

Contents:

Articles from the *Militant* on 40th anniversary of crisis

- Russians, Cubans, Americans relive 1962 'Missile' Crisis
- Opposing views heard at New York meeting on October 1962 crisis

Excerpts from *October 1962: The "Missile" Crisis as Seen from Cuba*, by Tomás Diez Acosta

- Cuba's response to 1962 U.S. military threats
- Cubans urged USSR to make defense pact public

Speeches by Fidel Castro

- 'U.S. has no right to demand inspections'
 - 'The imperialists today are not the all-powerful masters of the world.'
 - 'They will never catch Cuba by surprise'
-

Russians, Cubans, Americans relive 1962 'Missile' Crisis

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA--A three-day tripartite international conference here on "The October Crisis: a political perspective 40 years later" finished October 13 with a visit by participants to one of the locations in Pinar del Río province where a medium-range ballistic missile site had been under construction in October 1962.

Altogether some 200 Cubans, Americans, and Russians--many of whom were directly involved 40 years ago in what is widely known as the "missile" crisis--exchanged views on the origins and consequences of those events. The U.S. administration of John F. Kennedy came within a few steps of launching an attack on Cuba that would, in all probability, have rapidly escalated into nuclear war with the Soviet Union.

At the conference, former secretary of defense Robert McNamara, whose tenure in that post spanned both the "missile" crisis and the massive escalation of U.S. forces in Vietnam, argued that the Kennedy administration's Operation Mongoose had been "stupid." It was nothing but a sideshow, he said.

Mongoose was an extensive U.S. government program of assassination, sabotage, and subversion, personally directed from the White House by Attorney General Robert Kennedy on behalf of his brother, the president. It had been initiated in the aftermath of the crushing defeat dealt by Cuba's armed forces and militia in April 1961 to a U.S.-organized invasion by Cuban mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs. The objective of the invasion was to prepare the way for the direct use of U.S. military forces to overthrow Cuba's revolutionary government.

With a full dose of imperial arrogance, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who was special assistant to John F. Kennedy at the time, labeled Operation Mongoose a mere "pinprick," declaring "surprise" that it had caused such "problems for the Cubans." U.S. policy makers were really not interested in Cuba, he proclaimed. The only issue was eliminating potential Soviet military bases in Latin America.

Each of these lies and more were taken up and answered in the course of the meeting, especially by the conference participants from Cuba. The origin of the "missile" crisis was not Soviet weapons but Washington's determination to try to crush the Cuban revolution. What prevented a U.S. invasion--for which military plans were far advanced--was neither Kennedy's "moderation,"

nor Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev's abrupt decision to withdraw the missiles without consultation with the Cuban leadership. What stayed Washington's hand was the knowledge that an invasion of Cuba would entail unacceptable political costs due to the determination of the Cuban people to defend their socialist revolution. Pentagon planners at the time predicted that U.S. casualties would have been incredibly high just in the first few days of such an assault.

The Cuban delegation, whose members helped set the record straight about Washington's aggression, included President Fidel Castro, Vice Presidents José Ramón Fernández and José Ramón Balaguer, other leaders of the Cuban government and Communist Party directly involved in the October 1962 events, and a number of authors and researchers. Among those who opened a conference session with a presentation was Tomás Diez Acosta, author of the new book *October 1962: The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba*, which draws on a wealth of information from Cuban archives and from interviews with direct participants in the events (see excerpt from book on the facing page).

Vol.66/No.39

October 21, 2002

Opposing views heard at New York meeting on October 1962 crisis

BY NAOMI CRAINE

NEW YORK--At a number of campuses across the country, events are taking place this month to mark the 40th anniversary of the so-called Cuban missile crisis. One of these, held October 1 at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center, drew about 200 people.

The featured speaker at the New York event was Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., former advisor to President John F. Kennedy. He and the other panelists put forward the official U.S. government version--presented from a liberal perspective--of the October 1962 events in which Washington brought the world to the brink of nuclear war.

As the speakers portrayed it, Kennedy saved the world from disaster, Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev was a sensible adversary, and the Cuban people were simply not part of the picture.

Schlesinger, a prominent U.S. historian, was a special assistant to Kennedy in 1962 and was intimately involved in the White House's propaganda efforts at the time. He was joined on the platform by Wayne Smith, who headed the U.S. Interests Section in Havana under the Carter administration.

Also speaking was Nina Khrushcheva, a professor at the New School, and Celestine Bohlen, a former *New York Times* correspondent who chaired the meeting. Publicity for the event had listed Carlos Alzugaray, deputy director of Cuba's Institute for Higher International Studies, as a speaker, but U.S. officials denied him a visa, according to the event's organizers.

October 1962 was "the most dangerous moment in human history. It was the only time two contending powers had the capacity to blow up the world," Schlesinger began. "We were fortunate to have leaders as concerned as Kennedy and Khrushchev who avoided a nuclear war."

The former Kennedy advisor noted that the events leading up to the "missile" crisis were preceded by the U.S.-organized attempt to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. This mercenary invasion "was a misguided effort inherited from [former president Dwight] Eisenhower," Schlesinger asserted, adding that "Kennedy would never have conceived something like that."

He mentioned Washington's secret campaign of counterrevolutionary terror and destabilization from late 1961 through 1962, code-named Operation Mongoose, as a program of sabotage. In fact, the operation was much broader in scope, including detailed scenarios of pretexts that could lead to a direct U.S. invasion of Cuba.

Schlesinger acknowledged that in signing a mutual defense agreement with the Soviet Union in 1962, the Cuban leadership had argued for making the pact--including the deployment of Soviet missiles on the island--public, in contrast with the Soviet officials' effort to keep it secret.

Schlesinger concluded his presentation by comparing discussions among U.S. officials in October 1962 to the current tactical differences among Democratic and Republican politicians over Washington's war moves in the Middle East. "Everyone agreed that the missiles had to be gotten out" of Cuba, Schlesinger said. While some officials simply wanted to get the Soviet missiles moved, "others campaigned for preemptive war. Fortunately they did not prevail."

The same day as the CUNY forum, Schlesinger appeared as one of the signers of a full-page ad in the *New York Times*, sponsored by the liberal group Common Cause, opposing a Congressional resolution that, it explained, would give U.S. president George Bush "a blank check to make war on Iraq." The ad argued instead that "we must encourage the United Nations to make every effort to carry out effective inspections to ascertain the danger from Iraqi weapons" before launching a full-scale war against Iraq.

Smith and Khrushcheva spoke in the same vein as Schlesinger. "Thank God Khrushchev accepted Kennedy's proposal that the Soviets withdraw the missiles and the U.S. end its naval blockade against Cuba," Smith said.

Khrushcheva cited approvingly a speech by Sen. Edward Kennedy on Iraq the previous week in which he cited President Kennedy's actions in October 1962 as an example of restraint in contrast to those who sought a "preemptive" attack.

