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Washington, D.C., October " ", 1962.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I was asked to send to you, for your information, a copy of a Message addressed on October 25 by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR N.S. Khrushchev to President Kennedy. The Message was delivered to the United States Embassy in Moscow on October 26.

Sincerely yours,

*A. Dobrynin*

Anatoly F. Dobrynin

Enclosure:

Message to President Kennedy dated October 25, 1962.

The Honorable  
Dean Rusk  
The Secretary of State  
Washington, D.C.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY <u>J. J. [unclear]</u>	DATE <u>FEB 2 8 1984</u>
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TS AUTH.	

Уважаемый г-н Президент,

Получил Ваше письмо от 25 октября. Из Вашего письма я почувствовал, что у Вас есть некоторое понимание сложившейся ситуации и сознание ответственности. Это я ценю.

Сейчас мы уже публично обменялись своими оценками события. 1962.  
вокруг Кубы и каждый из нас изложил свое об"яснение и свое понимание этих событий. Поэтому я считал бы, что, видимо, продолжение обмена мнениями на таком расстоянии, пусть даже в виде кратких писем, вряд ли что-либо добавит к тому, что одна сторона уже сказала другой.

Думаю, Вы правильно поймете меня, если Вы действительно заботитесь о благе мира. Мир нужен всем: и капиталистам, если они не потеряли рассудка, и тем более коммунистам, людям, которые умеют ценить не только свою собственную жизнь, но больше всего - жизнь народов. Мы, коммунисты, вообще против всяких войн между государствами и отстаиваем дело мира с тех пор, как появились на свет. Мы всегда рассматривали войну как бедствие а не как игру и не как средство для достижения определенных целей и тем более - не как самоцель. Наши цели ясны, а средства их достижения - труд. Война является нашим врагом и бедствием для всех народов.

Так понимаем вопросы войны и мира мы, советские люди, а вместе с нами и другие народы. Это я во всяком случае твердо

Вро Председательству  
Джону Кеннеди  
Посланнику Соединенных Штатов  
Америки

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могу сказать за народы социалистических стран и также за всех прогрессивных людей, которые хотят мира, счастья и дружбы между народами.

Я вижу, г-н Президент, что Вы тоже не лишены чувства беспокойства за судьбы мира, понимания и правильной оценки характера современной войны и того, что война несет с собой. Что Вы хотите раст? Вы угрожаете нам войной. Но Вы же знаете, что самое меньшее, что Вы получите в ответ, - это то, что пошлете нам, испытаете те же последствия. И это должно быть ясно нам, людям, облеченным властью, доверием и ответственностью. Мы не должны поддаваться угару и мелким страстям, независимо от того, предстоит ли в той или иной стране выборы или не предстоит. Это все вещи преходящие, а если уж война разразится, то не в нашей власти будет ее задержать, остановить, ибо такова логика войны, которую я наблюдал в двух войнах и знаю, что война кончается тогда, когда она прокатится по городам и селам, сея повсюду смерть и разрушение.

Я заверяю Вас от имени Советского правительства, советского народа, что Ваши доводы относительно наступательного оружия на Кубе не имеют под собой никакой почвы. Из того, что Вы мне пишете, видно, что у нас разное понимание на этот счет, вернее мы по-разному оцениваем те или другие военные средства. Да и в действительности, одни и те же виды оружия могут иметь разное толкование.

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Вы - человек военный и, надеюсь, поймете меня. Возьмем к примеру простую пушку. Какое это средство: наступательное или оборонительное? Пушка - средство оборонительное, если она поставлена для защиты границ или укрепленного района. Но если артиллерия сконцентрирована, да придать ей нужное количество войск, то те же пушки станут уже средством наступательным, потому что они готовят и расширяют путь пехоте для наступления. Также получается и с ракетно-ядерным оружием, с любыми видами этого оружия.

Вы ошибаетесь, если считаете, что какие-то наши средства на Кубе являются наступательными. Однако давайте сейчас не будем спорить. Видимо, я не смогу убедить Вас в этом. Но я Вам говорю: Вы, г-н Президент, - военный человек и должны понимать разве можно наступать, имея на своей территории пусть даже и огромное количество ракет разного радиуса действия и разной мощности, но используя только эти средства. Эти ракеты - средство истребления и разрушения. Но наступать этими ракетами, даже ядерными ракетами мощностью в 100 мегатонн, нельзя, потому что наступать могут только люди, войска. Без людей любые средства какой бы мощности они ни были, не могут быть наступательными.

Как же можно поэтому давать такое совершенно неправильное толкование, которое Вы сейчас даете, что, мол, какие-то средства на Кубе являются наступательными. Все средства, находящиеся там, и я заверяю Вас в этом, имеют оборонительный характер, используются на Кубе исключительно для целей обороны, и мы настра

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ли их на Кубу по просьбе кубинского правительства. Вы же говорите, что это наступательные средства.

Но, г-н Президент, неужели Вы серьезно думаете, что Куба может наступать на Соединенные Штаты и даже мы вместе с Кубой можем наступать на Вас с территории Кубы? Неужели Вы действительно так думаете? Как же так? Мы не понимаем этого. Разве в военной стратегии появилось что-то такое новое, чтобы думать, будто можно так наступать. И именно говорю - наступать, а не разрушать, ведь разрушают варвары, люди, потерявшие рассудок.

Я считаю, что у Вас нет оснований так думать. Вы можете относиться к нам с недоверием, но во всяком случае Вы можете быть спокойны в том отношении, что мы находимся в здравом уме и отменно понимаем, что если мы нападём на Вас, Вы нам ответите тем же. Но и Вы получите то же самое, что бросите против нас. Я думаю, что Вы тоже понимаете это. Так говорить даёт мне полная беседа с Вами в Вене.

Это говорит о том, что мы - нормальные люди, что мы правильно понимаем и правильно оцениваем положение. Следовательно, как же мы можем допустить неправильные действия, которые Вы нам предлагаете? Это могут сделать только сумасшедшие или самоубийцы, которые хотят сами погибнуть и перед смертью разрушить весь мир. Мы же хотим жить и вовсе не хотим разрушать Вашу страну. Мы хотим совсем другого - соревноваться с Вашей страной на мирном поприще. Мы с Вами спорим, у нас есть расхождения по историческим вопросам. Но наше миропонимание состоит в том,

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что вопросы идеологические, как и экономические проблемы, должны решаться не военным путем, их надо решать на основе мирного соревнования, то есть, как это понимается в капиталистическом обществе, - на основе конкуренции. Мы исходили и исходим из того, что необходимо мирное сосуществование двух различных социально-политических систем, реально существующих в мире, необходимо обеспечить прочный мир. Вот каких принципиальных взглядов мы придерживаемся.

Мы объявили сейчас пиратские меры, которые применялись в средние века, когда нападали на проходящие в международных водах корабли, и мы назвали это "карантином" вокруг Кубы. Наши суда, видимо, скоро придут в зону, где патрулирует ваш военный флот. Заверьте Вас, что эти суда, идущие сейчас на Кубу, везут самые обычные мирные грузы. Неужели Вы думаете, что мы только там и занимаемся, что возим так называемое наступательное оружие, атомные и водородные бомбы? Хотя, может быть, ваши военные и воображают, будто это какой-то особый вид оружия, но я Вас заверяю, что это самая обыкновенная мирная продукция.

Поэтому, г-н Президент, давайте проявим благоразумие. Я Вас заверяю, что на тех кораблях, которые идут на Кубу, нет вообще никакого оружия. То оружие, которое нужно было для обороны Кубы, уже находится там. Я не хочу сказать, что перевозок оружия вообще не было. Нет, такие перевозки были. Но сейчас Куба уже получила необходимые средства для обороны.

Не знаю, можете ли Вы понять меня, поверить мне. Но я хочу, чтобы Вы поверили, сами себе и согласились с тем, что

страсти нельзя давать волю, надо ими владеть. А в какой  
 правлении развиваются события сейчас? Если Вы будете отпра-  
 вать суда, то, как Вы сами знаете, это будет пиратство? Если  
 бы мы стали делать это в отношении Ваших кораблей, что Вы с  
 нами стали бы делать? Как возмущаемся сейчас мы и весь мир? Дру-  
 гие интерпретации таким действиям нельзя дать, потому что нельзя  
 считать беззаконие. Если это допустить, тогда мира не бу-  
 дет и мирного сосуществования. Тогда мы будем вынужде-  
 ны осуществлять необходимые мероприятия оборонительного харак-  
 тера. Почему наши интересы в соответствии с международными пра-  
 вами? Зачем это делать? К чему все это приведет?

