

October 23, 1962

Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos)

Citation:

"Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Washington (Campos)", October 23, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, MD—Washington—Telgr.-Cartas—Receb.-Exped.—1962 (7 á XII), (Cx 324), Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg.
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Summary:

A report on Secretary of State Dean Rusk's discussion of the severity of the American reaction to the installation of remote-controlled missiles of medium and intermediate range in Cuba by the Soviet Union.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Portuguese

Contents:

Translation - English

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

TELEGRAM
RECEIVED
12602

FROM THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON
ON/22/22/X/62

CONFIDENTIAL-URGENT
DAS/DAC/DOr/DEA/600.(24h)

Question of Cuba. Declaration of President Kennedy.

774 - TUESDAY - 0100hs - Adding to my telegram 773 and referencing the text of the speech of President Kennedy, already delivered by Ambassador [Lincoln] Gordon to the President of the Republic. I have been informed, after a meeting at the Department of State, that [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk justifies as follows the severity of the American reaction to the installation of remote-controlled missiles of medium and intermediate range, detected by aerial photography, only on the 14th [of October]: 1) Cuba and the USSR were warned by the United States that it would not tolerate offensive installations: North American inaction would undermine the credibility of the Western system of defense; 2) the remote-controlled missiles in Cuba are of the type never supplied not even to the satellite members of the Warsaw Pact, indicating a visible intention to intimidate Latin America, putting, in the first place, all the Caribbean and the north of South America, reaching Lima, the Northeast of Brazil, Columbia and Venezuela under nuclear sight. Beyond this, the internal political press blocks Kennedy from any accommodating attitude. The plane of action is as follows: 1) to obtain the endorsement of the OAS on the base of article six of the Treaty of Rio for a naval quarantine and interception of ships of any nationality that carries offensive materials, with the hope not to permit the arrival of new offensive remote-controlled missiles, but, also, of nuclear warheads [cargas] for those already installed, not knowing, until this moment, if the respective missiles [ogivas] have already arrived in Cuba: 2) the resolution approved by the OAS, the Soviet government will be notified and be given several hours' time to return its ships to Russian ports, avoiding North American naval action; 3) the blockade will be suspended when the UN observers visit Cuba and monitor the dismantling of the offensive installations; 4) how many of the nuclear missiles [porventura] already arrived in Cuba, it is not specified which means of eliminating them, constituting a subsequent problem of the United States that, probably, must be resolved by an ultimatum to Cuba to destroy or return the missiles. The Council of the OAS will convene tomorrow, the 23rd, at nine o'clock in the morning and transforming in[to] a provisional meeting of consultation, the United States is hoping, also tomorrow, for approval of the resolution the text already transmitted to Ambassador Penna Marinho, authorizing individual and collective action, including the use of armed forces[,] for blocking the arrival of offensive armament or installation of missiles. I call attention to the language used in paragraph two of the resolution giving a blank check [carta branca] not only for the blockade but for any other military action, in the individual judgment of the country that adopts it, agreeing that we are alerted by not having specified the measures. Simultaneously, the United States convened the UN Security Council to pass a resolution, calling on the Soviet Union to cease its offensive shipments for Cuba and declaring that the blockade will cease when UN observers, admitted onto Cuban territory, verify the dismantling of the offensive remote-controlled missiles. In case of a probable veto in the Security Council the matter will be raised to the General Assembly. The situation is extremely dangerous, the State Department admitting of the hypothesis of nuclear war, with which it anticipates that one of the following hypotheses will prevail: A) Russian retreat, choosing the return of its ships; B) American interception without a Russian nuclear

response; C) increasing the Russian pressure in other areas, without nuclear conflict.

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