

November 1, 1962

Danish Defense Intelligence Service Weekly Brief (Excerpts)

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Summary:

Denmark reports on the fact that the Soviet Union does not wish for a Third World War and have abandoned Cuba as a military base, although they hope to keep it as a political base. There is also some reports on conflicts going on around the world in the 'global' Cold War. As a part of this weekly intelligence briefing, there is also a list of dates from the week with important events/actions listed for each of those days.

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Danish Defense Intelligence Service

Weekly Brief

1 November 1962

[excerpts]

SUMMARY

(for the period 25-31 October 1962)

The only conclusion which can be made with any certainty at the moment following the Cuba-crisis, is that the Soviet Union does not wish a Third World War. The ultimate goal, world dominance, has not been abandoned. This is amply illustrated by the fact that the Soviets have given up Cuba as a military base, but seek to keep it as a political base. It should be noted, that among the reasons for the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Cuba was the fear, as the situation developed, that the United States should gain unwanted insight into Soviet missile data.

The cancellation of the sales of weapons and material to India by the Soviet Union, must, in the light of the Chinese-Indian border dispute, be regarded as a wish not to worsen Soviet-Chinese relations.

Both the Cuban and the India-China crisis will probably make it more difficult for the Soviet Union to penetrate into ASIA, AFRICA, and LATIN AMERICA.

Four more nuclear test detonations have been conducted in the Soviet Union.

An expansion of certain roads in East Germany may have a military purpose.

A certain degree of readiness is maintained in the Eastern Bloc, especially among the strategically important forces (rocket troops, air defense, etc.) as well as internal security forces in the Warsaw Pact countries. The latter is apparently in order to maintain internal order.

An intensified patrolling of the western and eastern parts of the Baltic Sea can be observed.

Apart from this, no abnormal dispositions can be observed.

Only limited training activity has yet been observed in the newly discovered areas, which have been sealed off for military purposes.

On the fronts between China and India, the Chinese attack has stalled, and Indian forces have begun a counter-attack.

POLITICAL

The world political activity of the Eastern Bloc: The reported time period is marked by the Cuban-American-Soviet conflict concerning the bases on Cuba. Perhaps as a consequence of the crisis, the Soviet Union has furthermore taken a friendlier stance in the Indian-Chinese conflict.

Moscow's latest step in the Cuban conflict is estimated in the following account of the chronological development since Wednesday the 24th:

24 October, 15:00 hours Danish time: the American naval quarantine is initiated.

Several Soviet ships nearing the quarantined zone change course. Khrushchev sends a non-publicized message to President Kennedy, in which he supposedly warns the United States and remarks, that the blockade could trigger a nuclear war. He simultaneously answers Bertrand Russell and declares that the Soviet Union does not intend to act unpremeditated and is willing to participate in a summit conference to avoid a war. U Thant urges the Soviet Union to stop its weapons transporters and the United States to lift the quarantine.

25 [October]. A Soviet tanker is stopped, but is then allowed to continue, after it had been ascertained that it did not contain any offensive weapons. The ship was not boarded. Khrushchev accepts U Thant's plea. Kennedy declares that the United States is ready to negotiate. However, according to a US spokesman the quarantine is to be maintained, as long as the construction of the rocket bases continues. The UN Security Council asks U Thant to mediate in the matter. According to unconfirmed messages, Kennedy has sent Khrushchev an extremely serious warning and assured him, that the United States will act, if the construction of the bases is not stopped immediately. There is a dramatic clash between [Soviet UN ambassador Valerian] Zorin and [US UN ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson in the UN Security Council.

26 [October]. Polish radio and press thank both Khrushchev and Kennedy for their positive attitude to U Thant's request, and there is talk about "judicial" consequences in the eventual boarding of a Polish ship. East German radio mentions Kennedy in positive terms. Khrushchev agrees that Soviet ships must stay away from the forbidden zone. Kennedy promises that the United States will try to avoid direct confrontation with the ships for a couple of days. The US spokesman declares that the if the building of the bases continue, "further action will be justified." At the same time Washington announces that the construction of the bases "continues at a rapid pace." U Thant mediates between the parties.

27 [October]. Khrushchev's second message to Kennedy. He suggests the removal of the rockets from Cuba in exchange for the Americans doing the same with their rockets in Turkey. The United States rejects the "deal," but displays a willingness to negotiate, if the construction of the rocket bases on Cuba is stopped.

