

**November 16, 1962**

**Excerpt from Protocol No. 66 of Session of CC CPSU  
Presidium, 'Instructions to Comrade A. I. Mikoyan'**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Khrushchev explains his agreement with Kennedy to Ambassador Mikoyan, in which the Soviet Union promised to remove weapons from Cuba on the condition that the US will lift the quarantine and prevent further invasion or attacks on Cuba.

**Credits:**

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Russian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

About Instructions to Comrade A. I. Mikoyan □□

To approve the text of instructions to comrade A. I. Mikoyan (attachment - special folder).

CC Secretary

To paragraph 1 of protocol # 66

Extraordinary

Special folder

Havana

Soviet Ambassador

To comrade A. I. Mikoyan

We are sending you the confidential oral reply from [John F.] Kennedy to our oral confidential message.

From this letter, you can see that Kennedy has agreed to our assurance regarding the removal of the IL-28s with the crews and equipment. If we give Kennedy this assurance, then he will immediately lift the quarantine. From his letter, it is clear that he does not even demand that it be published, but, so to speak, is relying on a gentleman's agreement regarding the removal of the IL-28s over the period of, as he says, 30 days. Therefore, it seems like it would not be difficult to reach an agreement on this issue.

But this is not the main issue. The main issue is stopping the overflights of Cuba and [getting] confirmation of the non-invasion guarantees, which were given in Kennedy's letter of 27 and 28 October.

From Kennedy's letter, it is clear that currently he is holding us to our promises to remove offensive weapons and to our statement that with the consent of the Cuban government we agree to inspections by U.N. representatives of the removal of the weapons, which the Americans call offensive, from Cuba, on condition that the United States gives guarantees through the United Nations that it will not invade Cuba nor that it will allow such an invasion by other countries of the Western hemisphere.

We, to our regret, did not find any understanding on the part of the Cuban government of our efforts aimed at confirming the U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba through the United Nations. Moreover, the Cuban government publicly announced that it does not agree with the steps we are trying to take in the negotiations that began in order to achieve confirmation through the United Nations of the U.S. obligations mentioned above in the interests of Cuba. Therefore, the necessary cooperation between us and the government of Cuba on this issue has not been established from the very beginning, and therefore the statements that we made in our letters look as if they have no basis, which Kennedy is exploiting as a pretext for refusing to confirm his pledge at the United Nations not to attack Cuba.

We, the Presidium of the Central Committee, in full quorum, discussed this issue fully, taking into account the last letter from Kennedy, and believe that the position of our friends on this issue cannot be considered rational. Living in a world that contains two antagonistic camps means that you cannot always rely only on weapons. Under certain conditions one has to show significant flexibility, so that while relying on force, i.e. on weapons, one is still able to use diplomatic channels as well, when the situation demands that and when it is in our interests.

We believed and now believe that we accomplished a big favor for Cuba when we snatched the statement out of Kennedy about a non-invasion of Cuba. We believe that if our missiles and our weapons had not been deployed in Cuba, then Cuba would already have been invaded by the armed forces of the United States. The military maneuvers that were announced by Pentagon in October - that was precisely the announcement of the invasion of Cuba. Therefore, if our Cuban comrades are able to think that the missiles we deployed invited the U.S. threat to Cuba, then that is a big delusion.

We believe that Kennedy's proposal, and those proposals that were expressed by U Thant, created a good opportunity to resolve the difficulties in the issue of inspection over the withdrawal of our missiles. In particular, we had in mind U Thant's proposal to the effect that he and the U. N. officers accompanying him could be given an opportunity to visit the locations of dismantlement of our missiles and to make sure that they were been dismantled. That proposal was the most reasonable and the most appropriate for our side.

There was also the second proposal - for ambassadors of five Latin American countries represented in Cuba to visit the locations of dismantlement of the missiles as a tour.

How could Cuba's sovereignty suffer from this in any way? But they rejected [those proposals]. We simply do not understand that.

