

October 31, 1962

Cable from the Chinese Embassy in the Soviet Union, 'Views on Khrushchev's Compromise with the United States on Cuba'

Citation:

"Cable from the Chinese Embassy in the Soviet Union, 'Views on Khrushchev's Compromise with the United States on Cuba'", October 31, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 111-00342-12, 184-186. Translated by Zhang Qian.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/115121>

Summary:

The Chinese Embassy shares their opinion on Khrushchev's reconciliation with Kennedy after the Cuban Missile Crisis. They believe: Khrushchev's activities "amounted to a bowl of cold water, poured right over the Cuban people"; because of Khrushchev, those who sit on the fence have now leaned rightward; American imperialists will, under the banner of the UN, create troubles for Cuba; and Khrushchev exhausted his words to exculpate Kennedy, which invariably stemmed from the concern to arrange a Cuba deal as a starting point, with the ultimate goal to push for reconciliations to be reached on other questions.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

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Views on Khrushchev's Compromise with the United States on Cuba

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Khrushchev's reconciliation and submission to American imperialism constitutes a fiasco in the diplomatic struggle of the Soviet Union. Its influence on future development is bound to be extremely negative. Our preliminary views are as follows:

A development, extremely favoring the struggle against American imperialism, emerged at the moment when the American imperialists declared a blockade against Cuba. But just when the people were being mobilized and about to take action and the contradiction within imperialism was deepening, Khrushchev did not take advantage of the development, [which was at the time] extremely unfavorable to the US. He did not conduct a tit-for-tat struggle and push the development of the crisis [in the direction favoring anti-imperialism]. Instead, after performing [a few] gestures of struggle, he gradually backed down, and started to make a series of concessions, in the name of [being] cautious, calm, and rational, to the point of agreeing to dismantle and retrieve missiles previously deployed to Cuba, under United Nations supervision. This way, the Soviet Union had turned from initiative to passivity. From being a plaintiff condemning the US for threatening and invading Cuba, [it has now become] a defendant, admitting smuggling strategic weaponry and threatening US security. [The Soviet Union] abandoned the advantage [which resulted from] supporting Cuba, a sovereign country, in conducting a just struggle; it, instead, disadvantaged itself by deserting Cuba and accepting all American conditions which were compensated by a guarantee of empty words. [By contrast,] the US has risen, from a pirate, condemned by the world with one voice, to a savior, defending the security of the Western Hemisphere and the peace of the world as a whole. The very situation encourages the arrogance of American imperialists while discouraging the global anti-American movement, indeed, to an unprecedented degree. [However, this situation] also further exposes the true face of revisionists and their weakness.

The reason why Khrushchev squandered the favorable situation of anti-imperialism, even at the expense of revolutionary interests, was his fear of war blackmail from American imperialists. He miscalculated the situation, [thinking] that the world had already slipped to the verge of a nuclear war, and unless concessions were made, all [countries] would perish together. Pravda says that the past week has been the most difficult week since the end of World War II, with the entire humanity lingering on the verge of a nuclear disaster. In the cable sent to [Bertrand A. W.] Russell, Khrushchev also repeatedly emphasized that once the war erupts, it will be a total world war with nuclear weapons being used. This fear could also be read from his letter to Kennedy. Meanwhile, the Soviet support to Cuba proved far from sincere, it was carried out in line with the general strategy of promoting peaceful Soviet-American co-existence. Because of this, [the Soviet Union] sacrificed the interests of the Cuban and world revolution when danger approached. When American imperialists encircled Cuba with its troops, ready to attack at any minute, and charged the Soviet Union with deploying aggressive weaponry, Khrushchev sent messages to John Kennedy, yet, not to defend Cuba's sovereignty and its legitimate right to weaponry of any form. Rather, he reassured Kennedy by repeatedly highlighting the fact that those weapons were in the hands of Soviet troops and any worry would be therefore unnecessary. In the end, he yielded to American bidding [zhiyi] by retrieving those weapons [from Cuba], giving not even the slightest attention to Cuba's opinion. Khrushchev even allowed, on Cuba's behalf, for the UN to send officials to conduct inspections on Cuban territory. By doing all these, the Soviet Union avoided being Cuba's protector. These activities have caused damage to Cuba's pride and sovereignty, and are also considerably harmful to Cuba's revolutionary struggle.

By conceding on the issue of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Khrushchev's calculation was to ingratiate and trade with Kennedy for a general improvement of Soviet-American relations which would lead to the settlement of other international disputes. On the part of Kennedy, his basic objective [in negotiations with the Soviet Union] was to remove Cuba, this nail in the eye. [He, then,] exploited the illusions of Khrushchev by releasing empty bait, and then demanded further concessions from the Soviet Union on the Cuba question. Khrushchev exhausted his words to exculpate Kennedy. Repeatedly, he expressed his understanding, satisfaction, confidence, respect, and gratitude towards Kennedy, saying that Kennedy had made rational decisions and demonstrated the will of peace. [All these gestures] invariably stemmed from the concern to arrange a Cuba deal as a starting point, with the ultimate goal to push for reconciliations to be reached on other questions. These topics are disarmament, prohibiting nuclear tests, nuclear non-proliferation, mutual non-aggression between the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the WTO (Warsaw Treaty Organization).

Khrushchev's behavior will inevitably generate extremely bitter fruits. First, it feeds the arrogance of American imperialists. The counter-revolutionaries in the world will hail it in one voice. The prestige of Kennedy has been considerably enhanced, which will enable him to demand more concessions in future bargains. Second, Khrushchev's activities amounted to a bowl of cold water, poured right over the Cuban people who have been fighting on the front line of the battle against the Americans. Because of Khrushchev, those who sit on the fence have now leaned rightward. However, this incident [i.e. the Soviet-American reconciliation] has again exposed to the world the true face of the modern revisionists. The people of the world have been offered an ever more unforgettable lesson: imperialism should be fought against on one's feet and in this struggle, revisionists can by no means be counted on.

From now on, American imperialists will, under the banner of the UN, create troubles for Cuba. Modern revisionists will, regardless of Cuba's interests, continue to seek the opportunity to reconcile with the US, or even the possibility of opening high-level meetings by imitating the model generated from the Cuba Missile Crisis management. In the latter case, the development of the situation will become more complicated.

[Chinese] Embassy to the Soviet Union
31 October 1962