'About the revolution, not missiles'

During the question period, Schlesinger and Smith both expressed their view that Washington's four-decade-long economic embargo against Cuba does not advance its interests today.

Criticizing the Bush administration's Cuba policy, Schlesinger argued, "The embargo protects Castro and enables him to play the nationalist card." It would be better, he stated, to lift the embargo and "drown him with American tourists."

Speaking from the floor, Martín Koppel, who is the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of New York, expressed a different view. The October 1962 crisis, he said, "was not primarily about missiles but about the Cuban Revolution, which the U.S. government was determined to overthrow because of the example it set for workers and farmers around the world, including in the United States." He encouraged those attending the meeting to read the newly published Pathfinder book *October 1962: The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba* by Tomás Diez Acosta. This book, Koppel said, details how the Kennedy administration began planning for a direct U.S. invasion of Cuba following Washington's defeat at the Bay of Pigs, and describes the mobilization and determination of the Cuban people to defend themselves that stayed the U.S. rulers' hand.

"There were no plans to invade Cuba," said Smith in response. "There were no troop movements to the south" or other evidence of such plans, he added. Schlesinger said, "If we had wanted to invade, we would have smashed Cuba," alleging that it was thanks to Kennedy that an invasion did not take place.

Disputing that view, Koppel had pointed out that on Oct. 26, 1962, Kennedy was informed by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff that a U.S. invasion of Cuba would cost more than 18,000 U.S. casualties in the first 10 days, more than the U.S. casualties in the first five years of the Vietnam war--a political price Washington was not willing to pay.

Another member of the audience pointed to a Pentagon memo dated September 25 of that year laying out contingency plans to carry out an invasion of Cuba on as little as two days' notice.

Another participant in the meeting questioned the seriousness of Kennedy's professed attempts to make peace with the Cuban government after the "missile" crisis, given the numerous continued U.S. attempts to assassinate the Cuban leader.

Schlesinger replied that the assassination attempts all issued from the CIA, and that Kennedy never knew what was happening. He did not mention that the president's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, was a regular participant in meetings of top officials that discussed Washington's plans to try to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.

The majority of the audience appeared to be in agreement with the speakers. A number of people, however, stopped by a literature table outside the meeting that was staffed by supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign. They purchased \$120 worth of books, including three copies of *October 1962: The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba* and several other titles on the Cuban Revolution.

Cuba's response to 1962 U.S. military threats

Washington's provocations brought world to the edge of nuclear catastrophe

In October 1962, in what is widely known as the Cuban Missile Crisis, Washington pushed the world to the brink of nuclear war. The events brought to a head the drive by the U.S. rulers to launch a direct invasion of Cuba and overthrow the revolutionary government there. In the face of the U.S. government's threats, Cuban working people mobilized in their millions to defend their revolution, staying Washington's hand (see accompanying box).

Released on the 40th anniversary of these events, the Pathfinder book *October 1962: The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba*, by Cuban author Tomás Diez Acosta, tells the story of what really happened.

The *Militant* has been printing excerpts from the new book. The one below is from the chapter titled "The brilliant yet sad days of the crisis." The chapter details the steps taken by the U.S. government between October 22 and 28, 1962--the high point of the crisis--toward launching a war against Cuba. It also describes the political and military moves taken by Cuba's revolutionary government to counteract these threats and aggression, as well as the positions taken by top Soviet leaders.

BY TOMÁS DIEZ ACOSTA

On October 22 the crisis erupted. From then on, not only the countries directly involved but the entire world was shaken by these momentous events, which posed a real and imminent danger of nuclear war.

The military measures taken by the United States were directed not only against Cuba but also against the USSR. These steps included putting the Strategic Air Command (SAC) on maximum alert, ordering nuclear submarines armed with Polaris missiles to leave their bases and take up attack positions, and placing in a state of combat readiness the ring of U.S. bases, with all their troops and equipment, that encircled the Soviet Union from Turkey to Japan. For its part, the Soviet Union made its strategic missile forces combat-ready and put its entire armed forces on maximum alert. In Europe the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact armies took similar measures.

The stance taken by the superpowers created worldwide turmoil. Starting on October 23 there were demonstrations in many countries against these actions, which threatened peace and endangered all humanity. Public opinion on the gravity of the events was expressed in various ways around the world. However, political conditions were not favorable for the protests to directly condemn the actions of the U.S. rulers, given the way in which the Soviet Union had deployed the missiles in Cuba and Kennedy's adroit manipulation of public opinion.

Seven days on the brink of nuclear war

Cuba was not caught off guard. Noting the increase in U.S. military actions in the Caribbean, the Cuban government had already begun taking action to meet the threat. Cuban intelligence units were kept on alert. Increasingly alarming reports poured in to the General Staff of the armed forces.

On October 21 it was learned that the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo had been reinforced with additional troops and matériel. Information was also obtained--through a secret channel--that in the early morning hours of October 22 the base commander had ordered the evacuation of civilian families of troops stationed at Guantánamo. In accordance with Operational Directive no. 1, and in light of the political-military situation, orders began going out to Cuban combat units.¹

At noon on October 22, news arrived that the White House press secretary, Pierre Salinger, had reserved time that evening on all U.S. radio stations and TV channels for President Kennedy's address to the nation. From then on, the news media started to report on all meetings held in the presidential office.

Cuban authorities concluded that the flurry of activity in the U.S. capital had to do with discovery of the Soviet missile sites. Although they could not predict exactly what military action the U.S. would launch or where it would strike, they were certain that an attack was imminent. At 3:50 p.m. that day Prime Minister Fidel Castro, in his capacity as commander in chief, placed the armed forces on combat alert. Shortly afterward, at 5:35 p.m.--nearly an hour and a half before Kennedy spoke--a state of combat alarm was decreed for the entire country.²

That evening, Foreign Minister Raúl Roa instructed the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, Mario García Incháustegui, to request an emergency session of the Security Council because--as Roa stated in his instructions--the naval blockade against Cuba announced by the U.S. president constituted "an act of war carried out behind the backs of international organizations, with absolute disdain for the Security Council, creating an imminent danger of war."

Cuba's plans for wartime defense of the island involved organizing the military and political command structure into three operational regions based on the mountain ranges--eastern, central, and western. Each was headed by an authoritative commander who could lead the struggle and armed resistance independently. Commander Raúl Castro, minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, assumed command of Oriente province and its army. Commander Juan Almeida headed up the central provinces, with his headquarters in Santa Clara. Commander Ernesto Guevara, based in Pinar del Río, led the western region. Fidel Castro remained in Havana, at the head of the nation....

