

October 25, 1962

**Central Committee of the Communist Party of the
Soviet Union Presidium Protocol No. 61**

Citation:

"Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Presidium Protocol No. 61", October 25, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGANI, F. 3, Op. 16, D. 165, L. 170-173. Translated and edited by Mark Kramer, with assistance from Timothy Naftali. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/115136>

Summary:

In response to President Kennedy's letter protesting the placement of missiles in Cuba, Khrushchev proposes a resolution to the crisis. When the time seemed right he would offer to dismantle the missiles already on the island (the MRBMs or R-12s) if Kennedy pledged not to invade Cuba.

Credits:

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Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Those who took part: Members of the CC Presidium Cdes. L. I. Brezhnev, F. R. Kozlov, A. N. Kosygin, A. I. Mikoyan, D. S. Polyansky, M. A. Suslov, and M. N. Shvernik; Candidate member of the CC Presidium Cde. V. V. Grishin; and CC Secretaries Cdes. P. N. Demichev, L. F. Ilichev, B. N. Ponomarev, and A. N. Shelepin; and also A. A. Gromyko and V. V. Kuznetsov. Chaired by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev.

Point 1. On the response of the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers Cde. N. S. Khrushchev to the letter of US President Kennedy

Cde. N.S. Khrushchev says he decided to convene a session of the Presidium in connection with the further events in Cuba.

The further course of events is proceeding in the following way. The Americans say that the missile installations in Cuba must be dismantled. Perhaps this will need to be done. This is not capitulation on our part. Because if we fire, they will also fire. There is no doubt that the Americans became frightened, this is clear. Kennedy was sleeping with a wooden knife. [To Cde. A. I. Mikoyan's question (in jest), "Why with a wooden one?" N. S. says, jokingly, that when a man goes bear hunting for the first time, he takes with him a wooden knife so that it will be easier to clean his trousers.][1]

Cde. N. S. Khrushchev goes on to say that we have now made Cuba a country that is the focus of the world's attention. The two systems have clashed. Kennedy says to us, take your missiles out of Cuba. We respond: "Give firm guarantees and pledges that the Americans will not attack Cuba." That is not a bad [trade].

We could pull out the R-12 [SS-4] missiles and leave the other missiles there. This is not cowardice. This is a fallback position, it is possible we will have to meet with them at the UN. We have to give the opponent a sense of calm and, in return, receive assurances concerning Cuba. Beyond that, it is not worth forcing the situation to the boiling point. We can strike the USA from the territory of the USSR. Now Cuba will not be what it was previously.

They, the Americans, are threatening an economic blockade, but the USA will not attack Cuba. We should not inflame the situation and should conduct a reasonable policy. In this way we will strengthen Cuba and will save it for 2-3 more years. Within several years it will be harder [for the Americans] to deal with [Cuba].

We have to play, but we should not get out and lose our heads. The initiative is in our hands, there is no need to be afraid. We began and got cold feet. It is not to our benefit to fight. The future depends not on Cuba but on our country.

That is correct.

All the members of the Presidium and the Secretaries endorse and support Cde. N. S. Khrushchev.

Cde. N. S. Khrushchev proposes to think about information [to give to] F. Castro.

We must draft a document in which we say where we are heading. Some things worked out well, others did not. What we have right now is a positive moment. What is the positive side of this? The fact that the entire world is focused on Cuba. The missiles played their positive role.

Time will pass, and if need be, the missiles can appear there again.

Perhaps Cdes. Gromyko, Ponomarev, and Ilichev will think a bit about this document.

Notes taken by A. K. Serov[2] on 25 [October] 1962.

[1] Translator's Note: The bracketed portion was crossed out in A. K. Serov's notes.

[2] Translator's Note: Aleksei Kapitonovich Serov (1918-1993) was the head of the first sector of the CPSU General Department from 1961 to 1963. Sometimes when Vladimir Malin, the head of the CPSU General Department, was absent, either Serov or V. N. Chernukha (Malin's deputy) would take notes of the CPSU Presidium meetings. In this particular instance, both Malin and Serov took notes of the 25 October 1962 meeting, just as they had at the session on 22-23 October 1962.