

October 24, 1962
**Cable no. 319 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in
Havana (Vladimir Pavlíček)**

Citation:

"Cable no. 319 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Vladimir Pavlíček)", October 24, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122.
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Summary:

This cable sent to Prague confirms the decision by President John F. Kennedy to blockade Cuba, based on talks between Cuban Foreign Minister Raul Roa and Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Aleksandr Alekseev. Despite no orders for the American warships to stop Soviet ships, Alekseev was preparing in anticipation for "dangerous provocations." Cuba canceled all PanAm flights, while at the same time allowing Czech and Soviet flights to proceed.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Czech

Contents:

Translation - English

Telegram from Havana File # 10.815

Arrived: 24.10.62 16:30

Processed: 24.10.62 17:30 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 24.10.62 18:00

NEWSFLASH!

According to talks with [Cuban foreign minister] Raúl Roa and [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev, it has been confirmed that [US President John F.] Kennedy has caved to the heavy pressure of the Pentagon, the CIA, and the monopolist circles and chosen the utmost dangerous route of provocations and blockades of Cuba. Within a few hours initial contacts between the USSR's ships and the American battleships should take place; according to Alekseev's information, the American battleships do not yet have instructions to stop the ships. Despite this, the Soviet friends are anticipating dangerous provocations. About eight ships are on the way. On the morning of 23.10. [October 23] two of the USSR's ships arrived without difficulty. The Cubans have cancelled all Pan-American [Airlines] flights and all domestic connections. Our ČSA [Czechoslovak Airlines] and Soviet TU [Tupolev] should depart normally. TU at night, and ČSA on the morning of 24.10 [24 October]. In the event of internal unrest, certain changes can be expected. Fidel [Castro] is satisfied with the pronouncement of the Soviet government, as well as with the situation in the country, which is calm. He will speak on the evening of 23.10 [23 October]. Battle preparedness has been strengthened in all sectors. This morning a US military plane crashed into a minefield in Guantanamo, causing a tremendous explosion and many dead. We are calming the Czechoslovak colony, instructing according to the lines of duty and the Party and taking the appropriate precautions. We will inform you further. The Vietnamese ambassador visited me: He had the same questions as Kříž [military attaché at the Czechoslovak embassy] about borrowing several pistols for the defense of the embassy. Send your views. We feel we can suitably decline since the Cubans ensure the defense of the embassy and the residence.

Pavlíček 319