

October 26, 1962

Telegram from Soviet delegate to the United Nations V. A. Zorin to USSR Foreign Ministry (1) regarding the meeting with U Thant on the latter's second address

Citation:

"Telegram from Soviet delegate to the United Nations V. A. Zorin to USSR Foreign Ministry (1) regarding the meeting with U Thant on the latter's second address", October 26, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation (AVP RF), Moscow; copy obtained by NHK (Japanese Television), provided to CWIHP, and on file at National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.; translation by John Henriksen, Harvard University <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110991>

Summary:

Soviet response to the new UN proposal based on the US and Soviet government's approval. They also discussed a proviso in U Thant's first address forbidding ships arriving in Cuba from carrying weaponry, a new American proposal and the Soviet inability to discuss actions to be taken on Cuban territory.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

26 October 1962

On the evening of 26 October we ([Platon] Morozov and I) met with U Thant, in the presence of [UN Under Secretary for Special Political Affairs Chakravanthi V.] Narasiman, [UN official Omar] Loutfi, [Military Advisor to the UN Secretary-General Brig.-] General [Indar J.] Rikhye, and, on our request, Comrade [E.D.] Kiselev. After giving our consent to the publication of N.S. Khrushchev's response to U Thant's second message, U Thant immediately released for publication both his message and the responses to them by the Soviet Union and the USA. In so doing, U Thant again emphasized that now the whole world would be again convinced that the Soviet Union is positively and constructively working towards the peace initiative that it undertook, and he also asked to convey his thanks to the Soviet government and personally to N.S. Khrushchev for the speedy and positive response to his second message.

U Thant said furthermore that Kennedy's response to his second message was not as clear as N.S. Khrushchev's response. Nevertheless U Thant noted that, as he sees it, an agreement has been reached at the present moment between the Soviet Union and the USA which, although for only a short period (2 to 5 days, as he put it), ensures the possibility of avoiding dangerous encounters on the open sea. In this way, a situation will be created in which further steps can be taken towards the lessening of tensions.

Stevenson today announced to U Thant that the USA was prepared to approve U Thant's proposal contained in his first message (concerning the cessation for 2 to 3 weeks of arms stockpiling in Cuba, and the USA's simultaneous suspension of blockade activities), on the proviso that measures would be taken to guarantee that ships arriving in Cuba (Soviet ships, as well as freight vessels) are not supplying any weaponry during this this period.

U Thant explained that the satisfaction of this demand, either in this way or in some other fashion, is a very important issue for American public opinion. It would be possible to discuss a particular procedure for maritime traffic, or for particular ports of call in Cuba, whereby for example UN delegates from neutral countries, selected by agreement, or representatives of the International Red Cross might one way or another ascertain that vessels arriving in Cuba are not carrying arms. He implied that the Americans would apparently be satisfied with a simple procedure, and would not demand searches or inspections of vessels bound for, or in the ports of, their destinations.

We declared to U Thant that the American proposal was at odds with U Thant's own proposal, and shows that the USA, unlike the Soviet Union, is not ready to agree to that proposal. We remarked that in giving consent to U Thant's proposal, the Soviet Union was taking a highly important step toward preserving the peace. We pointed out that the Soviet Union would stick to its obligations with unconditional steadfastness if an agreement was reached on the basis of U Thant's own proposal. No checks on this are needed, not only because of what has been put forth, but also because if the arms provisioning continued, it would not be hard to detect anyway. For this reason, the Americans' push for the above-mentioned proposal proves that they are looking for a pretext for not fulfilling the very agreement that would facilitate a conclusive settlement.

We also noted that while the USA is advancing a new proposal that complicates matters, they themselves are continuing to prepare intensively for an invasion of Cuba. If we are to talk about UN observation, then we must first of all demand an immediate end to that sort of military preparation against Cuba, which threatens the general peace.

We noted as well that we cannot enter discussions about what actions may be taken

on Cuban territory, since that is a matter for the Cuban government alone to decide. But the forms of monitoring proposed would constitute an obvious interference in the domestic affairs of Cuba.

U Thant said that he understood all this personally, and that he firmly believed that the Soviet Union would keep its word. Nonetheless it is clear that the USA is acting as it is in order to justify before American public opinion its refusal to take the appropriate blockade measures that have been announced.

We told U Thant that the Soviet Union has already approved two of his proposals, proceeding in such a way as to frustrate the American provocation that threatens the peace, and also that it is now up to U Thant, in his capacity as acting General Secretary of the UN, to exert the necessary pressure on the USA with the aim of reaching a provisional agreement for 2 to 3 weeks, based on the initial proposal of U Thant himself.

We emphasized that it is necessary to act quickly, since our ships cannot remain on the open sea for an indefinite period of time, and since the situation cannot be allowed to get out of control. U Thant said that he would do all he could, although he asks us as well to think of measures that would be favorably received by the USA.

At the end of the conversation, U Thant said that today he had presented the Cuban delegate to the UN with the message, to be conveyed to Castro, in which he asked that missile installation work in Cuba, which according to reports received by him from the Americans continues day and night, be suspended for the 2 to 3 week period that is necessary for negotiations.

In response to our question about what plans U Thant had concerning the basis upon which a conclusive settlement would be attainable, U Thant answered that he found the key to this in Dorticos's speech to the General Assembly on 8 October of this year, in which the latter announced that if the USA were to give effective guarantees that they will not undertake a military invasion of Cuba, and will not aid its invasion by anyone else, it would not be necessary for Cuba to take military measures, or even to maintain its army.

U Thant said that today he had explained his point of view to Stevenson, and that the latter had promised to inform Kennedy about it.

In conclusion, we arranged with U Thant that he inform the Americans of our conversation, and agreed that our forthcoming meeting would be contingent upon how events unfold.

At the next meeting, if we do not receive other instructions, we will continue to push for the provisional agreement on the 2 to 3 week period, based on U Thant's proposal that was approved in Comrade N. S. Khrushchev's response, without the supplementary conditions advanced by the USA.

26.X.62 V. ZORIN