

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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LAST EVENING, ON STRICTLY CONTROLLED PRIVATE BASIS, HUGH GAITSKELL AND GEORGE BROWN WERE BRIEFED ON CUBA [REDACTED] FOUR US OFFICIALS WERE PRESENT, INCLUDING AMB BRUCE. EVIDENCE OF SOVIET OFFENSIVE BUILD-UP IN CUBA, WITH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS, AND MAJOR PHASES IN US DETERMINATION OF FACTS AND POLICY ACTION WERE PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED.

1. BOTH GAITSKELL AND BROWN WERE IMPRESSED BY EVIDENCE OF SOVIET ACTIONS, BUT NOT RPT NOT EQUALLY. GAITSKELL APPEARED RESERVED, WORRIED, AND SLIGHTLY NEGATIVE ABOUT CONCLUSIVENESS OF US RPT US FINDINGS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED BY UNCOORDINATED MANNER OF "UNILATERAL" US RPT US DECISION TO ACT, ITS SCOPE, AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES. HE SAID FLATLY HE WAS NOT RPT NOT SATISFIED WITH PREPARATIONS ON US RPT US SIDE IN DEALING WITH "ALLIES" AND ALSO EXPRESSED PERSONAL DOUBTS ABOUT "PROOF" AND LIKELIHOOD OF AGGRESSIVE SOVIET INTENTIONS AGAINST AMERICAN MAINLAND. MACMILLAN AT EARLIER BRIEFING THAT AFTERNOON OF TOP LABOR LEADERS HAD APPEARED, ACCORDING TO BROWN, "HURT" BY ABSENCE OF ADEQUATE US RPT US ADVANCE WARNING AND CONSULTATION. US RPT US OFFICIAL POINTED OUT BRITISH OFFICIALS IN US RPT US WERE INFORMED LATE FRIDAY, BUT EVENTS MOVED SWIFTLY AND CLOSELY CONTROLLED NATURE OF THEM MADE IT DIFFICULT TO SATISFY USUAL CONSULTATION PROCEDURES.

2. BROWN WAS OBVIOUSLY MORE AT HOME IN DEFENSE FIELD THAN GAITSKELL. HE SOUGHT TO LEAD, RATHER THAN FORCE, GAITSKELL TO RECOGNIZE FACT THAT DISCLOSED DATA WENT CONSIDERABLY BEYOND AVAILABLE BRITISH

KNOWLEDGE

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KNOWLEDGE REGARDING SOVIET BUILD-UP BOTH IN SIZE AND CHARACTER. GAITSKELL DID NOT RPT NOT WARMLY OR POSITIVELY RESPOND TO THESE LEADS. BROWN WAS ALSO MORE READY TO ACCEPT STRONG PRESUMPTIVE EVIDENCE OF HOSTILE SOVIET INTENTIONS. HE PUT SEVERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT NUMBER AND BACK-UP SUPPORT OF SOVIET EMPLACEMENTS IN CUBA, NUMBER OF KNOWN, LAUNCHER-READY SOVIET ICBM'S RPT ICBM'S, AND PRESENT RANGE OF BMEWS RPT BMEWS.

3. BOTH MEN RAISED QUESTIONS OF NEXT STEPS AND CONSEQUENCES OF SHOW-DOWN IN CUBA, OBVIOUSLY POINTS OF GENERAL CONCERN HERE AND PARTICULARLY IN LABOR POLITICS. AT MEETING WITH MACMILLAN AT 5:00 PM THEY HAD URGED HIM, AMONG OTHER POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION (BROWN SAID), TO GO TO WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY TO "MEDIATE" SITUATION. THIS COURSE IS MUCH IN GAITSKELL'S MIND, BEING APPARENTLY CONVINCED MAGNITUDE AND GRAVITY OF US RPT US RESPONSE ARE OUT OF PROPORTION TO IMMEDIATE SOVIET CHALLENGE. FEELING SEEMS WIDELY SHARED HERE. INEVITABLY, QUESTION OF POSSIBLE TRADE-OFF OF US RPT US AND SOVIET BASES CAME UP AS ONE POSSIBLE MEANS OF EASING ACUTE PRESENT TENSIONS, NOTABLY BASES LIKE THOSE IN TURKEY. BOTH MEN AGREED UNRESERVEDLY BERLIN COULD NOT RPT NOT BE CONSIDERED IN POSSIBLE DICKER WITH USSR, WEST MUST STAND FIRM THERE WHATEVER HAPPENS. GAITSKELL SEEMED FEARFUL THAT SOMETHING DRASTIC WOULD HAPPEN IN BERLIN SOON. BROWN SUGGESTED, IN VIEW DECLINING UTILITY OVERSEAS BASES, US RPT US COULD CONSIDER GIVING UP SOME BASES IN RETURN FOR "NORMALIZATION" OF SITUATION IN CUBA. IDEA IS ALSO FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED IN BRITISH PRESS AS POSSIBLY BEING ONE OF MAIN SOVIET AIMS AT PRESENT JUNCTURE.

4. IMPLIED IN THESE BRITISH ATTITUDES, PARTLY REFLECTED IN RATHER DETACHED VIEWS OF GAITSKELL AND EVEN MORE PARTISANLY IN THOSE WHO DISLIKE US RPT US POLICY IN CUBA, IS THAT US RPT US AND USSR ARE ENGAGED IN SAME POWER GAME, BOTH ALMOST EQUALLY GUILTY OF PROVOCATIVE FORWARD-

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BASE STRATEGY, AND BOTH UNWILLING TO CONSIDER "DISENGAGEMENT" FOR REASONS OF PRESTIGE AND NAKED POWER CALCULATIONS. GOOD DEAL OF THIS ATTITUDE HAS RUBBED OFF ON GAITSKELL AND IS ENDEMIC IN HIS PARTY AND OTHER SECTORS OF BRITISH OPINION. TO MANY OBSERVERS HERE CUBA LOOKS ALL OF PIECE WITH COLD WAR STRATEGY AND THERE IS DISTURBING TENDENCY TO DEPICT US RPT US AS NOT RPT NOT BEING MUCH DIFFERENTLY MOTIVATED OR MORE JUSTIFIED THAN USSR IN DEALING WITH SITUATIONS OF POTENTIAL WORLD CONFLICT.

5. DESPITE RESERVATIONS AND UNCERTAINTIES CONCERNING FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS, FRANK DISCUSSION WITH LABOR LEADERS SERVED USEFUL PURPOSE. BROWN EXPRESSED OPINION (AND HOPE) THAT LEADERSHIP WOULD BE ABLE TO KEEP PARTY REACTIONS TO UNFOLDING EVENTS "ON RAILS."

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