Давайте нормализуем отношения. Мы получили обращение  
 г-на Генерального секретаря ООН У Тана с его предложениями.  
 Уже дал ему ответ. Его предложения сводятся к тому, чтобы  
 стороны не перевозили никакого вооружения на Кубу в течение  
 некоего отрезка времени, пока будут вестись переговоры, а  
 мы готовы вступить в такие переговоры, - а другая сторона не  
 предпринимала никаких пиратских действий против судов, и совет-  
 ствует плавание в открытом море. Я считаю эти предложения ра-  
 зумными. Это был бы выход из создавшегося положения, который да-  
 л бы народам возможность вздохнуть спокойно.

Вы спрашивали, что случилось, что вызвало поставки оружия  
 на Кубу? Вы говорили об этом нашему министру иностранных дел  
 открыто скажу Вам, г-н Президент, чем это было вызвано.  
 Мы были очень опечалены тем фактом, - я говорил об этом  
 в Бразилии, - что был нанесен десант, было совершено нападение на

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дубу, в результате которого погибло немало кубинцев.

Вы сами сказали мне тогда, что это была ошибка. Я с уважением отнесся к этому об"яснению. Вы мне несколько раз повторили это, намекая, что не все люди, занимающие высокое положение, признают свои ошибки, как это сделали Вы. Я ценю такую откровенность. Со своей стороны я Вам сказал, что мы тоже обладаем не только силой, но и мужеством; мы также признали те ошибки, которые были совершены в истории нашего государства, и не только признали, но резко осудили.

Если Вы действительно заботитесь о мире и о благосостоянии народа, а это Ваша обязанность, как Президента, то я, как Председатель Совета Министров, проявляю заботу о своем народе. Кроме того, нашей совместной заботой должно быть сохранение всеобщего мира, так как если в современных условиях разразится война, то это будет война не только между Советским Союзом и США, между которыми, собственно говоря, нет никаких взаимных претензий, но война всемирная, жестокая, истребительная.

Целью мы пошли на оказание такой военной и экономической помощи Кубе? Ответ таков: мы пошли на это только из соображений гуманности. В свое время наш народ сам совершил революцию, когда Россия была еще отсталой страной. Тогда на нас напали. Мы были об"ектом нападения многих стран. В этой авантуре участвовали США. Это зафиксировано участниками агрессии против нашей страны. Об этом написана целая книга генералом Грейвсом, который командовал в то время американским экспедиционным корпусом.

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Гренес назвал ее "Американская авантюра в Сибири".

Мы знаем, как трудно совершать революцию и как трудно перестраивать страну на новых началах. Мы искренне сочувствуем Кубе, кубинскому народу. Но в вопросы внутреннего устройства мы не вмешиваемся, в их дела не вмешиваемся. Советский Союз хочет помочь кубинцам строить свою жизнь так, как они сами хотят, если бы другие им не мешали.

Вы когда-то говорили, что Соединенные Штаты не готовят вмешательства. Но Вы заявляли и о том, что сочувствуете кубинским коммунистическим эмигрантам, поддерживаете их и будете помогать в осуществлении их планов против нынешнего правительства Кубы. Ни для кого не секрет также, что над Кубой постоянно висела и продолжает висеть угроза вооруженного нападения, агрессии. Только это и побудило нас откликнуться на просьбу кубинского правительства предоставить ему помощь для укрепления обороноспособности этой страны.

Если бы были даны заверения Президента и правительства Соединенных Штатов, что США не будут сами участвовать в нападении на Кубу и будут удерживать от подобных действий других, если Вы отзовете свой флот, - это сразу все изменит. Я не говорю за Фиделя Кастро, но думаю, что он и правительство Кубы, вероятно, объявили бы о демобилизации и призвали бы народ приступить к мирному труду. Тогда отпал бы и вопрос об оружии, так как - если нет угрозы, то оружие является бременем для всякого народа. Тогда будет стоять иначе и вопрос об уничтожении не только оружия, которое Вы называете наступательным, но и вся-

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кого другого оружия.

Я выступал от имени Советского правительства в Организации Объединенных Наций и внес предложение о роспуске всех армий и об уничтожении всего оружия. Так как же я могу делать сейчас ставку на это оружие?

Оружие приносит только бедствия. Когда его накапливают, это наносит ущерб экономике, а если его пустить в дело, то оно уничтожит людей с обеих сторон. Поэтому только безумец может считать, что оружие - это главное средство в жизни общества. Нет, это - вынужденная растрата человеческой энергии, да к тому же - для уничтожения самого человека. Если люди не проявят мудрости, то в конце концов они дойдут до того, что столкнутся, как слепые кроты, и тогда начнется взаимное истребление.

Давайте же проявим государственную мудрость. Я предлагаю, со своей стороны, заявим, что наши корабли, идущие на Кубу, не везут никакого оружия. Вы же заявите о том, что Соединенные Штаты не вторгнутся своими войсками на Кубу и не будут подкреплять никакие другие силы, которые намеревались бы совершить вторжение на Кубу. Тогда отпадет и необходимость в пребывании на Кубе наших военных специалистов.

Г-н Президент, я обращаюсь к Вам, чтобы Вы хорошо взвесили, к чему могут привести агрессивные, пиратские действия. Я знаю, как Вы объявили, США намерены осуществлять в международных водах. Вы сами знаете, что никакой здравомыслящий человек, кто не может согласиться с этим, не может признать Ваше право на такие действия.

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Если Вы это сделали в качестве первого шага к развязыва-  
 войн, - ну что же, - видимо, ничего другого у нас не остается,  
 как принять этот Ваш вызов. Если же Вы не потеряли самообла-  
 дания и твердо представляете себе к чему это может привести, а са-  
 тогда, г-н Президент, нам с Вами не следует сейчас тянуть за кон-  
 цы веревки, на которой Вы завязали узел войны; потому что чем  
 сильнее мы с Вами будем тянуть, тем сильнее будем затягивать  
 этот узел. И может наступить такой момент, когда этот узел бу-  
 дет затянут до такой степени, что уже тот, кто его завязал, не  
 в силах будет развязать его, и тогда придется рубить этот узе-  
 л. А что это значит, - не мне Вам раз"яснять, потому что Вы сами  
 отлично понимаете, какими грозными силами обладают наши страны.

Поэтому, если нет намерения затягивать этот узел и тем  
 самым обрекать мир на катастрофу термоядерной войны, тогда давай-  
 те не только ослаблять силы, натягивающие концы веревки, давай-  
 те принимать меры для развязывания этого узла. Мы на это согласны.

Мы приветствуем все силы, которые стоят на позициях мира.  
 Поэтому я выразил благодарность и г-ну Бертрану Расселу, кото-  
 рый проявляет тревогу и заботу о судьбах мира, и охотно откли-  
 нулся на призыв и.о. Генерального секретаря ООН У Тана.

Вот, г-н Президент, мои соображения, которые, если бы Вы  
 с ними согласились, могли бы положить конец тому напряженному  
 положению, которое волнует все народы.

Эти соображения продиктованы искренним стремлением раз-  
 рядить обстановку, устранить угрозу войны.

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С уважением,

Н. ХРУЩЕВ

26 октября 1962 года.

**TRANSLATION FOLLOWS**

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

(TRANSLATION)

LS NO. 46118  
T-85/T-94  
Russian

[Embossed Seal of the USSR]

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Moscow, October 26, 1962

Mr. Ambassador:

I transmit herewith a letter from N. S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to J. F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America.

Respectfully,

[s] A. Gromyko

A. Gromyko

Minister of Foreign Affairs, USSR

Enclosure: Letter for transmittal to J. F. Kennedy, President of the United States

His Excellency

Foy D. Kohler,

Ambassador of the United States of America,

Moscow

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*State Dept Bulletin*  
E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)  
By *D. J. NARS*, Date *3/29/74*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

(TRANSLATION)

LS NO. 46118  
T-85/T-94  
Russian

[Embossed Seal of the USSR]

Dear Mr. President:

I have received your letter of October 25. From your letter I got the feeling that you have some understanding of the situation which has developed and a sense of responsibility. I appreciate this.

By now we have already publicly exchanged our assessments of the events around Cuba and each of us has set forth his explanation and his interpretation of these events. Therefore, I would think that, evidently, continuing to exchange opinions at such a distance, even in the form of secret letters, would probably not add anything to what one side has already said to the other.

