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To: Secretary General  
e.o. Deputy Secretary General  
DSG/ASG for Economics and Finance  
ASG for Political Affairs

From: Executive Secretary

~~Summary Record of a Private Meeting of the Council  
held on Friday, 16th November, 1962, at 10.30 a.m.~~

UNITED STATES ASSESSMENT OF PRESENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION IN THE  
LIGHT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN CUBA

The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE introduced Mr. William Tyler, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs in the State Department, who would give the Council an account of the preliminary thinking of the United States government on the post-Cuban situation. He hoped that this would produce a useful exchange of views in the Council in preparation for the forthcoming ministerial meeting.

2. Mr. TYLER emphasized that the views he would now express represented only the preliminary thinking of his authorities. He would discuss East/West relations in general, seen in the light of the post-Cuban situation, beginning with assumptions on Soviet intentions and objectives. It was obvious that East/West relations were now under intensive review in both camps. The recent rapid succession of developments in various parts of the globe called for the highest qualities of statesmanship and the fullest consultation and exchange of information between the allies. This was one of the critical periods for which NATO had been created.

3. It was not now possible to say why the Soviets had accepted the risk of placing missiles and nuclear weapons in Cuba, in a country so distant from the Soviet Union, and governed by a man whom they knew to be unstable and unreliable. It was, however, very probable that they had been inspired by the desire to increase both their military tactical power and their political bargaining strength plus that they had miscalculated the intensity and speed of the United States reaction. Three important points emerged:

- (1) the unity of command which had made it possible for the United States to react decisively and swiftly;
- (2) the choice of responses available to the United States;
- (3) the definition of the United States objectives.

4. He agreed with the United Kingdom view that there was no valid evidence that the decision to install the missiles had been forced on Mr. Khrushchev, or that his withdrawal of the missiles had so far led to an undermining of his leadership. It was, however, possible that he and other Soviet leaders might face criticism in the future, and it was obvious that his prestige and that of the Soviet government were seriously involved throughout the world. It was therefore clear that the Soviets might now need a compensating success or development which might be interpreted as such. Where were they likely to turn now? The information available made any speculation possible. The United States was at present reasoning on the following lines: the Soviets had three broad choices before them:

- (a) to pursue vigorously a "forced draft" programme with a view to correcting as soon as possible the imbalance of nuclear power;
- (b) to bring order into current problems by continuing their present attitude while undertaking an intensive policy review; or
- (c) to envisage agreements with the West on basic national security arrangements.

5. They might adopt the first alternative, but past experience showed that they were not inclined to pursue a policy of emphasis on sophisticated weapons at the expense of others. As regards the second alternative, a policy review was now necessarily forced on the Soviets, as also on the United States. The Soviets might now seek a form of nuclear test ban agreement, agreement on measures to prevent surprise attack, or some kind of relationship between the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. They might also renew talks on Berlin. The possibility of serious unilateral action by the Soviets with regard to Berlin should not be excluded, but he thought that at the present stage they would prefer to avoid precipitating another major crisis like that over Cuba.

6. As regards the implications for the West, one was at present too close to recent developments to be able to draw firm conclusions. Throughout the Cuban crisis, East/West contacts had remained at a high level in various parts of the world. The firm support by NATO and also the OAS for the United States position was obviously a major, and possibly the determining factor in making Khrushchev take a peaceful way out of the Cuban crisis. Generally, the United States government felt that Western solidarity impressed Mr. Khrushchev. Further, Mr. Khrushchev had not found a counter-weapon to the drive towards economic development in the West, and the Soviets had serious internal economic problems. The West should therefore consider ways in which to maintain the political and psychological momentum produced by recent events. It was undesirable to envisage an early initiative for political consultation at a high level; contacts should continue through the many other existing channels. The West should remain alert to any indications that the Soviets had decided on a new military venture, or had decided to seek agreements on selected vital issues. This should be a period of watchful waiting in which the West should be ready to take advantage of any Soviet initiative which might lead to useful negotiations. The solid NATO front should be continued.

