

Dear Dave,

9/2/97

Day before yesterday you asked me about the book "One Hell of a Gamble," that Jerry had loaned me and I told you it is a fine and an important work, as Jerry had said and as reading it makes obvious. Then yesterday I came to where the USSR records to which the authors had access quote Khrushchev as saying exactly ~~at~~ what was basic to my contemporaneous analysis and seemingly had never suggested itself to any of those of the ExCom working on that crisis. The only mark I've added to the page on which Jerry has a few is the highlighting of what Kh. said.

For those to whom I'll send this and who did not know me then or did not know of the book I'd planned on my analysis, "Tiger to Ride: The Untold Story of the Cuba Missile Crisis (not Cuban)" I add that it had reached this analysis and had expressed it twice the Wednesday before the solution was formulated and announced. Those to whom I had expressed it were the WxPost's foreign editor whose name I recall was Thornbury (I had customers in the Post newsroom and delivered there on Wednesdays) and Bob Rogers, then manager of the National Symphony and who had been editor of CLICK when I was its Washington correspondent.

I'd loaned that <sup>a</sup> ~~research~~ <sup>research</sup> and the records of that and other analyses to Howard Roffman for a college thesis that he changed and later made into a book. Many of those pages did not come back but many also exist.

From what has since come out I was not correct on all details but in essence I was on target, quite correct, and what I have marked was what Kh believed and as it turns out said and was basic in my thinking/analysis/ understanding of what was going on while it was going on and the people who ran the governments were struggling. *Could not see it.*

I thought it was obvious but I suppose what is obvious is too simple for big-shots with big reputations to maintain and jobs to justify for which there can be nothing simple.

I've reached this point in the book. It is an important and a very worthwhile work 35 years after the fact.

cussed Biryuzov and Rashidov's important trip. Once everyone had arrived, Khrushchev stood up and gave a farewell speech to the delegation. "An attack on Cuba is being prepared," he said. "The correlation of forces is unfavorable to us, and the only way to save Cuba is to put missiles there." He revealed that his decision was founded upon an expectation of John Kennedy's reaction. Kennedy is "intelligent" and "would not set off a thermonuclear war if there were our warheads there, just as they put their warheads on missiles in Turkey." The American rockets in Turkey "are aimed at us and scare us." "Our missiles will also be aimed at the United States, even if we do not have as many of them. But if missiles will be deployed near the U.S., they will be even more afraid."<sup>49</sup>

Khrushchev emphasized that the Soviet missiles in Cuba would "not in any case" be used. "Every idiot can start a war, but it is impossible to win this war. . . . Therefore the missiles have one purpose—to scare them, to restrain them so that they have appreciated this business." In a word: "to give them back some of their own medicine." Khrushchev believed it very important that the Soviet scheme not be disclosed before November 6, the day of the congressional elections in the United States. After the election period, he intended to visit the United States to inform Kennedy himself. Faced with this fait accompli, Kennedy would have no alternative to accepting the missiles. Later, between November 25 and 27, Khrushchev intended to visit Cuba, where he would sign a treaty with Castro. "Tell Fidel that there is no other way out." Then the Soviet leader added for effect: "Tell him that we will do all that is necessary to guarantee him—the maintenance of forces, rockets, and equipment." But in the event that Castro did not agree to take these forms of *spetstechnika*, "we will help in other ways."

On Monday, May 28, the delegation left for Havana on a TU-114 transport plane by way of Conakry, Guinea. Thanks to the security measures that were taken, Washington did not detect the purpose of this special mission.

In Agatha Christie's popular mystery *Murder on the Orient Express*, the detective Hercule Poirot encounters a train full of individuals who had motive and opportunity to kill the wealthy American found dead in his luxury compartment. Students of the Cuban missile crisis have suggested a series of plausible explanations for Khrushchev's decision in May 1962 to break with Soviet tradition and station nuclear weapons outside of Eurasia. Some people have claimed that Khrushchev did this to paper over the USSR's strategic inferiority by doubling at a stroke the number of Soviet missiles that could hit the United States. Another explanation, especially popular in the 1980s, was that Khrushchev was genuinely concerned about the likelihood of an American invasion and thought that only a battery of medium- and intermediate-range missiles could deter Kennedy. It has also been suggested that anger at the American decision to station Jupiter missiles in Turkey provoked the impulsive Khrushchev. Finally, there are those who interpreted Khrushchev's decision as an attempt to guarantee the status quo in Cuba and to prevent any attempt by

the Chinese to dislodge him. Like the all-star cast it is responsible for the act. Each a very serious step of May 24.

Yet an answer that ascribe mean nothing. Khrushchev 1961 when Castro unexpectedly the Kremlin expected a reaction Cuba to Hungary in a private hope there might have been a communist country off American soil. A country alone cannot explain why expensive and dangerous we After all, Khrushchev had 1 four times in 1960–61 had e

May 1962 was different from Khrushchev probably first considered to invade Cuba. Two major tensions and the future of cooperation Kennedy's decision to resume come as a surprise after Moscow ally in August 1961. But for from the Pentagon, Kennedy's guidance. Coupled with the lack of evidence of American activity, the nuclear plane loomed as a challenge.

Fidel Castro represented Khrushchev's misguided effort to control from the Cuban leader. Since Moscow had followed a two-pronged del Castro, Moscow worked to stabilize in his entourage. Escorted wake several pro-Moscow elements, and general cooperation matters was disrupted. Just in place for Castro, he seemed

For these specific reasons, Khrushchev needed a bold move to renounce the Kremlin received the respect he wanted to demonstrate that the Soviet Union would defend itself. He made this decision alone—to manage these two difficult