It was also suggested that representatives of nine neutral states Ghana, Guinea, UAR, Austria, Sweden, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Brazil visited the locations of dismantlement. We had no objections against those countries, because we had no doubts in their good will toward Cuba. That proposal was also rejected.

All this creates a situation where we were denied an opportunity to cooperate with the Cuban government in this question in favor of Cuba, - not in our interest, but precisely in Cuba's interest.

Now the Cubans have taken the following step - they sent the protest against the overflights of the American aircraft over the Cuban territory to the Security Council. This is correct. But, at the same time, they issued a warning that if such flights continue, then American aircraft would be shot down. In the situation where the diplomatic contacts have been established and the negotiations are going on, of course, it is a step that does not encourage fastest resolution of the conflict around Cuba.

The American aircraft, as is well known, fly over Cuba from the first days of the Revolution. Civilian planes also fly [over Cuba]. We have information that in this year and even in August and September American planes were flying over Cuba and that Cubans issued an order not to shoot down these planes; in any case, they did not open fire and did not shoot them down. The question arises, what does it mean to press such an ultimatum now, when the diplomatic negotiations are going on. If we raise such conditions, we would have to implement it, i.e. begin to shoot down the planes.

We believe that our people cannot participate in this, because, according to our deepest conviction, not all opportunities have been used for realization of mutual obligations of the sides, which arise from the exchange of correspondence with President Kennedy. To act in such a manner now would lead to a military conflict, and it could develop if one would follow such a course, -it could not be justified by anything and would have no grounds. This is our understanding of the situation, and this is our assessment of the position of our Cuban friends on the issue of American

flights over Cuba.

All this puts us in a very difficult situation already, because there are our people [in Cuba] servicing these weapons. Of course, they will believe that these weapons would have to be used. But we cannot give an order to our people to use those weapons, because to give such an order would mean to start pulling ourselves into a war. And we do not want that and we consider it irrational.

In addition, we believe-and this is very important-that, even if they opened fire against the American aircraft, and we would regret if such a development occurred, if that would have been done, that fire would not be effective. It would not result in a real strengthening of Cuban security by military means. But it could cause an onset of U.S. military actions against Cuba. And it is a fact that the United States possesses military capabilities which exceed the capabilities that Cuba has now many times, even though now it is much better armed than it was before. Therefore, to open fire against the American aircraft would be an irrational act, which would give the most notorious reactionary forces in America an opportunity to press Kennedy toward the extreme militaristic positions. They, those forces, do exactly that-they put pressure on Kennedy and use the opportunities that the Cuban comrades' current position creates for them.

We have done and are doing everything possible in order to shield Cuba from intervention and to arm Cuba. We undertook a great risk, and we knew that we were taking a great risk, because a danger of unleashing the thermo-nuclear war really did emerge at the most intense moment. Now with our diplomatic actions we have rapidly brought down this tension and put the negotiations of the two sides that are involved in the conflict in diplomatic channels under such conditions that present for both sides the mutually beneficial resolution of the situation. All this is being done primarily for Cuba and not for us. However, it looks like Cuba does not want to cooperate with us. Cuba, which now does not want to even consult with us, wants to practically drag us behind itself by a leash, and wants to pull us into a war with America by its actions. We cannot and will not agree to this. We will not do it, because we see the conditions that were created with our efforts and that allow us to resolve the issue of Cuban security without war, the issue of non-invasion guarantees.

If the Cuban comrades do not want to cooperate with us on this issue and do not want to undertake measures which would help us resolve this issue and avoid being pulled into a war together with us, then apparently the conclusion that we see is that our presence in Cuba is not helpful for our friends now. Then let them state that openly, and we will have to make conclusions for ourselves. If our Cuban comrades undertake measures that in their opinion protect their interests - it is their right. But then we have to raise the issue with them that we would be forced to remove from ourselves all responsibility for the consequences to which their steps might lead them. If they do not take our arguments into account, then it is clear that our side cannot bear responsibility for it.

