

## Czechoslovakia-Cuba Relations and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1959-1962:

### Evidence from the Prague Archives

**E**d. note: Of all the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact allies in Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia appears to have forged the fastest and closest political, economic, and military relationship with Fidel Castro's revolutionary leadership after it seized power in Havana at the beginning of 1959. (In fact, Russian documents have disclosed, Castro's guerrilla army first sought to purchase arms from Czechoslovakia—in apparently its first such foray beyond the Iron Curtain—as early as December 1958, on the eve of its final victory over the Batista dictatorship; the Kremlin approved the limited transaction, conducted through a Costa Rican firm.<sup>1</sup>) With some in Havana considering relations with Prague an “ice-breaker” for further ties to the communist camp (Soviet-Cuban diplomatic relations were not restored until 1960<sup>3</sup>), Czechoslovak and Cuban leaders frequently exchanged visits and openly signed agreements to increase trade, cultural, scientific, educational exchanges, and the like—and secretly negotiated extensive arms transfers of Soviet-bloc arms to the rulers in Havana as they sought to defeat an ongoing challenge from anti-Castro Cuban insurgents (both on the island and in exile) and faced the looming threat of assault from Washington as US-Cuban relations rapidly deteriorated.

The collection of translated Czechoslovak documents presented here document this emerging relationship from 1959 to 1962 (at least from Prague's perspective and through the lens of Czech documents—unfortunately, Cuban archives containing records of foreign diplomatic and inter-party contacts remain closed, preventing a better understanding of Havana's side of the story).<sup>4</sup> They are divided into two sections.

The first section presents evidence on the early development of Czechoslovak-Cuban relations from 1959 to 1961, which includes the somewhat sensitive issue of Prague's attempting to grasp the relationship and balance of power within Havana's rulers between Fidel Castro's “July 26<sup>th</sup>” movement and the traditional, pro-Moscow communist party, the People's Socialist Party (PSP). The reports here include contacts of the ruling Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) leadership with both camps, including such figures as Raul Castro and Che Guevara, both of whom visited Czechoslovakia during this period, and, significantly, extensive information on the Prague government's decision, in late September 1959, to approve sending what was euphemistically described as “special technical supplies” or “special technology” (i.e., weapons, specifically 50,000 submachine guns and ammunition) to Havana, using a neutral Swiss firm as a cut-out to conceal the transaction, especially from American eyes.<sup>5</sup> The Czechoslovak willingness to covertly aid Cuba militarily,

at Havana's behest, paralleled a comparable deal contemplated by Poland at the same time—and both required a green-light from Moscow, which Nikita Khrushchev—briefly in the capital in between visits to the United States and China at the end of September—secretly gave, overruling Kremlin associates who considered tying the Soviet Union to revolutionary Cuba a hopeless cause since it was so firmly within the US sphere of influence. According to Fursenko and Naftali, who first revealed the episode (without the piquant details provided by the Czech documentation here), the step was a significant indication of the Soviet leader's emotional commitment to the new regime on the distant island, foreshadowing more fateful actions in the years to come. “If one were to choose the point at which the United States and the Soviet Union started inclining toward their first direct military clash, it was this day in late September 1959,” they wrote. “By approving the weapons sale”—Fursenko and Naftali were referring to the Polish sale, but Khrushchev apparently also approved the simultaneous Czech deal—“Khrushchev signaled to the top levels of the Soviet government that he would take risks to pursue Soviet aims in Latin America.”<sup>6</sup>

Notably, the Czech documents reveal, in July 1959 the Cubans had told a visiting Czech trade delegation in Cuba that Fidel Castro desired to obtain arms from Czechoslovakia, but “that given the current tense situation the purchase of these goods could only be made by way of a third country, otherwise direct supplies from Czechoslovakia could be politically manipulated by the United States, as in the case of Guatemala.” To mask the sale's actual partners, the documents show, the sale was to be made via a complicated conduit involving neutral Switzerland using financing from the charity C.A.R.E. Evidently, the Cubans succeeded in organizing such arrangements under the noses of Americans and of the Central Intelligence Agency in particular. In a late November 1959 conversation with the British ambassador in Washington, CIA director Allen W. Dulles explained the US objections to a proposed UK sale of planes to Cuba because he wanted the Cuban government to turn behind the Iron Curtain for arms, just like Arbenz had done in Guatemala, for this would help mobilize anti-Castro Cubans in exile for a covert operation to unseat the leadership in Havana. Evidently, Dulles didn't know that the Cubans had already done so, and effectively hidden the transaction for precisely the reason that he wished to coerce and expose such an act.<sup>7</sup>

