

October 29, 1962
**Telegram from Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister
Kuznetsov to USSR Foreign Ministry**

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Summary:

Kuznetsov sends the results of a meeting with UN Sec. General U Thant.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

On 29 October we met with U Thant.

We conveyed greetings to U Thant from Comrade N.S. Khrushchev, as well as the latter's wishes for U Thant's success in averting a war, strengthening the peace, and safeguarding the security of all nations. U Thant was told that I had been entrusted by the Soviet government to aid him, U Thant, in his efforts to eliminate the current dangerous situation. We then laid out the basic points of the USSR's position in the Cuban affair, as they were defined in Comrade N.S. Khrushchev's messages to Kennedy of 26, 27, and 28 October 1962. We noted that the USA had declared the Soviet proposals to be generally practicable, which allows the Cuban problem to be resolved on the basis of those Soviet proposals. We emphasized that in view of this, the moment had arrived for moving away from general statements about the positions of the parties, and towards an agreement on concrete steps to be taken. We declared that the Soviet government is ready to take on this practical work.

U Thant asked us to convey to Comrade N.S. Khrushchev his sincere gratitude and best wishes. He remarked that the situation had been extraordinarily serious, especially towards the end of 27 October, although Comrade N.S. Khrushchev's message of 28 October had relieved the situation. U Thant called that message "a most considerable contribution to peace" and emphasized that this was the general opinion in the UN.

U Thant said furthermore that he also considered it expedient to move towards the working out of an agreement on concrete measures for the settlement of the Cuban situation, and precisely for this purpose he had addressed a request the day before (on 28 October) to the Americans to lift the blockade of Cuba immediately (U Thant used the word "blockade") for a period of 2 to 3 weeks, as had been stipulated in U Thant's first message of 25 October. In doing so, U Thant emphasized that the USSR had already done what U Thant had requested in that message, suspending arms provisioning in Cuba, while the USA had not yet lifted the blockade. It still cannot be said that the Americans have done so, U Thant continued. For him (U Thant) a very strange situation could arise if he is in Cuba (he will fly to Havana tomorrow to meet with Fidel Castro), and the American navy is still continuing the blockade at that time.

We asked U Thant how the Americans are explaining their delay in accepting the decision about lifting the so-called quarantine, even though it is obvious that such a lifting is absolutely necessary both politically and practically. With regard to this, we pointed out the urgency of lifting the quarantine first and foremost because of the necessity of laying a foundation, as U Thant himself suggested, for negotiating a settlement of the Cuban problem. Moreover, because of the continuing blockade, ships carrying exclusively peace-time goods cannot get these goods to Cuba, where they are needed, and furthermore the ships are experiencing fueling difficulties, and their idleness is bringing losses. We emphasized that the Soviet Union has agreed to U Thant's proposal to hold back these vessels bound for Cuba for several days, but that the Americans keep prolonging the period.

U Thant answered that the Americans are demanding checks on the Soviet vessels carrying cargo to Cuba, as one of the conditions on their lifting the quarantine. With regard to this he said that the situation would be relieved if the Soviet Union agreed to the carrying out of these checks through some "independent agency."

In accordance with your instructions, we informed U Thant that the Soviet government is prepared to give its consent to checks on Soviet vessels bound for Cuba, as U Thant proposed in one of his earlier talks with Comrade Zorin, by representative of the International Red Cross, if the USA refuses to lift the blockade unless such checks are instituted. I emphasized that this is of course a temporary measure, for 2 to 3 weeks until the settlement of the Cuban problem.

U Thant received this information with very great interest, and expressed gratitude to the Soviet government for this new and important step towards settling the Cuban conflict. He said that he would meet today with the Americans, and would secure the lifting of the "quarantine." With regard to the practical issues connected with our proposal for carrying out checks on vessels by representatives of the International Red Cross, we explained to U Thant in accordance with your instructions that the main issue here concerns the checks at sea, in which Red Cross representatives would be conveyed on board Soviet ships by USSR vessels or by those belonging to neutral countries. As far as checks in the ports are concerned, we noted that this falls not within our own jurisdiction, but that of the Cuban government. U Thant came back to this point several times, and it was clear that he prefers instituting checks in the Cuban ports. For our part we consider it feasible to agree with this, as long as our Cuban friends do not object. It is technically possible to carry out checks in ports much faster than on the open sea, and this would keep the Americans from delaying any longer the lifting of the "quarantine."