I think you will understand me correctly if you are really concerned for the welfare of the world. Everyone needs peace: both capitalists, if they have not lost their reason, and all the more, communists--people who know how to value not only their own lives but, above all else, the life of nations. We communists are against any wars between states at all, and have been defending the cause of peace ever since we came into the world. We have always regarded war as a calamity, not as a game or a means for achieving particular purposes, much less as a goal in itself. Our goals are clear, and the means of achieving them is work. War is our enemy and a calamity for all nations.

This is how we Soviet people, and together with us, other peoples as well, interpret questions of war and peace. I can say this with assurance at least for the peoples of the Socialist countries, as well as for all progressive people who want peace, happiness, and friendship among nations.

His Excellency  
John Kennedy,  
President of the United States of America

[Embossed Seal of the USSR] .

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Moscow, October 26, 1962

Mr. Ambassador:

I transmit herewith a letter from N. S. Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to J. F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America.

Respectfully,

[s] A. Gromyko

A. Gromyko

Minister of Foreign Affairs, USSR

Enclosure: Letter for transmittal to J. F. Kennedy, President of the United States

His Excellency

Foy D. Kohler,

Ambassador of the United States of America,

Moscow

DECLASSIFIED

*State Dept. Bulletin*  
E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)  
By *D. J. [unclear]* NARS, Date *2/29/74*

*Mr. Foy D. Kohler*

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His Excellency  
John Kennedy,  
President of the United States of America

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DECLASSIFIED

*State Dept. Bulletin*  
E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)

By *[Signature]* NARS, Date *2/22/74*

GPO-918884



I can see, Mr. President, that you also are not without a sense of anxiety for the fate of the world, not without an understanding and correct assessment of the nature of modern warfare and what war entails. What good would a war do you? You threaten us with war. But you well know that the very least you would get in response would be what you had given us; you would suffer the same consequences. And that must be clear to us-- people invested with authority, trust and responsibility. We must not succumb to light-headedness and petty passions, regardless of whether elections are forthcoming in one country or another. These are all transitory things, but should war indeed break out, it would not be in our power to contain or stop it, for such is the logic of war. I have taken part in two wars, and I know that war ends only when it has rolled through cities and villages, sowing death and destruction everywhere.

I assure you on behalf of the Soviet Government and the Soviet people that your arguments regarding offensive weapons in Cuba are utterly unfounded. From what you have written me it is obvious that our interpretations on this point are different, or rather that we have different definitions for one type of military means or another. And indeed, the same types of armaments may in actuality have different interpretations.

You are a military man, and I hope you will understand me. Let us take a simple cannon for instance. What kind of a weapon is it--offensive or defensive? A cannon is a defensive weapon if it is set up to defend boundaries or a fortified area. But when artillery is concentrated and supplemented by an appropriate number of troops, then the same cannon will have become an offensive weapon, since they prepare and clear the way for infantry to advance. The same is true for nuclear missile weapons, for any type of these weapons.

You are mistaken if you think that any of our armaments in Cuba are offensive. However, let us not argue at this point. Evidently, I shall not be able to convince you. But I tell you: You, Mr. President, are a military man and you must understand: How can you possibly launch an offensive

even if you have an enormous number of missiles of various ranges and power on your territory, using these weapons alone? These missiles are a means of annihilation and destruction. But it is impossible to launch an offensive by means of these missiles, even nuclear missiles of 100 megaton yield, because it is only people--troops--who can advance. Without people any weapons, whatever their power, cannot be offensive.

How can you, therefore, give this completely wrong interpretation, which you are now giving, that some weapons in Cuba are offensive, as you say? All weapons there--and I assure you of this--are of a defensive nature; they are in Cuba solely for purposes of defense, and we have sent them to Cuba at the request of the Cuban Government. And you say that they are offensive weapons.

But, Mr. President, do you really seriously think that Cuba could launch an offensive upon the United States and that even we, together with Cuba, could advance against you from Cuban territory? Do you really think so? How can that be? We do not understand. Surely, there has not been any such new development in military strategy that would lead one to believe that it is possible to advance that way. And I mean advance, not destroy; for those who destroy are barbarians, people who have lost their sanity.

I hold that you have no grounds to think so. You may regard us with distrust, but you can at any rate rest assured that we are of sound mind and understand perfectly well that if we launch an offensive against you, you will respond in kind. But you too will get in response whatever you throw at us. And I think you understand that too. It is our discussion in Vienna that gives me the right to speak this way.

This indicates that we are sane people, that we understand and assess the situation correctly. How could we, then, allow [ourselves] the wrong actions which you ascribe to us? Only lunatics or suicides, who themselves want to perish and before they die destroy the world, could do this. But we want to live and by no means do we want to destroy your country. We want something quite different: to compete with your country.

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endeavor. We argue with you; we have differences on ideological questions. But our concept of the world is that questions of ideology, as well as economic problems, should be settled by other than military means; they must be solved in peaceful contest, or as this is interpreted in capitalist society--by competition. Our premise has been and remains that peaceful coexistence of two different sociopolitical systems--a reality of our world--is essential, and that it is essential to ensure lasting peace. These are the principles to which we adhere.

You have now declared piratical measures, the kind that were practiced in the Middle Ages when ships passing through international waters were attacked, and you have called this a "quarantine" around Cuba. Our vessels will probably soon enter the zone patrolled by your Navy. I assure you that the vessels which are now headed for Cuba are carrying the most innocuous peaceful cargoes. Do you really think that all we spend our time on is transporting so-called offensive weapons, atomic and hydrogen bombs? Even though your military people may possibly imagine that these are some special kind of weapons, I assure you that they are the most ordinary kind of peaceful goods.

Therefore, Mr. President, let us show good sense. I assure you that the ships bound for Cuba are carrying no armaments at all. The armaments needed for the defense of Cuba are already there. I do not mean to say that there have been no shipments of armaments at all. No, there were such shipments. But now Cuba has already obtained the necessary weapons for defense.

I do not know whether you can understand me and believe me. But I wish you would believe yourself and agree that one should not give way to one's passions; that one should be master of them. And what direction are events taking now? If you begin stopping vessels it would be piracy, as you yourself know. If we should start doing this to your ships you would be just as indignant as we and the whole world are now indignant. Such actions cannot be interpreted otherwise, because lawlessness cannot be legalized. Were this allowed to happen then there would be no peace; nor

would there be peaceful coexistence. Then we would be forced to take the necessary measures of a defensive nature which would protect our interests in accordance with international law. Why do this? What would it all lead to?

Let us normalize relations. We have received an appeal from U Thant, Acting Secretary General of the U.N., containing his proposals. I have already answered him. His proposals are to the effect that our side not ship any armaments to Cuba for a certain period of time while negotiations are being conducted--and we are prepared to enter into such negotiations--and the other side not <sup>undertake</sup> any piratical action against vessels navigating on the high seas. I consider these proposals reasonable. This would be a way out of the situation which has evolved that would give nations a chance to breathe easily.

You asked what happened, what prompted weapons to be supplied to Cuba? You spoke of this to our Minister of Foreign Affairs. I will tell you frankly, Mr. President, what prompted it.

We were very grieved by the fact--I spoke of this in Vienna--that a landing was effected and an attack made on Cuba, as a result of which many Cubans were killed. You yourself told me then that this had been a mistake. I regarded that explanation with respect. You repeated it to me several times, hinting that not everyone occupying a high position would acknowledge his mistakes as you did. I appreciate such frankness. For my part I told you that we too possess no less courage; we have also acknowledged the mistakes which have been made in the history of our state, and have not only acknowledged them but have sharply condemned them.

While you really are concerned for peace and for the welfare of your people--and this is your duty as President--I, as Chairman of the Council of Ministers, am concerned for my people. Furthermore, the preservation of universal peace should be our joint concern, since if war broke out under modern conditions, it would not be just a war between the Soviet Union and the United States, which actually have no contentions between them, but a

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Why



Why have we undertaken to render such military and economic aid to Cuba? The answer is: we have done so only out of humanitarian considerations. At one time our people accomplished its own revolution, when Russia was still a backward country. Then we were attacked. We were the target of attack by many countries. The United States took part in that affair. This has been documented by the participants in aggression against our country. An entire book has been written on this by General Graves, who commanded the American Expeditionary Force at that time. Graves entitled it American Adventure in Siberia.

