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## SOVIET REPORTED TO YIELD ON CUBA

### Equipment for a Submarine Base Would Be Removed

The United States and the Soviet Union are understood to have reached a secret understanding that the Russians would remove from Cienfuegos, Cuba, equipment for a base to serve missile-carrying submarines.

White House and State Department spokesman refused to comment yesterday on reports to that effect. But it was reliably learned that departure of two Soviet ships, a tug and a submarine tender, from Cienfuegos harbor on Oct. 10 was signaled that the Russians had started to carry out the understanding.

Details of the arrangement, still officially undisclosed, were reportedly worked out in secret diplomatic contacts in Washington and Moscow late in September and early this month after the White House issued a stern warning that Moscow must abide by the pledge Nikita S. Khrushchev made when Premier to keep offensive missiles out of Cuba.

#### Promised to Raise Issue

Secretary of State William P. Rogers said at a news conference on Oct. 9 that he would discuss Washington's concern that the Russians might be building a submarine base at Cienfuegos with Andrei A. Gromyko when he met with the Soviet Foreign Minister. But American officials said the matter was not brought up when the two men conferred last Friday night and probably would not come up when they meet again tomorrow night.

The reason, it was learned, was that Moscow and Washington had already exchanged public as well as private signals to confirm the secret understanding.

The point of concern, underscored by the White House on Sept. 25, was the presence of four Soviet vessels—a tugboat, a submarine tender and two barges for servicing nuclear-armed submarines—in Cienfuegos harbor, along with the construction of some barracks on shore.

The White House, recalling the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and the understanding between Premier Khrushchev and President Kennedy, warned Moscow that it would "view the establishment of a strategic base in the Caribbean with the utmost seriousness."

#### Soviet Denied Charge

The first public indication that the dispute was easing came on Oct. 13. On that day Tass, the official Soviet press agency, issued an authoritative statement saying the American charges that a submarine base was being constructed in Cuba were "a concoction."

Tass went on to add, significantly: "The Soviet Union has not built and is not building its own military base on Cuba and is not doing anything that would contradict the understanding between the governments of the U.S.S.R. and the United States."

On instructions from the White House, the State Department welcomed the Tass statement as a "positive" development. The Pentagon also disclosed that two of the Soviet vessels, the submarine tender and the tug, had already left Cienfuegos harbor and had sailed to the northern shore of the island, apparently on her way home. These statements were evidently public confirmation of the private understanding.

Some American officials were concerned that the two vessels stopped in Mariel, a harbor west of Havana, and that the two barges, considered by some specialists the most serious element in the Soviet buildup, were still in Cienfuegos yesterday.

But White House sources said that they considered the situation to be as "positive" as it was Oct. 13, when the Defense Department disclosed the departure of the two Soviet vessels from Cienfuegos.