

Secretary Rusk Nov. 22 1962

~~Off Record~~ "DEEP Background"

On Cuba. The exchange of letters on 27/28 were such that there were all sorts of impressions. There was no time for systematic and detailed negotiations. There was no basis for a law suit. We had our own theory. They had their theory. The public exchanges were in themselves a reflection of the urgency of the situation. Communications simply could not take place through private channels, at the rate events were moving. One of most damaging reports that came out implied that more violent action was advocated--that we were ourselves urging escalation. The fact that answer of 28th was given in public was in large part due to urgency of the time factor. Situation was so tight that a complete meeting of minds was not possible. We did not know whether K understood what the President said in his television address. We were talking about both missiles and bombers. As far as we were concerned, offensive weapons included bombers. They were not all that obsolete that they were not dangerous, especially in low level attack. For first few days we did not make much of an issue over the bombers, as long as the missiles were moving out we did not make an issue. When we saw that they were on ship board and saw them from the air we could turn again to the bombers. The fact that we had a slow reaction to the bombers was not an accident. K has agreed to take the bombers out and we will be able to see if they are leaving. The President said that some difficult problems remain yet. Are a great many involved. Some may not be resolved for some time yet. Until there are some safeguards about what is going on in Cuba we will have to get information by our own methods. The Sov. U. has made a considerable effort to get safeguards. It is our impression there have been real differences between Mikoyan and Castro and Sov U. has not been able to get Castro to go as far as Sov Un would go. Castro has forces on island which make it difficult for Sov U to say what he must do or else. Castro has 50,000 militia. There was a limit on what Sov Un could produce in Cuba. Castro has not come through on safeguards and we must keep our freedom of action. As to invasion pledge--we are not going to give any assurances that modify our responsibility for hemispheric defense under the Rio Pact. Anything we do will be conditioned by the security requirements of hemisphere.

We will not guarantee the Castro government. We do not guarantee any government,--including our own. Not going to guarantee Castro. Not going to guarantee a haven from which Castro can launch an attack on the rest of hemisphere.

One of troubles in making this clear at the time was that by the time we go through putting reservations on any statement of our position it would sound as though we were declaring war. We cannot leave the door open for the Soviet Union to build a base in Cuba. We cannot acknowledge the right of extra hemisphere country to have a foothold. Cannot sanction Castro putting into other countries agents of subversion. But insurance against invasion is the only thing K gets out of the whole affair. What comes next is of a lower order of danger but is sticking in terms of negotiating out anything that has remotest chance of being satisfactory to both sides.

K had to make a case out that he is a man of peace. We willing to go along with the gag. He did pull missiles out. He has gotten himself committed to the idea of a or necessity of a detente. We have been ~~willing to talk~~ unwilling to talk about anything else until Cuba and Berlin were settled. But S U is flying flag of detente. Hints are that there may be some important development fairly soon...some important agreement on some other subject. Maybe disarmament and nuclear testing. Not much we can negotiate in Berlin. But K seems to be interested in creating the impression that there is a detente--a pause for rearming maybe. Until they build up their ballistic missiles. It may be he has been sobered. Maybe has economic problems. Maybe defenses in bloc worry them. Maybe differences in bloc worry them. But maybe he really wants detente for a period.

Juno-Saint
Has been skeptical of differences between Moscow and Peking. Feel neither could accept the idea of seeing the other seriously injured. But there are signs that split is worse than we had supposed. Believe Moscow now genuinely worried about China and India. About China becoming nuclear power. About danger that China will get involved in war with West that will drag Sov Union in. Worried about having to get into China's wars or denounce its relations with China. My impression Russia has been trying to restrain China on Indian affair. (Pointed out 1/3 of oil comes from Russia) Will be interesting to see if Stalinists are checked in East Germany and Czechoslovakia as in Bulgaria. We must always bear in mind that we maybe set up for a draw play by the impression of detente. May be serious action in some other point.

We must not generalize about Cuban experience. Soviet U has enormous military power and nuclear potential. Enough to inflict massive damage on U. S.. They can bring enormous power to bear on other parts of world. Unless they had been prepared to use nuclear power they were at enormous disadvantages in Cuba. Great mistake to think measures we found useful in Cuba would work in some other situation.

Was there Soviet miscalculation in Cuba? Will be long time before we know. I am convinced they surprised by our reaction to Cuba, by NATO and OAS reaction. Also by fact that Afro-Asian block gave them no support. They made a misjudgement. This time they were able to correct it. One element in our action was that they had made a miscalculation and we ought to give them time to correct it before it escalated very far or very fast. We must be concerned from preventing them from making such miscalculation again.

On Nato

Only the US has really met its Nato goals fully. If you were in Moscow the action of Nato countries might put you in doubt about what the reaction of Nato would be. Have been trying for years to get Nato countries to maintain force levels in Nato agreed on in Eisenhower administration--not just because of real military requirements but because of the kind of signals this gives to Moscow. We must avoid tempting thieves.

