaks about a joint struggle of China and the USSR against the Americans. He emphasized that, if one goes to war, then, unquestionably, one should go to war now. He added that he has just expressed the analogous idea at the session of the CCP CC Politburo .
3. As to the dispatch of Chinese troops to Korea, MAO ZEDONG believes that it makes sense to send not five-six divisions, but at least nine divisions.

However, he pointed out the extremely low level of technical equipment of these divisions, as they have only 108 artillery pieces and do not have tanks at all.

MAO ZEDONG also remarked, referring to the materials received from the Korean friends that the US corps (three divisions) include around 1,500 artillery pieces of different caliber, including tanks.

MAO ZEDONG believes that in order to defeat one US corps, Chinese should have four-to-one superiority in human force and three-to-one superiority in technical equipment.

MAO ZEDONG underlined that he can easily resolve the issue of infantry, thanks to available reserves, but as to technological equipment of Chinese troops they totally count on the assistance of the Soviet Union.

He also said that currently they do not have the trained cadres to man artillery units, tanks and other technical means.

Concerning the issue about the timing of entry of Chinese troops into Korea, MAO ZEDONG noted that they are ready to start moving their divisions in the next few days, but he believes it is not appropriate to make haste with this; it would be better to give Americans a chance to advance deeper to the North, since this would lead to their dispersal and would facilitate for the Chinese to defeat it in parts.

4. MAO ZEDONG paid special attention to the issue of aviation. He pointed out that, according to the data of the Korean friends, the Americans have about 1000 aircraft in the Korean theater, while the Chinese still have no aviation. It is necessary to have aviation, in the opinion of MAO ZEDONG, for:

- a) the cover of the Chinese ground troops that will be sent to Korea;
- b) for combat operations on the front;
- c) for the cover of the largest industrial centers: Shanghai, Tianjin, Beijing, Mukden (Anshan, Fushun).

MAO ZEDONG believes that the Americans can, first of all, destroy from the air the Chinese industrial base, disorganize economic life and mess up communications. Such a situation, said MAO ZEDONG, might create serious discontent in the country, particularly on the part of national bourgeoisie, and put the people's government in an extremely difficult position. MAO ZEDONG declared that the Chinese government cannot ensure itself the air cover of the troops and industrial centers, and the equipment from the Soviet Union is essential.

1. MAO ZEDONG drew attention to the fact that in Korea the roads and communications are destroyed and this gravely complicates the task of supplying the army. In this case, he said, the Chi-

nese could rely only on Soviet assistance in providing transportation means.

2. MAO ZEDONG declared that the Chinese government does not possess sufficient funds for purchasing the required armaments for aviation and the ammunition. The entire 1951 budget is two billion two hundred million American dollars, of which only two hundred million could be directed for the armament.

3. Having said all the above, MAO ZEDONG said it is necessary to send immediately ZHOU ENLAI and LIN BIAO to report to you on the developments and all the considerations of the Chinese friends. ZHOU ENLAI and LIN BIAO may depart by plane on 8 October. They could be flown from Beijing until Irkutsk. Our special plane is required in Irkutsk.

MAO ZEDONG expressed a wish, that ZHOU ENLAI and LIN BIAO be accompanied by SHI ZHE and FEDORENKO. Present at the conversation were: ZHOU ENLAI, U SU XIAN and FEDORENKO. The conversation lasted for 1 hour and 45 minutes.

I am waiting for your instructions,

ROSHCHIN

No. 2318
7.10.50



DOCUMENT No. 8
Soviet Record of Meeting of Stalin, North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, and Chinese Military Commander Peng Dehuai, Moscow, 4 September 1952

RECORD OF CONVERSATION OF I. V. STALIN AND KIM IL SUNG AND PENG DEHUI

4 September 1952

In attendance:

From our side, comrades Molotov, Malenkov, Mikoyan, Beria, Bulganin, Kaganovich.

From the Chinese and Korean side: Zhou En-lai, Chen Yun, Li Fu-chun, Zhang Wentian, Su Yu, Pak Hon Yong

Translators: Mun, Shi Zhe and Fedorenko.

STALIN: What is the mood of the Korean people?

KIM IL SUNG: The mood is good.

STALIN: Does [North Korean Foreign Minister] PAK HON YONG agree?

PAK HON YONG: Yes, the mood is good.

STALIN: What about in the armies?

KIM IL SUNG: In the armies the mood is also good.

STALIN: And what does PENG DEHUI think?

PENG DEHUI: Good.

KIM IL SUNG: The overall situation is favorable, if you do not include the bombing raids.

STALIN: Do you have any fighter aviation?

KIM IL SUNG: We have one division.

STALIN: China will have a hard time introducing its air force because everyone can declare that these are not volunteers anymore, but government troops. Volunteers do not have their own air force. We can ask: would it be advantageous for the democratic camp? In my opinion, it would not be advantageous to announce that the Chinese government... [portion cut off]

Troops wage the war. KIM IL SUNG should have Korean aviation.

KIM IL SUNG: If material conditions allow, we could form 1-2 aircraft divisions.

STALIN: Although the Korean people are tired of war, they deserve to be called heroic people. Since the Korean has suffered, we are ready to disarm our 1-2 divisions for the benefit of Korea.

KIM IL SUNG: We thank you.

STALIN: Do you have a division of fighters?

KIM IL SUNG: Yes we have.

STALIN: It could change seats [i.e., its pilots could be transferred to new divisions - trans.]

KIM IL SUNG: There is another division, in the training school.

STALIN: We can provide a material basis for 1-3 divisions.

KIM IL SUNG: We could find people for 1-3 divisions.

STALIN. Good, we will give you the material base for 3 divisions. What else does Korea lack?

KIM IL SUNG. As a result of the constant intensification of the enemy's bombing we need to build up our anti-aircraft artillery. Recently we asked for 5 regiments of anti-aircraft artillery, but we really need 10 regiments. We asked 5 from you, comrade STALIN, and 5 - from the Chinese comrades. Mao Zedong said that currently it is impossible for China to meet Korea's request. Therefore we are asking you to give us 10 regiments of anti-aircraft artillery.

STALIN. How many divisions do you have on the ground [*nazemnikh divizii*]?

KIM IL SUNG. We have 18 divisions.

STALIN. And how much of artillery?

KIM IL SUNG. We have a few regiments, but they are under-armed.

STALIN. There are two artillery regiments in our division. The same situation is in China. What about you?

KIM IL SUNG. We have a similar system.

STALIN. If you lack something, make an appropriate list.

KIM IL SUNG. We have such a list.

STALIN. Do you have mortars?

KIM IL SUNG. Yes, 122-mm [caliber].

STALIN. We will give you material base for 10 divisions of anti-aircraft artillery.

KIM IL SUNG. We thank you, comrade STALIN.

In our ground troops we lack 122-mm howitzers and other armament. We could present additional requests.

STALIN. What else do you lack?

KIM IL SUNG. Especially acute is the problem with supplies for engineering troops and communication troops. Here we are grossly undersupplied. The same situation is in aircraft. We lack equipment and materials [*oborudovaniia I materialov*]. This is what will force us in a month to stop production of shells of 122-mm caliber.

STALIN. Give us the list of materials you need.

KIM IL SUNG. This list is made.

STALIN. What is the situation with food, with bread and rice?

KIM IL SUNG. We have a good harvest this year, but we will not last on it until next year. Mao Zedong promised to procure us with clothing and food.

STALIN. Do they eat wheat in your country, or only rice?

KIM IL SUNG. During our hardest times you, Comrade STALIN, had sent us a gift of 50 thousand tons of food-stuffs. Our people like wheat flour. Overcoming present difficulties, the Korean people try to make ends meet, but we lack means of transportation and we cannot solve this problem by ourselves. We would like to receive automobiles, tractors and chemical fertilizers from the Soviet government.

STALIN. Give us an appropriate list.

They say that you, Chinese and Koreans, have a disagreement of some sort about how to conduct negotiations with Americans. Is that right?

KIM IL SUNG. In my opinion, there are no serious conflicts of opinion. We have agreed to the versions, suggested by our Chinese comrades. But taking into consideration the grave situation, in which the Korean people found itself, we are interested in signing the armistice as soon as possible. Our Chinese comrades are also interested in that.

STALIN. We have discussed this issue with the Chinese delegation. There was a proposal not to agree to the American conditions in regards to the prisoners of war, and instead to insist on our own conditions. Someone has expressed an opinion that if the Americans do not want to return 20% of Chinese and Korean POWs, then it would be advisable to detain 10% of American POWs until the Chinese and Korean POWs are released; or to say that if they don't release these 20% of Chinese and Korean prisoners-of-war, then we would not return 20% of their POWs as long as they hold Chinese and Koreans POWs. Perhaps this arrangement is even better.

We could settle on this and negotiate a cease-fire. As for the talks about the unreleased portion of the POWs, we can continue them after the cessation of hostilities, after the cease-fire.

I do not know how you would feel about this, but I think that this arrangement would convince everyone of the sincerity of your stand.

The Americans might say that 20% of Chinese and Korean POWs do not want to return to their homeland. In this case it would be advisable to declare that we do not believe this.

This combination delays the question of 20% of POWs while 60% of them are released. This is the core of the proposal.

Our Chinese comrades believe that at the present time we should not introduce any new proposals and that we should bide our time, until new proposals are introduced by Americans, in order for us to make revisions. Do you know about this?

KIM IL SUNG: We have heard about this from Mao Zedong.

STALIN: And what did Mao Zedong say on this issue?

KIM IL SUNG: During his conversation with us, Mao Zedong suggested a few alternatives: the first was to continue to insist on the release of all POWs; the second — to negotiate the question of POWs after the armistice; the third — due to the detention of our POWs by the opponent, we also have to detain a corresponding quantity of their POWs.

In this manner, Mao Zedong's point of view coincides with your point of view, comrade STALIN.

We believe that these 3 options are the most appropriate ones. But I would like to ask for your advice on what steps we should take to secure a resolution of the question.

STALIN: In my opinion, we should continue to dispute the release of all POWs for some time (a month or a few weeks). If we don't succeed, then we should propose the 20% deal. We are talking here not about different versions, but about different stands. The first stand is the release of all POWs; the second is non-release of POWs up to 20%.

