

November 27, 1962

Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 27 November 1962

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Summary:

Jelen describes a conversation he had with Gallan Czyzycki, a Mexican journalist, about the Cuban Missile Crisis.

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Translation - English

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Came to the Decoding Department at 11.28 at 14:20

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI1, Eyes Only
From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JELEN2

In the conversation with [one of the Polish embassy employees] Czyżycki, Gallan - a Mexican journalist - relayed the following statement made by [Fidel?] Castro in the conversation with him on the 26th of this month (after the departure of [Anastas] Mikoyan):

The decision to install, and subsequently to withdraw, the [missile] bases, was not well thought out. Cuba would never have agreed to the proposition of their installation had it known that there was a possibility of their dismantling. Cuba agreed, and it was ready to bear consequences, because it believed that the point here was the strategic goals of the [communist] camp [as a whole]. Besides, the deciding [factor in their decision] was their trust they placed in the Soviet assessment of the international balance of power.

If the installation of the [missile] bases resulted from ignoring the abilities of the opponent, something that had already taken place not for the first time in the Soviet [foreign] policy, for example in 1941,3 then the [decision] to dismantle the missiles resulted from the exaggerated [assessment of the opponent's abilities].

It was a mistake to withdraw the missiles and the bombers separately, because it was like swallowing a bitter pill twice.

Castro is absolutely convinced about the honesty of the Soviet intentions during the crisis. However, it will take time to calm down the emotional [passionate] moods of the [Cuban] society.

Cuba does not put too much hope in the ongoing talks [taking place] in the UN. The principle [espoused] in the second Havana declaration should be intensively implemented in Latin America. However, this issue is related to the overall attitude of the USSR towards the policy of the communist parties of Latin American countries, which do not support the declaration. [The issue] is also related to the idea of [peaceful] coexistence under the specific [conditions] in Latin America.

The possibility of a renewed visit by [UN Secretary General] U Thant to Cuba is quite great.

[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] The reference here is to the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 known as the "Operation Barbarossa," which followed after Stalin signed the Treaty of Non-Aggression (commonly known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact) on 23 August 1939.