Question: You said in speech yesterday we might be on threshold of great events etc.

What I had in mind was that almost all major problems have been affected by Cuba--Kh is not the same, the ~~base~~ loc is not the same, Nato is not the same etc. Kh has some serious problems. So have we but I would rather have our problems than theirs. Moscow-Peking split is more serious than I have thought hitherto. I think there has been a new spirit in Nato. Nato allies saw two things--that US was able to look into the cannon's mouth without flinching; that Russians are not 12 foot tall. Also the left in SA has abandoned Castro. Was notable serenely in our Allies--governments were as steady as could be. Kennedy was calmest man in Washington. This is such a lonely responsibility that this was a terrible testing period.

Question: If there have been these many changes are we changing any of our policies to take advantage of the shifts?

Well, we have to be careful about overdoing the doctrine of hot pursuit. Cuba has not destroyed the power of the Soviet Union. Have to be careful about a too eager follow up. Patience is called for. We might find ourselves in the embrace of a wounded bear.

Question: What is your appraisal of internal conflict in Sov Union in Kremlin?

We have no indication of any major conflict around K. Think he is personally responsible for policy--including Cuba. Sometime in early summer he evidently decided to put missiles into Cuba--to cover it he talked soft--no Berlin issue until after elections etc. It is not unreasonable to suppose that he intended to arrive at UN in November and talk about Berlin--to disclose missiles in Cuba to back up foreign policy.

Question: May we adopt a "softer" policy to encourage detente--missiles in Turkey etc.

R: Independently of the Russians or the Cuban affair we have been reviewing our defense arrangements abroad and it is possible we might alter them--have a Nato deterrent etc. We are talking about new forces in NATO. On Berlin not much we could get soft about--we have sort of run out of margins on our side. Not much we can give on. Two points: our presence and access. Never got to second because Russian never conceded first.

Question: What about the unpublished K letter of 26th?

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R: I have said you couldn't build a law suit on these letters. When President replied in his press conference that there had been a constant flow of letters it was a slip of tongue--he meant of communications. There was a long letter on Oct 26. Before we could reply to it the letter of the 27th was broadcast, including ref to Turkish bases. We elected to reply to letter of 26th because there was in it more possibility of agreement than in the letter of 27th. The letter of 28th--our letter--you will find does not fit snugly with the letter of the 27th.

On Cuba

Two aspects of Cuban situation. First is the military threat to the hemisphere. When it is solved will still have the problem of penetration of this hemisphere by a power from outside the hemisphere. We are back where we were before the middle of Sept. We are rid of the immediate offensive menace but still have to deal with Castro.

Q: What type of mil action did we intend to take in Cuba.

A: Better not go into that. We had two alternatives---air strike or ground invasion.

Q. How much known in Russia about letters. Have no info about how many in Kremlin knew about letter of 26th. We feel it important for us not to publish letter of 26th because we think it had things in it that would have frozen a situation. It will be out in 25 years.

On China

If this a major attack on India it is something the entire free world have to do something about. We would hope: first that India would take all possible steps to help itself; (2) that the commonwealth nations would be mobilized to help and (3) we would support India and the commonwealth. Better we not be point of the spear from standpoint of Sov Un. This might force Moscow to back up Peking.

Q. The President said nuclear weapons were taken out Cuba. Were there nucl ear warheads there?

R. An intrsrng point. We never have seen any warheads for the missiles. Have never had direct info about presence there. We had to assume that at least some were there. We not sure are no missiles left. We know 42 have left. In absence of look see can't guarantee are not some more.

On Mc Mahon line---much clearer than Ladakh area. We have never had an official view about L line. Have recognized Mc Mahon line a long time.

Q How can Castro defy Sov Un.

A. The way Phoumi could defy us. etc.

Q. What about India-Pak detente?

A. Some developments on Kashmir in a few days if Chin. advance.

Q. Is it our policy in long run that Castro must go?

Was a portion of Pres. press conf had direct bearing on this. Weapons removal not final solution. A regime like that in Cuba may not be a direct threat to US but it is a threat to other countries and a threat of penetration which we have to oppose. OAS has this in mind. Will have to turn back to that question when we get offensive weapons settled. We cannot consent to any Marxist-Leninist regime tied into the Communist bloc in this hemisphere. Situation of Castro at moment unpredictable. More fluid than heretofore.

Q. Who gets credit for OAS response?

A. Ed Martin did great job.

Q. What effect of India on other SE Asia centers?

A. Have impression that Moscow really wished settlement in Laos and maybe S Viet Nam, but impression that Peking has moved into power position of influence in Hanoi.

Q. Are you going to stay on the job awhile?

A. Have heard nothing to contrary.

Q. How badly India defeated?

A. Said not to underestimate long run strength of India. Most forces not committed. Many reserves. Still good fighting forces.

Q. Anything more on China Russia split.

A. Split is real but hard to say if can be patched up. Don't think so deep it could not be repaired, but reports from Europe show it very deep and might be difficult to patch up.

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