True, one may ask another question: is it advisable to make any new proposals now, or should we bide our time until Americans make a new proposal[?] We have to insist on the complete exchange of POWs and see how the situation will turn out.

The second arrangement is advantageous for you and for your campaign. They do not release 20% of your POWs and you do not release 20% of their POWs. The second arrangement would introduce discord into the American camp. There would be a campaign for the release of POWs and for the cessation of war. That would be advantageous to you.

That is our opinion on this issue.

How do Americans conduct themselves in battle: do they fight well?

PENG DEHUAI: The weakest trait of Americans is their poor morale.

STALIN: The reason for this is the unpopularity of the war. I would like to know how they fight: with inspiration, with skill, or with numerical superiority?

PENG DEHUAI: During the period of January-February [1952] Americans conducted more than 200 offensive attacks, but their success rate was only 1%. On the other hand, we conducted only 30 offensive attacks in a month, 80-90% of which were successful.

STALIN. What were these successes are exactly about?

PENG DEHUAI. We managed to destroy small units of the enemy - a platoon or a company.

STALIN. Do you agree, KIM IL SUNG?

KIM IL SUNG. Of course I agree.

STALIN. American fortifications are strong?

PENG DEHUAI. In the recent time their fortifications became much stronger, but our fortifications became reinforced as well. The American constructions are weaker than ours, but their building equipment is better.

STALIN. How many fortified lines do they have?

PENG DEHUAI. 3 lines.

STALIN. And how many lines of fortifications do you have?

PENG DEHUAI. Essentially 2 lines, and the third is only under constructions.

STALIN. And do you have minefields?

PENG DEHUAI. We do not have enough mines and barbed wire. We capture them from the enemy and use them against the enemy.

STALIN. During the war we widely practiced minefields. There were special maps that indicated passages for our troops. We believe it is impossible to wage a war without minefields.

PENG DEHUAI. Our positions are at a very close distance to the enemy - only 300 - 500 meters.

STALIN. Your positions must be too much forward-based.

PENG DEHUAI. It may be because since April we continue advancing.

STALIN. And what is the distance between the lines of fortification?

PENG DEHUAI: The distance is not great, it depends on the terrain. In some places the lines converge, while in others the distance reaches 20 kilometers. At the present time we are creating structures from reinforced concrete.

STALIN: Do you have entrenchments?

PENG DEHUAI: Yes.

MALENKOV: What explains the fact that we take few prisoners, while the opponent takes many?

PENG DEHUAI: On the whole we took more prisoners than the opponent.

STALIN: How many Chinese and Korean prisoners are there?

PENG DEHUAI: According to our calculations, there are 12

thousand Chinese prisoners, but according to the American announcements, there are 20 thousand. The number of Korean prisoners is greater because Americans managed to take a great number of Korean prisoners before October 1951. During their offensive attacks Americans also captured a significant number of prisoners from reserve brigade forces.

Since Chinese volunteers entered the Korean War, a total of 12 thousand troops were taken prisoner, 8 thousand of which were Americans. The number of *lisynmanovskikh* [North Korean] POWs is 40 thousand. However, due to difficult living conditions, many foreign POWs have died.

KIM IL SUNG: Based on the list produced by us, the total number of prisoners taken by us is 12 thousand people, 4,416 of which are foreigners, and the rest — “*lisynmanovtsy*.” POWs include 300 American pilots, 30 of whom are officers. Around 27 thousand South Koreans were transferred to the divisions of People’s Revolutionary Army. There were no media announcements about these POWs.

MALENKOV. Do you rotate Chinese volunteers at the front-line?

PENG DEHUAI. Yes we do.

MALENKOV. Does it mean that Chinese divisions have training opportunities?

PENG DEHUAI. Yes. By August 1953 all the divisions of volunteers in Korea will be replaced. All commanding cadres of the People’s Liberation Army of China (on the level of the army, corps, division) will be fully rotated through the Korean front.

STALIN. Do you have “Katyushas” [rocket-launchers]?

PENG DEHUAI. We have one division on the frontline and another in the rear.

STALIN. Are there guerilla units acting behind the enemy’s frontline?

KIM IL SUNG. Yes, they act, although conditions are very hard.

STALIN. Are there Japanese among prisoners?

PENG DEHUAI. There are only American Japanese.

MALENKOV. How you could explain that during the carpet bombing raids of American aviation in North Korea so few planes are shot down?

PENG DEHUAI. We believe that not a few [were shot down]. Since the beginning of war 5,800 American planes were shot down.

STALIN. Have Chinese pilots mastered jet-planes?

PENG DEHUAI. Chinese pilots can take part in combat operations when they are guided by Soviet pilots.

STALIN. So what, are they afraid?

PENG DEHUAI. They have enough courage, but they cannot fly in formations.

STALIN. You should let them fly more, only in the air they can train. There was a time when Soviet pilots also did not want to fly, they preferred to sit in schools. But gradually they began to fly, they learned to fly. Now we evaluate pilots by the number of flights. Those who have more flights get decorations. School training gives little. Combat training provides real experience. You should not be afraid to be in the air; on the contrary, you should feel in the air like at home. [STALIN, of all people, had real phobia of flying - trans.] You should also train them to fly at night. Otherwise you will not have aviation. You also need to have a system of rewards and decorations.

Do you have orders and medals?

PENG DEHUAI. Not yet. We would like to introduce them in 1953.

STALIN. You cannot go on like this. In my opinion, they [the Chinese] have an anarchist-like disregard of orders and medals. They did not even have generals. They believe that all this is against [the principles of] communism. In reality, the system of ranks, insignia and the system of rewards in the army is of enormous importance; you cannot build a real army without them. Otherwise, only partisan formations can exist like that. For 15 years they waged a civil war, expelled American imperialists, scored victory, but there are no military ranks, insignias and orders in the army. This is wrong. You should give a serious thought to it. The officer corps should be well taken care of, there should be salary, etc. The main thing is to preserve and take care of officer cadres, to create all necessary conditions for them, for they are military specialists.



DOCUMENT No. 9

Telegram from USSR Foreign Minister V.M. Molotov to Soviet Ambassador in Beijing, 4 July 1953

Ciphered Telegram # 13464
Tenth Department of the MFA SSSR
Top Secret

Received; 19:20 on 4 July 1953

Sent: 21:20 on 4 July 1953.

To: Beijing, Soviet Ambassador

URGENT [vne ocheredi]

1211-1220. Pay a visit to Siu-Tsuan and tell him the following.

1. The Soviet government regards the measures planned by the government of the PRC as correct. The Soviet government is also in agreement with the draft answer to [U.S. General Mark] Clark from Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai.

2. The Soviet government believes that the entire course of armistice negotiations testifies to a resolute success of the tactics employed by the Sino-Korean side in these negotiations. The Sino-Korean side demonstrated to the whole world its striving for peace and readiness to conduct negotiations and find the ground for a compromise while protecting their state interests. American ruling circles became isolated in their policy that leaves the blame for the delay of the armistice negotiations and for the continuation of war in Korea in the eyes of the world public opinion at the door of the US.

3. As to Syngman Rhee and his recent provocative actions aimed at complicating the negotiations and at delaying the end of the war, we believe that it is not his independent policy. It is absolutely obvious that all the recent actions of the Syngman Rhee clique and the fuss around them were done in execution of certain tasks set by the US ruling circles which act to please the most aggressive segment of American monopolists. Due to the successful tactics of the Sino-Korean side all the obstacles to the conclusion of an armistice agreement have been removed. This put in a tight corner not only American foreign but also domestic policy, since there is no more possibility to refer to the aggravation of the international situation, to the Korean war, etc. Under the new circumstances the US ruling circles face serious political difficulties in sustaining the atmosphere of military hysteria, high military appropriations, etc. Therefore American ruling circles are taking advantage of Syngman Rhee and the noise around him in order to maintain in the US (and not only in the US) the unstable semi-military political atmosphere and to delay, in one way or another, the conclusion of an armistice. However, the thrust of public opinion in the US as well as in other countries has increased so much that the US ruling circles could hardly manage to put off ending the Korean war for long. This does not exclude that all kind of noise around Syngman Rhee continues and that, perhaps, there would be some new attempts to delay the conclusion of the armistice in Korea.

4. The Soviet government deems it necessary to return to the question about the trip of Kim Il Sung to Punmunjom to sign the armistice agreement. We cannot ignore the defiant conduct of the Syngman Rhee clique, for it may play some kind of dangerous tricks on Kim Il Sung. Therefore, Kim Il Sung should be advised against going to Punmunjom. Instead, he should order another responsible Korean com-

rade to sign the agreement on behalf of the KPDR. We hope that the Chinese friends will agree with this.

Telegraph the results,

MOLOTOV

Copies: 1 - cde. MALENKOV

2 - cde. Molotov

3. cde. Khrushchev

4 - cde. Vyshinsky

5 - cde. Gromyko

6. - cde. Zorin

7. - 10th department

8 Copy.

Shown to cde. Podtserov, Fedorenko.

NOTES

¹ See Mark Kramer's obituary of Volkogonov in *CWIHP Bulletin* 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), p. 93.

² For more information on the Volkogonov collection at the Library of Congress, go to <http://www.loc.gov/rr/mss/text/volkogon.html>. Most of the documents here can be found in the Korea folder in box 27.

³ For a discussion of the broader context of this document, see Kathryn Weathersby, "Should We Fear This?" *Stalin and the Danger of War with America*, CWIHP Working Paper No. 39 (July 2002).

⁴ See, e.g., Kim's comments to Shtykov on 17 January 1950, in Shtykov to Vyshinsky, 19 January 1950, in Kathryn Weathersby, "To Attack or Not to Attack? Stalin, Kim Il Sung, and the Prelude to War," *CWIHP Bulletin* 5 (Spring 1995), p. 8.

⁵ For a discussion of the rationale behind Stalin's withdrawal of Soviet advisors from the front line immediately before the invasion began, see K. Weathersby, "New Russian Documents on the Korean War," *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6/7 (Winter 1995/1996): p. 31.