As the Czech documents detail, this military tie intensified in 1960 with expanded requests from the PSP head, Blas Roca, and a visit to Czechoslovakia by Cuba's defense minister, Raúl

Castro, whom Prague had learned was more ideologically attuned to communism than his brother, together with Antonio Nunez Jimenez, the powerful figure in charge of Cuba's agricultural reform agency (INRA). Besides furthering Havana's prospects for buying Soviet-bloc arms, the documents show, the Cuban visitors used visits to Prague to widen and intensify their contacts with diplomats from other communist countries, ranging from the People's Republic of China and the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam to assorted Warsaw Pact nations who had not yet normalized relations and established embassies in Cuba. As mutual visits took place at an accelerating tempo, Prague and Havana exchanged embassies in the summer of 1960 and, within a year, they also inaugurated an airline connection via Czechoslovak state airlines (CSA), directly linking the island to the Soviet bloc by commercial aviation.

By the end of 1960 and spring of 1961, the documents show, top level Cuban requests—including from Fidel Castro and President Osvaldo Dorticos through Prague's embassy in Havana—sought an even broader military relationship to complement weapons and equipment being obtained from the Soviet Union, and one that only intensified after the Bay of Pigs.<sup>8</sup> Though not formally acknowledged, this link was an open secret in Havana: "Although Czechoslovak sources never officially admitted military aid to Cuba," an outside analysis noted in June 1961, "it is no secret that a large number of Czechoslovak military advisors are present in Cuba and that Cuban air force pilots are receiving training in Czechoslovakia."<sup>9</sup>

By mid-1961, an analysis of Czech-Cuban relations over the past year concluded that Prague's "intensive activities" on the island had been "evident" since the summer of 1960 but "particularly vigorous" since the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion. Czechoslovakia, it noted, seemed to have been selected by Moscow as its "spearhead" in relations not only with Cuba but with much of the developing, or third, world.<sup>10</sup>

The second section of translated documents date from the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 as well as from the mostly secret Soviet-Cuban crisis in November, when Fidel Castro and many other Cubans were incensed at Nikita Khrushchev's decision to withdraw nuclear missiles, taken under the duress of US pressure and without consulting or even alerting Havana in advance (and, to add further insult, agreeing to UN inspection of the missiles' dismantling and removal on Cuban territory—an idea Castro resolutely rejected); and Khrushchev sent his closest associate, Anastas Mikoyan, who had helped broker the opening of ties between Moscow and Havana in February 1960, to mollify his disgruntled Cuban comrades.<sup>11</sup> When the crisis erupted in the fall of 1962, the close Cuban-Czechoslovak relationship established in the preceding years still persisted; a November 1962 comparative estimate of links to Cuba among Warsaw Pact countries judged that Czechoslovakia had "the lion's share" of

East/Central Europe trade with and various forms of assistance (including military) to Cuba, roughly twice as large the next highest (Poland and Bulgaria were more or less tied for second).<sup>12</sup> During the crisis Prague's ambassador in Havana, Vladimír Pavlíček, enjoyed access to such senior figures as Foreign Minister Raúl Roa and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, the old PSP stalwart whom Castro had named to run INRA, and who had become a member of the inner leadership circle, who candidly vented negative feelings toward Khrushchev's decisions to the Czech envoy despite the latter's inevitable loyalty towards Moscow.<sup>13</sup> The following summer, a Czechoslovak official in Prague insisted to a fraternal (Hungarian) diplomat that Czech-Cuban relations Cuba "did not change during the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban Missile] Crisis and the time following it, even amidst the biggest hardships...."<sup>14</sup> Pavlíček also, of course, kept in close contact with his Soviet colleague in Havana, Ambassador Aleksandr Alekseyev, from whom he gleaned bits of information about the lengthy negotiations between Mikoyan and the Cubans—and his Czechoslovak diplomatic colleague in Washington reported on his meeting (along with other Soviet-bloc envoys) with Mikoyan when the Soviet passed through town, meeting with JFK, at the end of November on his way back from Cuba to Moscow.<sup>15</sup> More broadly, the dozens of ciphered cables from Pavlíček (who also circulated with non-communist diplomats and did not shy away from reporting attitudes critical of the Soviet Union) printed here from late October-late November 1962 offer numerous fresh glimpses of attitudes, reactions, gossip, and events behind the "Sugarcane Curtain" that were difficult to discern or obtain from Washington. While Pavlíček lacked the insider information on Soviet-Cuban exchanges available to Alekseyev, his reports—usefully compared with the now-available contemporaneous reports from the Polish and Hungarian embassies in Havana<sup>16</sup>—valuably add the record of inter-communist communications, perceptions, and even emotions during those turbulent, momentous days in the Cuban capital. Supplementing these materials from the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry files, also printed are translations of a number of party records, including reports during the crisis to CPCz General Secretary (and Czechoslovak President) Antonín Novotný; information on PSP leader Blas Roca's conversations in Prague in early November; and, most importantly for students of the Soviet side of the crisis, the record of Novotný's 30 October 1962 conversation with Khrushchev in Moscow (see following section).<sup>17</sup>