We know how difficult it is to accomplish a revolution and how difficult it is to rebuild a country on new principles. We sincerely sympathize with Cuba and the Cuban people. But we do not interfere in questions of internal organization; we are not interfering in their affairs. The Soviet Union wants to help the Cubans build their life, as they themselves desire, so that others would leave them alone.

You said once that the United States is not preparing an invasion. But you have also declared that you sympathize with the Cuban counterrevolutionary emigrants, support them, and will help them in carrying out their plans against the present government of Cuba. Nor is it any secret to anyone that the constant threat of armed attack and aggression has hung and continues to hang over Cuba. It is only this that has prompted us to respond to the request of the Cuban Government to extend it our aid in strengthening the defense capability of that country.

If the President and Government of the United States would give their assurances that the United States would itself not take part in an attack upon Cuba and would restrain others from such action; if you recall your Navy--this would immediately change everything. I do not speak for Fidel Castro, but I think that he and the Government of Cuba would, probably, announce a demobilization and would call upon the people to commence peaceful work. Then the question of armaments would also be obviated, because when there is no threat, armaments are only a burden for any people. This

would also change the approach to the question of destroying not only the armaments which you call offensive, but of every other kind of armament.

I have spoken on behalf of the Soviet Government at the United Nations and introduced a proposal to disband all armies and to destroy all weapons. How then can I stake my claims on these weapons now?

Armaments bring only disasters. Accumulating them damages the economy, and putting them to use would destroy people on both sides. Therefore, only a madman can believe that armaments are the principal means in the life of society. No, they are a forced waste of human energy, spent, moreover, on the destruction of man himself. If people do not display wisdom, they will eventually reach the point where they will clash, like blind moles, and then mutual annihilation will commence.

Let us therefore display statesmanlike wisdom. I propose: we, for our part, will declare that our ships bound for Cuba are not carrying any armaments. You will declare that the United States will not invade Cuba with its troops and will not support any other forces which might intend to invade Cuba. Then the necessity for the presence of our military specialists in Cuba will be obviated.

Mr. President, I appeal to you to weigh carefully what the aggressive, piratical actions which you have announced the United States intends to carry out in international waters would lead to. You yourself know that a sensible person simply cannot agree to this, cannot recognize your right to such action.

If you have done this as the first step towards unleashing war--well then--evidently nothing remains for us to do but to accept this challenge of yours. If you have not lost command of yourself and realize clearly what this could lead to, then, Mr. President, you and I should not now pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied a knot of war, because the harder you and I pull, the tighter this knot will become. And a time may come when this knot is tied so tight that the person who tied it is no longer capable of untying it, and then the knot will have to be cut. ~~What that would~~

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need not explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly what dread forces our two countries possess.

Therefore, if there is no intention of tightening this knot, thereby dooming the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, let us not only relax the forces straining on the ends of the rope, let us take measures for untying this knot. We are agreeable to this.

We welcome all forces which take the position of peace. Therefore, I both expressed gratitude to Mr. Bertrand Russell, who shows alarm and concern for the fate of the world, and readily responded to the appeal of the Acting Secretary General of the U.N., U Thant.

These, Mr. President, are my thoughts, which, if you should agree with them, could put an end to the tense situation which is disturbing all peoples.

These thoughts are governed by a sincere desire to alleviate the situation and remove the threat of war.

Respectfully,

[s] N. Khrushchev

N. Khrushchev

October 26, 1962

**TRANSLATION FOLLOWS**

~~UNCONFIDENTIAL~~TRANSLATION OF LETTER FROM  
CHAIRMAN KHRUSHCHEV TO PRESIDENT KENNEDY DATED OCTOBER 26, 1962

Dear Mr. President:

I have received your letter of October 25. From your letter I got the feeling that you have some understanding of the situation which has developed and (some) sense of responsibility. I value this.

Now we have already publicly exchanged our evaluation of the events around Cuba and each of us has set forth his explanation and his understanding of these events. Consequently, I would judge that, apparently, a continuation of an exchange of opinions at such a distance, even in the form of secret letters, will hardly add anything to that which one side has already said to the other.

I think you will understand me correctly if you are really concerned about the welfare of the world. Everyone needs peace: both capitalists, if they have not lost their reason, and, still more, communists, people who know how to value not only their own lives but, more than anything, the lives of the peoples. We, communists, are against all wars between states in general and have been defending the cause of peace since we came into the world. We have always regarded war as a calamity, and not as a game nor as a means of the attainment of definite goals, nor, all the more, as a goal in itself. Our goals are clear, and the means to attain them is labor. War is our enemy and a calamity for all the peoples.

It is thus that we, Soviet people, and, together with us, other peoples as well, understand the questions of war and peace. I can, in any case, firmly say this for the peoples of the socialist countries, as well as for all progressive people who want peace, happiness, and friendship among peoples.

I see, Mr. President, that you too are not devoid of a sense of anxiety for the fate of the world, of understanding, and of what war entails. What would a war give you? You are threatening us with war. But you well know that the very least which you would receive in reply would be that you would experience the same consequences as those which you sent us. And that must be clear to us, people invested with authority, trust, and responsibility. We must not succumb to intoxication and petty passions, regardless of whether elections are impending in this or that country, or not impending. These are all transient things, but if indeed war should break out, then it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war. I have participated in two wars and know that war ends when it has rolled through cities and villages, everywhere sowing death and destruction.

GROUP 5  
Declassified following Feb. 1, 1971

~~UNCONFIDENTIAL~~

By: S/S- W. LLOYD  
RS/R- JMB

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~~UNCLASSIFIED~~

No. 14

In the name of the Soviet Government and the Soviet people, I assure you that your conclusions regarding offensive weapons on Cuba are groundless. It is apparent from what you have written me that our conceptions are different on this score, or rather, we have different estimates of these or those military means. Indeed, in reality, the same forms of weapons can have different interpretations.

You are a military man and, I hope, will understand me. Let us take for example a simple cannon. What sort of means is this: offensive or defensive? A cannon is a defensive means if it is set up to defend boundaries or a fortified area. But if one concentrates artillery, and adds to it the necessary number of troops, then the same cannons do become an offensive means, because they prepare and clear the way for infantry to attack. The same happens with missile-nuclear weapons as well, with any type of this weapon.

You are mistaken if you think that any of our means on Cuba are offensive. However, let us not quarrel now. It is apparent that I will not be able to convince you of this. But I say to you: you, Mr. President, are a military man and should understand: can one attack, if one has on one's territory even an enormous quantity of missiles of various effective radiuses and various power, but using only these means. These missiles are a means of extermination and destruction. But one cannot attack with these missiles, even nuclear missiles of a power of 100 megatons because only people, troops, can attack. Without people, any means however powerful cannot be offensive.

How can one, consequently, give such a completely incorrect interpretation as you are now giving, to the effect that some sort of means on Cuba are offensive. All the means located there, and I assure you of this, have a defensive character, are on Cuba solely for the purpose of defense, and we have sent them to Cuba at the request of the Cuban Government. You, however, say that these are offensive means.

But, Mr. President, do you really seriously think that Cuba can attack the United States and that even we together with Cuba can attack you from the territory of Cuba? Can you really think that way? How is it possible? We do not understand this. Has something so new appeared in military strategy that one can think that it is possible to attack thus. I say precisely attack, and not destroy, since barbarians, people who have lost their sense, destroy.

I believe that you have no basis to think this way. You can regard us with distrust, but, in any case, you can be calm in this regard, that we are of sound mind and understand perfectly well that if we attack you, you will respond the same way. But you too will receive the same that you hurl against us. And I think that you also understand this. My conversation with you in Vienna gives me the right to talk to you this way.

This indicates that we are normal people, that we correctly understand and correctly evaluate the situation. Consequently, how

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can we permit the incorrect actions which you ascribe to us? Only lunatics or suicides, who themselves want to perish and to destroy the whole world before they die, could do this. We, however, want to live and do not at all want to destroy your country. We want something quite different: to compete with your country on a peaceful basis. We quarrel with you, we have differences on ideological questions. But our view of the world consists in this, that ideological questions, as well as economic problems, should be solved not by military means, they must be solved on the basis of peaceful competition, i.e., as this is understood in capitalist society, on the basis of competition. We have proceeded and are proceeding from the fact that the peaceful co-existence of the two different social-political systems, now existing in the world, is necessary, that it is necessary to assure a stable peace. That is the sort of principle we hold.

