

September 14, 1962

Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 14 September 1962

Citation:

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Summary:

Jelen discusses a conversation he had with [Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa [García] on 9 September. They discussed diplomatic visits, UN delegation sessions, and growing tensions in the 'Cuban situation' and possible US military action against Cuba.

Credits:

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Dispatched from Havana on 09.14.1962 at 13:10 and received on 09.15.1962 at 15:12

Came to the Decoding Department at 09.15.1962 at 16:00

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI1

From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JELEN2 I conducted a conversation with [Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa [García] on 9 September.

I have generally informed him about the visits of [UN Secretary General] U Thant³ and [Britain's Leader of the Labour Party Opposition Hugh Todd Naylor] Gaitskell⁴, and especially the aspects of the conversations pertaining to Cuba (see Your Cable No. 10835). It did not seem from our conversation that he had received this information from [Cuban Ambassador to Poland?] Perez. Roa informed me, within the context of our conversation regarding U Thant, that they were expecting his visit sometime in January [1963].

R. informed me that as for now he did not expect to attend the UN session. [He said that] he would only go if the process of the session required his presence. They are not expecting to bring up the Cuban issue at the session (if the events demand this, then they will bring up the matter at the [U.N.] Security Council). They are asking, however, that the delegations of friendly [socialist] nations bring up the issue of the threat to Cuba at the general debate by emphasizing that a path to solving the contentious issues should be resolved through bilateral negotiations between the United States and Cuba. They turned to all of the socialist countries regarding this matter. Their delegation has instructions to remain in close contact with the delegations of the socialist countries. They were informed that the United Arab Republic [Egypt] would broach the issue of adopting this solution during the general debate [at the U.N.]. Other countries of the Casablanca group⁵ will also support this proposition. They have turned to countries of Latin America, [asking them] to bring up the issue of adhering to the principle of non-intervention.

R. expressed his view that the Soviet declaration [made on 11 September 1962]⁶ removes, [at least] for now, the threat of a more serious military action against Cuba. It did not seem from our conversation that he had any more knowledge of the prospects of conducting [an] unofficial conference of foreign ministers of American nations.

[This part of my report has been compiled based on] my conversations with colleagues from the diplomatic corps (of socialist countries) whom I was able to see. These conversations point to the fact that the Cuban leadership possessed information that very serious preparations were in the making as far as a military action [against Cuba]. A series of Western diplomats were also to share the opinion of such a possibility. The Hungarian [ambassador, János Beck] is saying that that in his conversation with the charge d'affaires of the nunciature [the Vatican], [the interlocutor] very sharply condemned the adventurousness of the United States [regarding Cuba]. From the same sources it seems that the Cuban leadership thinks that, following the Soviet declaration, there is currently a possibility that a series of attempts by isolated and heavy marine landings, [which are] aimed at unleashing a series of internal hotspots of the armed struggle [could take place].

[1] Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

[2] Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

[3] U Thant visited Poland in September 1962.

[4] Gaitskell visited Poland in August 1962.

[5] The Casablanca group was founded in 1961 and included Algeria, Egypt, Ghana and Morocco. The group, which represented more radical and socialist attitudes combined with the idea of Pan-Africanism, was eventually dissolved and merged into the organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

[6] Reference here to the Soviet Declaration that the US attack on Cuba will lead to nuclear war.