



(AP Wirephoto)
Former AP Reporter John Scali
... holds Cuban missile crisis note

CREDITED WITH AIDING IN SOLUTION

Reporter Go-Between in Cuba Crisis

WASHINGTON, Sept. 5.—American newsman John Scali and his Soviet contact were both deeply worried during the dark hours of the Cuban crisis that it could explode into history's first nuclear war, Scali said Tuesday.

In an interview, the ABC correspondent voiced great relief at being able to tell at last his "once in a reporter's lifetime" big story: His go-between role in key U.S.-Soviet exchanges that helped settle the 1962 crisis.

"A reporter by nature just finds it hard to go around carrying a major government secret for almost two years," he said. He said President Kennedy asked him to keep secret for a time his October 1962 meeting with a Russian intelligence officer identified only as "Mr. X" of Cuba, the usual Washington-Moscow diplomatic channels were not operating normally and time was running out. At this point on Friday, Oct. 26, 1962, a senior official at the Soviet embassy in the United States—and thus direct communication channels with the Kremlin—urgently asked Scali to lunch.

At that lunch Scali, who had known Mr. X as a news contact, left Washington early this year for a missile pull-out. Scali promptly relayed this to the State Department and Secretary of State Dean Rusk sent him back to Mr. X with a response showing U.S. interest.

The United States and the Soviet Union were deadlocked over each day during the fateful week-end. Their communications and those through more formal channels figured in the U.S.-Soviet maneuverings which at one point seemed headed for conflict. But by Sunday morning Premier Khrushchev had publicly ordered a missile withdrawal. The back of the crisis was broken.

Scali, Hilsman and the State Department all declined to identify Mr. X except to say that he got the Soviet suggestion of terms for a missile pull-out. Scali promptly relayed this to the State Department and Secretary of State Dean Rusk sent him back to Mr. X with a response showing U.S. interest.

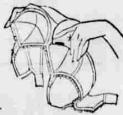
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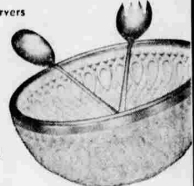
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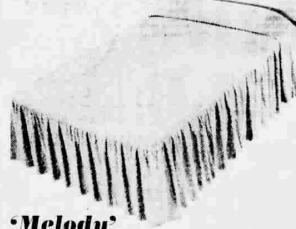
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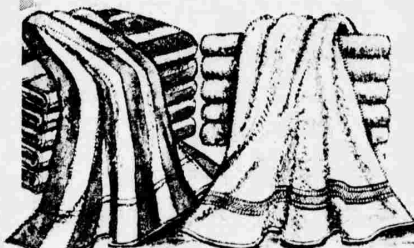
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