7. Another aspect of the post-Cuban situation was that of Sino-Soviet relations. The present United States position had been

most adequately stated by Mr. Rusk in his televised speech of 28th November, to the effect that there was little comfort to be drawn from the differences between the USSR and China, and that the West should remain vigilant.

8. There had been much speculation recently in the press as to whether a turning-point had now been reached in international relations. The United States government felt there was no justification whatsoever to assume that the future ~~COULD BE LESS DILEMMA~~ would be ~~less~~ than the past. As Mr. Rusk had stated on 10th November, developments in Cuba gave the United States confidence for the future, but it would be unwise to deduce that other problems would now suddenly be transformed. The United States position was undoubtedly stronger, but at the cost of having taken a tremendous risk. The lesson to be drawn was that the West should not lower its guard, and that on the contrary it would have to strengthen its defenses for the future.

9. Mr. Tyler then summarised briefly on account of the talks which had taken place on 28th November between Messrs. Stevenson and McCloy and Kuznetsov, Mikoyan and Lorin, during which both sides had commented at length on the draft United States declaration with regard to Cuba.

10. Continuing his assessment, he turned to the question of the effect on Soviet thinking of the Cuban crisis. There had been frequent indications recently, as confirmed by the United States Ambassador in Moscow, that the Soviets were ~~striving~~ ~~to settle East/West problems~~ ~~by compromise and mutual concessions~~. It appeared that Soviet officials were emphasising that this was a propitious time to try to solve outstanding problems, especially those of disarmament and European security. There was little evidence to show what here were the Soviet intentions or hopes. He thought that they must be affected by the following elements:

- (1) the effect of Cuba on previous ideas of Soviet leadership;
- (2) complications in relations inside the Communist Bloc;
- (3) the obviously uncoordinated Chinese action in India;
- (4) domestic problems, including the allocation of resources and foreign exchange.

11. It was thought that the first concrete sign of a Soviet desire to reach agreement with the ~~West~~ might be shown in Geneva, where they might possibly accept preliminary measures with regard to the prevention of surprise attack or war through miscalculation. There were certain hints that the Soviets might be prepared to compromise to a limited extent on the question of test inspections, and that they might revive the 1955 Soviet proposals for the establishment of military observers in the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. In regards Germany and Berlin, the only very slight signs of the Soviet attitude were their relative restraint on the question of access, and the absence of conspicuous provocation in Berlin itself. The Soviets were now definitely less bold in the press and in public statements, to the signing of a joint ~~declaration~~ ~~and the emphasis was being placed on importance of dialogue~~ ~~and the avoidance of conflict and the maintenance of stability~~. Hints had been given by Soviet officials of a concession regarding the

presence of Western troops in Berlin, if the status of the city could be changed. It was therefore possible that the Soviets were thinking along the lines that any attempt to apply the consequences of a separate peace treaty would be too dangerous. They might also be wondering whether, if they signed but did not carry out the consequences, this would suggest to world opinion weakness rather than strength. They might further think that any package deal on Germany and Berlin might leave the impression of a Soviet setback, since it would mean accepting the continued presence of Western troops in West Berlin and therefore, by implication, the continuation of the occupation status. It was possible, therefore, that the Soviets were considering that the best approach for them now was not to aim at a treaty, but to attempt to conclude a non-aggression agreement between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, together with agreement on measures to prevent surprise attack and possibly agreement on the non-diffusion of nuclear weapons. This latter approach would be more consistent with the image of Mr. Krushchev as a man of peace, and might lead to some relaxation with the West; it would also enhance the status of the GDR, and give an impetus to the acceptance by Western public opinion of the division of Germany. The Soviets might consider that a change in the status of Berlin, though desirable, was not now essential; the present regime might continue, though they would still be able to harass the Western powers at any time they chose. There was danger for the West in this Soviet approach, but there were advantages if it meant non-interference with the existing status.