Most of the Czechoslovak documents printed here were gathered by Oldřich Tůma for the National Security Archive in preparation for the 2002 conference in Havana to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and translated by Linda Mastalir; only a few (e.g., the excerpt from the 30 October

*1962 Novotný-Khrushchev conversation) were circulated at the time, and none of these have previously been printed. They were supplemented by documents gathered by James Hershberg during a 2009 visit to the Czech National Archives in Prague, and translated for this issue of the CWIHP Bulletin by Adolf Kotlík.—J.H.*



## **DOCUMENTS ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA-CUBA RELATIONS, 1959-1961**

Resolution of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Politburo, Regarding Talks with Representatives of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba, 24 March 1959

It is necessary to return these materials to the Technical Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia within one month at the latest.

Enclosure I

Resolution

Of the 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 24.3.1959.

Point: News about an interview with a representative from the People's Socialist Party of Cuba (Comrade J. Hendrych)

Passed resolution:

On the basis of news about the meeting with a representative of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba the following points are approved:

1. The sending of a trade mission to Cuba with the goal of preparing the road to normalizing diplomatic ties,
2. To express agreement for eventual negotiations about supplying arms should the Czechoslovak delegation be asked,
3. To provide the requested aid with regards to technical equipment for the People's Socialist Party of Cuba's printing house.

To be carried out by: Comrade J. Hendrych

Comrade V. David<sup>18</sup>

Comrade F. Krajčír<sup>19</sup>

Enclosure III

Memorandum

On talks with Comrade Severo Aguirre, member of the Politburo, Central Committee of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba.

Comrade Aguirre provided information about the situation in Cuba and the work of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba.

He stated that the partisan movement in Cuba, which began as an isolated action of armed petty bourgeois democrats, gradually changed into a mass movement of armed workers and peasants who form 90% of the revolutionary army. Considerable credit for this development goes to the communist party, which has for many years led the masses of landless people and petty farmers to fight for land reform: the rebel mutineers' leader, Fidel Castro, started to look for support amongst the masses of peasants after the tactic of isolated terrorist acts against the Batista dictatorship failed, and the masses of peasants supported Castro when he adopted the communist slogan of democratic land reform.

In 1958 the Central Committee of the People's Socialist Party of Cuba sent a member of the Politburo, Comrade [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez, to the headquarters of the rebel movement. The Party gave its support to the rebel movement and gained high positions within the organization. A series of significant command posts were held and are held by communists. Fidel Castro, who at the beginning of 1957 still yielded to anticommunist attitudes on the assumption that communists intend the "misuse" him for their own goals, gradually shed his anticommunist prejudices. American imperialism itself had much to do with his positive political development, since on the one hand it flirted with Castro's movement and pretended to sympathize with it, and on the other hand embraced the fascist dictator Batista with all-round military aid.

According to the Cuban comrades, Castro is sensitive to the requests of the masses. In the past the communists criticized Castro often—even publicly—for his incorrect approach that testified to the petty bourgeois mentality of the uprising's leaders. For example, in the spring of last year an appeal for a revolt was made to the soldiers in Batista's army—together with a warning that in the event instructions would not be followed, the leaders of the uprising would be shot. As a result, the honorable members of the ruling army and fascist criminals were brought together for a time.