Soviet forces placed on full combat alert

Early on the morning of October 23, Marshal Malinovsky reported on the military actions by the United States, and proposed to put the Soviet armed forces on full combat alert. Khrushchev, on the other hand, called for caution, for projecting an image of calm, and for not rushing to make decisions that might touch off a war. At the same time, Khrushchev gave instructions that the submarine fleet, anti-aircraft defense, and strategic missile units cancel all leaves and put on hold retirements based on age until further notice.

Faced with the threat of war, Warsaw Pact countries ordered similar military measures. The TASS news agency ran a statement by the Soviet government denouncing the naval blockade as a serious threat to peace and a step toward unleashing thermonuclear war. It also warned the United States not to implement the measures Kennedy had announced against Soviet ships headed toward Cuba, and requested that the UN Security Council be convened promptly.

At the same time, the Soviet Foreign Ministry gave U.S. ambassador Kohler a copy of the official statement and a message from Khrushchev to Kennedy, which repeated that the weapons in Cuba were defensive and called the actions announced the previous day outrageous interference

in the affairs of the Republic of Cuba as well as a provocative act against the Soviet Union. The Soviet premier also sent a letter to Fidel Castro, calling the U.S. actions piratical, perfidious, and aggressive. Khrushchev told Castro that he had given instructions to the Soviet military representatives in Cuba to take all necessary measures to be completely combat-ready.

This message was interpreted by the Cuban leadership as a clear sign of Soviet determination not to give in to U.S. demands. Years later, Fidel exclaimed: "The idea of retreating never entered my mind."

Coincidentally, on the morning of October 23 the Soviet ship *Aleksandrovsk* docked at the Cuban port of Isabela de Sagua, carrying on board the remaining nuclear missile warheads, without being detected by U.S. intelligence. This was very significant militarily, since it meant that the so-called quarantine announced by Kennedy had no strategic value. Politically, it was a powerful deterrent for the Soviets to use in negotiations to end the conflict. But this advantage was never utilized or even mentioned.

In the morning, after giving the necessary instructions, Fidel Castro went to the central command post to get the latest reports on the state of mobilization. There he learned that U.S. warplanes were making low-altitude flights over Cuba--a dangerous military escalation.

That night the Cuban prime minister appeared on radio and television to refute charges made by the U.S. president the day before. Fidel made it clear that he had no obligation to explain anything to the U.S. government, and he rejected the idea that the United States had the right to decide what kind of weapons or how many weapons Cuba should or should not have. He warned categorically that "appropriate measures to resist and...repel any direct aggression" had been taken. The Cuban leader also opposed the U.S. demand to inspect the island, because "we will never renounce our sovereign prerogatives. Within our borders we are the ones who rule, and we are the ones who will do the inspecting--nobody else."

One by one, Fidel refuted Kennedy's arguments for imposing the blockade. He denounced U.S. violations of the standards of conduct among nations, such as its repeated trespassing into Cuban airspace and territorial waters. In another part of his speech, he stated that the government of Cuba was always willing to resolve its differences with the United States--under conditions of equality.

At the same time, the prime minister asserted that Cuba was in favor of dismantling all military bases and not stationing any foreign troops in the territory of another country. "If the United States desires disarmament, magnificent!" he said. "Let us all support a policy for the dismantling of bases, of troops throughout the world.... But we are not in agreement with a policy that calls for disarming ourselves in the face of the aggressors."

Meanwhile, in the United States the press and other media were spreading alarming news that frightened the population. People stocked up on food and all kinds of supplies. Some well-to-do families in the South began moving north for fear of a nuclear strike in their region.

In Washington, as part of U.S. maneuvers to obtain international backing for its actions and demands, Secretary of State Rusk was assigned to pressure OAS members to approve a resolution of support....

At UN headquarters in New York, the Security Council was convened the afternoon of October 23 to hear representatives of the United States, Cuba, and the Soviet Union. The first to speak was Adlai Stevenson. He delivered a long speech seeking to present the blockade as an act of self-defense. He accused Cuba of receiving strategic weapons, and denounced the USSR for not making public the decision to provide them. He insisted that those weapons systems had altered the "precarious balance of forces" in the world. He also asserted that the Cuban government had allowed the Soviet Union to establish a beachhead and base of operations in the Western Hemisphere, inviting a foreign power to infiltrate the American family.

No inspections on Cuban territory

Cuban representative García Inchaústegui spoke next, refuting Stevenson's assertions. He stated that Cuba had been compelled to arm itself due to repeated acts of aggression by the United States in flagrant violation of the UN Charter and inter-American agreements. He criticized the U.S. stance of adopting military actions first and later calling on the council, since the UN Charter obligates its members to settle differences through peaceful negotiations before resorting to such extreme measures.

He commented on the striking contradiction that the United States was the only country that maintained a military base in Cuba--against Cuba's will--while at the same time it denounced Cuba for allowing the deployment of friendly troops from the Soviet Union. In conclusion, he presented the principled position of not allowing any kind of inspection of Cuban territory, because "the first thing that ought to be inspected are the U.S. bases from which invasions are launched. We do not accept observers of any kind in matters that fall under our internal jurisdiction."

Soviet representative Valerian Zorin analyzed the pretexts and sophisms used by the U.S. government to justify its aggression, and denounced its actions as having no legal basis. He pointed out that the United States "has endangered maritime shipping of several countries--including its own allies--which do not accept such a foolish policy toward Cuba." He also denounced the diplomatic maneuver by the United States in the OAS, which "openly violates the prerogatives of the Security Council--the only body that can authorize any acts of force." After his statement the session was recessed.

While these debates were taking place in the Security Council, representatives of forty-five nations, mostly members of the Nonaligned Movement from Asia and Africa, met at the United Nations to discuss ways of resolving the crisis. They agreed to ask the UN acting secretary-general, U Thant, to act as mediator and to convene a meeting of the General Assembly if the Security Council was not able to agree on a solution.

On the morning of October 24, Fidel--in his capacity as commander in chief of the armed forces--met with a group of commanders and officers at the General Staff headquarters to analyze the implementation of military measures to defend the country. The chief of intelligence, Captain Manuel de Jesús Quiñones (Pedro Luis), estimated that in case of an invasion of Cuba, the United States would use five or six divisions, and that transporting them would require 120 or 130 ships and take at least six days. He pointed out there was no evidence that such an invasion was imminent. He said, however, that if the 82nd Airborne Division were activated, the first stage of the invasion could be carried out in five or six hours, although the increase in communications traffic and the number of aircraft involved would mean the operation could be quickly detected and pinpointed. He thought the most likely action was an air strike.

Fidel Castro put special emphasis on antiaircraft defense, and he insisted the reserve batteries based in Havana had to be in a position to move quickly if necessary. Therefore, he ordered at least twenty-four of these batteries to be deployed at three points on the outskirts of the city, clustered in such a way that they could rapidly be moved to any location.