You have now proclaimed piratical measures, which were employed in the Middle Ages, when ships proceeding in international waters were attacked, and you have called this "a quarantine" around Cuba. Our vessels, apparently, will soon enter the zone which your Navy is patrolling. I assure you that these vessels, now bound for Cuba, are carrying the most innocent peaceful cargoes. Do you really think that we only occupy ourselves with the carriage of so-called offensive weapons, atomic and hydrogen bombs? Although perhaps your military people imagine that these (cargoes) are some sort of special type of weapons I assure you that they are the most ordinary peaceful products.

Consequently, Mr. President, let us show good sense. I assure you that on those ships, which are bound for Cuba, there are no weapons at all. The weapons which were necessary for the defense of Cuba are already there. I do not want to say that there were not any shipments of weapons at all. No, there were such shipments. But now Cuba has already received the necessary means of defense.

I don't know whether you can understand me and believe me. But I should like to have you believe in yourself and to agree that one cannot give way to passions; it is necessary to control them. And in what direction are events now developing? If you stop the vessels, then, as you yourself know, that would be piracy. If we started to do that with regard to your ships, then you would also be as indignant as we and the whole world are now. One cannot give another interpretation to such actions, because one cannot legalize lawlessness. If this were permitted, then there would be no peace, there would also be no peaceful co-existence. We should then be forced to put into effect the necessary measures of a defensive character to protect our interests in accordance with international law. Why should this be done? To what would all this lead?

Let us normalize relations. We have received an appeal from the Acting Secretary General of the UN, U Thant, with his proposals. I have already answered him. His proposals come to this, that our side should not transport armaments of any kind to Cuba during a certain period of time, while negotiations are being conducted - and we are ready to enter such negotiations - and the other side should not undertake any sort of piratical actions against vessels engaged in navigation on the high seas. I consider these proposals reasonable. This would be a way out of the situation which has been created, which would give the peoples the possibility of breathing calmly. You have asked what happened, what evoked the delivery of weapons to Cuba? You have spoken about this to our Minister of Foreign Affairs. I will tell you frankly, Mr. President, what evoked it.

We were very grieved by the fact - I spoke about it in Vienna - that a landing took place, that an attack on Cuba was committed, as a result of which many Cubans perished. You yourself told me then that this had been a mistake. I respected that explanation. You repeated it to me several times, pointing out that not everybody occupying a high position would acknowledge his mistakes as you had done. I value such frankness. For my part, I told you that we too possess no less courage; we also acknowledged those mistakes which had been committed during the history of our state, and not only acknowledged, but sharply condemned them.

If you are really concerned about the peace and welfare of your people, and this is your responsibility as President, as I, as the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, am concerned for my people. Moreover, the preservation of world peace should be our joint concern, since if, under contemporary conditions, war should break out, it would be a war not only between the reciprocal claims, but a world wide cruel and destructive war.

Why have we proceeded to assist Cuba with military and economic aid? The answer is: we have proceeded to do so only for reasons of humanitarianism. At one time, our people itself had a revolution, when Russia was still a backward country. We were attacked then. We were the target of attack by many countries. The USA participated in that adventure. This has been recorded by participants in the aggression against our country. A while back has been written about this by General Graves, who, at that time, commanded the US expeditionary corps. Graves called it "The American Adventure in Siberia".

We know how difficult it is to accomplish a revolution and how difficult it is to reconstruct a country on new foundations. We sincerely sympathize with Cuba and the Cuban people, but we are not

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interfering in questions of domestic structure, we are not interfering in their affairs. The Soviet Union desires to help the Cubans build their life as they themselves wish and that others should not hinder them.

You once said that the United States was not preparing an invasion. But you also declared that you sympathized with the Cuban counter-revolutionary emigrants, that you support them and would help them to realize their plans against the present government of Cuba. It is also not a secret to anyone that the threat of armed attack, aggression, has constantly hung, and continues to hang over Cuba. It was only this which impelled us to respond to the request of the Cuban government to furnish it aid for the strengthening of the defensive capacity of this country.

If assurances were given by the President and the government of the United States that the USA itself would not participate in an attack on Cuba and would restrain others from actions of this sort, if you would recall your fleet, this would immediately change everything. I am not speaking for Fidel Castro, but I think that he and the government of Cuba, evidently, would declare demobilization and would appeal to the people to get down to peaceful labor. Then, too, the question of armaments would disappear, since, if there is no threat, then armaments are a burden for every people. Then, too, the question of the destruction, not only of the armaments which you call offensive, but of all other armaments as well, would look different.

I spoke in the name of the Soviet government in the United Nations and introduced a proposal for the disbandment of all armies and for the destruction of all armaments. How then can I now count on these armaments? Armaments bring only disasters. When one accumulates them, this damages the economy, and if one puts them to use, then they destroy people on both sides. Consequently, only a mad man can believe that armaments are the principal means in the life of society. No, they are an enforced loss of human energy, and what is more are for the destruction of man himself. If people do not show wisdom, then in the final analysis they will come to a clash, like blind moles, and then reciprocal extermination will begin.

Let us therefore show statesmanlike wisdom. I propose: we for our part, will declare that our ships, bound for Cuba, will not carry any kind of armaments. You would declare that the United States will not invade Cuba with its forces and will not support any sort of forces which might intend to carry out an invasion of Cuba. Then the necessity for the presence of our military specialists in Cuba would disappear.

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CONFIDENTIAL

**UNCLASSIFIED**

Mr. President, I appeal to you to weigh well what the aggressive piratical actions, which you have declared the USA intends to carry out in international waters, would lead to. You yourself know that any sensible man simply cannot agree with this, cannot recognize your right to such actions.

If you did this as the first step towards the unleashing of war, well then, it is evident that nothing else is left to us but to accept this challenge of yours. If, however, you have not lost your self-control and sensibly conceive what this might lead to, then, Mr. President, we and you ought not now to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter that knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose.

Consequently, if there is no intention to tighten that knot and thereby to doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope, let us take measures to untie that knot. We are ready for this.

We welcome all forces which stand on positions of peace. Consequently, I expressed gratitude to Mr. Bertrand Russell, too, who manifests alarm and concern for the fate of the world, and I readily responded to the appeal of the Acting Secretary General of the UN, U Thant.

There, Mr. President, are my thoughts, which, if you agreed with them, could put an end to that tense situation which is disturbing all peoples.

These thoughts are dictated by a sincere desire to relieve the situation, to remove the threat of war.

Respectfully yours,

/s/ N. Khrushchev

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**TRANSLATION FOLLOWS**

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SECRET

Action

Control: 18890

Rec'd: OCTOBER 26, 1962  
6 PM

SS

Info

FROM: MOSCOW

TO: Secretary of State

007

NO: 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION ONE OF FOUR)

NIACT

EYES ONLY

POLICY

VERBATIM TEXT

EMBASSY TRANSLATION FOLLOWS OF LETTER FROM KHRUSHCHEV TO PRESIDENT DELIVERED TO EMBASSY BY MESSENGER 4:43 P.M. MOSCOW TIME OCTOBER 26, UNDER COVER OF LETTER FROM GROMYKO TO ME.

BEGIN TEXT.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER OF OCTOBER 25. FROM YOUR LETTER, I GOT THE FEELING THAT YOU HAVE SOME UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION WHICH HAS DEVELOPED AND (SOME) SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY. I VALUE THIS.

NOW WE HAVE ALREADY PUBLICLY EXCHANGED OUR EVALUATIONS OF THE EVENTS AROUND CUBA AND EACH OF US HAS SET FORTH HIS EXPLANATION AND HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THESE EVENTS. CONSEQUENTLY, I WOULD JUDGE THAT, APPARENTLY, A CONTINUATION OF AN EXCHANGE OF OPINIONS AT SUCH A DISTANCE, EVEN IN THE FORM OF SECRET LETTERS, WILL HARDLY ADD ANYTHING TO THAT WHICH ONE SIDE HAS ALREADY SAID TO THE OTHER.