We regret it, and we regret it very much, but we will have to state the following--because our advice is not being taken into account, we disclaim any responsibility, because we cannot be attached by force to those actions which we consider irrational. In such a case, let the Cuban comrades bear full responsibility for the situation and for the possible consequences.

What should be the conclusion and what would be the next step, if of course the Cuban comrades would agree to take rational steps?

We believe, as we have already informed you, that we can give an oral assurance to President Kennedy that we are going to withdraw the IL-28s from Cuba under the

condition that the President promises to lift the quarantine immediately, which he expressed willingness to do.

The issue of non-intervention guarantees is more complicated now. As you can see from Kennedy's latest confidential letter, he ties this question to the realization of our promises regarding inspections. Therefore, the question of lifting the quarantine and our obligation to withdraw the IL-28s is not the main question now, but realistically only an interim condition for the solution of the main issue, because of which essentially, as the Russians say, the whole mess had developed in the first place, is to squeeze out of the United States and to affirm through the United Nations an assurance of non-invasion of Cuba. The United States, of course, got into a difficult situation, taking into account the fact that they for many years after the revolution in Cuba had made statements that they could not tolerate a state of a different socio-political system in the Western Hemisphere. Now, as it clearly follows from the President's letters of October 27 and 28, they, i.e. the United States, stated exactly the opposite, namely: the United States agreed to tolerate a state of a different socio-economic system and is willing to undertake an obligation not to intervene in Cuba and to deter other countries of Western Hemisphere from intervention, if we withdraw the weapons, that President Kennedy characterized as offensive, from Cuba.

Our understanding is that all this means a significant important step in the interest of Cuba, in the interest of its independent development as a sovereign socialist state. Unfortunately, the Cuban comrades do not understand that. Now the Cubans by their stubbornness and, I would say, by their certain arrogance which shows in their statements about sovereignty, help the most extreme reactionary forces of the United States to reject the obligations stated in Kennedy's letters and help those forces to put pressure on Kennedy, so that he would be forced to disavow those obligations with a long-term target [in mind] - to ultimately embark on a military invasion of Cuba.

It is clear that it would only be in the interests of the enemies of the Cuban revolution.

Therefore, we believe that the Cuban comrades should gather their courage and reconsider their position in this issue. They should choose one of the options, which are presented to them: either U Thant's representatives, or ambassadors from five Latin American countries, or representatives of nine neutral countries. If they do not accept these proposals, the United States will be the only winner, and they will score this victory only because we could not rationally use [the bargaining chips] which we were able to obtain during the period of the most critical tension in our relations, when we were on the brink of war.

We consider it incorrect to open fire against the American aircraft in the present situation. If I was to use imaginative language, now after the tension has subsided, a certain type of truth emerged, when none of the sides opens fire. The Americans are flying over Cuba, but they were flying there before. To open fire against the U.S. aircraft now would mean to reject the diplomatic channels and to rely only on weapons, i.e. to make a choice of possibly unleashing a war.

We believe that this is irrational, and we will not participate in it. We are negotiating with the Americans. We want to cooperate with Cuba, and if Cuba wants to cooperate with us for its own benefit, - we will be happy. But if Cuba does not want to cooperate with us, then obviously our participation in the resolution of the Cuban conflict would not bring any benefit. In such a case, we would have to find out the opinion of the Cuban leadership and after that discuss the new situation, so that we could make appropriate conclusions for ourselves regarding our people who are presently in Cuba. Frankly speaking, we have deepest regrets that at the time when

on our part we are making all efforts to use every opportunity with the purpose of achieving a confirmation of U.S. obligations not to intervene in Cuba through the United Nations, our Cuban friends do not exhibit any desire to cooperate with us in this cause.