U.S. planes violate Cuban airspace

During the meeting it was reported that the previous day ten enemy aircraft had violated Cuban air space, flying over Cuba at an altitude of 100 meters and then climbing sharply once they crossed the coastline. These aircraft could not be allowed to fly with impunity, Castro said. He proposed an investigation of the places where antiaircraft defense needed to be strengthened, so that such flights into Cuban airspace could be shot down. "There is no political reason whatsoever why we shouldn't shoot down an aircraft flying 300 feet over our heads," Fidel said.

In closing the meeting, Fidel explained the military and political considerations that led to ordering the mobilization of October 22. He said that the Cuban leadership had indications an attack was being organized and therefore decided to put troops on alert and order a full

mobilization, because "the harm done by taking precautions that later turned out to be unnecessary was preferable to the consequences of being caught by a surprise enemy attack." The subsequent course of events fully justified such a decision.

That afternoon Castro visited a unit of Soviet surface-to-air missiles northeast of the capital. There he became aware how vulnerable they were to attack by low-flying aircraft,³ since they had only one 14.5-mm. zpu-2 double-barreled anti-aircraft machine gun. He ordered that fifty anti-aircraft batteries from the reserves be immediately deployed to protect those positions and the mid-range missile sites.

As expected, the U.S. naval blockade was put into effect in the waters surrounding the Cuban archipelago at 10:00 a.m. that same morning, October 24, and aircraft raids--above all low-altitude flights--increased. Meanwhile, at the Pentagon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered Gen. Thomas Powers, commander in chief of the Strategic Air Command (SAC), to put all his units on full-alert status, DEFCON-2, for the first and only time in the SAC's history. Then Powers, on his own initiative, decided to broadcast the orders to SAC commanders through uncoded messages, stressing that the operation was fully prepared and the alert process was proceeding smoothly. As General Powers himself commented, he felt it "important that [the Soviets] knew the state of combat readiness of SAC." The military situation was becoming more and more dangerous to world peace.

¹ On October 10, 1962, the General Staff had begun distributing Operational Directive no. 1 to the various armed forces commands, in order to ensure the strategic deployment of the FAR in the event of foreign aggression. See General Staff, Operational Directive no. 1, CID-FAR Archives, Military Unit 1081 Collection, Inventory 1, Record 2, File 1.

² During the night of October 22 and early morning of October 23, hundreds of thousands of Cubans were mobilized, with their weapons, and moved to their battle posts. A total of fifty-four infantry divisions, four brigades (one of tanks, and three of artillery), seventeen independent battalions, six artillery groups (multiple rocket launchers), three independent 120-mm. mortar groups, twenty units of the Revolutionary Navy, one hundred and eighteen anti-aircraft batteries, and forty-seven warplanes were mobilized. A total of 269,203 people were mobilized, including 169,561 reservists and 99,612 on the active-duty rosters of the FAR. See "Draft Report Analyzing Experiences of the Recently Concluded Mobilization." Operations Directorate, Havana, December 19, 1962. CID-FAR Archives, Military Unit 1081 Collection, Inventory 1, Record 28, File 4.

³As noted in Chapter 4, these anti-aircraft missiles were not effective against targets flying below 1,000 meters (3,270 feet).

1962: Cubans urged USSR to make defense pact public

In July 1962 the Cuban and Soviet governments signed a mutual defense pact that included deployment of Soviet missiles to Cuba. The deployment was code-named Operation Anadyr. This was the third such military agreement signed between the two governments, over the course of 11 months, to provide military equipment and resources to Cuba in response to Washington's invasion plans.

The author describes the disagreements between the Soviet and Cuban leaderships over Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev's insistence on keeping the mutual defense pact secret, and how Washington, after discovering the missiles, sought to take advantage of Moscow's stance to step up its preparations to attack Cuba. The Cuban leadership argued from the beginning for the public announcement of the pact, including the missiles, and the right of the Cuban people to defend themselves against U.S. aggression.

From the fifth chapter, titled, "The Secret and the Deception."

BY TOMÁS DIEZ ACOSTA

Due to the nature of Operation Anadyr, Soviet intelligence agencies devised measures of concealment and disinformation to keep secret the deployment of troops, weapons, and other combat and logistical supplies in Cuba. Official documents, public statements, and interviews with Soviet functionaries suggest that the political leadership of the Soviet Union was confident in the effectiveness of its disinformation measures, and did not prepare an adequate response in case the United States discovered the operation--as in fact happened.

Despite repeated warnings from Cuba, Nikita Khrushchev stubbornly insisted the operation should not be announced until it was an accomplished fact, which the U.S. would then have to accept. This determined two different stances--Cuban and Soviet--toward the news media campaigns and pressure from the United States.

If Khrushchev had proceeded as the Cuban leadership--with a clear view of the problem--repeatedly suggested, the crisis might have been avoided, or at least might have followed a course less dangerous for humanity.

'Why not make the agreement public?'

The Cubans' opinion on the difficulty of concealing Operation Anadyr began to be confirmed in early August. Reports of the arrival of Soviet troops in Cuba circulated in the U.S. press beginning August 8. U.S. authorities discounted those reports as exaggerated, even though they admitted that more Soviet ships were traveling toward Cuba.

The first reports that came to light in the U.S. press were based on correspondence between Cuban émigrés in the United States and their relatives in Cuba, as well as from Western diplomatic personnel and journalists stationed in Havana. They referred to caravans of military vehicles moving in the middle of the night, with large trucks transporting what appeared to be missiles covered with tarps. There were also reports of construction and repair of roads along various routes where the convoys moved, and reports confirming transfer of the civilian population from some of those rural areas.

As already noted, the intelligence services of Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany, which maintained constant surveillance of maritime traffic through the Straits of Gibraltar and the Dardanelles, warned the U.S. government of unusual movements of Soviet ships headed for the Atlantic. So Washington stepped up its surveillance of sea lanes leading toward Cuba, with continuous reconnaissance flights from the Azores.¹

In his book *Presidents' Secret Wars*, John Prados recounts that CIA Director John McCone asked Philippe Thyraud de Vosjoli--the chief of French intelligence in Washington and an expert on this kind of weaponry--to travel to Cuba to verify on-the-ground reports of the presence of Soviet missiles. In August the expert carried out that mission. He found evidence of anti-aircraft missile emplacements, but not of other types of missiles.

Nevertheless, U.S. intelligence services subjected Cuban territory to intensive scrutiny. Kennedy adviser Theodore Sorensen wrote that beginning in August movements of Russian personnel and equipment in or toward Cuba were the subject of secret meetings and reports in the White House. Naval forces and aircraft photographed every Soviet ship headed toward Cuba. Reconnaissance flights covered all of Cuban territory twice a month. According to Sorensen, beginning August 27 the intelligence services prepared special daily reports devoted exclusively to Cuba.

