

~~TOP SECRET~~

27 October

-In publicly announced message to the President, Khrushchev expresses satisfaction with Presidential response to U Thant. Proposes Soviets remove from Cuba means regarded by U.S. as offensive if U.S. will remove its analogous means (b)(1). Proposes subsequent inspection by personnel enjoying confidence of UN Security Council as well as of the United States, the Soviet Union, Cuba and (b)(1).

-President, in letter to Khrushchev, welcomes desire to seek prompt solution. Restates key elements of Khrushchev proposal as Soviet agreement to remove weapons systems from Cuba under UN observation and supervision, to halt further introduction of such weapons systems into Cuba, to remove U.S. quarantine measures, and to give U.S. assurances against invasion of Cuba. States that linking of Cuba problems to broader questions of European and world security would lead to intensification of Cuban crisis.

-Salinger issues White House statement regarding "several inconsistent and conflicting proposals" made by USSR. States position of the U.S. that as an urgent preliminary to consideration of any Soviet proposals, work on Cuban bases must stop. Offensive weapons must be rendered inoperative and further shipment must cease.

-Castro, in message to U Thant, indicates Cuba would accept compromises requested provided U.S. desists from aggressive actions, including the naval blockade. Indicates willingness to receive U Thant in Cuba.

28 October

-In publicly announced message to the President, Khrushchev indicates he has issued order to dismantle offensive weapons and return them to the Soviet Union. Refers to U-2 overflight incidents to include the case of 28 October. Announces Kuznetsov has been sent to New York to assist U Thant in current negotiations.

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91. Message From Chairman Khrushchev to President Kennedy

Moscow, October 27, 1962.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT, I have studied with great satisfaction your reply to Mr. Thant¹ concerning measures that should be taken to avoid contact between our vessels and thereby avoid irreparable and fatal consequences. This reasonable step on your part strengthens my belief that you are showing concern for the preservation of peace, which I note with satisfaction.

I have already said that our people, our Government, and I personally, as Chairman of the Council of Ministers, are concerned solely with having our country develop and occupy a worthy place among all peoples of the world in economic competition, in the development of culture and the arts, and in raising the living standard of the people. This is the most noble and necessary field for competition, and both the victor and the vanquished will derive only benefit from it, because it means peace and an increase in the means by which man lives and finds enjoyment.

In your statement you expressed the opinion that the main aim was not simply to come to an agreement and take measures to prevent contact between our vessels and consequently a deepening of the crisis which could, as a result of such contacts, spark a military conflict, after which all negotiations would be superfluous because other forces and other laws would then come into play—the laws of war. I agree with you that this is only the first step. The main thing that must be done is to normalize and stabilize the state of peace among states and among peoples.

I understand your concern for the security of the United States, Mr. President, because this is the primary duty of a President. But we too are disturbed about these same questions; I bear these same obligations as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. You have been alarmed by the fact that we have aided Cuba with weapons, in order to strengthen its defense capability—precisely defense capability—because whatever weapons it may possess, Cuba cannot be equated with you since the difference in magnitude is so great, particularly in view of

Source: Department of State, Presidential Correspondence: Lot 66 D 204. No classification marking. Other copies of this letter are *ibid.*: Lot 77 D 163, and in the Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Countries Series, USSR, Khrushchev Correspondence. This "official translation" prepared by Language Services of the Department of State and an "informal translation" from the Embassy in Moscow are printed in *Department of State Bulletin*, November 19, 1962, pp. 646-649. A note on the source text indicates a copy was sent to Acting Secretary-General U Thant. *Problems of Communism* reports that this message was broadcast over Moscow radio at 5 p.m., the same time the Russian text was delivered to the Embassy.

¹ See Document 59.