

November 1, 1962
**Telegram from Israeli Embassy in Havana (Prato), to
Israeli Foreign Ministry, Jerusalem**

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Summary:

Prato and Pinto discuss Brazilian efforts to persuade Cuba to accept inspectors as well as what a potential U.S. attack would mean for diplomatic relations in the region.

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Following a conversation that I had with the Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto] who kept in close contact with the [Cuban] President, Prime-Minister and Foreign Minister since the crisis started:

A. The Brazilian government had been making strenuous efforts to convince Castro to accept observers [i.e., inspectors] from the U.N. or any other party which would monitor the dismantlement of the bases. [Brazilian leader João] Goulart's personal envoy [Albino Silva], who reached [Havana] on the 29th, went back yesterday to Brazil empty-handed. His mission was also related to domestic Brazilian issues.

B. The [Brazilian] ambassador saw [UN Acting Secretary-General] U Thant and his colleagues after their first meeting with the Cubans on the 30th and found them surprised by Castro's insistence on rejecting the proposal to allow observers [into the island]. In view of his refusal, several other proposals were aired which were not prepared in advance just to keep the negotiations going, but all for naught. The content of the meeting on the 31st was secret and both sides promised not to leak any details.

C. U Thant said that the Americans insisted on sending observers, and the Cubans did not fully understand this fact.

D. On the night between the 27th and the 28th, the President [Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado] called the Brazilian ambassador to tell of an imminent US attack within the next 24 hours and asked for Brazil's intervention. The very same night, the ambassador received a cable from Goulart repeating the same story. Following an instruction to approach the Cubans, he asked them to accept observers as the only alternative to an American invasion, but the Cubans were not willing to agree. The attack did not materialize probably because of Khrushchev's last message to Kennedy on the 29th [sic-28th].

E. The Kennedy-Khrushchev deal irritated Castro. The Foreign Minister [Raul Roa] explicitly said so to the [Brazilian] ambassador and added that they would not agree to any settlement that did not involve Cuba even if the Soviets supported that arrangement. So much for what the ambassador had said. My assessment: Castro's rigid position possibly emanates either from a sense of despair or a feeling of strength. After he understood that the Soviets were unwilling to confront the US over Cuba, he [Castro] was trying to exploit their [i.e. the Soviets'] interest in reaching a compromise and extort them [to give concessions or rewards] by putting forward extreme positions which foil their plans.

F. The points Castro presented as a sufficient guarantee for the security of his country against the US attack were actually demands from Moscow that went behind his back and agreed to dismantle the bases in exchange for the US non-intervention. The fact that [Anastas] Mikoyan was coming showed that the Soviet Union could not allow itself to alienate Castro in its deal with the US. This was a propaganda victory for Castro. The game is very dangerous right now because there is no way of telling Castro's response.

[Jonathan] Prato