On August 29 aerial photography by U-2s detected anti-aircraft missile sites in western Cuba, which led the intelligence services to pay special attention to that area.

Days before, on August 11, Aleksandr Alekseev had arrived in Havana as the new ambassador, bringing with him the draft of the military agreement. When Fidel Castro examined the draft he found major political lapses in it. Since in Castro's view the problem was fundamentally political, the agreement needed to be, in his words, "clear, precise and concrete." From that standpoint, the top Cuban leader made the corrections he considered necessary.

The first thing he modified was the title of the accord. He proposed three alternatives. The one that in his opinion best fit the essence of the accord was: "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Cuba and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on military cooperation and mutual defense." Since the goal was not only "the defense of Cuban territory," as stated in the initial draft, but also "military cooperation and mutual defense" between the two countries, this would express the spirit of solidarity in the agreement.

According to the text of the document, the Soviet military contingent was to be directly subordinated to the Soviet government, and was to cooperate with the Cuban armed forces in the event of external aggression. The USSR was to cover the expenses of its forces and all the supplies its troops required. For its part, the Cuban state would assist the Soviet forces and provide the necessary facilities for their deployment.

The agreement also established that the Soviet armed forces had to respect Cuban sovereignty and Cuban law. They thus had no rights to occupy territory or do anything aside from their assigned functions. The agreement was to be valid for five years, although either side could terminate it giving one year's notice. The agreement also stipulated that the installations built would be turned over to the Cuban government when the troops withdrew.

Fierce U.S. propaganda against Cuba

Meanwhile, in the United States, rumors of the presence of Soviet missiles touched off a fierce media campaign against Cuba and the Soviet Union, which was manipulated by the inner circles of power in that country for their own political interests. There were more and more public statements about the military buildup in Cuba by high officials of the government, Congress, and political parties, as well as by leaders of the counterrevolutionary groups based in the United States.

The top Cuban leadership considered this political atmosphere to be quite dangerous, and thought it necessary to make an immediate, strong response. In late August, the Secretariat of the ORI National Directorate analyzed the situation and concluded that the propaganda campaign unleashed in the United States was an unmistakable sign of a new crisis brewing. Faced with that reality, the Secretariat thought it best to take the initiative by making public the military accord.

The Secretariat decided to send two of its members--Commander Ernesto Che Guevara and Captain Emilio Aragonés Navarro--to Moscow with the corrected draft of the military agreement, in order to propose personally to Khrushchev that it be made public. The final decision, however, was to be up to the Soviet side.

Aragonés and Guevara were in the Soviet Union from August 26 to September 1. According to Aragonés, during their exchange of ideas Khrushchev agreed with the corrections Fidel had made to the military agreement, but he did not think it was yet time to make it public. "Be calm," he recommended. "For the Americans a rumor is not the same as real proof of the missiles' existence."

Che repeated their concern that the missiles might be discovered before they were operational, and that the United States might take advantage of the situation to attack. Khrushchev asserted with great assurance, "Relax, I don't think they will find out. When they do find out, they will have no choice but to accept the situation."

Besides, the Soviet leader thought an announcement of the agreement right then would interfere with Kennedy's political activity in the midst of the off-year election campaign. Khrushchev may also have been influenced by the fact that the missile divisions' main weapons had not yet arrived

in Cuba. Perhaps he considered it better to publicize the agreement after the missiles had been installed, and in that way present it as a *fait accompli*. He concluded by repeating to Che and Aragonés what he had said previously to Raúl Castro: "You can relax. If any problem should occur, if we have to send the Baltic fleet over there, we'll send it."

Those talks resulted only in getting a paragraph included in a joint communiqué on the visit publicly expressing Soviet willingness to contribute to the reinforcement of Cuba's defense against the threats of external aggression. It stated: "As long as threats against Cuba by the above-mentioned circles persist, the Republic of Cuba will be fully entitled to adopt measures to guarantee its security and the defense of its sovereignty and independence, and all sincere friends of Cuba will have the full right to respond to those legitimate requests."

Meanwhile, in the United States, the campaign around Soviet weapons in Cuba was becoming more bellicose. The most reactionary politicians demanded immediate action against Cuba. A group of congressional Republicans headed by Senators Homer E. Capehart, Kenneth Keating, and Barry Goldwater was publicly pressing the Kennedy administration to do something. Those statements were directly linked to the November 1962 off-year elections, which drew numerous congressmen into the debate.

Some Latin American governments joined the campaign. The Venezuelan foreign minister, for example, predicted that if Cuba carried out aggression, his country would be the first target. Argentina and Peru also expressed alarm over what was happening on the island. In Central America other governments supported the idea of an invasion, as well.

On September 4 President Kennedy revealed that a reconnaissance flight over Cuba on August 29 had detected surface-to-air missiles and an increased number of Soviet military personnel. He warned Moscow that he would not tolerate the installation of offensive weapons on the island. On September 7 he requested congressional approval to call up 150,000 reservists to active duty if necessary to be able to respond quickly and effectively "to challenges in any part of the Free World."

A week later, on September 13, with his government under political pressure, the U.S. president stated in a press conference that if the growth of communism in Cuba should at some point endanger or interfere in any way with the security of the United States and other nations of the Western Hemisphere by turning the island into an important offensive base for the Soviet Union, he would do everything possible to protect their security. He also warned that if he were to take military action against Cuba, all the weaponry and military advisers provided by the communists would not be able to change the outcome.

On September 26 the U.S. Congress adopted Joint Resolution 230, presented by the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees. This resolution authorized the president to take armed action against Cuba over its supposed aggressive and subversive activities in the hemisphere, and also authorized the use of force to prevent the establishment or use of military power on the island that might endanger the security of the United States.²

A meeting of Latin American foreign ministers on October 3 adopted a communiqué, at the request of the U.S. State Department, condemning the secret military buildup in Cuba and calling on OAS member countries to take individual or collective action to prevent the spread of communism in the hemisphere.

Two different positions

In face of the U.S. campaigns, Cuba's stance was to defend the country's sovereign right to take the measures necessary for its defense, while the Soviet Union's position was to turn to deception to keep the operation secret. Compare, for example, statements made by both countries at the time.

Cuban president Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, in a meeting with workers leaders on September 7, said this about the U.S. campaign against Cuba: " What they are trying to do is deny us the right

to defend ourselves.... Cuba has the legitimate right to use all means necessary for its defense, and Cuba's friends have the right to respond to our requests as needed for defense."

That same day in Washington, Soviet ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, speaking on behalf of his government, assured the U.S. representative to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, that the Soviets were giving only defensive weapons to Cuba.

