

November 1, 1962

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 1 November 1962

Citation:

"Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 1 November 1962", November 1, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archive, The Hague, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2.05.118, inv. 15487. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/115555>

Summary:

Boissevain reports on the aftermath of the crisis and its effects on Cuba, especially in Havana. Rather than the majority being in support of government actions while a minority supported the opposition, there is a public outcry from the masses about the Soviet handling of the crisis. Fidel Castro's response is a speech to the people explaining the Soviet reasons for their actions, while the Soviet Union voices its support for Castro's Five Points and sends Anastas Mikoyan to Havana as a "troubleshooter."

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Dutch

Contents:

Translation - English

Received: 8 November 1962

No. 2387/562.

Havana, 1 November 1962.

C U B A:

Politics.

Although I cannot guess when an occasion for sending this report will present itself, I will nevertheless compose it by way of a kind of chronicle of the events that follow each other rapidly in this restless country.

In one of many anecdotes about [George] Bernard Shaw, during the performance of one of his plays, he said to a noisy "critic" in the gallery: "We appear to be in agreement Sir, but what is our opinion against that of the majority!"

In Cuba things are the other way around: not spontaneous support for government actions and a handful of opposition, but a "máximo líder" time and again more prominently standing out who is taking decisions and announces these in public and then assures adhesion in the form of slogans, newspaper articles, poems, radio shouting, and telegrams from all countries of the Soviet bloc plus Bertrand Russell.

The ensuing step is a speech by Fidel wherein he gives the people a full explanation of what has already taken place.

Even the Soviet Union seems to have taken part in this game in the scene of the second act that was enacted just now: Tass has declared its [i.e., Soviet] agreement with the five points [of Fidel Castro] and Anastas Mikoyan is on his way to Havana as a "trouble shooter." Is the Armenian coming as a "Dutch Uncle" or to eat humble pie? A third possibility is that he will inform Fidel about some deep game or another that the Soviet Union is playing with the United States.

Meanwhile Mr [U] Thant has returned to New York without accomplishing his aim, the blockade will probably be resumed, and in Cayo Hueso there is the same military busyness as everywhere in Cuba.

The Ambassador,

G.W.Boissevain.