Fidel Castro belongs to the leftist group the "July 26th of July Movement," to which his younger, though politically more mature brother Raul also belongs (the present leader of the armed forces). In government, Fidel Castro has surrounded himself with honorable, uncorrupted politicians who are partly fearful of the increasing pressure of American

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imperialism. The Popular Socialist Party of Cuba is pushing for cooperation not only with the leftist elements in the "July 26<sup>th</sup> Movement," but also with its center. In the realm of politics the widest democratic front is working to neutralize the rightist elements in the "July 26<sup>th</sup> Movement."

The party enjoyed considerable success during the reorganization of workers' divisions, though it must overcome sabotage from the rightist wing of the "July 26<sup>th</sup> Movement," which is opposed to the consistent democratization of the divisions and does not want to cooperate with the communists. In the countryside, communists are working in 300 local peasant unions. The party supports shared land reform that was begun on the liberated partisan territory and gives landless peasants (so-called *precaristas*) and petty farmers free land up to an area of 26 hectares, and the option of leasing land up to 39 hectares at a low rate.

The Popular Socialist Party of Cuba is requesting a change in the institutional law on land reform, which currently requires payment for land in advance, and in cash. In the next stage of the struggle for land reform the Party will request the confiscation of property belonging to landowners. American firms, which own 66% of the agricultural land, fall into this category. Thus, the fight for land reform is related to the fight against imperialism. At the head of the revolutionary government, Fidel Castro took the first step in nationalizing American companies by installing a state control commission into the staff of the American firm [International] Tel. & Tel. [ITT] Comp., which maintains disproportionately high telephone rates for its customers.

The bourgeois democratic revolution in Cuba was, and remains, largely led by the anti-imperialist petty bourgeois and the national middle-bourgeois. However, the tone is currently not set by the representatives of democratic opposition in the government, but rather by the petty bourgeois leaders of the revolutionary army (Fidel and Raul Castro, E. Guevara), who rely on the people's army. Communists have a high level of influence in this army, and they sympathize with these men [Castro, etc.]. The Cuban revolution included a combination of the people's partisan struggle and the actions of the working class in the cities, who came to support the people's armed uprising. The actions of the working class (which were above all actively organized by communists) frustrated the intentions of the USA to replace the inevitable fall of Batista's government with a new puppet.

During the course of the progressive bourgeois democratic revolution, the state bourgeois apparatus was largely broken-up: the army has only an insignificant number of the lower-ranking officers from the former ruling army (those who could prove that they did not participate in military actions against the people). The police forces were replaced

and the so-called "bureau for the subjugation of communism" was closed down. Those political parties that compromised themselves by participating in the election farce of November 1958 were dissolved. People were replaced in the departments of justice and the municipal boards, including the mayors. Members of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba were actively involved in all these revolutionary actions. Though the Cuban bourgeois democratic revolution did not begin under the leadership of the proletariat, the proletariat's example did influence and continues to influence its course with progressive slogans and tactics. The communists continue to develop increasingly better conditions for fulfilling the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution. Counter-revolutionary forces are currently disorganized and limited to individual groups of reactionary bourgeois that are isolated from the masses. They are gradually reorganizing themselves, especially with the support of the reactionary press. This process will reinstitute individual counter-revolutionary fronts of the bourgeois, though according to the opinions of the Cuban comrades, this will still take some time. Therefore, American imperialism cannot openly take up supporting the counterrevolutionaries who pretend to agree with the revolution and propagate the slogan: "for the revolution, but away with the communists." This situation is allowing for the renewal of the Popular Socialist Party, which had over 10,000 members at the end of December. Since then, the number of members has apparently increased considerably. The Party publishes a daily, *Hoy (Today)*; a weekly bulletin for its functionaries, *Carta Semanal (Weekly Letter)*; and it is preparing to once again publish the theoretical magazine *Fundamentalos (The Basics)*. The Party's propaganda has two important tasks: firstly, to explain to the masses that they must become the main force which will determine further development in Cuba, and secondly, to paralyze the anti-communist propaganda spread widely by the bourgeois press, which abuses "freedom for all."

Comrade Aguirre emphasized the fact that the revolutionary commanders, including Fidel Castro, are counting on the fact that after a time, should its planned economic boycott of Cuba prove futile, the USA will proceed to provoke an armed struggle. In this case the exceptional assistance of socialist countries acquires meaning. Of these, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has in Cuba particularly favorable conditions to provide aid. Diplomatic ties between the two countries were not interrupted (as they were with the USSR), but they were settled practically as a consequence of the fact that the Czechoslovak charge d'affaires was recalled before February 1948 for economic reasons. Trade with Cuban companies continued even during Batista's dictatorship.