Three days later, speaking to the Third National Congress of Municipal Education Councils, Fidel Castro sounded the alarm about pressures on the U.S. administration to attack the island, and pointed out: "An invasion of Cuba by U.S. military forces would place imperialism outside international law, as vulgar violators of the rights of the peoples, as perpetrators of genocide."

He also warned the U.S. rulers: "We have said on other occasions that we do not want imperialism to commit suicide on our account. We proclaim our desire to live in peace. We proclaim our desire that good judgment and the most elementary common sense should govern the destiny of that country."

On September 11, 1962, the Soviet news agency TASS broadcast a statement by the government of the USSR reaffirming its intention to provide needed military assistance to Cuba in the event of aggression. But paradoxically, the statement denied the existence of strategic weapons on the island: "The Soviet Union does not need to transfer to any other country--Cuba, for example--the means it possesses to repel aggression, to strike back. Our nuclear resources are so powerful in their explosive force and...we have such powerful missiles for delivering nuclear warheads that we have no need to look for a place to deploy them anywhere outside the boundaries of the USSR."

Cuba responds to U.S. slanders

In response to the joint congressional resolution authorizing President Kennedy to use armed force against Cuba if it threatened U.S. security, the Council of Ministers of the Cuban revolutionary government released a statement September 29 reaffirming Cuba's principled policy:

"Do we not have the rights that international norms, laws, and principles recognize for every sovereign state in any part of the world?"

"We have not surrendered nor do we intend to surrender any of our sovereign prerogatives to the Congress of the United States.

"If the U.S. government harbored no aggressive intentions toward our country, it would not care about the quantity, quality, or type of our weapons.

"If the United States could give Cuba effective and satisfactory guarantees with respect to our territorial integrity and would cease its subversive and counterrevolutionary activities against our people, Cuba would not need to strengthen its defenses. Cuba would not even need an army, and we would be happy to invest all the resources this implies to the nation's economic and cultural development.

"Cuba has always been ready to hold discussions with the U.S. government and to do everything possible on our part, if only we were to find a reciprocal stance by the U.S. government of reducing tensions and improving relations."

This is how the revolutionary government expressed itself in response to the slanderous campaigns being whipped up in the United States. Cuba steadfastly maintained this principled stance and never vacillated in the slightest in the face of all types of pressures. Nor did Cuba negate its sovereign right to possess whatever weapons might be necessary to confront military aggression, and it warned of the consequences such aggression could bring.

In assessing the information supplied and the position taken by Soviet officials, the testimony of Georgi Bolshakov is very interesting. Bolshakov was a press officer in the Soviet embassy in Washington, and at that time acted as a secret "channel" of communication between Kennedy

and Khrushchev. "The U.S. had already installed their missiles right under our noses, in Turkey, some time ago," he commented. "That was not secret. The whole world knew it, including the Soviet Union. However, our own deliberate secrecy was hindering Soviet diplomacy, because whenever the topic of Cuba came up, the question arose: 'Are there Soviet missiles in Cuba?' The fact that we denied it was used in the only possible way: 'They lie.' That idea took hold easily in the minds of the American people, sowing mistrust of our intentions. Perhaps this is why President Kennedy managed to secure support in advance for a planned invasion of Cuba from the Organization of American States and from several European countries, such as Great Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany, and France."

Years later, Fidel Castro explained the major mistakes made by the Soviet government, not only keeping the operation secret--which certainly didn't help--but also their repeated denial of the presence of missiles in Cuba. He analyzed how Khrushchev, in his eagerness to cover up the strategic character of those weapons, used the categories Washington had contrived of "offensive" or "defensive" weapons. Khrushchev always made assurances that the weapons sent to Cuba were defensive in character. For the U.S., the distinction depended on whether the weapons could reach the continental United States, not on the purpose for which they were intended. Consequently, to define the weapons in this way was a highly dangerous political error by Khrushchev. It made things easy for Kennedy, because when nuclear missiles were discovered, Kennedy presented himself as a man who had been lied to, which gave him the moral high ground in public opinion. Unlike the Soviet government, the Cuban government maintained a principled stance on the matter. "We refused to play that game," Fidel said, "and in the public statements of the government, and then at the United Nations, we always said that Cuba considered that it had the sovereign right to have the kind of weapons it considered convenient, and that no one had any right to establish what kind of weapons our country could or could not have. We never denied the strategic character of the weapons. We did not want to play that game."

¹ In August, U.S. air and naval reconnaissance registered the arrival of fifty-five Soviet ships in Cuba, compared to twelve in the same period a year earlier.

² On September 25, the Congress also approved President Kennedy's request to call up 150,000 reservists to active military service.

Vol.66/No.39 October 21, 2002

'U.S. has no right to demand inspections'

The following is a transcript of a meeting between Fidel Castro, Cuba's prime minister, and U Thant, United Nations secretary-general, held in Havana on Oct. 30, 1962. Also participating as part of the Cuban delegation were President Osvaldo Dorticós, Foreign Minister Raúl Roa, and Carlos Lechuga, the newly appointed Cuban representative to the United Nations. It is included in *October 1962: The "Missile" Crisis as Seen from Cuba*.

The accompanying box (see below) outlines how, in face of the U.S. government's plans to invade the island, Cuban working people mobilized in their millions to defend their revolution, staying Washington's hand.

Two days before the meeting recorded below, the Cuban leadership learned from a Radio Moscow broadcast of a letter sent by Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev to U.S. president John Kennedy ordering the removal of missiles from Cuba that were part of the mutual defense pact between the Cuban and Soviet governments.

The U.S. government demanded that Cuba accept "inspectors" to "verify" the removal of the missiles. U Thant visited Cuba for two days of talks to try to convince the revolutionary

leadership to accept a team of UN inspectors on Cuba territory combined with a UN reconnaissance plane that would operate over Cuba's airspace.

As the following exchange shows, Castro explained in no uncertain terms why this proposal was unacceptable. Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press; reprinted by permission.

CASTRO: There is one point I find confusing--the proposals for inspection. They talk about two points here: about a team, and about a plane. I would like you to elaborate on that--the part that refers to proposals for inspection. Please repeat that.

U THANT: Both proposals would involve the United Nations. It would consist of two units: one on the ground and the other from the air, for as long as it takes to dismantle the bases, that is, around two weeks.

CASTRO: I don't understand why they ask these things of us. Could you explain a little better?

U THANT: The explanation the United States gives is that it wants to make sure that the launchers are really being dismantled and that the missiles are being returned to the Soviet Union.

CASTRO: What right does the United States have to ask this? Is this based on a genuine right, or is it a demand imposed by force, made from a position of force?

U THANT: My viewpoint is that this is not a right. Something like this could be undertaken only with the approval and acceptance of the Cuban government.