⁶ For previously released Soviet evidence on this topic, see Alexandre Y. Mansourov, "Stalin, Mao, Kim, and China's Decision to Enter the Korean War, Sept. 16-Oct. 15, 1950: New Evidence from the Russian Archives," *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 94-119.

⁷ For messages from Pyongyang in late September, including Kim's appeal to Stalin, see Mansourov, "Stalin, Mao, Kim, and China's Decision to Enter the Korean War," *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 110-114.

⁸ See message from Filippov (Stalin) to Mao and Zhou Enlai, 1 October 1950, Mansourov, "Stalin, Mao, Kim, and China's Decision to Enter the Korean War," *CWIHP Bulletin* No. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), p. 114. As early as July 5, Stalin had communicated with Zhou about the advisability of concentrating nine divisions of Chinese "volunteers" who could enter the war should the enemy crossing the 38th parallel, and had promised air cover in that event. See Filippov (Stalin) to N.V. Roshchin (with message for Zhou), 5 July 1950, see *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 112-113.

⁹ See Mao Zedong to Stalin, 2 October 1950, Mansourov, "Stalin, Mao, Kim, and China's Decision to Enter the Korean War," *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 114-116. This Russian document contradicted a previously released Chinese version of a Mao message to Stalin of the same date indicating that China had decided to enter the war; it appears that this earlier version was an unsent draft. See Mansourov, "Stalin, Mao, Kim, and China's Decision to Enter the Korean War, Sept. 16-Oct. 15, 1950: New Evidence from the Russian Archives," *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 100, 106-107 fn 30; Shen Zhihua, trans. Chen Jian, "The Discrepancy between the Russian and Chinese Versions of Mao's 2 October 1950 Message to Stalin on Chinese Entry into the Korean War: A Chinese Scholar's Reply," *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 237-242; and Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 54-55, 303 fn 34-36.

¹⁰ See Fyn Si [Stalin] to Kim Il Sung (via Shtykov), 8 [7] October 1950, Mansourov, "Stalin, Mao, Kim, and China's Decision to Enter the Korean War," *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 116-117. See also K. Weathersby, "'Should We Fear This?' Stalin and the Danger of War with America," *CWIHP Working Paper No. 39*.

¹¹ See esp. the paperback edition of Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994 [& 1996]), pp. x-xii, 171-189, and Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, esp. pp. 55-58, 90.

¹² See, e.g., Mao's comments to Soviet ambassador Pavel Yudin on 22 July 1958 in Zhang Shu Guang and Chen Jian, "The Emerging

Disputes Between Beijing and Moscow: Ten Newly Available Chinese Documents," *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 155, 156.

¹³ See Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War*, *passim*.

¹⁴ See record of Stalin-Zhou conversation, 20 August 1952, *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), p. 12.

¹⁵ Stalin-Zhou conversation, 20 August 1952, *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), p. 12. For a detailed discussion of Russian documents on the armistice negotiations, see Kathryn Weathersby, "Stalin, Mao, and the End of the Korean War," in Odd Arne Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945-1963* (Washington and Stanford: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 1998): 90-116.

¹⁶ For the context of this discussion, see the record of the Stalin-Zhou conversations on 20 August 1952, 3 September 1952, and 19 September 1952, in *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 9-20. Zhou had raised the possibility of Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai coming to Moscow during his talk with Stalin on August 20.

¹⁷ Stalin-Zhou conversation, 20 August 1952, *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), p. 13.

¹⁸ See in particular K. Weathersby, "New Russian Documents on the Korean War," *CWIHP Bulletin* 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), esp. pp. 34-35 and documents on pp. 80 ff.

¹⁹ See William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 330-339.

From the CWIHP Annals



Former US Deputy Secretary of State **Strobe Talbott** (right) discusses **William Taubman's** "*Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*" (2003) at a 26 March 2003 CWIHP seminar.

From the CWIHP Annals



Former Polish President and Nobel Peace Prize recipient **Lech Walesa** addresses the conference “The Economic Cold War,” organized by CWIHP, The Economic Cold War History Project (Academy of Finland and University of Tampere) and the Russian State Archives of Contemporary History (RSACH). The conference took place in the House of Estates (Säätytalo) in Helsinki on 14-16 September 2003. For more information visit the CWIHP website at <http://cwihip.si.edu>.

Woodrow Wilson Center Public Policy Scholar **Marilena Gala** (University of Florence) discusses her new research project on “The European Security Issue” at a 15 December 2003 CWIHP seminar.



Leopoldo Nuti (University of Rome III, left) and **Samuel F. Wells, Jr.** (Woodrow Wilson Center) at the 28-30 September 2003 Critical Oral History Conference on “The Road to Helsinki.” The conference on the lead-up to the 1975 Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was co-sponsored by the Machiavelli Center for Cold War Studies, CWIHP and the National Security Archive. Held at the Villa Finlay in Florence, the meeting featured several former ambassadors involved in the CSCE negotiations, including Jacques Andreani (France), James Goodby (USA), John Maresca (USA), Yuri Dubinin (Russia), Yuri Kashlev (Russia), Luigi Vittorio Ferraris (Italy), Nicolai Ecobescu (Romania). About 50 scholars and students attended the meeting, which was held in cooperation with the Zurich-based Parallel History Project. For more information visit the CWIHP website at <http://cwihip.si.edu>.

Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Cuba: New Evidence

By Svetlana Savaranskaya

The most studied crisis of the twentieth century—the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962—never fails to provide researchers with new puzzles. As Raymond L. Garthoff pointed out in *CWIHP Bulletin 11*, “Each new tranche of revelations about the Cuban Missile Crisis helps to answer some old questions about it, but also raises new ones.”¹ One of the most interesting questions still remaining concerns Soviet intentions regarding the weapons not explicitly covered in the exchange of letters between US President John F. Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev, and the evolving nature of the Soviet-Cuban military agreement.

The new documents from the Russian archives that became available at the Havana Conference² (“The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: 40th Anniversary Conference”) in October 2002 shed new light on Khrushchev’s decision to deploy and then to remove tactical nuclear weapons from Cuba. They also invite further discussion on the following questions: what were the Soviet intentions regarding the tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba? What was the nature of the debate in the Soviet Union on the removal of these weapons from Cuba? Were there differing positions between the military and the political leadership on this issue? When, and why, was the final decision to withdraw those weapons made? When did the last tactical nuclear warhead leave Cuba?

We know that Khrushchev’s initial decision to deploy a nuclear-armed group of Soviet forces in Cuba included sending both strategic and tactical nuclear weapons (80 cruise missiles with nuclear warheads, as specified in the original plan for “Operation Anadyr” of 24 May 1962). In early September, Khrushchev augmented the plan by adding 6 nuclear bombs for the IL-28 bomber and 12 short-range tactical nuclear missiles for the dual-use Luna complex. (Later in September he also revised the plans for naval deployment, drastically reducing the naval capability specified in the plan.)

Until January 1992, US officials had been unaware of the presence of tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba in 1962.³ This type of weaponry had not been explicitly covered in the exchange of letters between Khrushchev and Kennedy. Khrushchev had promised Kennedy that the “the so-called offensive weapons would be removed,” which referred to the short- and medium-range ballistic missiles SS-4 (R-12, with a range of 1,050 miles) and SS-5 (R-14, with a range of approx. 2,000 miles) capable of reaching US territory. Even if the Americans had known about the presence of tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba, it would have been hard for them to make an argument that tactical nuclear weapons were offensive since their short range allowed them to be used only as battlefield weapons against an invading force.

Exploiting the ambiguity of Khrushchev’s phrase, the US demanded the withdrawal of the IL-28 bombers declaring them an offensive weapon. After Moscow decided to withdraw the bombers, Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan,

sent by Khrushchev to Havana, discussed the US demand with the Cubans. Mikoyan presented the issue in such a way that the Soviet government appeared to be consulting with the Cubans on the withdrawal of the IL-28s.

No such pretense was taken, however, on the issue of tactical nuclear weapons; there were no consultations with the Cuban leadership. Much to their surprise the Cubans were told that the tactical nuclear weapons were to be returned to the Soviet Union, even though they were not covered by the Kennedy-Khrushchev exchange. A more definitive answer to the question of why the Soviets decided to withdraw tactical nuclear weapons from Cuba may become feasible only after full access to the minutes of the CPSU Presidium sessions in the fall of 1962 (the so-called “Malin Notes”), which remain classified in the Presidential Archive of the Russian Federation in Moscow.⁴ Unfortunately, the selections of the Malin notes declassified so far do not contain any references to the discussion of whether to remove tactical nuclear weapons, which one would suspect, must have taken place at the Politburo some time in November 1962.

Nevertheless, the newly declassified documents from the Presidential Archive (“Special Declassification,” April 2002) and from the personal archive of Mikoyan’s son, Sergo Mikoyan, show that Khrushchev was ambivalent about the tactical nuclear weapons and their safety throughout the crisis, and that eventually he concluded that they were just too dangerous to be left in the hands of the Cuban ally. There are also some indications of differences between the Soviet military (who might have wanted to keep the weapons on the island) and Khrushchev.

The earliest sign of the Soviets ambiguity on the issue of tactical nuclear weapons emerged in September in discussions concerning the predelegation of authority to use the tactical nuclear weapons in the event of an US invasion of Cuba. The question was whether local commanders should have the authority to use tactical nuclear weapons if they were under attack, and if it was impossible to contact Moscow. Concerning the predelegation of authority to use the weapons in the event of an invasion of Cuba during which it was impossible that contact with Moscow. As General Anatoly Gribkov, the top Soviet military official in Cuba in 1962, explained in his 1996 book *Operation Anadyr*,⁵ a directive predelegating the authority to use tactical nuclear weapons had been prepared by the General Staff but, it was never signed by Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky, likely reflecting Khrushchev’s unwillingness to predelegate the authority to launch to the local commanders.

Even though the directive was never signed, Malinovsky apparently remained apprehensive as to whether General Issa Pliev, commander of the Soviet Group of Forces in Cuba, understood the procedures for using tactical nuclear weap-

ons in a critical situation. On 27 October he sent an urgent telegram to Pliiev “categorically confirming that you are prohibited to use [tactical] nuclear weapons.” The cable might have been prompted by the shooting down of an American U-2 plane that day, despite the fact that Soviet commanders did not have the authority to do so.