These concrete questions were raised during the discussion:

1. The sending of a Czechoslovak trade mission to Cuba. It would have a semi-official character and arrive without any publicity. The mission would discuss the possibility of expanding Czechoslovak trade with Cuba, and would emphasize the wish to grant the Cuban government economic aid on the basis of a mutual agreement. The Cuban comrades pledge that for such a trade mission, equipped with full powers and politically well-prepared, they will arrange meetings with the major representatives of the Cuban government, including Fidel Castro.

This is a suitable moment for such a step. According to Comrade Aguirre, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic can figure as “an ice-breaker of the socialist camp” in the Caribbean region. In relation to this he said that for example, the Chinese People’s Republic could purchase Cuban sugar through the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (thus far it is purchased through England). In the near future the Cuban comrades will determine which of the Castro government’s diplomatic representatives would be best suited to carry out an authorized probe. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of this month, Comrade Aguirre discussed with Comrade Hloch at the Ministry of International Trade some detailed questions related to the eventual sending of an unofficial Czechoslovak trade mission to Cuba.

2. With regards to the Cuban comrades’ request dating to the end of 1958 (the supply of arms to the insurgent army), Comrade Aguirre emphasized that the situation changed with the quick overthrow of the Batista dictatorship. However, in the event that the Cuban government should request the sale of military technology, it would be correct for the Czechoslovak side to oblige. According to the Cuban comrades, such an act would have a very positive psychological effect not only on the masses, but also on the leadership of the “July 26th Movement,” for which it was always difficult to secure arms.
3. Furthermore, Comrade Aguirre requested technical aid (type-setting machines) for the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba’s new printing press. He said that the Popular Socialist Party will receive assistance from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the East German Socialist Party, which will donate a rotary press. From our side it would be possible to provide five well-kept line presses that have been utilized until now.



In advance, Comrade Hendrych voiced his agreement with the suggestions and requests of Comrade Aguirre, adding that he will inform the Party’s leadership.  
10.3.1959

*[Source: Central State Archive, Prague, Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, fund 02-2, Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 1958-1962, volume 235 and 314, point 14, page 9. Translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlík.]*



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### **Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) Politburo Resolution (with enclosures) on Arms Transfers to Cuba, September 1959**

Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist  
Party of Czechoslovakia

Strictly confidential!

3552/14

Point: Special technical supplies to Cuba

A Swiss firm is interested in purchasing special technology in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic for the Cuban armed forces. The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was informed in advance. On the basis of its resolution of 8 September 1959, a proposal for signing an authorized contract is being put forward. The matter was discussed with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and National Defense.

Enclosure I

Proposed resolution

Enclosure III

Report

Presented by: Comrade F. Krajčír

25 September 1959

Number of pages: 8

It is necessary to return these materials to the Technical Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia within one month at the latest.



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Comrade Hamouz<sup>20</sup>: there is no capacity for repairing submachine guns.

Question of manufacturing munitions

Comrade Jankovcová, Comrade Krajčír together with Comrade David are to verify in the resolution that the arms are really meant for the Cuban government.

Enclosure I

Resolution

Of the 69<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Politburo, Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 29.IX.59

Point: Special technical supplies to Cuba  
(Comrade F. Krajčír)

Resolution:

The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

- I. takes note of the introduced report
- II. approves of:

1. Realizing the supply of specialized technology, or sending Czechoslovak samples to the Cuban government via a suitable intermediary on the basis of a license or another official document from a neutral country. This in the event that the Cuban government does not recognize the possibility of discussing these questions with the Czechoslovak government directly, *and that before the realization of these prospective supplies, Comrade Krajčír would present the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia with an authorized proposal.*<sup>21</sup>

2. The supply of 50,000 9mm guns of the Czechoslovak type 23/25, and the requested amount of corresponding munitions to the Cuban armed forces by way of the Swiss firm Philipp Friedlander as an intermediary.

3. Signing a contract with the Swiss firm P. Friedlander for the supply of the above noted 9mm guns and cartridges, on the basis of a Swiss re-export license and on the condition that the goods be picked up at the Czechoslovak border, with payment in cash in a foreign currency, so long as the company in question proves that the goods are designated for the Cuban armed forces.

III. The following are charged with:

1. Comrade Krajčír together with Comrade David are to ensure that before the contract is signed it is proven that the arms are designated for the Cuban government, and a prospective inquiry with the authorized Cuban state organs is not out of the

question.

