

November 26, 1962

Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 26 November 1962

Citation:

"Letter from Dutch Embassy, Havana (Boissevain), 26 November 1962", November 26, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Archives, The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Legation (later Embassy) in Cuba, 1955-1964, 2.05.169, inv. 87. Obtained for CWIHP by Rimko van der Maar and translated for CWIHP by Bastiaan Bouwman.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/115573>

Summary:

Boissevain explains the previous disjointed cable sent to Amsterdam on 26 November. Anastas Mikoyan gave a farewell speech which contained old communist platitudes and admiration for the Cuban people. He makes references to Fidel Castro several times, but ironically Castro is not with Mikoyan, instead retreating to Havana University. The leader revealed a manifesto entitled "Cuba's Answer to Kennedy," which contained: a reiteration of Castro's Five Points, the demand of a UN investigation into U.S.-led attacks on Cuban military bases, the Cuban right to defend itself, and a statement regarding lack of faith in Kennedy's promises of nonaggression. In Boissevain's mind this will serve to only aggravate both the Soviet Union and the United States, and, in his words, "an anxious time begins."

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Dutch

Contents:

Translation - English

2528/588.

Havana, 26 November 1962.

C U B A:

Politics.

As [I reported to] Your Excellency through another channel, Anastas Mikoyan made a speech on the evening before his departure [from Cuba] consisting of communist platitudes and expressions of admiration for the Cuban people in its struggle against imperialism and its love for world peace. Time and again he covered himself with the mantle of Khrushchev's name and he repeatedly mentioned Fidel Castro. Like Achilles the latter has withdrawn into the tent of the University, where he basks in the admiration of students of both sexes.

What the "máximo líder" has concocted was revealed on the morning of the long-awaited departure of the first vice-prime minister of the Soviet Union, namely a manifesto printed as: Cuba's answer to Kennedy.

Apart from a repetition of the familiar five points this piece contains the provocative demand that the U.N. launch an investigation in the United States into the sites where attacks on Cuba are being prepared and that it accomplish the dismantling of the camps where volunteers are trained.

Cuba reserves the right to acquire any kind of weapons for its defense. "As Marxist-Leninists we defend peace out of conviction and as a principle." The naked assurance of non-aggression does not satisfy the revolutionary government: she has as little faith in the words of President Kennedy as she has fear for his threats.

The die is cast! Unless the Soviet Union, which has abandoned or been forced to abandon friends in the past, pressures Cuba, for which means are available in abundance, I fear that the crisis will continue as will the boycott on the shipping trade with which the government and labor unions of the United States wield a powerful economic weapon.....

Now the jokes about the length of Mikoyan's stay are subsiding.

Mr [James] Donovan was supposed to arrive to negotiate a ransom for Mikoyan¹; the Armenian would not leave over sea, nor by airplane, but "con el caballo" (= Fidel Castro). What can the members of the bourgeoisie, who at the moment are not even able to leave, expect other than a steady deterioration of their living conditions?

For the Cuban people an anxious time begins!

The Ambassador,

G.W. Boissevain.

¹ The joke alluded to the lawyer who was negotiating with Castro terms for the release of Cubans taken prisoner during the Bay of Pigs invasion - ed.