U Thant then asked how we feel about the fact that the Red Cross will use mainly Swiss personnel to carry out the checks. In doing so he emphasized that, as he knows from past experience, the International Red Cross does not accept any recommendations on the make-up of its personnel, and its own personnel is 95% Swiss. I said that we would prefer that the personnel of the inspection groups consisted of citizens from neutral countries that are represented in the UN.

U Thant also asked whether we agreed to the Red Cross checks on Soviet ships only, or also on vessels chartered by the Soviet Union. We said that we cannot speak of any vessels other than Soviet ones, but that it would be absurd if the Americans started suspecting the Soviet Union of conveying arms that it calls "offensive" on chartered vessels belonging, for example, to Sweden or Lebanon. U Thant agreed that this would be an absurdity.

We asked U Thant what his intentions were with regard to the forthcoming negotiations in Cuba. U Thant said that he wanted to exchange views with Fidel Castro primarily on how the dismantling of war sites, which is referred to in Comrade N.S. Khrushchev's message of 28 October, would be carried out.

We told U Thant that the military sites mentioned there were in the hands of Soviet officers. U Thant answered that he knew this, and of course would consult with the Soviet Union on this matter.

With regard to this, we reminded U Thant that, as noted in Comrade N.S. Khrushchev's letter of 27 October, the checks should be carried out after the arms are removed from Cuba. What will have to be checked is not the weaponry, but the fact that it is no longer in Cuba. U Thant declined to spell out his own point of view on this matter. It can be supposed that the Americans will insist that inspections be carried out even during the process of dismantling.

U Thant said that he meant to exchange views with Fidel Castro as well on the matters connected with the checks on vessels bound for Cuba.

The goal of his trip to Cuba, U Thant said, would also be a discussion with Fidel Castro on obtaining guarantees for Cuban security, and guarantees for the security of other countries which maintain that Cuba represents a threat to them. He said that he wanted to propose to Castro a formulation that would stipulate a "UN presence" in Cuba on the model of the "UN presence" in the United Arab Republic (Gaza and Aqaba) as a guarantee that nobody will invade Cuba, and that Cuba will not take actions against anybody else.

We told U Thant that really the point about guarantees for Cuban security ought to constitute the most important part of the final settling of the whole problem. Kennedy's statements on this matter are positive, but they seem to have a provisional character, and refer to Cuba's inviolability from attack in only a very general way. It is necessary to concretize these statements, and to confirm the whole settlement of the Cuban issue, including guarantees for Cuba's security, through the Security Council. With regard to this we referred to the relevant point about guarantees on Cuban security contained in Comrade N. S. Khrushchev's message of 27 October. We also recalled the guarantees that Fidel Castro demanded in his statement of 28 October.

U Thant did not show any reaction to any of this, although he did not object of any of it, but rather returned again to the question of a "UN presence" in Cuba. He said that if Fidel Castro approves this proposal, he will then address a similar proposal to the other party regarding the "UN presence" in the USA and certain Latin American countries. We were given to understand that the goal of this "UN presence" would be to avert attacks on Cuba by counterrevolutionary Cuban emigres now living in the USA and certain countries of Latin America.

We did not meanwhile express to U Thant our attitude to this proposal of his. We assume that it could be viewed positively when one takes into account that U Thant has in mind a "UN presence" on the territories of both parties--of Cuba as well as of the USA and certain Latin American countries. This would mean that with regard to this issue the UN would be keeping the same watch over Cuba as over the USA, which is certainly advantageous.

In their relations to us, the Americans are remaining passive, and decline to meet. Intending to initiate contact with Stevenson, we suggested to U Thant through Kiselev that he arrange a breakfast today and invite the Americans and us. U Thant liked this idea, and he contacted Stevenson. Stevenson, however, refused to accept his invitation, referring to the fact that he had no instructions from the State Department, and that without such authorization he could not meet with Soviet representatives.

29.X.62 V. KUZNETSOV

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