

Tiger file, Moscow conference on 1962 Cuba Missile Crisis, add 2, page 2

Under the head " '62 Missile Crisis Yields New Puzzle" the N.Y. Times gives this story the best position it gave any on this conference, page 2. The story concerns itself with whether or not Khrushchev's son was the unattributed source on the report that Castro had asked Khrushchev to fire the missiles.

There is no such ^{telex} telegram and the USSR ambassador ^{to whom Castro} ~~was~~ dictated and sent all of Castro's ^{telex} ~~telex~~grams says he made no such request.

The story goes into nothing else.

ABC-TV Evening News last night had a long and fair report on the conference. Its correspondent, Pierre Salinger, was both a conferee and reporter, it seems. He was JFK's press secretary. *(Not its Moscow correspondent)*

NBC-TV Evening News has a simplistic report that told its viewers that the crisis ended when Khrushchev removed his missiles, nothing else.

'62 MISSILE CRISIS YIELDS NEW PUZZLE

Hoagy
Khrushchev's Son Is Said to
Recount That Castro Asked
Soviets to Fire at U.S.

By **BILL KELLER**

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Jan. 29 — Leading figures in the 1962 Cuban missile crisis ended an unusual meeting here this weekend having resolved some of the mysteries about that autumn of nuclear brinksmanship, but having added at least one puzzle: Did Fidel Castro urge Nikita S. Khrushchev to fire nuclear weapons at the United States?

The story that he did arose in a Moscow conference center, where high-level American, Soviet and Cuban veterans of the crisis were brought face to face for the first time.

The story about Mr. Castro was the most electrifying speculation to arise at the gathering. It circulated widely among conference participants and found its way into a few Western news reports. Today it was firmly denied by Moscow's former ambassador to Havana — but not totally disbelieved by American participants.

How the Story Emerged

It began with a few Americans, who said they heard it Saturday in a conversation with a well-informed Soviet conference participant. The Americans retold the account on the condition that neither they nor the Soviet be identified, but it soon became generally known that the Soviet was Sergei N. Khrushchev, the son of the Soviet leader who faced off against President John F. Kennedy over Soviet deployment of nuclear missiles in Cuba.

The Americans said Sergei Khrushchev had recounted his father's alarm upon receiving a message from Mr. Castro on Oct. 26, 1962, at the peak of tension. Mr. Castro's message was said to call an American invasion of the island imminent, and urged that the Soviets fire their missiles.

The Soviets had deployed 42 medium-range missiles, targeted on American cities, along with 20 nuclear



Robert S. McNamara, right, former Defense Secretary, in Moscow yesterday with Sergei N. Khrushchev, son of the late Soviet leader. They were tak-

ing part in a conference on the 1962 Cuban missile crisis attended by top-level American, Soviet and Cuban officials who were involved.

warheads that could have been mounted and fired within a few hours.

According to the Americans, Sergei Khrushchev said his father was shaken by the message and declared, "We must take the missiles out immediately." Mr. Castro had no control of the missiles, which were in the hands of 42,000 Soviet troops, but his panicky message was a shocking reminder of how things might get out of hand.

Soviet's Response: 'That's Stupid'

The Castro story was denied most bluntly by Aleksandr I. Alekseyev, who was the Soviet ambassador to Cuba in 1962 and to whom Mr. Castro dictated his telexes to Moscow.

"That's stupid," Mr. Alekseyev said this afternoon in an interview at the conference center. "I wrote the telexes,

and there was nothing of the kind."

Sergei Khrushchev, in an interview today, said that as far as he knows there was never any request from Mr. Castro to use the missiles. About his conversation with the Americans, he said this was "some misunderstanding."

By the end of the day, American participants here, none of them satisfied that the full story had emerged, had concocted at least four alternative scenarios:

One is that Mr. Castro did send a message urging Mr. Khrushchev to shower nuclear weapons on America, and that Sergei Khrushchev backed away from his story because he feared it would upset current Soviet-Cuban relations.

The second is that Mr. Castro sent a message that Nikita Khrushchev misconstrued.

A third possibility is that Nikita Khrushchev did not actually say Mr. Castro had asked for use of the missiles, but he said some things that Sergei Khrushchev's memory, 26 years after the fact, has enlarged.

And a fourth scenario is that nothing very much happened, and the Americans really did misunderstand Sergei Khrushchev. They spoke English, and the his English is imperfect.

The story may be proven or disproven if the Soviets, as they have said they may do, release classified documents from that time. Meanwhile, the story will live on as part of the vast lore of the Cuban missile crisis.