According to the newly declassified Presidium materials, in anticipation of President Kennedy’s address to the nation on 22 October 1962, the Soviet leadership discussed the possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons if the U.S. paratroopers landed on Cuba immediately after President Kennedy’s speech. Specifically, Malin notes Khrushchev saying “To give instructions to Pliiev—to bring the troops to combat readiness. To make every effort not to use atomic

of the military agreement with Moscow, which was supposed to be signed during Khrushchev’s visit to Cuba. Moscow was silent regarding the agreement. The discussions in the beginning of November in Moscow apparently came to no conclusion. The Malinovsky-to-Pliiev telegrams dated early November tentatively assumed that the tactical nuclear weapons would stay in Cuba.

On 8 November, Mikoyan sent a telegram to Moscow prompting Khrushchev to make a decision regarding the military agreement and suggesting his version of the solution—transferring the remaining weapons to the Cubans after the Soviet specialists trained them, and then gradually withdrawing most of the Soviet specialists so that the USSR could not be accused of having a military base in Cuba (Soviet official

[Among] the most interesting questions still remaining concerns Soviet intentions regarding the weapons not explicitly covered in the exchange of letters between US President John F. Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev.

[weapons] in the early stages. If there is a landing [of U.S. forces]—tactical atomic weapons, and strategic—[wait] until instructions (excluding the use of the means of Statsenko’s equipment).

After Khrushchev’s decision to remove the strategic weapons from Cuba, the available cable traffic between “Reed” (Malinovsky) and “Pavlov” (Pliiev) reveals that there was considerable ambiguity regarding the withdrawal of the tactical nuclear warheads. At the beginning of November, Malinovsky suggested that warheads for cruise missiles, Lunas and the Il-28 bombs should be left in Cuba because “so far their withdrawal was not discussed.”⁶

The Cubans, of course, were very interested in the fate of the remaining military equipment and fully expected that those weapons that were not a part of the Kennedy-Khrushchev exchange would remain in Cuba. This interest was expressed repeatedly in the Cuban leaders’ inquiries about the fate of the unsigned military agreement between the Soviet Union and Cuba in the conversations with Mikoyan.

On 6 November, Mikoyan sent a long letter to the CPSU Central Committee summarizing his first conversations with the Cuban leaders.⁷ In that letter he described an episode during which Fidel Castro alleged that the Soviet Union had promised the Americans in the Khrushchev letters to “withdraw all weapons and all military specialists from Cuba,” to which Mikoyan replied, reassuring Fidel: “And you know that not only in these letters but today as well, we hold to the position that you will keep all the weapons with the exception of the offensive weapons and associated service personnel, which were promised to be withdrawn in Khrushchev’s letter.”⁸

Not fully reassured by Mikoyan’s clarifications, the Cubans kept pressing the Soviet representatives about the fate

policy at the time was to have no military bases on foreign soil). The telegram does not even mention the tactical nuclear weapons, and it is unclear whether Mikoyan included them with the “remaining weapons.”

Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko responded to Mikoyan’s telegram approving his suggestion on the part of the Presidium. Between 6 November and 12 November, all available evidence indicates, tensions between the USSR and Cuba were declining, and Mikoyan’s conversations with the Cuban leaders were quite friendly and cordial. They visited state farms and educational centers and discussed various issues concerning Soviet-Cuban cooperation.

But on 12 November, the emerging fraternal bliss was shattered by the confrontation over the Soviet decision to withdraw the Il-28s. Although Mikoyan tried to be as sensitive as possible in framing the issue of withdrawal by seemingly asking for Cuban consent, the Cuban leader quickly realized the decision had already been made in Moscow.⁹

The Cuban reaction to the Soviet decision to withdraw the Il-28s was so openly negative—Castro even refused to meet with Mikoyan for several days—that it surprised and alarmed the Moscow leadership. In addition, on 15 November, Castro, while visiting his troops and without consultation with the Soviets, issued an order to shoot at any low-flying US reconnaissance aircraft. That move surprised the Kremlin, which at that moment was engaged in difficult negotiations with the United States over the conditions of withdrawal and inspections of weapons.

Khrushchev once again realized that he could not control his independent and emotional ally Fidel Castro, and that such an alliance, given the presence of tactical nuclear weapons on the island, could be downright dangerous. Castro’s order led to an unprecedented outburst of anger and irritation on the part of Khrushchev, who called the Cuban leader

“unreliable” and threatened to withdraw all of the Soviet forces from Cuba if Castro did not immediately correct his course.¹⁰

Khrushchev’s long telegram to Mikoyan on 16 November signified a turning point in the Soviet-Cuban story of crisis resolution. Although we will only know for sure when the Soviet Presidium minutes become available, one may hypothesize that the decision to remove tactical nuclear weapons from Cuba was made between 15 November and 21 November. On 20 November, Malinovsky ordered Pliev to load all tactical nuclear weapons on the ship “Atkarsk” and return them to the Soviet Union. Gribkov stated at the October 2002 conference in Havana that the last nuclear warhead left Cuba on 20 November.¹¹

On 21 November, Mikoyan sent a telegram to Moscow, in which he concluded that all tactical nuclear weapons should be removed from Cuba. This telegram read in stark contrast to his telegram of 8 November. On 22 November, the CPSU Presidium issued instructions to Mikoyan in connection with the Cuban Foreign Ministry’s message to the Cuban representative at the United Nations, Carlos Lechuga, that “we should keep the tactical nuclear weapons.” Mikoyan was instructed to make sure that the Cubans stop talking about any nuclear weapons and to inform them that “these weapons belong to us, and are to be kept in our hands only, we never transferred them to anyone, and we do not intend to transfer them to anyone. In addition, as we have told the Americans, all nuclear weapons have been removed from Cuba.”¹²

The issue reached its culmination during the meeting between Mikoyan and the Cuban leadership on the evening of 22 November, at which Mikoyan confronted the Cubans with the fact that all tactical nuclear weapons would be removed from Cuba even though they were not part of the agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States. This unexpected turn of events was clearly hard for Castro to accept, but eventually he stopped trying to pressure Mikoyan into finding some way to keep those weapons, or even any significant Soviet military presence on the island. According to the available documents, the issue of tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba was never raised again after 22 November.

Most likely, the decision to withdraw the tactical nuclear weapons resulted from “nuclear learning” on the part of the Soviet leadership. Although the Khrushchev initially intended to leave the tactical nuclear weapons along with the rest of the equipment not covered in the exchange of letters in Cuba, he soon began to appreciate the danger of an inadvertent nuclear conflict and some time in the second half of November 1962 Moscow apparently resolved to withdraw them. However, more evidence is still needed to be able to state conclusively when the final decision was made and what the main argument was for removing the tactical nuclear weapons.

The documents below became available as a result of international collaboration between the National Security Archive and the Russian scholars, military veterans of the Cuban missile crisis and archivists. For a more extensive look at the new Russian documentation on the Cuban Mis-

sile Crisis, consult the websites of the National Security Archive (<http://www.nsarchive.org>) and the Cold War International History Project (<http://cwihip.si.edu>) as well as the forthcoming book by Sergo A. Mikoyan.

Dr. Svetlana Savranskaya is director of Russian programs at the National Security Archive at The George Washington University.



DOCUMENT No. 1

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), 22 October 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET

TROSTNIK...to Comrade PAVLOV

In connection with the possible landing of Americans participating in the maneuvers in the Caribbean Sea on Cuba, undertake urgent measures to increase combat readiness, and to repel the enemy by joint efforts of the Cuban army and all units of the Soviet troops, excluding the weapons of Statsenko’s and of all Beloborodov’s cargo.

Director

#4/389

22 October 1962

23.30



DOCUMENT No. 2

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), 23 October 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET

TROSTNIK...to Comrade PAVLOV

From 00 Moscow time on 24 October establish two-way radio connection on two directions on radio station R-

100. Also establish round-the-clock reception on the radio receiver “Volna-K” in radio network # 21 at the frequency 17.1 kHz.

Director
23 October



DOCUMENT No. 3

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), 25 October 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET

TROSTNIK...to Comrade PAVLOV personally

In connection with the fact that US Navy is blockading approaches to Cuba, we made a decision not to send 665 and 668 RP [missile regiment] to you. You should not unload warheads for R-14 from transport ship “Alexandrovsk.” If they are already unloaded, organize secret loading back onto “Alexandrovsk.” Transport ship “Alexandrovsk” with the warheads for R-14 should be prepared for transportation back to the Soviet Union, accompanied by “Almetievsk.” Remove the cannons with the crews. Carefully instruct captain of the ship and head of the echelon about their conduct on their way and their actions in accordance with their instructions. In case of extreme situation they have to sink the ship.

Report on readiness of “Alexandrovsk” for departure.

Director
25 October

DOCUMENT No. 4

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), 27 October 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET

TROSTNIK...to Comrade PAVLOV

Stop all work on deployment of R-12 and R-14—you are aggravating the United Nations. Camouflage everything carefully, work only at night.

Director
27 October



DOCUMENT No. 5

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), 27 October 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET

TROSTNIK...to Comrade PAVLOV
to # 8/154

We categorically confirm that you are prohibited from using nuclear weapons from missiles, FKR [cruise missiles], “Luna” and aircraft without orders from Moscow.

Confirm receipt.

Director
76639
27 October 1962
16.30



DOCUMENT No. 6

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), 27 October 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET

TROSTNIK to Comrade PAVLOV
to # 8/162

Send "Alexandrovsk" accompanied by steamship "Bratsk" to the Soviet Union.

Director
27 October



DOCUMENT No. 7

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), 28 October 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET
TROSTNIK to Comrade PAVLOV

We believe that you were too hasty in shooting down the US U-2 reconnaissance plane; at the time an agreement was emerging to avert, by peaceful means, an attack on Cuba.

We have made the decision to dismantle the R-12s and remove them. Begin to implement this measure.

Confirm receipt.

