

## **October 29, 1962**

### **Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 29 October 1962**

#### **Citation:**

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#### **Summary:**

Boissevain speaks on the domestic situation in Cuba immediately after the end of the Missile Crisis. There are many counterrevolutionary groups who worry that current UN supervision of dismantling of the Soviet missile sites will preclude a U.S.-led invasion of Cuba, and perhaps might be the prelude to a normalizing of relations between Cuba and the United States. Raul Castro gives a speech saying the dismantling of the Soviet missile sites is a run-up to new Cuban demands, especially toward the evacuation of the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo. Raul goes on to address his brother Fidel, with assurances unity from the people, and obedience to any orders he issues. This raises the fear of what future demands Fidel may raise in the aftermath of this crisis.

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C U B A:

Worries about the future.

Many Cuban "gusanos" (counterrevolutionaries [lit. "worms" - ed.]) are presently worrying about the possibility that after the dismantling of the Russian missile sites in Cuba under the supervision of the U.N., the prospect of guarantees against an invasion put forward by Kennedy will result in a perpetuation of the Castro-regime and possibly even a restoration of trade relations with the US.

They are beginning to wonder if, to put it crudely, "as on Playa Girón [i.e., at the Bay of Pigs - ed.] they will again be abandoned and have only been used as instruments to provide the Democratic Party with the prestige it so urgently requires for the upcoming American elections."

The statements of Raúl Castro (in a speech made yesterday at Santiago de Cuba shortly after the decision to dismantle) only 5 days after those of Fidel (the day after the quarantine was proclaimed in a television program on the 23rd of this month) are indeed reminiscent of a first step on the road to adjustment to the circumstances that underwent such change in this short time. Compare:

Fidel: "We do not even consider giving account to or asking advice from the august members of the Senate and House of the US about the weapons, which we consider it proper to purchase."

"We purchase weapons for our defense at will and we take the measures we consider necessary for our defense at our discretion."

Raúl mentions in passing the decision taken by Khrushchev to dismantle the missile sites as a run-up to new Cuban demands for guarantees, including those concerning the evacuation of the naval base of Guantánamo.

Fidel: "No one inspects our country, no one can come and inspect our country because we will never authorize anyone to do so and never will we give up our sovereign right that it is we who are in charge within our borders and that it is we who inspect and no one else."

"Anyone who proposes to inspect Cuba, knows that he should show up in battle dress."

Raúl does not mention a word about the arrival tomorrow of U Thant, who is coming to further arrange the supervision of the dismantling.

Fidel: "Opposite this policy of provocation and violence: our forceful, calm attitude of self-defense. The attitude of the Soviet Union: the calm, exemplary attitude. The answer of the Soviet Union has been a true lesson for imperialism, forceful, calm, loaded with arguments, loaded with reasons, which reveals the aggressive policy of Mr Kennedy."

Raúl must have found it difficult to have to be the first to also say a good word about

the gesture made by the Soviet Union "in the name of mankind," which should serve as an example to the US "if indeed a good will exists and we should be allowed to believe that this (good will) can arise in the brains of the American leaders."

Toward the end of his speech Raúl addressed his big brother "comrade Fidel, highest representative of the Party and of the Government, founder of the first Socialist State of America," with assurances that the people stand behind him as one and that it is "prepared to unconditionally accept and carry out the orders, which he will wish to give in name of the people of Cuba, of the Party, and of the Government, and as supreme commander."

This is what is being worried about: that after the settlement of the conflict, Fidel, however sobered up inwardly, will in his familiar way manage to announce to the common herd that he has likewise "for the sake of mankind" abandoned some of his demands (including Guantánamo!); with the guarantees given to Cuba and the Soviet Union, which put an end to the economic boycott, to piracy, and to the violation of Cuban airspace, the country will however be able to freely work on its golden future in cooperation with its Marxist-Leninist brothers!

Whether this fear will prove justified, or whether after Fidel's grandiloquence his "people" will still be inclined to swallow everything he puts in front of them, remains an open question. The fact is that after the exuberance of the first days of mobilization a silence has set in among the ranks of his supporters, an anxious silence that is shared by his enemies who live between hope and fear.

Most of my foreign colleagues believe that Fidel will emerge from the battle stronger than ever, be it without the missile installations.

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.