

November 1, 1962

Coded telegram from Soviet official Georgy Zhukov

Citation:

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Summary:

Zhukov relays the message that John F. Kennedy sent, via Salinger, that the President needed proof that the weapons in Cuba were dismantled.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

CIPHERED TELEGRAM

I am reporting about a meeting with [White House press secretary Pierre] Salinger on 31 October.

1. Salinger requested that I pass on to N.S. Khrushchev that Kennedy is thankful to him for the decision which he made to dismantle and remove the missiles, and expresses his confidence that the agreement which was reached, built on mutual trust, will open the way to the resolution of other ripe problems. "The President does not want to portray the matter as if we won a victory over the USSR," said Salinger. His version for the press is exactly reflected in [New York Times correspondent James] Reston's article of 29 October. Kennedy declared to the members of the government that it makes no sense to try to use the situation that developed to Khrushchev's detriment. In this spirit, Rusk conducted talks with 50 of the most prominent and trusted observers in the USA and allied countries.

2. Kennedy, in Salinger's words, is now extremely preoccupied with somehow disarming his adversaries, who are asserting that he has once again "fallen into a trap..." "We must, he said, no matter what, publish evidence that the missiles have been dismantled and taken away. Let it be representatives of the UN or of the Red Cross, let it be observation photos taken from the air, it is all the same to us. In this regard we are not demanding access to the missiles themselves, they really are secret. We must publish evidence that they are no longer on the launching pads and that they have been taken away.

3. Kennedy, in Salinger's words, as in the past is under strong pressure from the "right-wingers," who are condemning him for the fact that he, for the first time in the history of the Western hemisphere has given a guarantee for the permanent preservation of a "Communist preserve" by the shores of the USA. In order to deflect these attacks, Kennedy must receive evidence to the effect that Castro has no "offensive" weapons.

4. Kennedy, as Salinger asserts, believes that achieving a resolution to the Cuban crisis "will open a completely new epoch in Soviet-American relations," when mutual trust will become the "basis of everything." One of the first issues to be resolved can and must be the issue of a test ban.

5. Regarding a meeting between Kennedy and Khrushchev, before the Cuban crisis a majority of members of the government spoke out against such a contact, although it had been publicly stated that Kennedy will meet with Khrushchev if he comes to the General Assembly. Kennedy himself had doubted that this meeting will bring any sort of positive results.

"Now, - said Salinger - the situation has changed. The Cuban crisis showed that the issues on which the improvement of Soviet-American relations depends must be resolved urgently. Therefore, it is will be necessary to review the position in relation to a meeting in light of the results of the settlement of the crisis. We were too close to war for it to be possible to forget about this and to allow ourselves to delay even longer in reaching a resolution to the problems which have become urgent. However, the President still does not have a prepared decision about the expediency of a meeting and about the issues which should be considered. We still have to think about that."

6. Salinger, like other interlocutors in Washington, avoided touching on the German question. He mentioned in passing only that "even in respect to Berlin we have always stressed our respect for the opposing point of view."

7. Salinger stressed that even with all the "shortcomings" of Kennedy and Khrushchev's Vienna meeting, it had given a positive result, at least insofar as on the basis of the agreement that had been achieved there the Laos problem had been settled, which prompted confidence that it is possible to develop our relations on the basis of trust. For precisely this reason Kennedy had withdrawn the forces from Thailand.

"The Cuban crisis undermined this development of relations, but Khrushchev's wise decision may put the development of Soviet-American relations onto a basis of mutual trust," said Salinger.

8. Salinger asked me to pass on to N.S. Khrushchev his personal thanks for the hospitality which had been given to him in Moscow.

XI.I.62 G. ZHUKOV

[Source: AVP RF, copy courtesy of NSA; translation by Mark H. Doctoroff.]