Director

No. 76645
28 October 1962
16:00



DOCUMENT No. 8

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), 28 October 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET
TROSTNIK to Comrade PAVLOV

In addition to the order not to use S-75s, you are ordered not to dispatch fighter aircraft in order to avoid collisions with US reconnaissance planes.

Director

No. 4/835
28 October 1962
18:30



DOCUMENT No. 9

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), 30 October 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET
TROSTNIK comrade PAVLOV

Load warheads for R-12 on "Alexandrovsk" and send the transport accompanied by the ready ship to the Soviet Union.

Director
30 October



DOCUMENT No. 10

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), early November 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET
From TROSTNIK to Comrade PAVLOV

Weapons should be transferred to the Cubans after the training on the following timetable:

MSP – 3 to 4 months,
Air Defense and Naval – 8 to 10 months,
Air force – 8 to 10 months,
Missiles "Luna" and FKR with conventional loads will be probably left in Cuba.

Send your considerations.

Director
[early November 1962]



DOCUMENT No. 11
Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliiev), ca. 5 November 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

TOP SECRET
From TROSTNIK to comrade PAVLOV

With regard to warheads for “Luna,” FKR [cruise missiles] and IL-28 airplanes, so far their withdrawal has not been discussed. They should be left in Cuba under your command.

Director
76190/sh
[circa 5 November 1962]



DOCUMENT No. 12
Ciphered Telegram from Anastas Mikoyan to CC CPSU, 6 November 1962

[Source: Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF), Special Declassification April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya and Andrea Hendrickson.]

TOP SECRET
Making Copies Prohibited

Copy No. 12
CIPHERED TELEGRAM

CC CPSU

It seems to me that it is now possible to go over some conclusions from the conversations I have had here. In connection with this I would like to cite a few characteristic mo-

ments.

Several hours before my arrival in Havana the Cuban leadership had decided that two representatives of the leadership would meet me at the airport, [Ernesto “Che”] Guevara and [Defense Minister] Raoul Castro. However, two hours before my arrival, upon receiving the text of my statement at the airport in New York in support of Cuba, their intentions changed and the entire leadership (except for the president) with Fidel Castro himself greeted me warmly and in a brotherly fashion. They all came with me to the residence and we conversed for about 15 minutes.

For the first conversation, Fidel received me in his private apartment. He went outside into the street and greeted me in front of the house where the car stopped and walked me to the upper floor. You received his statements, which he made in a calm, friendly tone, but in essence I could feel the acute dissatisfaction with our policy.

The next — second — meeting took place at the Presidential Palace. All six leaders participated in the conversation. Each time they met me in the corridors of the palace and accompanied me to the room where the discussions were held, and at the end of the discussions they all walked me to the car and we parted warmly. I was treated warmly everywhere.

During the conversations they acted calmly and listened attentively when I, in the course of several hours, tried to dispel their doubts, citing all possible arguments, one point after another, trying to prove that our policy was correct. They all listened to me with great attentiveness and took notes. I had the impression that I was speaking persuasively except for two moments, about which Fidel Castro posed questions during the conversation, expressing his dissatisfaction and his alarm.

1. The American radio and press have disseminated information that there is allegedly one section in the confidential letter from [Nikita] Khrushchev to [John F.] Kennedy from 26 October that cannot be published.

Apparently, that led him to entertain some suspicions.

Fidel asked whether there was another message from Khrushchev in addition to what had been given to him. I said that there was not. Fidel said: “If so, why would Kennedy, in his response from 27 October to Khrushchev’s 26 October letter already be mentioning the Soviet proposal to dismantle, and other things, although that was not directly mentioned in the confidential letter from Khrushchev from 26 October?” Apparently he suspects that there is another message from Khrushchev that was hidden from him, or a section of Khrushchev’s letter of 26 October that was not shown to him.

I explained that in his response from 27 October Kennedy formally responded only to the confidential letter of 26 October. However, in reality, he responded both to this one [26 October] and, mainly, to Khrushchev’s message from the 27th, which was openly transmitted on the radio, although Kennedy’s letter did not cite it directly. I said that all of the letters from Khrushchev to Kennedy, and everything that

was received from Kennedy confidentially, were given to Fidel. I participated in all the meetings and I know this very well, but if you want me to check again, then I will check all the documents I have with me and will add to my information tomorrow.

We checked everything carefully. After that, I said that actually there was one Kennedy letter, as we just found out, that did not make it to Fidel, but it does not have any serious meaning. It was his confidential letter from 25 October in response to the confidential letter of Khrushchev from the 23rd, the text of which he has. In that letter, Kennedy continues to insist that the Soviet people allegedly lied to the Americans by secretly delivering the missile systems to Cuba. We read the text of the second short letter.

All these explanations allayed their suspicions, and after that Fidel immediately spoke and one could see that he was satisfied and that this question no longer had significance for him.

2. I said further: we had our information that the Americans were on the verge of attacking Cuba, and we received a telegram from Fidel Castro with similar information from other sources that within the next 24 hours an attack was expected. Then we decided to tie Kennedy's hands before world public opinion, and to thwart the invasion of Cuba. Then comrade Khrushchev on 28 October made the open statement on the radio ordering the dismantling and removal of the missiles. Of course, under normal conditions the draft of Khrushchev's letter would have been coordinated with our Cuban friends, but that would have required encoding, decoding, and translating it — and the same regarding the reply. That would have taken so much time that normal consultations would not have had a chance to be completed; the invasion of Cuba could have occurred and Cuba could have perished.

We had no other choice but to solve the main problem—prevent the attack against Cuba, hoping that our Cuban friends would understand the correctness of such actions, even though the normal procedures of consultation were not observed.

We only had 24 hours before the invasion of Cuba. One has to take into account that we had just hours left, and we could not act in any way differently than we did. And we have the results. The attack on Cuba was prevented, peace was preserved. Although you are right that not everything regarding procedures of consultation was followed that would have been possible under normal conditions.

It seems as though this got through to them and they understood me. When I finished all of these explanations, Fidel on his part responded and gave his assessment of all the previous discussions and his own analysis in the following words:

“I would like to respond to Comrade Mikoyan.

“We listened to Comrade Mikoyan's statement and explanation with great attention. Undoubtedly, these explanations, which help us to better understand the developments, were very valuable. We are thankful for your desire to explain all these developments to us and for all your efforts in

this regard. We have no doubts about your arguments regarding the fact that strategic missiles, after they have been discovered by the enemy, as a practical matter lose all military significance — or their significance becomes extremely small.

“We thank you for all these explanations and we understand that the intentions of the Soviet government cannot be assessed only on the basis of an analysis of the most recent events, especially because circumstances change very quickly and new situations develop. In [our] analysis, we have to take into account all the decisions that have been made on the basis of which the strategic weapons were deployed to Cuba and the agreement was signed. We intended to publish the agreement after completion of the assembly of the strategic missiles and after the elections in the USA. These decisions are evidence of the firm decisiveness of the Soviet Union to defend Cuba. They allow one to understand the political line of the Soviet Union correctly. Therefore I repeat that the analysis of the Soviet position can be correct only if one takes account of all the events and decisions, both in the period preceding the crisis and during the crisis as well.

“We do not doubt that if all the work on the assembly of the strategic weapons had been completed under conditions of secrecy, then we would have had a powerful means of deterrence against the American plans to invade our country. In this way the goals which both the Soviet government and the government of the Republic of Cuba pursued would have been attained. We believe, however, that the deployment of the Soviet missiles on Cuba had significance for the interests of the entire Socialist camp. Even if one does not see this deployment as providing military superiority, it had political and psychological importance in the struggle to deter imperialism and to prevent it from carrying out its aggressive plans. Therefore the deployment of strategic missiles in Cuba was carried out not only in the interests of defending Cuba but of the Socialist camp. This was done with our full consent.

“We understood the importance of this step very well, and we believe that it was the right step.

“We fully agree that we should not allow the unleashing of war. We have nothing against [your statement] that the measures you undertook pursued two goals, namely not to permit an invasion of Cuba and to avoid unleashing a world war. We are in full agreement with these goals, which the Soviet Union pursued.

“A misunderstanding emerged regarding the form that discussion of this issue took. However we understand that circumstances demanded quick actions and the situation was not normal. Evaluating past occurrences, we came to the conclusion that we could have conducted consultations on these critical issues in another form. Here, for example, the issue we are now discussing. It relates to the effect my letter had on the Soviet government decision [to withdraw the missiles] and the making public of the Soviet government's letter of 28 October. It is true that my letter did not have any relation to the issues raised in the letters of 26 and 27 October exchanged between the Soviet government and the government of the USA. [My] letter pursued one goal — to inform

the Soviet government about the inevitability of an invasion of Cuba. In it we did not speak about the slightest vacillation on our part; we clearly announced our willingness to fight. In addition, we did not say that we expected an invasion. We wrote that although it was possible, it was less probable. More probable, in our opinion, was an air attack with the sole purpose of destroying the strategic weapons on Cuba. The basis of the Soviet government decision of 28 October was already laid out in the letter to Kennedy dated 26 October and was clearly outlined in the letter of N.S. Khrushchev to Kennedy from 27 October. Those two documents contain the real basis of the decision, which was stated in the letter of 28 October. Thus, Kennedy's letter from 27 October meant his acceptance of Khrushchev's proposal from 26 October regarding his [Khrushchev's] consent to remove not only the strategic arms, but all the weapons if the United States would stop threatening Cuba with invasion. After all, this threat from the United States was the only reason that forced Cuba to arm itself. When Kennedy accepted that proposal (we did not know that he had accepted it), conditions emerged for developing the Soviet proposals and preparing a declaration regarding the agreement of both sides. You could have told the United States that the USSR was prepared to dismantle the equipment but wanted to discuss it with the Cuban government. In our opinion, this is how the question should have been resolved instead of immediately giving instructions on the withdrawal of the strategic weapons. This approach would have allowed us to weaken international tension and would have given us an opportunity to discuss the issues with the Americans under more favorable conditions. This way, we could have reached not only a lessening of international tensions, and not only discussed this issue under better conditions, but also attained a signed declaration.

"However, this is only a simple analysis of preceding events, which does not have any special importance at the present time.

