

October 27, 1962

**Telegram from Soviet delegate to the UN Zorin to
USSR Foreign Ministry**

Citation:

"Telegram from Soviet delegate to the UN Zorin to USSR Foreign Ministry", October 27, 1962, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Archive of Foreign Policy, Russian Federation (AVP RF), Moscow; copy obtained by NHK (Japanese Television), provided to CWIHP, and on file at National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.; translation by John Henriksen, Harvard University <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/111003>

Summary:

Soviet response to American changes to U Thant's proposal.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

On 27 October I visited U Thant and gave him Comrade N.S. Khrushchev's letter of 27 October, as well as a copy of the message to Kennedy of the same date.

U Thant said that he would study the documents attentively, and that he hoped they would prove to be a constructive contribution to the resolution of the problem.

U Thant then informed me that around noon today Stevenson had visited him and told him about N.S. Khrushchev's message to Kennedy of 26 October of this year. Stevenson did not leave U Thant the text of this message, saying that Kennedy had not authorized him to do so.

It must however be noted that, as Stevenson told U Thant, Kennedy is examining this message in a positive and benevolent frame of mind. Stevenson also let a mistake pass when giving an account of the 26 October message to U Thant, declaring that this message allegedly says that the Soviet Union is prepared to remove all its missiles, missile launch pads, and warheads from Cuba.

We indicated that the message made no mention of such points, but we declined to discuss the matter, pleading our lack of authorization to do so.

U Thant asked us to convey to him, if possible, the text of the above-mentioned message of 26 October in order to take it into account when he examines N.S. Khrushchev's message of 27 October.

Later we asked what U Thant had accomplished in the past 24 hours by way of progress towards the provisional agreement, for 2 to 3 weeks, based on the proposal approved by the Soviet Union (whereby the USSR suspends arms stockpiling in Cuba, and the USA suspends its blockade activities).

U Thant responded that he had not yet discussed that matter with Stevenson again, and was waiting for Cuba's response to his 26 October message on the suspension of missile-base construction. He again reiterated that the USA was very concerned that work there, including the assembly of bombers, is proceeding day and night. "After receiving the Cuban response," U Thant said, "I intend to put before Cuba the possibility of creating some monitoring device (in ports of call) for ascertaining that ships arriving in Cuba are not carrying arms."

We again asserted our negative view of the USA demands that go beyond the bounds of U Thant's proposal, and we insisted that he exert the necessary pressure on the Americans to make them adopt his plan. In all respects it was clear that in the last 24 hours U Thant under American pressure had not taken the necessary measures in that direction, and that he intended to win consent, if only from the Cubans, for establishing a procedure that to some degree at least could be considered to guarantee that ships arriving in the next 2 to 3 weeks in Cuba are not carrying arms. We expressed our dissatisfaction with that course of affairs, and stressed the importance of immediately winning approval for this procedure in order to avert the threat of armed encounter, after which any further negotiations would be rendered impossible.

U Thant said that he shared our concern, and would take action.

U Thant tried (honoring Stevenson's request) to give us the USA legation's letter to the Soviet government, which contained a description of the blockade area around Cuba, on the pretext that N.S. Khrushchev's response to U Thant's second message allegedly contains an agreement to avoid clashes between Soviet vessels and the American naval ships carrying out the blockade, and because they claim that it is

important to know which areas are forbidden. We refused to accept this letter on the grounds that, as is well known, the Soviet government considers the blockade illegal (in this we were bearing in mind the fact that in Moscow similar notes from the USA were also returned). U Thant said that he would give the indicated letter back to Stevenson.

(The letter indicated that the blockade area includes: the region with its center in Havana and with a radius of 500 nautical miles, and the region with its center in Cape Maisi on the eastern extremity of Cuba and with a radius of 500 nautical miles as well.)

U Thant gave us the letter in which he expresses his sincere thanks to N.S. Khrushchev for his very constructive 26 October response to U Thant's message of 25 October of this year.

It should be noted that the UN delegates from the neutral countries, like the United Arab Republic and Ghana, have begun to calm down a bit in recent days, since Soviet efforts were able to avert dangerous clashes in the very first days after the American provocation. Now they have started to say that the settlement of the conflict is mainly a concern for the USSR and the USA, that smaller countries cannot advise great powers on what they should do, and so on.

We will continue to exert pressure on U Thant and the UN delegates from the neutral countries (in particular, we had a conversation today to this effect with the delegate from the United Arab Republic in the Security Council) with the aim of persuading them to support the Soviet proposals, and of exerting pressure on the USA and its allies.

It would be expedient to give U Thant the text of Comrade N.S. Khrushchev's message to Kennedy of 26 October, since Stevenson has already informed him about it, albeit in his own interpretation.

We request your consent.

27.X.62 V. ZORIN