CASTRO: What we do not understand is precisely why this is asked of us. We have not violated any law. Nor have we carried out any aggression against anybody whatsoever. All our actions have been based in international law; we have done absolutely nothing outside the norms of international law. To the contrary, we have been the victims, in the first place, of a blockade, which is an illegal act. And secondly, we have been victims of another country's claim to determine what we have the right to do or not do within our own borders.

It is our understanding that Cuba is a sovereign state, no more and no less than any other member state of the United Nations, and that Cuba has all the attributes inherent to any of those states.

Moreover, the United States has been repeatedly violating our airspace without any right to do so, thereby committing an act of intolerable aggression against our country. It has tried to justify this by referring to an agreement of the OAS [Organization of American States], but so far as we are concerned that agreement has no validity. We were expelled from the OAS, in fact.

We can accept anything that respects our rights, anything that does not imply a reduction in our status as a sovereign state. But the rights that have been violated by the United States have not been restored. And we accept nothing imposed by force.

As I see it, all this talk about inspection is one more attempt to humiliate our country. We do not accept it.

This demand for inspection aims to validate the U.S. presumption that it can violate our right to freely act within our borders, that it can dictate what we can or cannot do within our borders. And our line on this is not only a line for today; it is a view we have always maintained, without exception.

In the revolutionary government's reply to the joint resolution of the U.S. government, we said the following:

"Equally absurd is its threat to launch a direct armed attack should Cuba strengthen itself militarily to a degree the United States takes the liberty to determine. We have not the slightest intention of rendering accounts or of consulting the illustrious members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives about the weapons we find it advisable to acquire, nor the measures to

be taken to fully defend our country.... Do we not have the rights that international norms, laws, and principles recognize for every sovereign state in any part of the world?

"We have not surrendered nor do we intend to surrender any of our sovereign prerogatives to the Congress of the United States."

That view was repeated by the president of the Republic of Cuba at the United Nations, and also in numerous public statements I have made in my capacity as prime minister of the government. This is the firm position of the Cuban government.

All these steps were taken for the sake of the country's security, faced with a systematic policy of hostility and aggression. They have all been taken in accordance with the law, and we have not renounced our decision to defend those rights.

We can negotiate with full sincerity and honesty. We would not be honest if we agreed to negotiate away the sovereign rights of our country. We are willing to pay whatever price is necessary to uphold these rights. And that is not a mere formula, mere words; it's the deeply felt stance of our people.

U THANT: I understand perfectly Your Excellency's feelings. That is why I clearly said to the United States and others: "Any action of the United Nations in Cuban territory can be undertaken only with the consent of the people and government of Cuba." I told them so in the name of peace, which all the world and all the peoples of the world ardently wish for. I told the forty-five countries that I agreed to come to Cuba without having commitments from either side.

Some press reports last night and this morning, before I left on this trip, said I was coming to arrange details of a UN presence in Cuba. That is totally erroneous--that would constitute a violation of the sovereignty of the Republic of Cuba. I have come here solely to present the viewpoints of the other side and to explore the options of finding a peaceful solution.

As well, the forty-five countries that asked me to come know which position is legal and which one is not.

But in the name of world peace--and for a period of only one or two weeks, perhaps three--they have asked me to come and try to find a possible solution.

Your Excellency, my conscience is clear on this issue--the United Nations can undertake an action of this kind only when it has the consent of the government involved. This is not the first time this has happened. In Laos, when a situation arose that threatened international peace, the United Nations went into that country only after obtaining the consent of the government of Laos. In 1956 a situation arose in Egypt, in the United Arab Republic, and the United Nations went into Egypt--and is still in Egypt--always with the consent of the government. Similarly in 1958, another situation that threatened world peace arose in Lebanon, and the United Nations went in there after obtaining the consent of the government of Lebanon.¹

One condition is absolutely necessary in order to undertake this kind of action: the consent of the government involved....

CASTRO: In the case of the Congo...

U THANT: There was also the case of Somalia.²

CASTRO: In the case of the Congo, my understanding is that they requested the United Nations come in.³

U THANT: In the Congo the request was made by the government of the Congo.

CASTRO: In the Congo, the government that made that request is now dead and buried!

Our government has not the slightest doubt that the present secretary-general of the United Nations is acting with good intentions, impartiality, and honesty. We have no doubt about your intentions, your good faith, and your extraordinary interest in finding a solution to the problem. We all have a high regard for your mission and for you personally. I say this with all sincerity.

I understand that we must all take an interest in peace. But sacrificing the rights of the peoples, violating the rights of the peoples, is not the road to peace; that is precisely the road that leads to war. The road to peace is to guarantee the rights of the peoples, and the willingness of the peoples to resist and defend those rights.

In all the cases cited by Mr. Secretary--Laos, Egypt, Lebanon, the Congo, which I mentioned--in all those cases, what has been seen is nothing but a chain of aggressions against the rights of the peoples. It all has been caused by the same thing.

The road to the last world war was the road that included toleration of German imperialism's annexation of Austria and its dissolution of Czechoslovakia--that is what led to war. These dangers are a warning to us. We know the course that aggressors like to follow. In our own case, we can foresee the course that the United States wants to follow.

That is why it is really difficult to understand how one can speak about immediate solutions without speaking of future solutions. What interests us most is not paying whatever price to achieve peace today. Rather, we are interested in definitive guarantees of peace. What interests us is not having to pay every day the price of an ephemeral peace.

Of course Cuba is not Austria, or Czechoslovakia, or the Congo. We have the firmest intention to defend our rights and surmount all the difficulties, all the risks. In order for your mission to be successful, Mr. Secretary-General, you must be aware of our determination, so that you can work fully informed of these circumstances.

U THANT: I am fully aware of the sentiments and the points of view that Your Excellency has expressed.

Concerning the point of immediate and long-term solutions, I wish to say that the Security Council has authorized me to look for the means by which peace can be obtained for this region.

I understand that immediate and long-term solutions are closely linked; and we must explore the possibilities for long-term solutions in light of the situation as it is now. That is what the Security Council has authorized me to do. In practice it is very difficult to separate these things.

I believe that if we can find an immediate solution, doing so would lead us toward a permanent solution, not only for the United Nations but for all interested parties.

In citing Laos and the other cases where the United Nations has gone in, I agree with you, but I also wish to say that in those places the United Nations has been able to avoid or prevent outside aggression.

Please consider this: the presence of the United Nations in Cuba for a period of three weeks, perhaps more, would also be able to eliminate or make more remote the danger of aggression.

I am of the opinion that now and in the coming period, the presence of the United Nations in some countries will especially serve to push back and prevent aggression.

DORTICÓS: I would like to say something. I share the view expressed by our prime minister concerning our full appreciation for the mission that Mr. Secretary-General is undertaking with great nobility. That mission, of course, is none other than seeking ways to guarantee peace in this crisis situation.

