

November 1, 1962

Cable no. 341 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček)

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Summary:

Pavlicek relays to Prague the results of the meeting between Cuban foreign minister Raul Roa and UN Secretary General U Thant. Thant expressed sympathy for the Cuban people and acknowledged the right for Cuba to submit their considerations for the resolution to the crisis. The Cuban requests included lifting the American blockade, fulfilling Castro's 5 Points, and no UN inspection of the missile bases. Besides the meeting with the Secretary General, Pavlicek also recounts the meeting of a Latin American delegation including representatives from Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay and Mexico. All nations but Mexico refused to give in to U.S. pressures, and stood in support of Cuba. Pavlicek then moves on to cover the possible subjects of Castro's speech on 1 November, including the Cuban detention of anticommunist groups in country and the results of the negotiations with U Thant. In the meantime, the Cuban government is concerned with curtailing the actions of anti-Soviet groups which have sown confusion and discontent among the population.

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NEWSFLASH!

[Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa informed me of the results of the talks with [UN Secretary-General] U Thant. He qualified his [i.e., Thant's] manner as proper, with considerable sympathy and understanding for Cuba. Today, on 31 October, U Thant met only with the Cubans, without translators and other members of the delegation, among whom an Indian and an Arab were not pleasant. U Thant discussed the question of the Cubans' requests with them and acknowledged their right to submit the issues for consideration. The Cuban requests are based on discontinuing the blockade, fulfilling Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points, and not supporting an international inspection. The firmness of the Cuban government and the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people made an impression on U Thant. Apart from the negotiations he held talks with [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev, the Brazilians, and a Yugoslav. He asked Alekseev about the dismantling of the rockets and the manner in which they would be transported back to the Soviet Union. Alekseev said that he does not know anything about the bases and referred U Thant to the military experts. According to Roa, the Brazilians offered its good offices and were eager to present suggestions for the removal of Soviet bases on Cuba, but also for those of the USA in the entire Caribbean. They acknowledged Cuba's right to negotiate. In cooperation with the Brazilians, the Yugoslav also offered its good offices, wanting to gain support for the Cuban requests from Asian and African countries, especially those that signed the Belgrade Declaration. Furthermore, Roa informed us that during the night hours of 30 October he received a message from the Canadian government offering its good offices. Roa thanked the Canadian ambassador and referred to the discussions at the UN. At the end of the talks, in the name of the USA, U Thant requested information about a US airman [Major Rudolf Anderson] who was shot down 27 October in the east. The Cubans provided information about the incident and promised to agree to ship his body to the USA. On the basis of preliminary information, the UN Security Council should be called together on 7 November and Roa will attend. Since the Cubans refused to budge on the issue of an international inspection, U Thant's entire group including [Cuban UN Ambassador Carlos] Lechuga departed together. The Brazilian delegation left that same day. Roa reported that Chile, Bolivia, and Uruguay refused to submit to the USA's pressure and break relations with Cuba. Of the Latin American countries, Brazil had the most correct approach, and Mexico was highly condemned for giving in to US pressures. Roa also praised the support of Yugoslavia and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, he revealed that Fidel will likely concern himself with two problems in his speech of 1 November. The first is the Cubans' orientation and the detention of anti-Soviet groups inside the country, actions supported by the Soviet Union in friendship and gratitude for the enormous help. The second point will be news about the results of negotiations with U Thant, the requests and guarantees granted Cuba. Roa openly admitted that while the government and Fidel are absolutely clear on the fact that the actions of the Soviet Union in the interest of preserving peace and preventing a nuclear war were correct, they cannot understand and accept the manner in which they were carried out -- [i.e.,] the very harsh political mistake, revealed also in [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev's documents, of presenting Cuba with a decision without preliminary talks or communications. They await [Soviet Deputy Premier] Mikoyan's explanations, which will clarify much. They have a real desire to quickly bring to a halt and paralyze the anti-Soviet campaign which was unleashed by counter-revolutionary elements and reactionaries, and caused much confusion. He understands the very difficult situation of Alekseev and the Soviet soldiers living in Cuba, and believes that the situation will improve after Fidel's speech, although it will be difficult to completely erase the incident from memory. Alekseev was present for the entire discussion and admitted big mistakes, expressing the hope that Mikoyan will clarify the situation. Roa said that the KRV very much welcomes Mikoyan's visit and sees it as an

important political gesture given the current situation. Alekseev and Roa agreed that Guevara and Roa will be present for the arrival ceremony, without an invitation from the diplomatic office dealing with sensitive visits. Despite this, we are going to the airport with friends from countries of the socialist camp. I will send information about the course of the visit.

Pavlíček 341