"Now it is important for us to know what to do in the new conditions. How are we going to try to attain our main goals and at the same time not permit the unleashing of aggression and fight for the preservation of peace? Of course, if with time we can ensure a really stable peace, then in light of these new facts we will be able better and more correctly to assess the importance of those steps that have already been taken. The results of our struggle in the future will speak about the importance of the events of today. Of course very little in this struggle will depend on us.

"We are very grateful for all the explanations that Comrade Mikoyan has given us, and for his efforts to make us understand the development of recent events. We take into account the special conditions under which it was necessary to act. We do not have any doubts about the friendly nature of our relations, which are based on common principles. Our respect for the Soviet Union is unshakable. We know that it respects our sovereignty and is prepared to defend us from aggression on the part of imperialism. Therefore at present it is most important for us to define our future joint steps.

"I would like to assure you, Comrade Mikoyan, of our complete trust."

Upon listening to this, it became clear that in general things were going well and that the mood was changing for the better compared to what it had been at the beginning.

However even this statement had moments [points] that could not be left alone without new explanations. On my part, I expressed satisfaction with the progress of discussions and with the analysis of past events, and said that I have to make two comments, not with the purpose of prolonging the discussion about the past, but to bring some clarity.

First. It is not clear where our comrades got the understanding that the Soviet Union gave the Americans its consent to withdraw all weapons and all military specialists from Cuba, as if the Soviet Union gave its consent to that in Khrushchev's confidential letter of 26 October. If that were so, then the Americans would have stuck to that and it would have been mentioned both in Kennedy's statement published in the press and in the next letter from Khrushchev. But you know that both Kennedy and Khrushchev in all these statements spoke only about the so-called "offensive" weapons and the personnel supporting them. You simply misunderstood one phrase in Khrushchev's letter from 26 October where it speaks about the withdrawal of Soviet specialists. In this context Khrushchev had in mind not all specialists but, as it follows from the documents, only those who were involved with "offensive" weapons. And you know that not only in these letters but today also, we hold to the position that you will keep all the weapons with the exception of the "offensive" weapons and associated service personnel, which were promised to be withdrawn in Khrushchev's letter.

Fidel confirmed that this is correct.

Second. F. Castro's question about whether, instead of ordering the dismantling of strategic weapons we could have made a different decision—a legitimate question. However, we had information that an invasion on Cuba was to begin in the next several hours: it could be that they really intended to deliver an air strike against the positions of the strategic missiles first, but an invasion of Cuba would follow after that. We had to act decisively in order to thwart the plan of the invasion of Cuba. We understand that by doing that we had to sacrifice the opportunity for consultations with the Cuban government in order to save Cuba.

I did not think it necessary to comment again on Fidel's statement, in particular about the fact that the weapons deployed in Cuba had as their purpose the defense of the interests of the entire socialist camp. By that, he reiterated that he did not agree with my previous statement in response to his similar statement in which I said that these weapons were deployed not in the name of, and not for, the camp, and not for the Soviet Union. It was done only, exclusively, in the interests of defending revolutionary Cuba itself, which has international importance, great importance, for the entire socialist camp.

Then I turned to the issue of how necessary collaboration between the Soviet Union and Cuba, as between two

socialist countries, is. But in this case, we were talking about something more than that. We have to have an especially close collaboration due to the fact that Soviet weapons and Soviet military personnel are located in Cuba. Therefore our actions need to be coordinated. Even if we have differences of opinion we should strive for unity in our actions. Therefore I propose to work out a plan of joint coordinated actions without touching upon the past. I would like to hear what proposals our Cuban comrades have in this respect because we need to act together. This is how the issue stands now because our victory in preventing a military attack on Cuba should be confirmed by a diplomatic victory. Here we should show the necessary skill in diplomacy and policy while firmly defending our main goals.

The Americans are interested in prolonging the Cuban crisis. We are interested in its speediest resolution through negotiations between the interested sides and then through the Security Council. We are interested in finalizing everything with an international document that defends the interests of Cuba, and removing the blockade and the dangerous situation in the Caribbean basin.

Interim Secretary General of the United Nations U Thant, who obviously sympathizes with Cuba, can play a great, positive role. It would be good if the Cuban comrades helped U Thant so that he could have at his disposal enough arguments and information to make a statement in the Security Council, which would have approximately the following content: that he is convinced that the "offensive" weapons were dismantled and removed, and that thus the conditions for lifting the blockade and normalizing the situation have been created.

Regarding the dismantling, U Thant could cite the Americans' own statement that according to their air reconnaissance the dismantling has been completed, and therefore the need for aerial inspections of the dismantling has disappeared. Only one fact remains unconfirmed, which could be raised by our enemies; it is the fact of the loading and dispatching of these weapons on Soviet ships. I think that you could allow U Thant's neutral representatives to arrive by ship at a Cuban port and, without setting foot on Cuban territory, to observe the fact of the loading and dispatching of these weapons on Soviet ships. That would require 3-4 days and all the work would be completed in that time.

I also said that the earlier we resolve the issue of the withdrawal of these "offensive" weapons and the inspection of the fact of their withdrawal, the sooner the quarantine can be lifted, which is in Cuban interests in the first place. The Soviet Union will bear big losses because its ships are sitting at sea with shipments for Cuba, and they cannot proceed under the quarantine. We cannot tolerate these losses any longer, and we have to take joint measures to achieve the lifting of the quarantine; my proposal regarding inspection of ships in Cuban ports could facilitate matters. (I felt that we came to such an understanding that the Cubans would accept the proposal. Comrade Alekseev, who sat next to me, whispered in my ear that the Cubans will definitely accept it.)

I added: I am asking you not to give an answer to this

question now. We could interrupt our conversation and you could discuss it without us, and then we could meet again, continue our work and listen to your opinion.

Then suddenly Fidel, in a calm tone, made the following unexpected statement:

"A unilateral inspection would have a monstrous effect on the morale of our people. We have made large concessions. The American imperialists freely carry out aerial photography, and we do not prevent them from doing so because of a request by the Soviet government. We need to search for some other formula. I want to say to Comrade Mikoyan, and what I am telling you reflects the decision of our entire people: We will not agree to an inspection. We do not want to compromise the Soviet troops and risk peace throughout the world. If our position puts peace throughout the world at risk, then we would think it more correct to consider the Soviet side free of its obligations and we will resist by ourselves. Come what may. We have the right to defend our dignity ourselves."

I was not worried about his refusal to allow the inspections at the ports. I was shocked by the final part of his statement. Everyone was quiet for several minutes. I thought: how do I proceed with this matter?

I decided not to comment on this shocking statement. I thought that maybe it was something they had not thought through, or maybe they had discussed that as a possibility among themselves, and then he just blurted it out unexpectedly. After some thought, [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos said that Fidel expressed their common opinion. The rest were silent.

I said I did not understand such a sharp reaction to my proposal. First of all, we were not talking about inspections of Cuba, either by air or land, which we had already discussed. We were talking about inspections on Soviet ships in Cuban waters, and ships are considered the territory of the state to which they belong. We were speaking about Soviet ships and therefore Soviet, not Cuban, territory. What this has to do with the infringement of Cuban sovereignty is impossible to understand. Finally, I do not have direct instructions from my government to present this proposal. I only did it hoping to make it easier for U Thant to support the Cuban cause in the UN and taking into account the favorable atmosphere that has developed in our conversations.

I repeated that our Central Committee instructed me to give thorough explanations of the Soviet position on all issues of interest to our Cuban comrades without imposing my opinion and without putting any pressure on you in order to obtain your consent for inspections of Cuban territory.

Fidel noted: why can we not carry out these inspections of the ships in neutral waters? I said that I believe, of course, it is possible, but that does not have any relationship to Cuba. He agreed.

Several hours later, in the meeting with Dorticos, Guevara, and [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez, Dorticos stated: We have analyzed Comrade Mikoyan's latest proposal for loading the strategic missiles on the decks of Soviet ships in Cuban ports. Our opinion is as follows: taking into account the need to

keep up the morale of our people and, in addition, wishing not to allow legal disputes regarding the issues of the extra-territorial location of the ships, we would like to give a final response to Comrade Mikoyan. We believe that it is impossible [for us] to accept this proposal. We have to reject it because we do not accept in principle inspections on Cuban territory, in our air space, or in our ports.

The statement that F. Castro blurted out was so unexpected that this formulation of the issues caught not only us but all of his friends unawares. It appears that the awkwardness of the situation touched even Castro himself.

Dorticos came to his rescue, suggesting we take a break from our work. How could one explain F. Castro's statement? We had the impression that he had not planned on saying this, but that it had slipped out.

Moreover, F. Castro's friendly attitude toward us and his desire to find a commonality of opinion with us about cooperation in the future did not give any reason even to imagine that such thoughts were in his head. After all he had already accepted in full sincerity that the removal of missiles from a military point of view would not weaken the defense of Cuba, and he expressed his interest in keeping our other powerful defense weapons in Cuba, expressing concern lest we remove certain other types of weapons from Cuba under pressure of the Americans.

One would like to believe, and most likely it is truly so, that the phrase Castro used was a result of his passing mood and his desire to show how important the issue of not allowing any kind of inspections is for the Cuban revolution, and that in order to preserve this principle they are prepared for anything.

One should not forget the complicated personal qualities of Castro's character, his acute sensitivity. While in power, he made many thoughtless statements caused by a fleeting impressionability [*vpechatlitel'nost'*] which he later regretted.

The provocative buzzing [*podzuzhivaniye*] of the American press to the effect that Castro has lost his independence, and that the Soviet people are in command in Cuba undoubtedly has had an influence on him.

The Embassy knows that Castro takes it hard when he reads the statements of reactionary agencies in which he is called a "puppet of the USSR." The North American press especially blows out of proportion the issue of inspections, alleging that Castro would have to retreat under our pressure, notwithstanding his categorical statements about the impermissibility of any form of inspections.

Castro probably believes that after his militant statements against inspections, accepting them in any form means compromising his position as a leader of the people of Cuba and Latin America, and that he could begin to lose prestige. We should not exclude the possibility that Castro actually suspects us of intending to put pressure on him on this issue, and that he decided to make such a statement in order once and for all to cut off any possibility of our doing so, as a way of emphasizing the inviolability of the principles that he defends.