DECLASSIFIED

*State Dept Bulletin*  
E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(O) or (E)  
By *[Signature]* NARS, Date *8/22/24*

SECRET

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~~SECRET~~

-2- 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION ONE OF FOUR) FROM MOSCOW

I THINK YOU WILL UNDERSTAND ME CORRECTLY IF YOU ARE REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELFARE OF THE WORLD. EVERYONE NEEDS PEACE: BOTH CAPITALISTS, IF THEY HAVE NOT LOST THEIR REASON, AND, STILL MORE, COMMUNISTS, PEOPLE WHO KNOW HOW TO VALUE NOT ONLY THEIR OWN LIVES BUT, MORE THAN ANYTHING, THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLES. WE, COMMUNISTS, ARE AGAINST ALL WARS BETWEEN STATES IN GENERAL AND HAVE BEEN DEFENDING THE CAUSE OF PEACE SINCE WE CAME INTO THE WORLD. WE HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED WAR AS A CALAMITY, AND NOT AS A GAME NOR AS A MEANS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF DEFINITE GOALS, NOR, ALL THE MORE, AS A GOAL IN ITSELF. OUR GOALS ARE CLEAR, AND THE MEANS TO ATTAIN THEM IS LABOR. WAR IS OUR ENEMY AND A CALAMITY FOR ALL THE PEOPLES.

IT IS THUS THAT WE, SOVIET PEOPLE, AND, TOGETHER WITH US, OTHER PEOPLES AS WELL, UNDERSTAND THE QUESTIONS OF WAR AND PEACE. I CAN, IN ANY CASE, FIRMLY SAY THIS FOR THE PEOPLES OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS FOR ALL PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE WHO WANT PEACE, HAPPINESS, AND FRIENDSHIP AMONG PEOPLES.

I SEE, MR. PRESIDENT, THAT YOU TOO ARE NOT DEVOID OF A SENSE OF ANXIETY FOR THE FATE OF THE WORLD, ~~UEGN~~ \*UNDERSTANDING, AND OF WHAT WAR ENTAILS. WHAT WOULD A WAR GIVE YOU? YOU ARE THREATENING US WITH WAR. BUT YOU WELL KNOW THAT THE VERY LEAST WHICH YOU WOULD RECEIVE IN REPLY WOULD BE THAT YOU WOULD EXPERIENCE THE SAME CONSEQUENCES AS THOSE WHICH YOU SENT US. AND THAT MUST BE CLEAR TO US, PEOPLE INVESTED WITH AUTHORITY, TRUST, AND RESPONSIBILITY. WE MUST NOT SUCCUMB TO INTOXICATION AND PETTY PASSIONS, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER ELECTIONS ARE IMPENDING IN THIS OR THAT COUNTRY, OR NOT IMPENDING. THESE ARE ALL TRANSIENT THINGS, BUT IF INDEED WAR SHOULD BREAK OUT, THEN IT WOULD NOT BE IN OUR POWER TO STOP IT, FOR SUCH IS THE LOGIC OF WAR. I HAVE PARTICIPATED IN TWO WARS AND KNOW THAT WAR ENDS WHEN IT HAS ROLLED THROUGH CITIES AND VILLAGES, EVERYWHERE SOWING DEATH AND DESTRUCTION.

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-3- 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION ONE OF FOUR) FROM MOSCOW

IN THE NAME OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT AND THE SOVIET PEOPLE, I ASSURE YOU THAT YOUR CONCLUSIONS REGARDING OFFENSIVE WEAPONS ON CUBA ARE GROUNDLESS. IT IS APPARENT FROM WHAT YOU HAVE WRITTEN ME THAT OUR CONCEPTIONS ARE DIFFERENT ON THIS SCORE, OR RATHER, WE HAVE DIFFERENT ESTIMATES OF THESE OR THOSE MILITARY MEANS. INDEED, IN REALITY, THE SAME FORMS OF WEAPONS CAN HAVE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS.

YOU ARE A MILITARY MAN AND, I HOPE, WILL UNDERSTAND ME. LET US TAKE FOR EXAMPLE A SIMPLE CANNON. WHAT SORT OF MEANS IS THIS: OFFENSIVE OR DEFENSIVE? A CANNON IS A DEFENSIVE MEANS IF IT IS SET UP TO DEFEND BOUNDARIES OR A FORTIFIED AREA, BUT IF ONE CONCENTRATES ARTILLERY, AND ADDS TO IT THE NECESSARY NUMBER OF TROOPS, THEN THE SAME CANNONS DO BECOME AN OFFENSIVE MEANS, BECAUSE THEY PREPARE AND CLEAR THE WAY FOR INFANTRY TO ATTACK. THE SAME HAPPENS WITH MISSILE-NUCLEAR WEAPONS AS WELL, WITH ANY TYPE OF THIS WEAPON.

YOU ARE MISTAKEN IF YOU THINK THAT ANY OF OUR MEANS ON CUBA ARE OFFENSIVE. HOWEVER, LET US NOT QUARREL NOW. IT IS APPARENT THAT I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONVINCED YOU OF THIS. BUT I SAY TO YOU: YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, ARE A MILITARY MAN AND SHOULD UNDERSTAND: CAN ONE ATTACK, IF ONE HAS ON ONE'S TERRITORY EVEN AN ENORMOUS QUANTITY OF MISSILES OF VARIOUS EFFECTIVE RADIUS AND VARIOUS POWER, BUT USING ONLY THESE MEANS. THESE MISSILES ARE A MEANS OF EXTERMINATION AND DESTRUCTION. BUT ONE CANNOT ATTACK WITH THESE MISSILES, EVEN NUCLEAR MISSILES OF A POWER OF 100 MEGATONS BECAUSE ONLY PEOPLE, TROOPS, CAN ATTACK. WITHOUT PEOPLE, ANY MEANS HOWEVER POWERFUL CANNOT BE OFFENSIVE.

HOW CAN ONE, CONSEQUENTLY, GIVE SUCH A COMPLETELY INCORRECT INTERPRETATION AS YOU ARE NOW GIVING, TO THE EFFECT THAT SOME SORT OF MEANS ON CUBA ARE OFFENSIVE. ALL THE MEANS LOCATED THERE,

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-4- 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION ONE OF FOUR) FROM MOSCOW

AND I ASSURE YOU OF THIS, HAVE A DEFENSIVE CHARACTER, ARE ON CUBA SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSES OF DEFENSE, AND WE HAVE SENT THEM TO CUBA AT THE REQUEST OF THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT. YOU, HOWEVER, SAY THAT THESE ARE OFFENSIVE MEANS.

KOHLER

GDW

\* AS RECEIVED.

NOTE: RELAYED WHITE HOUSE 10/26/62 6:30 PM RLL.

Note: Advance copies to SS 10/26/62 - 7:50 pm. JAW

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**INCOMING TELEGRAM**

*Department of State*

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Action  
**SS**

Control: 18954  
Rec'd: OCTOBER 26, 1962  
8:27 PM

Info

FROM: MOSCOW

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION TWO OF FOUR)

NIACT

EYES ONLY

POLICY

VERBATIM TEXT

BUT, MR. PRESIDENT, DO YOU REALLY SERIOUSLY THINK THAT CUBA CAN ATTACK THE UNITED STATES AND THAT EVEN WE TOGETHER WITH CUBA CAN ATTACK YOU FROM THE TERRITORY OF CUBA? CAN YOU REALLY THINK THAT WAY? HOW IS IT POSSIBLE? WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS. HAS SOMETHING SO NEW APPEARED IN MILITARY STRATEGY THAT ONE CAN THINK THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO ATTACK THUS. I SAY PRECISELY ATTACK, AND NOT DESTROY, SINCE BARBARIANS, PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR SENSE, DESTROY.

I BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE NO BASIS TO THINK THIS WAY. YOU CAN REGARD US WITH DISTRUST, BUT, IN ANY CASE, YOU CAN BE CALM IN THIS REGARD, THAT WE ARE OF SOUND MIND AND UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY WELL THAT IF WE ATTACK YOU, YOU WILL RESPOND THE SAME WAY. BUT YOU TOO WILL RECEIVE THE SAME THAT YOU HURL AGAINST US. AND I THINK THAT YOU ALSO UNDERSTAND THIS. MY CONVERSATION WITH YOU IN VIENNA GIVES ME THE RIGHT TO TALK TO YOU THIS WAY.

THIS INDICATES THAT WE ARE NORMAL PEOPLE, THAT WE CORRECTLY UNDERSTAND AND CORRECTLY EVALUATE THE SITUATION. CONSEQUENTLY, HOW CAN WE PERMIT THE INCORRECT ACTIONS WHICH YOU ASCRIBE TO US? ONLY LUNATICS OR SUICIDES, WHO THEMSELVES WANT TO PERISH AND TO DESTROY THE WHOLE WORLD BEFORE THEY DIE, COULD DO THIS.

