

November 2, 1962

Cable from Japanese Embassy in Moscow to Tokyo

Citation:

"Cable from Japanese Embassy in Moscow to Tokyo", November 2, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan ("Cuban Domestic Policies and Situation: 1959-1975" file), Tokyo. Obtained and translated for CWIHP by Masaki Hirata.

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Summary:

Describes the domestic reaction in Moscow following the Cuban Blockade by the US. The cable discusses how the real sense of crisis had been widespread in society, and that after the crisis was over there was a sense of relief.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Japanese

Contents:

Translation - English

Transmitted from Moscow 11/2/1962 19:55

Received in Tokyo 11/3/1962 07:66

To Foreign Minister Ohira from Chargé d'affaires ad interim Shigemitsu

Re: Moscow's Reaction to the Cuban Issue

The following items are what we found on the domestic reaction to the Cuban issue.

1. When the Soviet government issued a statement on the Cuban issue on the 24th [of October], one Soviet intellectual working at a newspaper company made the following argument which reflected suspicion and anxiety shared by others. "It's hard to understand why we had to build a military base in Cuba in the first place. It was an absurd decision. Kennedy looks gentle and timid. However, once he gets furious, he bites you hard and never leaves you even if he loses all of his teeth like an Irish bulldog. We are being bitten by such an outrageous guy."

2. On the 30th [of October], a young foreign language teacher had a conversation with one of our Embassy staff. Responding to the staffer's comment that he felt little sense of crisis by reading newspapers or watching the people in Moscow, the teacher countered that people felt so relieved just after the crisis was over, which meant that a real sense of crisis had been widespread in the society. He also said that there was much tension in the workplace meetings he attended and that you could not feel that atmosphere just by reading the papers. At one point, he really felt threatened by the immediate possibility of the occurrence of a nuclear warfare. As an apparent example to show such feelings, he talked about some mothers he knew who had vivid wartime memories. They rushed to the nearby stores to buy large amounts of salt. He heard that salt disappeared from stores temporarily because of these excessive behaviors.