28 [October]. Radio transmissions from the Eastern Bloc are dominated by declarations about how Khrushchev is unwilling to let himself be provoked into making rash actions. At 3 PM Danish time, Khrushchev sends his third message to Kennedy that the Soviet Union is prepared to dismantle and ship home the Soviet Rockets, which are in the care of Soviet officers on Cuba. If Cuba will allow it, this removal could be done under the supervision by the UN.

29 [October]. Soviet press and radio hail Khrushchev as a "champion of peace"; also the "sensible" approach by Kennedy is mentioned. U Thant declares that he, accompanied by military and political advisers, will travel to Cuba on the 30th to negotiate about the UN-supervised removal of the Soviet rockets.

30 [October]. The United States suspends the quarantine and aerial reconnaissance during the time U Thant is staying on Cuba. U Thant arrives on Cuba along with 17 advisers, including several officers. He negotiates with Castro for 2 ½ hours. From the Cuban side it is declared that the negotiations did not lead to any results, whereas U Thant says that the talks were "extremely useful."

31 [October]. During the afternoon at 4:00 PM Danish time, the negotiations are continued. The Western powers have given the United States diplomatic and moral support during the action and the Organization of American States (OAS) has approved Kennedy's steps and denounced both Cuba and the Soviet Union. India has not taken any direct stand on the matter and has only uttered general statements, whereas Cuba has supported China in the conflict with India.

If one tries at this early moment to get an idea as to why the Soviet Union suddenly gave in, one should probably regard the following reasons: 1) The disagreement expected by the Soviet Union among the Western countries failed to materialize. 2) Poland probably gave voice to its concerns for the Warsaw Pact not to overreach themselves. 3) The concern that the blockade and in the event of a US invasion of Cuba, Soviet classified information about missiles and their propulsion could fall into American hands. (This is probably also the why they want to hurry up the dismantling of the rockets, so that the UN observers won't get any information about the Soviet rockets.) 4) Moscow apparently does not [believe that the] time is good for starting a major conflict, maybe because of the major restructuring of the political and economical life in the Eastern Bloc.

The Soviet Union has apparently already from the start of the crisis been willing to initiate a "flexible withdrawal," which goes parallel with their stand on the Indian-Chinese border-conflict. Here the Soviet Union, maybe because they did not want to deepen the antagonism towards China, took an almost anti-Indian stand. In the Cuba-United States conflict, the politics used by the Soviet Union was not exactly in harmony with the wishes of Castro. Confronted with a grave situation, Moscow chose to preserve its friendship with communist countries, at the expense of the non-communist countries India and Cuba. It has to be said that it is far too early to make a reliable analysis of the events; they can after all hardly be regarded as being definitively over yet. Therefore, the views presented here must only be seen as an attempt on a preliminary assessment.

[...]

ARMY

A. Soviet Union

Readiness.

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The consequences of the ordered readiness of the armed forces mentioned in the last weekly brief, including the cancellation of leave, has only been observed in certain regions, especially those in the South and South East of the European part of the SOVIET UNION (CAUCASUS and the BLACK SEA region).

Note: It is unknown, if the above state of readiness still exists following president Khrushchev's radio-broadcast at 15:00 hours on 28 October.

The combat readiness only seems to include (have included?) the forces, who are deployed close to TURKEY as well as the rocket forces and the air defense. It can not be ruled out that these measures were part of Khrushchev's proposal for a barter trade for the rocket-bases in TURKEY.

[...]

C. Miscellaneous.████████████████For Official Use

There has in the period in question been observed a great deal of Soviet trawlers in the waters around SKAGEN. About three fishery-motherships are also present in the area, and it is therefore probable that just like the previous years there will be established a fishery base here.

The following Soviet merchant-ships have passed through Danish waters destined for

CUBA and have later returned to the BALTIC SEA with cargo:

KRASNOGRAD

Northbound 22 October

Southbound 24 October

KASIMOV

Northbound 21 October

Southbound 25 October

KISLOVOPSK

Northbound 15 October

Southbound 29 October

BOLSHEVIK SUKHANOV

Northbound 17 October

Southbound 30 October

METALLURG KURAKO

Northbound 16 October

Southbound 30 October.