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-2- 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION TWO OF FOUR) FROM MOSCOW

WE, HOWEVER, WANT TO LIVE AND DO NOT AT ALL WANT TO DESTROY YOUR COUNTRY. WE WANT SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT: TO COMPETE WITH YOUR COUNTRY ON A PEACEFUL BASIS. WE QUARREL WITH YOU, WE HAVE DIFFERENCES ON IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS, BUT OUR VIEW OF THE WORLD CONSISTS IN THIS, THAT IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS, AS WELL AS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, SHOULD BE SOLVED NOT BY MILITARY MEANS, THEY MUST BE SOLVED ON THE BASIS OF PEACEFUL COMPETITION, I.E., AS THIS IS UNDERSTOOD IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY, ON THE BASIS OF COMPETITION. WE HAVE PROCEEDED AND ARE PROCEEDING FROM THE FACT THAT THE PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE OF THE TWO DIFFERENT SOCIAL-POLITICAL SYSTEMS, NOW EXISTING IN THE WORLD, IS NECESSARY, THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO ASSURE A STABLE PEACE. THAT IS THE SORT OF PRINCIPLE WE HOLD.

YOU HAVE NOW PROCLAIMED PIRATICAL MEASURES, WHICH WERE EMPLOYED IN THE MIDDLE AGES, WHEN SHIPS PROCEEDING IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS WERE ATTACKED, AND YOU HAVE CALLED THIS "A QUARANTINE" AROUND CUBA. OUR VESSELS, APPARENTLY, WILL SOON ENTER THE ZONE WHICH YOUR NAVY IS PATROLLING. I ASSURE YOU THAT THESE VESSELS, NOW BOUND FOR CUBA, ARE CARRYING THE MOST INNOCENT PEACEFUL CARGOES. DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT WE ONLY OCCUPY OURSELVES WITH THE CARRIAGE OF SO-CALLED OFFENSIVE WEAPONS, ATOMIC AND HYDROGEN BOMBS? ALTHOUGH PERHAPS YOUR MILITARY PEOPLE IMAGINE THAT THESE (CARGOES) ARE SOME SORT OF SPECIAL TYPE OF WEAPON, I ASSURE YOU THAT THEY ARE THE MOST ORDINARY PEACEFUL PRODUCTS.

CONSEQUENTLY, MR. PRESIDENT, LET US SHOW GOOD SENSE. I ASSURE YOU THAT ON THOSE SHIPS, WHICH ARE BOUND FOR CUBA, THERE ARE NO WEAPONS AT ALL. THE WEAPONS WHICH WERE NECESSARY FOR THE DEFENSE OF CUBA ARE ALREADY THERE. I DO NOT WANT TO SAY THAT THERE WERE NOT ANY SHIPMENTS OF WEAPONS AT ALL. NO, THERE WERE SUCH SHIPMENTS. BUT NOW CUBA HAS ALREADY RECEIVED THE NECESSARY MEANS OF DEFENSE.

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU CAN UNDERSTAND ME AND BELIEVE ME. BUT I SHOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOU BELIEVE IN YOURSELF AND TO AGREE THAT ONE CANNOT GIVE WAY TO PASSIONS; IT IS NECESSARY TO CONTROL

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-3- 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION TWO OF FOUR) FROM MOSCOW

THEM. AND IN WHAT DIRECTION ARE EVENTS NOW DEVELOPING? IF YOU STOP THE VESSELS, THEN, AS YOU YOURSELF KNOW, THAT WOULD BE PIRACY. IF WE STARTED TO DO THAT WITH REGARD TO YOUR SHIPS, THEN YOU WOULD ALSO BE AS INDIGNANT AS WE AND THE WHOLE WORLD NOW ARE. ONE CANNOT GIVE ANOTHER INTERPRETATION TO SUCH ACTIONS, BECAUSE ONE CANNOT LEGALIZE LAWLESSNESS. IF THIS WERE PERMITTED, THEN THERE WOULD BE NO PEACE, THERE WOULD ALSO BE NO PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE. WE SHOULD THEN BE FORCED TO PUT INTO EFFECT THE NECESSARY MEASURES OF A DEFENSIVE CHARACTER TO PROTECT OUR INTERESTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW. WHY SHOULD THIS BE DONE? TO WHAT WOULD ALL THIS LEAD?

KOHLER

GDW

NOTE: RELAYED WHITE HOUSE 10/26/62 8:45 PM RLL

Note: Advance copies to SS 10/26/62. CWO/JRL

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**INCOMING TELEGRAM****Department of State**

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Action

Control: 18896

SS

Rec'd: OCTOBER 26, 1962

Info

6:23 PM

FROM: MOSCOW

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION THREE OF FOUR)

NIACT

EYES ONLY

POLICY

VERBATIM TEXT

LET US NORMALIZE RELATIONS. WE HAVE RECEIVED AN APPEAL FROM THE ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UN, U THANT, WITH HIS PROPOSALS. I HAVE ALREADY ANSWERED HIM. HIS PROPOSALS COME TO THIS, THAT OUR SIDE SHOULD NOT TRANSPORT ARMAMENTS OF ANY KIND TO CUBA DURING A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME, WHILE NEGOTIATIONS ARE BEING CONDUCTED--AND WE ARE READY TO ENTER SUCH NEGOTIATIONS-- AND THE OTHER SIDE SHOULD NOT UNDERTAKE ANY SORT OF PIRATICAL ACTIONS AGAINST VESSELS ENGAGED IN NAVIGATION ON THE HIGH SEAS. I CONSIDER THESE PROPOSALS REASONABLE. THIS WOULD BE A WAY OUT OF THE SITUATION WHICH HAS BEEN CREATED, WHICH WOULD GIVE THE PEOPLES THE POSSIBILITY OF BREATHING CALMLY. YOU HAVE ASKED WHAT HAPPENED, WHAT EVOKED THE DELIVERY OF WEAPONS TO CUBA? YOU HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT THIS TO OUR MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. I WILL TELL YOU FRANKLY, MR. PRESIDENT, WHAT EVOKED IT.

WE WERE VERY GRIEVED BY THE FACT -- I SPOKE ABOUT IT IN VIENNA -- THAT A LANDING TOOK PLACE, THAT AN ATTACK ON CUBA WAS COMMITTED, AS A RESULT OF WHICH MANY CUBANS PERISHED. YOU YOURSELF TOLD ME THEN THAT THIS HAD BEEN A MISTAKE. I RESPECTED THAT EXPLANATION. YOU REPEATED IT TO ME SEVERAL TIMES, POINTING OUT THAT NOT EVERYBODY OCCUPYING A HIGH POSITION WOULD ACKNOWLEDGE HIS

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SECRET

-2- 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION THREE OF FOUR) FROM MOSCOW

MISTAKES AS YOU HAD DONE. I VALUE SUCH FRANKNESS. FOR MY PART, I TOLD YOU THAT WE TOO POSSESS NO LESS COURAGE; WE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THOSE MISTAKES WHICH HAD BEEN COMMITTED DURING THE HISTORY OF OUR STATE, AND NOT ONLY ACKNOWLEDGED, BUT SHARPLY CONDEMNED THEM.

IF YOU ARE REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PEACE AND WELFARE OF YOUR PEOPLE, AND THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS PRESIDENT, THEN I, AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, AM CONCERNED FOR MY PEOPLE. MOREOVER, THE PRESERVATION OF WORLD PEACE SHOULD BE OUR JOINT CONCERN, SINCE IF, UNDER CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS, WAR SHOULD BREAK OUT, IT WOULD BE A WAR NOT ONLY BETWEEN THE RECIPROCAL CLAIMS, BUT A WORLD WIDE CRUEL AND DESTRUCTIVE WAR.

WHY HAVE WE PROCEEDED TO ASSIST CUBA WITH MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID? THE ANSWER IS: WE HAVE PROCEEDED TO DO SO ONLY FOR REASONS OF HUMANITARIANISM. AT ONE TIME, OUR PEOPLE ITSELF HAD A REVOLUTION, WHEN RUSSIA WAS STILL A BACKWARD COUNTRY. WE WERE ATTACKED THEN. WE WERE THE TARGET OF ATTACK BY MANY COUNTRIES. THE USA PARTICIPATED IN THAT ADVENTURE. THIS HAS BEEN RECORDED BY PARTICIPANTS IN THE AGGRESSION AGAINST OUR COUNTRY. A WHOLE BOOK HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THIS BY GENERAL GRAVES, WHO, AT THAT TIME, COMMANDED THE US EXPEDITIONARY CORPS. GRAVES CALLED IT "THE AMERICAN ADVENTURE IN SIBERIA."