2. In 1959 and 1960, [Czechoslovak Minister of National Defense] Comrade B. Lomský, together with Comrade F. Krajčír, are to free from the army's supplies, for the purpose stated in point II/2, a total of 50,000 9mm guns, type 23/25, and 80 million 9mm cartridges, all in a manner that would allow at least 15,000 pieces to be shipped at the beginning of December 1959.

To be undertaken by: Comrade F. Krajčír  
Comrade B. Lomský  
Comrade V. David<sup>22</sup>

Those to be notified: [Chairman of the State Planning Committee] Comrade O. Šimůnek  
[Czechoslovak Minister of Finance] Comrade J. Ďuriš  
Comrade J. Hendrych

#### IV. Conclusion

With regards to the above, we recommend approving, after deliberations, this addition resolved in point III:

"Comrade F. Krajčír, together with Comrade David, is charged with ensuring that before the contract is signed it is credibly verified that the arms are designated for the Cuban government, and a prospective inquiry of the relevant Cuban state organs is not out of the question."

Furthermore, we recommend adding a sentence with the following wording to Point II/1:

"...and that, before the realization of these prospective supplies, the minister of foreign trade would always present the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia with a relevant proposal."

Prague, 28 September 1959 Department Head:

Signature unreadable

Enclosure III

Report for the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia regarding the discussion on supplies of specialized technology from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the Cuban armed forces.

At the beginning of September of this year, the Swiss citizen Willy Strub visited the Ministry of International Trade's main Technical Department.<sup>23</sup> He produced a document with the credentials of Mr. Philipp Friedlander who is authorized by the Swiss to deal in arms and war supplies (license #1876 Eidg. Militardep.). The purpose of his trip was to discuss the possibility of supplying 50,000 pieces of 9mm guns and

ammunition (5-10,000 pieces per gun) to the Cuban armed forces.

The Cuban locals have been interested in special technology from Czechoslovakia since the end of 1958. At the end of December last year, on behalf of a purely Costa Rican firm, the Czechoslovak national in charge of trade and assigned to Mexico passed on a request for military technology to aid Fidel Castro's units. Back then, the possibility of supplying trophies or older Czechoslovak arms was discussed with the Soviets. On 7 January of this year, the Soviet State Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs voiced a positive stance towards Czechoslovakia's intention to aid the liberation struggle in Cuba. In connection, the Politburo of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in its resolution of 20 January 1959 (point 15) gave the minister of international trade the task of realizing the aforementioned supplies after a preliminary consultation with Soviet representatives, should the new Cuban government request them.

While discussing the news of the interview with the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba's representative, the 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia also concerned itself with the question of supplying special technical aid to Cuba. The relevant resolution of 24 March 1959 (point 7) stipulated that a trade mission will be sent to Cuba, which amongst other things should inform the Cubans of our agreement with the eventual discussions concerning the supply of arms.

On the basis of this, in July of this year the head of the Czechoslovak trade mission, Comrade Maruška, held talks with the director of the National Institute for Land Reform, Captain Jimenez. In the closing discussions the above named Cuban functionary affirmed interest in arms from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. At the same time he voiced the opinion of the head of the government, Dr. Fidel Castro, that given the current tense situation the purchase of these goods could only be made by way of a third country, otherwise direct supplies from Czechoslovakia could be politically manipulated by the United States, as in the case of Guatemala.

Therefore, the Ministry of International Trade assumes that, taking into consideration the current viewpoint of the Cuban representatives, it would be useful to take advantage of suitable intermediaries, and possibly realize special technical supplies of Czechoslovak types to Cuba. This would be done on the basis of a license or another official document from one of the neutral states (Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Finland).

The recent visit of Mr. W. Strub to Prague seems to be in line with the stated conception of the Cuban locals, who apparently found it suitable to locate an intermediary in neutral Switzerland. Willy Strub said that the transaction would

be made on the basis of a proper Swiss re-export license, and in several shipments. Mr. Friedlander would personally come to Czechoslovakia to sign the authorized contract, and this on the condition that the price include transport to the Czechoslovak border, as well as transport to a loading dock (which should be in Rostock, East Germany), and that the shipment overseas would be arranged by the buyer. Payment would be made in Swiss Francs on an irreversible line of credit that Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft, Zurich, would open at the Czechoslovak State Bank in Prague. Mr. Strub also said that the purchase would be financed by the American religious organization CARE, which is apparently as a part of its charity work a major buyer of Cuban sugar, and apparently has an interest in our particular shipment. CARE's Vice-President, Benjamin Winkler, is in Havana at this time and awaiting news from Mr. Friedlander. Thus far, the Ministry of International Trade knows nothing about the goals and intentions of the CARE organization.

