

October 31, 1962

Cable no. 339 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček)

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Summary:

Pavlicek relates to Prague how Fidel Castro is in a rage over the decision to dismantle the missile bases in Cuba, as he had not been informed. All efforts of the Cuban government are focused on having Castro's 5 Points fulfilled, while explanations from the Soviet Union that Cuba was not abandoned are spreading. The mood among the Soviets is one of crushing defeat, and some of the technicians have given in to drunkenness in a refuge of despair, refusing to cooperate. The situation in Havana appears grave according to Pavlicek.

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NEWSFLASH!

[Deputy Foreign Minister Antonin] Gregor.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez visited me and informed me of the crushing impressions and the situation in which Fidel [Castro] and the government find themselves with regard to the Cuban people; for Fidel was not at all informed of the order to dismantle [the missile bases] nor of the UN inspection, to which he was categorically opposed. At the same time they see no guarantees that could be given to Cuba for they do not trust the USA. Therefore they are focusing their efforts on having Fidel's 5 Points fulfilled. Explanations that Cuba was not abandoned are spreading in an explosive fashion amongst the population. Rodriguez confirmed that [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev learned of the order to dismantle from my telephone conversation, based on news from Prensa Latina.

□A crushing mood also prevails amongst the Soviet friends. After receiving the order, the Soviet personnel absolutely did not understand and cried. Some experts and technicians refused to work further and there were many instances of drunkenness in old Havana. Rodriguez said that they are awaiting the arrival of [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan. Despite this, he said that the actions of the Soviet Union will have a catastrophic effect for the USSR's position, as well as that of the entire socialist camp and Latin America. He sees only a partial salvation of the situation in the form of perfect guarantees, in which he does not believe anyhow. The internal situation will depend much on Fidel's speech of 1 November. [UN Secretary General] U Thant's preliminary discussions are not yet known. The concrete negotiations should take place on 31 October. Brazil should send some of its suggestions, which [Brazilian President] Goulart will voice straight away. The position of our experts and technicians amongst the Cuban colleagues is difficult. They are met with a series of comments and innuendos suggesting that we all abandoned Cuba. There is also considerable disorientation among a series of our friends. When possible, I ask for your information and directions.

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