WE KNOW HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO ACCOMPLISH A REVOLUTION AND HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO RECONSTRUCT A COUNTRY ON NEW FOUNDATIONS. WE SINCERELY SYMPATHIZE WITH CUBA AND THE CUBAN PEOPLE, BUT WE ARE NOT INTERFERING IN QUESTIONS OF DOMESTIC STRUCTURE, WE ARE NOT INTERFERING IN THEIR AFFAIRS. THE SOVIET UNION DESIRES TO HELP THE CUBANS BUILD THEIR LIFE AS THEY THEMSELVES WISH AND THAT OTHERS SHOULD NOT HINDER THEM.

YOU ONCE SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS NOT PREPARING AN INVASION. BUT YOU ALSO DECLARED THAT YOU SYMPATHIZED WITH

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-3- 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION THREE OF FOUR) FROM MOSCOW

THE CUBAN COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY EMIGRANTS, THAT YOU SUPPORT THEM AND WOULD HELP THEM TO REALIZE THEIR PLANS AGAINST THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF CUBA. IT IS ALSO NOT A SECRET TO ANYONE THAT THE THREAT OF ARMED ATTACK, AGGRESSION, HAS CONSTANTLY HUNG, AND CONTINUES TO HANG OVER CUBA. IT WAS ONLY THIS WHICH IMPELLED US TO RESPOND TO THE REQUEST OF THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT TO FURNISH IT AID FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF THE DEFENSIVE CAPACITY OF THIS COUNTRY.

① IF ASSURANCES WERE GIVEN BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES THAT THE USA ITSELF WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN AN ATTACK ON CUBA AND WOULD RESTRAIN OTHERS FROM ACTIONS OF THIS SORT, IF YOU WOULD RECALL YOUR FLEET, THIS WOULD IMMEDIATELY CHANGE EVERYTHING. I AM NOT SPEAKING FOR FIDEL CASTRO, BUT I THINK THAT HE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CUBA, EVIDENTLY, WOULD DECLARE DEMOBILIZATION AND WOULD APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE TO GET DOWN TO PEACEFUL LABOR. THEN, TOO, THE QUESTION OF ARMAMENTS WOULD DISAPPEAR, SINCE, IF THERE IS NO THREAT, THEN ARMAMENTS ARE A BURDEN FOR EVERY PEOPLE. THEN, TOO, THE QUESTION OF THE DESTRUCTION, NOT ONLY OF THE ARMAMENTS WHICH YOU CALL OFFENSIVE, BUT OF ALL OTHER ARMAMENTS AS WELL, WOULD LOOK DIFFERENT.

I SPOKE IN THE NAME OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND INTRODUCED A PROPOSAL FOR THE DISBANDMENT OF ALL ARMIES AND FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL ARMAMENTS. HOW THEN CAN I NOW COUNT ON THOSE ARMAMENTS?

KOHLER

GDW

NOTE: RELAYED WHITE HOUSE 10/26/62 6:45 PM RLL

Note: Advance copies to SS 10/26/62-7:50 pm JAW

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SSControl: 18970  
Rec'd: OCTOBER 26, 1962  
9 PM

Info

FROM: MOSCOW

007

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION FOUR OF FOUR)

NIACT

EYES ONLY

POLICY

VERBATIM TEXT

ARMAMENTS BRING ONLY DISASTERS. WHEN ONE ACCUMULATES THEM, THIS DAMAGES THE ECONOMY, AND IF ONE PUTS THEM TO USE, THEN THEY DESTROY PEOPLE ON BOTH SIDES. CONSEQUENTLY, ONLY A MADMAN CAN BELIEVE THAT ARMAMENTS ARE THE PRINCIPAL MEANS IN THE LIFE OF SOCIETY. NO, THEY ARE AN ENFORCED LOSS OF HUMAN ENERGY, AND WHAT IS MORE ARE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF MAN HIMSELF. IF PEOPLE DO NOT SHOW WISDOM, THEN IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS THEY WILL COME TO A CLASH, LIKE BLIND MOLES, AND THEN RECIPROCAL EXTERMINATION WILL BEGIN.

② LET US THEREFORE SHOW STATESMANLIKE WISDOM. I PROPOSE: WE, FOR OUR PART, WILL DECLARE THAT OUR SHIPS, BOUND FOR CUBA, WILL NOT CARRY ANY KIND OF ARMAMENTS. YOU WOULD DECLARE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT INVADE CUBA WITH ITS FORCES AND WILL NOT SUPPORT ANY SORT OF FORCES WHICH MIGHT INTEND TO CARRY OUT AN INVASION OF CUBA. THEN THE NECESSITY FOR THE PRESENCE OF OUR MILITARY SPECIALISTS IN CUBA WOULD DISAPPEAR.

MR. PRESIDENT, I APPEAL TO YOU TO WEIGH WELL WHAT THE AGGRESSIVE, PIRATICAL ACTIONS, WHICH YOU HAVE DECLARED THE USA INTENDS TO CARRY OUT IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS, WOULD LEAD TO. YOU YOURSELF

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-2- 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION FOUR OF FOUR) FROM MOSCOW

KNOW THAT ANY SENSIBLE MAN SIMPLY CANNOT AGREE WITH THIS, CANNOT RECOGNIZE YOUR RIGHT TO SUCH ACTIONS.

IF YOU DID THIS AS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE UNLEASHING OF WAR, WELL THEN, IT IS EVIDENT THAT NOTHING ELSE IS LEFT TO US BUT TO ACCEPT THIS CHALLENGE OF YOURS. IF, HOWEVER, YOU HAVE NOT LOST YOUR SELF-CONTROL AND SENSIBLY CONCEIVE WHAT THIS MIGHT LEAD TO, THEN, MR. PRESIDENT, WE AND YOU AUGHT NOT NOW TO PULL ON THE ENDS OF THE ROPE IN WHICH YOU HAVE TIED THE KNOT OF WAR, BECAUSE THE MORE THE TWO OF US PULL, THE TIGHTER THAT KNOT WILL BE TIED. AND A MOMENT MAY COME WHEN THAT KNOT WILL BE TIED SO TIGHT THAT EVEN HE WHO TIED IT WILL NOT HAVE THE STRENGTH TO UNTIE IT, AND THEN IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO CUT THAT KNOT, AND WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN IS NOT FOR ME TO EXPLAIN TO YOU, BECAUSE YOU YOURSELF UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY OF WHAT TERRIBLE FORCES OUR COUNTRIES DISPOSE.

CONSEQUENTLY, IF THERE IS NO INTENTION TO TIGHTEN THAT KNOT AND THEREBY TO DOOM THE WORLD TO THE CATASTROPHE OF THERMONUCLEAR WAR, THEN LET US NOT ONLY RELAX THE FORCES PULLING ON THE ENDS OF THE ROPE, LET US TAKE MEASURES TO UNTIE THAT KNOT. WE ARE READY FOR THIS.

WE WELCOME ALL FORCES WHICH STAND ON POSITIONS OF PEACE. CONSEQUENTLY, I EXPRESSED GRATITUDE TO MR. BERTRAND RUSSELL, TOO, WHO MANIFESTS ALARM AND CONCERN FOR THE FATE OF THE WORLD, AND I READILY RESPONDED TO THE APPEAL OF THE ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UN, U THANT.

THERE, MR. PRESIDENT, ARE MY THOUGHTS, WHICH, IF YOU AGREED WITH THEM, COULD PUT AN END TO THAT TENSE SITUATION WHICH IS DISTURBING ALL PEOPLES.

THESE THOUGHTS ARE DICTATED BY A SINCERE DESIRE TO RELIEVE THE SITUATION, TO REMOVE THE THREAT OF WAR.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-3- 1101, OCTOBER 26, 7 PM (SECTION FOUR OF FOUR) FROM MOSCOW

RESPECTFULLY YOURS,

/S/ N. KHRUSHCHEV

OCTOBER 26, 1962. END TEXT

ORIGINAL OF LETTER BEING AIR POUCHED TODAY UNDER TRANSMITTAL  
SLIP TO EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT.

KOHLER

GDW

NOTE: RELAYED TO WHITE HOUSE 10/26/62 9:15 PM RLL

SECRET