

October 23, 1962

Ciphered Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Aleksandr Alekseev

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Summary:

A report on Alekseev's 23 October 1962 conversation with Fidel Castro, together with two members of the Cuban leadership, the day after the public crisis began. Presented with official Soviet statements on the crisis, Castro reviews the situation and confidently vows defiance to the US "aggression," which he claimed was doomed to failure.

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Ciphered Telegram

Spec. No. 1643-1644

Top Priority

Your No. 811, 812-813 were presented to F. Castro in the presence of [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos and [Emilio] Aragones. At the same time I transferred to them what was received through TASS, a full text of the announcement of the Soviet government and a report about the measures adopted by the USSR Minister of Defense [Rodion Malinovsky] regarding the combat readiness of the Soviet Army and the announcement of [Warsaw Pact Commander-in-Chief] Marshal [Andrei] Grechko to be the representative of the nations of the Warsaw Pact. Castro thanked the Soviet government for its assistance and expressed his complete assurance that the new plans of US aggression were doomed to fail. He announced that the United States at the present time did not have sufficient strength for a sudden attack on Cuba. In order to avoid possible attempts at direct intervention, the Cuban government has prepared every military division for combat readiness and is hastily attempting to mobilize the members of the national militia. According to Castro, among the populace there is universal enthusiasm and no sign of any sort of elements of panic. In the mills and factories, meetings are being held with regard to the implementation of mobilization. In Castro's opinion, the USA's new threats serve to rally further the Cuban people and rouse their determination in the conflict against American imperialism. Castro says that he fully approves of the Soviet government's tactics, the tone of the documents sent to him, and the aim to unmask the US leadership as an international gendarme before public opinion and to show the unlawfulness of their domineering actions.

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

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

In this connection, the presence of Soviet military specialists is not a secret for the imperialists or for the Cuba people and Castro expressed the idea about possibly creating their own separate divisions to be included in our military formations. According to him, this measure will arouse huge enthusiasm among the Cuban population putting the USA in an even more difficult position.

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

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

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

Fidel Castro asked me to assure the Soviet government of the firmness and the composure of the Cuban leadership and to express his complete trust in those measures that the Soviet government is taking and will take with regard to the defense of Cuba.

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

23. X. 62 Alekseev

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

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