In my opinion, we should not yet draw any conclusions based on only this one statement.

I will be able to get a better feel for his real mood and understand the direction of his thinking on this issue better in my future talks with him.

One should not forget that in the evening, when the conversation continued with Dorticos, Guevara, and Rodriguez, Dorticos mentioned at the very beginning of the conversation that Fidel Castro could not come because he felt unwell. It was clearly felt that they wanted to erase what had happened; they don't want us to take Fidel's outburst seriously. It is not a coincidence that the next day — today, 6 November — in the evening Guevara half-jokingly noted: "We Cubans are not Albanians, and we will not demand the liquidation of your military bases on Cuba." This was said after I responded to their question about what to do next with the known agreement about military aid by saying that as soon as we overcome the current crisis in the Caribbean we will discuss it in a calm atmosphere and hopefully will arrive at a decision coordinated in a brotherly fashion. All three confirmed their full agreement.

In addition, today in his conversation with [Aleksander] Alekseev, Rodriguez said that he had just met with F. Castro and told him about the most recent and, in his opinion, very warm and friendly conversations with me, about which Castro was very pleased.

Immediately after this Rodriguez expressed his regret regarding such an unpleasant end to our conversation of 5 November. Rodriguez did not say anything about F. Castro's opinion. However, the fact that he himself raised this issue speaks to the fact that the Cuban leaders, apparently, have discussed the situation that has been created and are now trying to repair it.

6.XI.62 A. Mikoyan

Example 39

Printed 8.XI.24

Issued by Shiryanev

Correct:

(signature)

Nikolaev Ezhov



DOCUMENT No. 13

Excerpt from Protocol No. 66 of Session of CC
CPSU Presidium, 16 November 1962

[Source: Personal Archive of Dr. Sergo A. Mikoyan.
Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.]

About Instructions to Comrade A. I. Mikoyan

To approve the text of instructions to comrade A. I. Mikoyan (attachment – special folder).

CC Secretary
To paragraph 1 of protocol # 66

Extraordinary
Special folder

Havana
Soviet Ambassador
To comrade A. I. Mikoyan

We are sending you the confidential oral reply from [John F.] Kennedy to our oral confidential message.

From this letter, you can see that Kennedy has agreed to our assurance regarding the removal of the IL-28s with the crews and equipment. If we give Kennedy this assurance, then he will immediately lift the quarantine. From his letter, it is clear that he does not even demand that it be published, but, so to speak, is relying on a gentleman's agreement regarding the removal of the IL-28s over the period of, as he says, 30 days. Therefore, it seems like it would not be difficult to reach an agreement on this issue.

But this is not the main issue. The main issue is stopping the overflights of Cuba and [getting] confirmation of the non-invasion guarantees, which were given in Kennedy's letter of 27 and 28 October.

From Kennedy's letter, it is clear that currently he is holding us to our promises to remove offensive weapons and to our statement that with the consent of the Cuban government we agree to inspections by U.N. representatives of the removal of the weapons, which the Americans call offensive, from Cuba, on condition that the United States gives guarantees through the United Nations that it will not invade Cuba nor that it will allow such an invasion by other countries of the Western hemisphere.

We, to our regret, did not find any understanding on the part of the Cuban government of our efforts aimed at confirming the U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba through the United Nations. Moreover, the Cuban government publicly announced that it does not agree with the steps we are trying to take in the negotiations that began in order to achieve confirmation through the United Nations of the U.S. obligations mentioned above in the interests of Cuba. Therefore, the necessary cooperation between us and the government of Cuba on this issue has not been established from the very beginning, and therefore the statements that we made in our letters look as if they have no basis, which Kennedy is exploiting as a pretext for refusing to confirm his pledge at the United Nations not to attack Cuba.

We, the Presidium of the Central Committee, in full quorum, discussed this issue fully, taking into account the last letter from Kennedy, and believe that the position of our friends on this issue cannot be considered rational. Living in a world that contains two antagonistic camps means that you cannot always rely only on weapons. Under certain

conditions one has to show significant flexibility, so that while relying on force, i.e. on weapons, one is still able to use diplomatic channels as well, when the situation demands that and when it is in our interests.

We believed and now believe that we accomplished a big favor for Cuba when we snatched the statement out of Kennedy about a non-invasion of Cuba. We believe that if our missiles and our weapons had not been deployed in Cuba, then Cuba would already have been invaded by the armed forces of the United States. The military maneuvers that were announced by Pentagon in October – that was precisely the announcement of the invasion of Cuba. Therefore, if our Cuban comrades are able to think that the missiles we deployed invited the U.S. threat to Cuba, then that is a big delusion.

We believe that Kennedy's proposal, and those proposals that were expressed by U Thant, created a good opportunity to resolve the difficulties in the issue of inspection over the withdrawal of our missiles. In particular, we had in mind U Thant's proposal to the effect that he and the U. N. officers accompanying him could be given an opportunity to visit the locations of dismantlement of our missiles and to make sure that they were being dismantled. That proposal was the most reasonable and the most appropriate for our side.

There was also the second proposal – for ambassadors of five Latin American countries represented in Cuba to visit the locations of dismantlement of the missiles as a tour.

How could Cuba's sovereignty suffer from this in any way? But they rejected [those proposals]. We simply do not understand that.

It was also suggested that representatives of nine neutral states Ghana, Guinea, UAR, Austria, Sweden, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Brazil visited the locations of dismantlement. We had no objections against those countries, because we had no doubts in their good will toward Cuba. That proposal was also rejected.

All this creates a situation where we were denied an opportunity to cooperate with the Cuban government in this question in favor of Cuba, – not in our interest, but precisely in Cuba's interest.

Now the Cubans have taken the following step – they sent the protest against the overflights of the American aircraft over the Cuban territory to the Security Council. This is correct. But, at the same time, they issued a warning that if such flights continue, then American aircraft would be shot down. In the situation where the diplomatic contacts have been established and the negotiations are going on, of course, it is a step that does not encourage the fastest resolution of the conflict around Cuba.

The American aircraft, as is well known, fly over Cuba from the first days of the Revolution. Civilian planes also fly [over Cuba]. We have information that in this year and even in August and September American planes were flying over Cuba and that Cubans issued an order not to shoot down these planes; in any case, they did not open fire and did not shoot them down. The question arises, what does it mean to press such an ultimatum now, when the diplomatic negotia-

tions are going on [?]. If we raise such conditions, we would have to implement it, i.e. begin to shoot down the planes.

We believe that our people cannot participate in this, because, according to our deepest conviction, not all opportunities have been used for realization of mutual obligations of the sides, which arise from the exchange of correspondence with President Kennedy. To act in such a manner now would lead to a military conflict, and it could develop if one would follow such a course, —it could not be justified by anything and would have no grounds. This is our understanding of the situation, and this is our assessment of the position of our Cuban friends on the issue of American flights over Cuba.

All this puts us in a very difficult situation already, because there are our people [in Cuba] servicing these weapons. Of course, they will believe that these weapons would have to be used. But we cannot give an order to our people to use those weapons, because to give such an order would mean to start pulling ourselves into a war. And we do not want that and we consider it irrational.

In addition, we believe—and this is very important—that, even if they opened fire against the American aircraft, and we would regret if such a development occurred, if that would have been done, that fire would not be effective. It would not result in a real strengthening of Cuban security by military means. But it could cause an onset of U.S. military actions against Cuba. And it is a fact that the United States possesses military capabilities which exceed the capabilities that Cuba has now many times, even though now it is much better armed than it was before. Therefore, to open fire against the American aircraft would be an irrational act, which would give the most notorious reactionary forces in America an opportunity to press Kennedy toward the extreme militaristic positions. They, those forces, do exactly that—they put pressure on Kennedy and use the opportunities that the Cuban comrades' current position creates for them.

We have done and are doing everything possible in order to shield Cuba from intervention and to arm Cuba. We undertook a great risk, and we knew that we were taking a great risk, because a danger of unleashing the thermo-nuclear war really did emerge at the most intense moment. Now with our diplomatic actions we have rapidly brought down this tension and put the negotiations of the two sides that are involved in the conflict in diplomatic channels under such conditions that present for both sides the mutually beneficial resolution of the situation. All this is being done primarily for Cuba and not for us. However, it looks like Cuba does not want to cooperate with us. Cuba, which now does not want to even consult with us, wants practically to drag us behind itself by a leash, and wants to pull us into a war with America by its actions. We cannot and will not agree to this. We will not do it, because we see the conditions that were created with our efforts and that allow us to resolve the issue of Cuban security without war, the issue of non-invasion guarantees.

If the Cuban comrades do not want to cooperate with us on this issue and do not want to undertake measures which

would help us resolve this issue and avoid being pulled into a war together with us, then apparently the conclusion that we see is that our presence in Cuba is not helpful for our friends now. Then let them state that openly, and we will have to make conclusions for ourselves. If our Cuban comrades undertake measures that in their opinion protect their interests — it is their right. But then we have to raise the issue with them that we would be forced to remove from ourselves all responsibility for the consequences to which their steps might lead them. If they do not take our arguments into account, then it is clear that our side cannot bear responsibility for it.

We regret it, and we regret it very much, but we will have to state the following—because our advice is not being taken into account, we disclaim any responsibility, because we cannot be attached by force to those actions which we consider irrational. In such a case, let the Cuban comrades bear full responsibility for the situation and for the possible consequences.

What should be the conclusion and what would be the next step, if of course the Cuban comrades would agree to take rational steps?

We believe, as we have already informed you, that we can give an oral assurance to President Kennedy that we are going to withdraw the IL-28s from Cuba under the condition that the President promises to lift the quarantine immediately, which he expressed willingness to do.

