

December 27, 1962

Cable from Dutch Embassy, Washington (Van Roijen), 27 December 1962

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Summary:

The cable concerns a conversation between Dutch ambassador J. Herman van Roijen and U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Rusk said the Cuban issue still was a source of concern, with the upcoming anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, and was concerned about Havana in particular. Rusk conjectured that one of three things would happen: 1) Castro would announce joining the Non-Aligned Movement; 2) The extremists within the Communist Party would overthrow Castro; 3) A revolution against both Castro and the Russians would be mounted. The conversation concludes with Rusk complimenting President Kennedy for his aggressive yet prudent stance against the Soviets during the crisis.

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During a tour d'horizon with Rusk this afternoon he said that the Cuban issue still worried him, especially with reference to the situation in Havana. It is being considered that the celebration of the takeover by Castro on the coming second of January, for which occasion a large number of militia members would be concentrated in Havana, will preface events of far reaching nature. Although they are not sure exactly which direction things will go Rusk said he saw the following possibilities:

A. Castro may announce a "change of policy" which would boil down to a break with the Russians followed by a reorientation either in the Chinese-Albanian direction, or a Titoist line.

B. The extreme militant wing of the Cuban communist party could overthrow Castro with the aid of the Russian troops.

C. The moment could be seized for a revolution which would be directed not only against Castro but also against the Russians present.

Especially the latter possibility gives the US much cause for worry since it could lead to a situation as in Hungary in 1956, with the difference that this time the US [in my opinion also for domestic political reasons] would have to intervene.

During a brief review of the Cuban crisis Rusk pointed out that Kennedy although forceful had nevertheless acted very prudently especially by always leaving Khrushchev a way out. For instance the US had first addressed the removal of the missiles [Rusk here noted that indications neither of the presence of nuclear warheads nor of the preparation of missiles for launch in the direction of the US were ever received; if the latter would have been observed the US would have struck immediately] only when the issue of the missiles had been dealt with was withdrawal of the bombers demanded and only when the IL-28[s] had been removed, had the withdrawal of the Russian troops been tabled. He confirmed that Khr[ushev] had conceded withdrawal of the troops, albeit without committing himself to a definite time limit.

Van Roijen 1057 ++