

To: President Lyndon B. Johnson

From: Prime Minister Fidel Castro

Verbal Message given to Miss Lisa Howard of
ABC News on February 12, 1964 in Havana, Cuba.

1. Please tell President Johnson that I earnestly desire his election to the Presidency in November ... though that appears assured. But if there is anything I can do to add to his majority (aside from retiring from politics), I shall be happy to cooperate. Seriously, I observe how the Republicans use Cuba as a weapon against the Democrats. So tell President Johnson to let me know what I can do, if anything. Naturally, I know that my offer of assistance would be of immense value to the Republicans - so this would remain our secret. But if the President wishes to pass word to me he can do so through you Lisa Howard. He must know that he can trust you; and I know that I can trust you to relay a message accurately.
2. If the President feels it necessary during the campaign to make bellicose statements about Cuba or even to take some hostile action - if he will inform me, unofficially, that a specific action is required because of domestic political considerations, I shall understand and not take any serious retaliatory action.
3. Tell the President that I understand quite well how much political courage it took for President Kennedy to instruct you Lisa Howard and Ambassador Attwood to phone my aide in Havana for the purpose of commencing a dialogue toward a settlement of our differences. Ambassador Attwood suggested that I prepare an agenda for such talks and send the agenda to my U.N. Ambassador. That was on November 18th. The agenda was being prepared when word arrived that President Kennedy was assassinated. I hope that we can soon continue where Ambassador Attwood's phone conversation to Havana left off ... though I'm aware that pre-electoral political considerations may delay this approach until after November.

4. Tell the President (and I cannot stress this too strongly) that I seriously hope that Cuba and the United States can eventually sit down in an atmosphere of good will and of mutual respect and negotiate our differences. I believe that there are no areas of contention between us that cannot be discussed and settled within a climate of mutual understanding. But first, of course, it is necessary to discuss our differences. I now believe that this hostility between Cuba and the United States is both unnatural and unnecessary - and it can be eliminated.

5. Tell the President he should not interpret my conciliatory attitude, my desire for discussions as a sign of weakness. Such an interpretation would be a serious miscalculation. We are not weak ... the Revolution is strong ... very strong. Nothing, absolutely nothing that the United States can do will destroy the Revolution. Yes, we are strong. And it is from this position of strength that we wish to resolve our differences with the United States and to live in peace with all the nations of the world.

6. Tell the President I realize fully the need for absolute secrecy, if he should decide to continue the Kennedy approach. I revealed nothing at that time ... I have revealed nothing since ... I would reveal nothing now.