The issue of non-intervention guarantees is more complicated now. As you can see from Kennedy's latest confidential letter, he ties this question to the realization of our promises regarding inspections. Therefore, the question of lifting the quarantine and our obligation to withdraw the IL-28s is not the main question now, but realistically only an interim condition for the solution of the main issue, because of which essentially, as the Russians say, the whole mess had developed in the first place, is to squeeze out of the United States and to affirm through the United Nations an assurance of non-invasion of Cuba. The United States, of course, got into a difficult situation, taking into account the fact that they for many years after the revolution in Cuba had made statements that they could not tolerate a state of a different socio-political system in the Western Hemisphere. Now, as it clearly follows from the President's letters of October 27 and 28, they, i.e. the United States, stated exactly the opposite, namely: the United States agreed to tolerate a state of a different socio-economic system and is willing to undertake an obligation not to intervene in Cuba and to deter other countries of Western Hemisphere from intervention, if we withdraw the weapons, that President Kennedy characterized as offensive, from Cuba.

Our understanding is that all this means a significant important step in the interest of Cuba, in the interest of its independent development as a sovereign socialist state. Unfortunately, the Cuban comrades do not understand that. Now the Cubans by their stubbornness and, I would say, by their certain arrogance which shows in their statements about sovereignty, help the most extreme reactionary forces of the

United States to reject the obligations stated in Kennedy's letters and help those forces to put pressure on Kennedy, so that he would be forced to disavow those obligations with a long-term target [in mind] – to ultimately embark on a military invasion of Cuba.

It is clear that this would only be in the interests of the enemies of the Cuban revolution.

Therefore, we believe that the Cuban comrades should gather their courage and reconsider their position in this issue. They should choose one of the options, which are presented to them: either U Thant's representatives, or ambassadors from five Latin American countries, or representatives of nine neutral countries. If they do not accept these proposals, the United States will be the only winner, and they will score this victory only because we could not rationally use [the bargaining chips] which we were able to obtain during the period of the most critical tension in our relations, when we were on the brink of war.

We consider it incorrect to open fire against the American aircraft in the present situation. If I was to use imaginative language, now after the tension has subsided, a certain type of truth emerged, when none of the sides opens fire. The Americans are flying over Cuba, but they were flying there before. To open fire against the U.S. aircraft now would mean to reject the diplomatic channels and to rely only on weapons, i.e. to make a choice of possibly unleashing a war.

We believe that this is irrational, and we will not participate in it. We are negotiating with the Americans. We want to cooperate with Cuba, and if Cuba wants to cooperate with us for its own benefit, – we will be happy. But if Cuba does not want to cooperate with us, then obviously our participation in the resolution of the Cuban conflict would not bring any benefit. In such a case, we would have to find out the opinion of the Cuban leadership and after that discuss the new situation, so that we could make appropriate conclusions for ourselves regarding our people who are presently in Cuba. Frankly speaking, we have deepest regrets that at the time when on our part we are making all efforts to use every opportunity with the purpose of achieving a confirmation of U.S. obligations not to intervene in Cuba through the United Nations, our Cuban friends do not exhibit any desire to cooperate with us in this cause.

We do not believe that the Cubans would want to allow war, and if they do not want that, then it would be irrational to deny us and themselves an opportunity to quickly remove the remaining elements of conflicts on the conditions of the obligations that were already undertaken by the Soviet Union and the United States in their correspondence.

You should personally think it over once again, because you know the situation and the personalities of the people with whom you are going to talk. You need to bring our thoughts and our wishes to their comprehension. Let them respond to you and let them take the responsibility upon themselves. If they do not want to cooperate with us, then obviously the conclusion is clear that they want to take all responsibility upon themselves. It is their right—they are a government and they are responsible for their country, for

their policy, but then they should not involve us in their business. If they do not want our cooperation, we cannot follow their policy, which in addition is irrational in this issue.

In order to give Kennedy a response on this issue, we would like to know your opinion.

At this point we do not know yet how the events will develop, but obviously if the negotiations get prolonged, then the Americans will complicate the whole issue more and more. They have such an opportunity, because they have a more favorable strategic and geographic situation. This has to be taken into account. Therefore, they could stall, and they do not suffer and do not lose anything from the prolongation of this conflict. But the losers here first of all would be Cuba and us, both in a material respect and in the political and moral sense.

The President raises the issue regarding some guarantees for the future in regard to the issue of sending the so-called offensive weapons to Cuba. He even says that it allegedly follows from our correspondence that we undertook an obligation regarding inspections in the future with a purpose of not allowing further shipments of such weapons to Cuba. By the way, we have not undertaken such an obligation in our correspondence, although in Kennedy's letters that question had been raised. Presenting everything in such a light as if there existed a mutual agreement on that issue, Kennedy, of course, exaggerates. However, it follows that by doing it, he is trying to get the highest possible price from us for his confirmation through the U.N. of the pledge not to invade Cuba. This also complicates the issue.

Now to the question of U.N. posts. Earlier we presented this position to you and now we repeat that the idea of creating of such posts, as means of preventing an unexpected attack, seems reasonable. Kennedy apparently is consciously trying to link our proposals on that issue, which we made during consideration of arms control issues, to Cuba. He even puts the question in such a way: that creation of U.N. posts in the region of the Caribbean Sea, including the corresponding area of the United States, allegedly requires organization of such posts in the Soviet Union as well. Of course, it is not difficult for us to explain that our proposals regarding the posts were made at the time when negotiations on the issue of general and full disarmament were conducted in London and later during the negotiations in Geneva on prevention of surprise attacks. Therefore, those proposals concerning with the ports of the Soviet Union do not have and cannot have any relationship to Cuba, because at the time when they were made no Cuban issue had existed. We are hoping that Kennedy will understand the inappropriateness of raising the issue about the U.N. posts in the territory of the Soviet Union in connection with the Cuban issue and would not insist on that.

Now we are moving toward the Plenum. We have already informed you of our opinion, and we are now even more convinced that we made the right choice when we recommended that you should stay longer in Cuba, even while we understood that your long stay there is beginning to outgrow the framework of necessity. As you have probably

noted, the Americans are already saying that apparently the difficulties in our relations with the Cubans are so substantial that Mikoyan has to stay in Cuba for a long time and cannot leave yet. We even admit that it might be possible that the Cubans are beginning to feel certain awkwardness as a result of your prolonged stay in Cuba.

In short, we obviously have to reach an agreement now: if there is no hope for Cuban cooperation, then probably you will have to leave Cuba. But then we will say that since our Cuban friends do not need our cooperation, we have to draw appropriate conclusions from all this, and we will not impose ourselves.

In any case, we believe today that the decision about your trip to Cuba was correct, and your stay there was useful. Now, when you have these important and serious conversations with the Cuban friends, we would like you to take all the circumstances into account and to test the grounds regarding your further stay in Cuba. If you feel that the Cubans are not inconvenienced by your further presence, it would probably be useful for you to stay there longer. Your presence in Cuba represents, one can say, a deterrent factor both for the United States and for the Cubans.

N. Khrushchev
12-yav, ll



DOCUMENT No. 14

Telegram TROSTNIK (REED—USSR Defense Minister Rodion Malinovsky) to PAVLOV (Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba General Isa Pliev), 20 November 1962

[Source: *Archive of the President of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002. Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya.*]

TOP SECRET

From TROSTNIK to comrade PAVLOV

Missiles with conventional loads for “Luna” and FKR [cruise missiles] should be left in Cuba. Send 6 nuclear bombs, 12 warheads for “Luna” and 80 warheads for FKR to the Soviet Union on steamship “Atkarsk.”

Director
November 20

NOTES

¹ See Raymond L. Garthoff, “New Evidence on the Cuban Missile Crisis: Khrushchev Nuclear Weapons and the Cuban Missile Crisis” in *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issue 11, Winter 1998, pp. 251-262

² “The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962: 40th Anniversary Conference” Havana, Cuba, 11-13 October 2002, co-sponsored by the National Security Archive at George Washington University in partnership with Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Affairs and Cuban institutions. The conference was the latest in a series of critical oral history meetings on the Cuban Missile Crisis and generated worldwide headlines by gathering U.S., Russian and Cuban veterans of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis for two days of discussions in Havana on October 11-12, 2002, followed by a tour of the last surviving remnants of the missile emplacements on the island. Cuban President Fidel Castro hosted the 40th anniversary conference and participated fully in both days’ deliberations.

³ See Raymond L. Garthoff, “The Havana Conference on the Cuban Missile Crisis: Tactical Weapons Disclosure Stuns Gathering,” *CWIHP Bulletin* 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 2-4

⁴ *Editor’s Note*: Certain portions of the “Malin Notes” have been published recently in Moscow: *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954-1964: Chernovye zapisi zasedanii, stenogrammy*, ed. Aleksandr A. Fursenko (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003). See also Mark Kramer, “The “Malin Notes” on the Crises in Hungary and Poland, 1956,” *CWIHP Bulletin* No. 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 385-410.

⁵ Operation “Anadyr,” as the operation for transporting Soviet military personnel and equipment was codenamed, was given its name to disguise the actual final destination of the cargo. Anadyr is a river in north-eastern Russia, and military personnel assigned to the operation were issued winter uniforms to create an impression of an operation that would take place in the northern regions. See Anatoly Gribkov and William Y. Smith. *Operation Anadyr: US and Soviet Generals Recount the Cuban Missile Crisis*. (Chicago: edition q, 1994).

⁶ Telegram from Malinovsky to Pliev, published in *On the Brink of Nuclear Precipice*. (Moscow: Gregory-Page, 1998), p. 365. The author thanks Jim Hershberg and Raymond Garthoff for locating and supplying this manuscript.

⁷ See Vladislav M. Zubok, “Dismayed by the Actions of the Soviet Union: Mikoyan’s talks with Fidel Castro and the Cuban Leadership, November 1962.” in *CWIHP Bulletin*, Issue 5, Spring 1995, pp. 59-77.

⁸ Mikoyan’s telegram to Politburo, 6 November 1962, Presidential Archive of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002.

⁹ See Memorandum of conversation between Castro and Mikoyan, published in *Operation Anadyr*.

¹⁰ Khrushchev’s telegram to Mikoyan, 16 November 1962, printed below.

¹¹ Alexander Fursenko and Timothy Naftali note the same uncertainty regarding when the weapons were actually withdrawn in their book *One Hell of a Gamble: Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

¹² Presidium Instructions to Mikoyan in Cuba, 22 November 1962. Presidential Archive of the Russian Federation, Special Declassification, April 2002.