We do not believe that the Cubans would want to allow war, and if they do not want that, then it would be irrational to deny us and themselves an opportunity to quickly remove the remaining elements of conflicts on the conditions of the obligations that were already undertaken by the Soviet Union and the United States in their correspondence.

You should personally think it over once again, because you know the situation and the personalities of the people with whom you are going to talk. You need to bring our thoughts and our wishes to their comprehension. Let them respond to you and let them take the responsibility upon themselves. If they do not want to cooperate with us, then obviously the conclusion is clear that they want to take all responsibility upon themselves. It is their right—they are a government and they are responsible for their country, for their policy, but then they should not involve us in their business. If they do not want our cooperation, we cannot follow their policy, which in addition is irrational in this issue.

In order to give Kennedy a response on this issue, we would like to know your opinion.

At this point we do not know yet how the events will develop, but obviously if the negotiations get prolonged, then the Americans will complicate the whole issue more and more. They have such an opportunity, because they have a more favorable strategic and geographic situation. This has to be taken into account. Therefore, they could stall, and they do not suffer and do not lose anything from the prolongation of this conflict. But the losers here first of all would be Cuba and us, both in material respect and in the political and moral sense.

The President raises the issue regarding some guarantees for the future in regard to the issue of sending the so-called offensive weapons to Cuba. He even says that it allegedly follows from our correspondence that we undertook an obligation regarding inspections in the future with a purpose of not allowing further shipments of such weapons to Cuba. By the way, we have not undertaken such an obligation in our correspondence, although in Kennedy's letters that question had been raised. Presenting everything in such a light as if there existed a mutual agreement on that issue, Kennedy, of course, exaggerates. However, it follows that by doing it, he is trying to get the highest possible price from us for his confirmation through the U.N. of the pledge not to invade Cuba. This also complicates the issue.

Now to the question of U.N. posts. Earlier we presented this position to you and now we repeat that the idea of creating of such posts, as means of preventing an unexpected attack, seems reasonable. Kennedy apparently is consciously trying to link our proposals on that issue, which we made during consideration of arms control issues, to Cuba. He even puts the question in such a way: that creation of U.N. posts in the region of the Caribbean Sea, including the corresponding area of the United States, allegedly requires organization of such posts in the Soviet Union as well. Of course, it is not difficult for us to explain that our proposals regarding the posts were made at the time when negotiations on the issue of general and full disarmament were conducted in London and later during the negotiations in Geneva on prevention of surprise attacks. Therefore, those proposals concerning with the posts of the Soviet Union do not have and cannot have any relationship to Cuba, because at the time when they were made no Cuban issue had existed. We are hoping that Kennedy will understand the inappropriateness of raising the issue about the U.N. posts in the territory of the Soviet Union in connection with the Cuban issue and would not insist

on that.

Now we are moving toward the Plenum. We have already informed you of our opinion, and we are now even more convinced that we made the right choice when we recommended that you should stay longer in Cuba, even while we understood that your long stay there is beginning to outgrow the framework of necessity. As you have probably noted, the Americans are already saying that apparently the difficulties in our relations with the Cubans are so substantial that Mikoyan has to stay in Cuba for a long time and cannot leave yet. We even admit that it might be possible that the Cubans are beginning to feel certain awkwardness as a result of your prolonged stay in Cuba.

In short, we obviously have to reach an agreement now: if there is no hope for Cuban cooperation, then probably you will have to leave Cuba. But then we will say that since our Cuban friends do not need our cooperation, we have to draw appropriate conclusions from all this, and we will not impose ourselves.

In any case, we believe today that the decision about your trip to Cuba was correct, and your stay there was useful. Now, when you have these important and serious conversations with the Cuban friends, we would like you to take all the circumstances into account and to test the grounds regarding your further stay in Cuba. If you feel that the Cubans are not inconvenienced by your further presence, it would probably be useful for you to stay there longer. Your presence in Cuba represents, one can say, a deterrent factor both for the United States and for the Cubans.

N. Khrushchev  
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