

December 3, 1962

**Central Committee of the Communist Party of the
Soviet Union Presidium Protocol 71**

Citation:

"Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Presidium Protocol 71", December 3, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 947, LI. 53-53ob. Translated and edited by Mark Kramer, with assistance from Timothy Naftali. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/115094>

Summary:

Protocol 71 gives details to the immediate fallout of the Cuban Missile Crisis from the Soviet perspective. Thanks to Castro's so-called Armageddon letter and his five points, by December 1962 (date of this protocol), Khrushchev was calling the Cubans "unreliable allies."

Credits:

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Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Present: Voronov, Kirilenko, Kosygin, Mikoyan, Polyansky, Suslov, Khrushchev, Efremov, Demichev, Andropov, Ilichev, Rudakov, Polyakov, Titov, Shelepin, Satyukov, Gromyko, Malinovsky, Troyanovsky, S. Ivanov, Shuisky, Lebedev, Shevchenko.

I. Cde. Mikoyan's report on his trip to Cuba.

Mikoyan, Khrushchev,
Gromyko,

Consider the line to be correct.

We preserved Cuba as a hub of the rev[olutionary] move[ment].

The USA was compelled to recognize that we, too, have our interests in the Western Hemisphere.

Whoever says that we retreated - this is malicious feebleness.

We pulled out the missiles - that is correct. We assembled a large-scale force.

We are participants of the world club. They themselves got frightened.

If we had held out for a while longer, then perhaps nothing would have come of it.

[Fidel] Castro, when he was speaking - open atomic fire.[1] Now he is backing away from this and glossing over it.

A treaty with him is not needed, within a certain time we should consider some sort of declaration.

Malinovsky, Kosygin

The Cubans are unreliable allies.

We should be careful in dealing with our gains.

We should treat our obligations strictly and responsibly.

Help Cuba, strengthen its army.

We are our own side, let them answer for their own actions.

Kennedy, I think, will keep his word.

Our tactics in relation to the C[hinese] C[ommunist] P[arty] leadership - do not burn bridges.

Cde. Mikoyan brilliantly handled the CC's mission and upheld the line and coped with[2]

He did it well.

Approve the activity and the work carried out under difficult circumstances in our country's interests and the interests of Cuba.[3]

Regarding plans for the withdrawal of troops from Cuba (Malinovsky, Khrushchev), do not consider it for a while yet.

[1] Translator's Note: This is clearly a reference to one of the most remarkable (and disconcerting) events during the Cuban Missile Crisis. At a critical moment on the night of 26-27 October, Fidel Castro (who believed that a US invasion of Cuba was imminent) sent an urgent cable to Khrushchev calling on the Soviet Union to launch a nuclear strike against the United States if US forces embarked on a full-scale invasion of Cuba. Such a step, Castro declared, would be "an act of the most legitimate self-defense," and "no matter how harsh and terrible [this option] would be, there would be no other." Khrushchev promptly sent a blunt reply turning down Castro's suggestion. Castro's cable was first publicly mentioned by Sergei Khrushchev (Nikita's son) at an international conference in Moscow in January 1989 and was then recounted in print in 1990 in a supplementary English-language volume of previously unpublished segments of Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs, *Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes*, ed. by Jerrold L. Schecter and Vyacheslav V. Luchkov (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1990), pp. 176-178. The disclosure prompted a strong reply from the Cuban authorities, who published the text of the cable in the Communist daily *Granma* on 25 November 1990. For an overview and an English translation of the document (as well as of other cables between Khrushchev and Castro in 1962), see Appendix 2 of James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993). In 1992, after the Soviet Union broke apart, the document (along with other declassified Soviet cables exchanged with the United States as well as with Cuba in the fall of 1962) was published in Russian in a special issue (*spetsial'nyi vypusk*) of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's monthly journal *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*. Translations of these documents have also been published in the CWIHP Bulletin and in numerous anthologies.

[2] Translator's Note: The line breaks off here unfinished.

[3] Translator's Note: The phrase "difficult circumstances" is an understatement. Throughout Mikoyan's visit, Fidel Castro made clear his extreme displeasure with the Soviet Union's handling of the crisis, including Moscow's consent to the US demand for the withdrawal of Soviet Il-28 bombers. For a riveting account of the tense negotiations, see S. A. Mikoyan, *Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis: Castro, Mikoyan, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Missiles of November*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), which is a revised and more concise version of S. A. Mikoian, *Anatomiia Karibskogo krizisa* (Moskva: Academia, 2006). Also see translated documents presented by Svetlana Savranskaya elsewhere in the Digital Archive Cuban Missile Crisis collection.