It seems there is a question to be answered: Wherein lies the danger of war? Is it perhaps in the weapons of one kind or another that Cuba possesses, or is it in the aggressive intentions of the United States against Cuba?

We believe it is aggression that can lead to war. The weapons that exist in Cuba, no matter what they may be, will never initiate aggression. Therefore we ask ourselves this question: Why is inspection and our agreement to inspection a requirement to guarantee peace? In order to guarantee peace, it would be enough for the United States to pledge, with all necessary assurances through the United Nations, not to attack Cuba....

U THANT: In the first place I wish to thank Your Excellencies, Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister, for your words regarding me personally and the position I occupy. I fully agree with both of you that the solution we find for short-term agreements must also include negotiations for long-term agreements. But in terms of the United Nations, I believe that the best solution--and I think that the 110 member nations will agree on this--is that through the Security Council UN representatives should be provided to set about looking for and finding a long-term solution. But for now, at this moment, I do not think that the United Nations, its Security Council, can reach a positive and acceptable long-term solution that is in the best interests of the whole world and of world peace. If a long-term solution is found, that will be in the best interests of the whole world and of world peace, but I believe it is difficult to achieve that in the United Nations at this time.

CASTRO: As I see it, if the short-term solution that Mr. Secretary talks about is not achieved, it will simply be because the United States does not want it, because the U.S. persists in demanding inspection as an act of humiliation against Cuba. To achieve the unilateral security that the U.S. requires, it ought to have been enough for them that the Soviet government decided to withdraw the strategic weapons that it had brought here for the defense of the Republic of Cuba.

The Cuban government has placed no obstacles in the way of the withdrawal of those weapons. The decision by the Soviet government inherently involves a public decision; and the mere fact of being adopted in that way in front of everyone has had repercussions on world opinion. The United States knows that this decision was adopted by the Soviet Union seriously and that the strategic weapons really are being withdrawn.

But if, in addition to this, what the United States is actually seeking is to humiliate our country, it will not succeed!

We have not vacillated for even one minute in our determination to defend our rights. We cannot accept conditions of the kind imposed only on a defeated country. We have not relinquished our decision to defend ourselves. Our determination is such that they will never be able to impose conditions on us, because first they would have to destroy us and annihilate all our people. And in that case they will find nobody here upon whom to impose humiliating conditions.

U THANT: Concerning the subject of the U.S. declaration, the United States has said that it will make a public statement of nonaggression and of respect for the territorial integrity of Cuba, once the missiles have been dismantled and withdrawn.

In my opinion there is no disagreement. I fully agree with Mr. Prime Minister that action by the United Nations involves an invasion of the rights of a member state. And in this case, speaking about Cuba, if you do not agree to accept UN action, then my duty, what I must do, is to report this back to those who made the proposal.

It is not my intention here to impose anything. My duty is solely to explain the possibilities of finding ways, means, or forms in which we could find a peaceful solution, without making specific proposals. I will take into account everything that has been said here this afternoon, and I will return to present my report to the interested parties.

I believe this meeting has been very useful, and if the prime minister agrees, we will meet again in the morning before I leave. Meanwhile, I will ponder what has been expressed on these matters by Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister.

CASTRO: To conclude, I would like to respond on the matter of inspection by the Red Cross. We are equally opposed to such inspection in our ports. I ask myself: If the Soviet Union authorizes inspection of its ships on the high seas, then why would it be necessary to inspect them again in Cuban ports?

Secondly, I see that Mr. Secretary is focusing his attention on getting the United States to make a public statement, a pledge before the United Nations that it will not invade Cuba.

Let me say, first of all, that the United States has no right to invade Cuba. One cannot negotiate over a promise not to commit a crime, over the mere promise not to commit a crime. Faced with the threat of this danger, we have more confidence in our determination to defend ourselves than we do in words from the U.S. government.

But furthermore, if the United Nations puts such a high value on a public pledge made before it by the United States--the pledge not to invade--why does it not put the same value on the public pledge the Soviet Union made before the United Nations to withdraw the strategic weapons that the USSR sent to defend the Republic of Cuba? These would be two equally public commitments. If one of the two pledges--the U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba--does not need any additional guarantee, why then does the pledge by the Soviet Union to withdraw its strategic weapons require the additional guarantee of inspecting us?

We will meet again, with pleasure, as often as you wish and at any time you wish.

U THANT: Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

On the first point I just want to say that when the Soviet government declared its willingness to accept inspection by the Red Cross on the high seas, we reported this to the Red Cross. Initially they said yes, even though they had to submit the issue to their governing body; they had to vote on this and accept it. But they indicated to us that it would be simpler to do this at the ports of disembarkation rather than on the high seas. That is, it's not a question of inspecting again, it's only once.

Also, I am very pleased to have your response on this matter and to have talked about this.

DORTICÓS: We could reach some arrangement on the hour to meet tomorrow.

U THANT: I have some consultations to make here, particularly with the ambassador of Brazil.

CASTRO: As far as we're concerned, we can meet at any hour you wish. It is not necessary to set the time now. Simply contact our foreign ministry and say what time you wish to see us.

U THANT: Tomorrow, not today.

CASTRO: Whenever you wish.

¹ In Laos, a civil war pitted liberation forces against the pro-imperialist monarchy backed by Washington. In July 1962 an agreement was reached in Geneva, calling for creation of a coalition government. The agreement rapidly fell apart and the civil war resumed.

Egypt was invaded in October 1956 by British, French, and Israeli troops in response to that country's nationalization of the Suez Canal in July. In November the United Nations sent a "peacekeeping" force, which remained until Egypt asked them to leave in 1967.

In Lebanon, a popular rebellion broke out in early 1958 against the pro-imperialist government. In June the United Nations sent troops to protect the regime under the guise of preventing "illegal infiltration of personnel or supply of arms" from Syria. In July the U.S. government too sent in 10,000 troops, ostensibly to "protect U.S. citizens."

² In 1949 the United Nations established a trusteeship over Somalia to be administered by Italy, its former colonial master. The country did not become independent until 1960.

³ After the Congo won its independence from Belgium in June 1960, Washington and its allies moved quickly to destabilize the new government headed by Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, who had been the leader of the independence struggle. In July 1960, Moise Tshombe began a war against the new regime by declaring the secession of the southern province of Katanga (today Shaba), with himself as president. Lumumba's government appealed to the United Nations for help, and the UN sent "peacekeeping" troops. Washington and its allies moved swiftly to disarm Lumumba's forces, sending Belgian and UN troops into the capital, Léopoldville. They also backed Tshombe's proimperialist breakaway regime in Katanga.

The U.S.-led intervention succeeded by late 1960 in winning over a faction within the Congolese government, headed by army chief of staff Joseph Mobutu, and Lumumba was deposed in September. As UN troops stood watch, he was later arrested and handed over to Tshombe's forces, who murdered him in January 1961.