12. The following questions were put to Mr. Tyler by the BELGIAN and ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVES respectively:

- (1) Did the reference, in the communiqué issued after Dr. Adenauer's talks with Mr. Kennedy, to "waiting to see whether there was any new Soviet initiative on Berlin" now that the United States and Germany had now adopted a firm position on Berlin, i.e., that the considered a Western initiative was out of the question? Did it seem that there was now no likelihood of a visit by Mr. Krushchev to New York? What exactly was the content of the existing United States-USSR talks? Mr. Tyler had suggested that the Soviets might now be considering an approach other than a separate peace treaty. In that case, since political consultation in the Council had recently been limited to contingency planning to meet the contingency of a separate peace treaty, the Belgian Representative suggested that the Council should now review its attitude on Berlin, and consider whether some modus vivendi could not be worked out for the future.
- (2) Did the United States envisage the possibility of a non-aggression pact between the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, and if so, under what conditions?

13. On (1), Mr. TYLER, commenting on the "wait and see" policy for Berlin, thought that there were now two possible Soviet moves:

- (a) the Soviets might show in some other field, e.g. disarmament, that they were considering a review of policy or
- (b) they might re-open talks on Berlin in the framework of the previous exchanges, but with some modification in

24. The United States was supposed to rush into negotiations on Berlin; the Cuban question must first be solved before any decision could be taken to renew talks or conciliations. Mr. Khrushchev had indicated to Sir Frank Roberts on 17th November that he was now prepared to accept temporarily the presence of Western forces "under a United Nations flag" (whatever that meant; no one could command them). The Soviets might hope that the introduction of a United Nations rôle in West Berlin would gradually erode the Western position.

25. Obviously, the Soviets had a wide choice for manoeuvre over Berlin. The West should exploit any signs of Soviet flexibility, provided they offered the possibility of an acceptable, stable and permanent settlement.

26. He had no information on a possible visit by Mr. Khrushchev to the United States.

27. As regards the nature of the dialogue with the Soviets, and whether it should be restricted to Cuba or not, he thought that in principle there was no limit to the subjects anyone might bring up. There were obviously many possibilities at present of initiating discussions in a profitable way. The United States would keep the Alliance fully informed of developments affecting the situation as a whole.

28. On (2), he repeated what Mr. Kennedy had said to Mr. Khrushchev in his letter of 27th November to the effect that the United States was ready to consider with its allies any useful proposals for a détente affecting the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. He added that the conditions of such a détente would of course have to be attractive to the Alliance as a whole.

29. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE thought that the West could now assume that the Soviets would try to retrieve the situation by an adventure elsewhere. The Council should therefore study in what way the West could prepare itself to exploit any Western advantage in East/West relations. It should examine the Berlin problem not in isolation, but in relation to broader East/West questions such as disarmament. Recalling the plan presented to the Council by the Four Foreign Ministers on 18th September, 1961, he thought that since then the Council had not considered whether it was desirable to retain the "narrow approach". The Council should study both Berlin contingency planning and the broader issues. A study should take place in the light of all the documents before the Council, including the revised 1962 Western peace plan by the Four Foreign Ministers (18th September, 1961), the Four Power plan presented to the Council on 14th November, 1962 and Mr. Speer's paper of 1st September, 1961.

30. The FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE thought that Mr. Khrushchev's actions over Cuba showed him to be a particularly dangerous, because impulsive enemy, and that increased vigilance was necessary with regard to any moves he might make elsewhere.

31. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE agreed with Mr. Tyler's evaluation of the motives inspiring the Soviet action in Cuba. An important element in assessing the implications of the Cuban crisis was the firm, speedy and efficient response by the United States which, combined with the United States moderation once the immediate crisis was past, had deeply impressed public opinion in Germany and especially in West Berlin. As regards the future, Mr. Khrushchev's position had

not been fundamentally affected, but he might now face criticism. It was unlikely that he would undertake any new venture in the near future which might result in a major East/West confrontation. It was possible that he might be more cautious with regard to Berlin. It was clear that the Soviets did not want to risk a military conflict in Berlin. This had been the case for some time past, and West Berlin also probably represented only a limited interest in the framework of Soviet policy. Since there had been a considerable change in the tone and ~~attitude~~ of Soviet policy towards preparing the imminent of a separate peace treaty, the announcement of 14th November now perhaps called for less urgent action by the Council; however, it represented only one element in Berlin Contingency Planning. He supported the Canadian suggestion that the Council should have another look at the Western peace plan of 1955.

22. He thought that whether the West should take a new initiative or not was primarily a question of timing. Mr. Khrushchev might try to exploit the present situation in order to obtain compensation for his concessions over Cuba; it might be a good idea to help him, and therefore over Berlin and other issues. He suggested that discussion might take place in the Council of Ministers in NATO on:

- (1) the credibility of Soviet assurances. Here, he asked whether the recent article by J. Alsop on the subject of a special message from Mr. Khrushchev to Mr. Kennedy during the Cuban crisis had any basis in fact;
- (2) Cuba seemed to prove that Soviet policy could not be defined as one of preserving the status quo;
- (3) as regards the conclusions to be drawn from Cuba in connection with Berlin Contingency Planning, he thought that further planning might be required in the light of the Cuban lesson. ~~It was agreed that further planning might be continued over Cuba but that no further move should be avoided escalation.~~

23. Mr. Tyler said that Mr. Alsop's article had some foundation in that a member of the Soviet Embassy to Washington had contacted an official of the State Department with an alleged message from Mr. Khrushchev, making the astounding claim that none of the weapons in Cuba had a range capable of reaching the shores of the United States.

24. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE said that the audacity and temerity of Mr. Khrushchev's action over Cuba had left the impression that he, and Soviet policies, might be even more dangerous than had ever been imagined. It would be hard to forget this duplicity, or to feel that one could negotiate in future with any degree of confidence. Further, it should not be imagined that in extracting himself from his dilemma, Mr. Khrushchev had become a reasonable person to deal with. He was now in a position where he had a large field for manoeuvre, and would try to induce the West to agree to some form of negotiation either on Berlin or on wider issues. If he did so, he would have scored an important point. The West must receive responsible, acceptable and durable proposals from him before

agreeing to negotiate. Much more clarification was necessary on his intentions. There were no indications so far at Geneva that he was reforming his policy with a view to negotiations in which the West might feel some degree of confidence. One should, therefore, while maintaining contacts at all levels, wait to see what his real intentions were.

25. The TURKISH REPRESENTATIVE hoped that western governments would not encourage any rumours on the subject of a possible bargain affecting the ICBM bases in Turkey. He explained that these were NATO bases and that this was a matter of concern to NATO as a whole.

26. The GREEK REPRESENTATIVE emphasised the need for increased vigilance wherever the Soviets made political demands.

27. The PORTUGUESE REPRESENTATIVE said that his government interpreted the results of the Cuban crisis less optimistically than others, since it could be argued that Mr. Khrushchev had achieved his aim in a United States guarantee of non-invasion of Cuba, and was also now able to pose as a man of peace.

28. Mr. TILSR emphasised that the United States had not given any formal assurances on non-intervention in Cuba, and since there had been no NAMO's satisfactory agreement had been reached on verification, on-site inspection and guarantees against the non-reinforcement of military forces. He stated by Mr. Kennedy on 20th November:

29. The CHAIRMAN, concluding, hoped that this preliminary exchange of views would help governments in assessing the present Soviet posture and the conclusions to be drawn by the West; he also hoped that the Ministerial Meeting would continue this discussion and give the Council guidance for the continuation of its planning work.

4th December, 1962 -