The Swiss representative discussed other issues not dependent upon the supply of 9mm guns, which he asked be quickly sent to Cuba either through the aforementioned Benjamin Winkler, or directly to the leader of the Cuban armed forces, Raul Castro. However, employees of the Ministry of International Trade (acting as employees of Omnipol) slowed discussions due to doubts about the suitability of sending the requested samples from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic directly to Cuba, so Mr. Strub agreed to take them himself and arrange in Switzerland their quick shipment to the interested parties. Having informed the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia beforehand, and with a resolution passed on 8 September 1959 (point 28) agreeing with this plan, the goods were handed over on 10 September of this year.

The called-for 50,000 guns would be covered by the main technical division of the Ministry of International Trade from its military supplies, allowing them to release 20,000 pieces this year, and the remaining 30,000 in 1960. As far as cartridges are concerned, the Ministry of National Defense is putting only 80 million pieces up for disposal, and of this about 1/4<sup>th</sup> this year and the rest next year. The requested number of cartridges (250-500 million pieces) is disproportionately high when compared with the number of requested guns. However, if the customer were to really order an amount exceeding the number of supplies freed by the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of International Trade would try to import the goods from either Poland or Bulgaria, and possibly, together with the Ministry of General Engineering they would try to find a means for the manufacture of these goods in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

The total cost value of the noted supplies amounts to about 32 million Kčs, of which the 50,000 9mm guns of Czechoslovak type 23/25 equal about 14 million Kčs, and the 80 million cartridges about 18 million Kčs. Considering the fact that arms of the 2nd category are involved—that is, used arms—it would be necessary to undertake an inspection of these guns. The Ministries of International Trade, National Defense and General Engineering are discussing this inspection in an effort to realize the first shipment in the greatest possible sum by the beginning of December at the latest, so that the wishes of the customer are adhered to. In addition, from our economic perspective, should the relevant payment in international currency add to the fulfillment of tasks planned for the year 1959, this would be welcomed.

Next week the Minister of International Trade will inform a representative from the Soviet State Committee of Ministers for International Trade of the discussions with the Swiss intermediary, and of the planned route for supplying the Cuban armed forces with the above noted guns and ammunition from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic.

The realization of this transaction would have a series of advantages. Above all, it would be the first supply of specialized technology for use in the support of an anti-imperialist movement in the Central American region (not considering the supplies sent to Guatemala), and at the same time Czechoslovakia would not carry the risk of the naval transport. Furthermore, it would be a useful way to utilize guns already put out of commission, and the Ministry of National Defense would gradually release a total of 160,000 pieces for export by the year 1964. At the same time, old ammunition manufactured in the years 1946-1951 would be sold.

The question of supplying the Cuban armed forces with specialized technology by way of an intermediary was first discussed with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and National Defense. Neither have objections to this export of goods. Therefore, the Ministry of International Trade recommends that the Politburo of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia pass the proposed resolution.

*[Source: Central State Archive, Prague, Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, fund 02-2, Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 1958-1962, Vol. 259 and 343, point 29, page 19. Obtained and translated for the National Security Archive.]*



## **Report of the Czechoslovak Politburo Regarding Military Assistance to the Cuban Government, 16 May 1960, and CPCz Politburo Resolution, 17 May 1960**

POLITBURO OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!

5155/14

Point: Supplies of special material to the Cuban revolutionary government.

Enclosure I

Proposed resolution

Enclosure III

Report

PLEASE RETURN IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING  
DISCUSSIONS!

Presented by: Comrade F. Krajčír

16 May 1960

Number of pages: 15

It is necessary to return these materials to the Technical  
Division of the Central Committee of the Communist Party  
of Czechoslovakia within one month at the latest.

Enclosure II

Report

On supplying special materials from Czechoslovakia to Cuba.

During his visit to Czechoslovakia in April 1960, Comrade Blas Roca, the General Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba, requested the supply of needed equipment and military technology to the Cuban revolutionary government. At the end of April this request was extended to include further technical goods, and presented in Prague by a representative of the Cuban government, Captain Pina. In addition to the supply of special technology, Czechoslovakia was asked to provide technical assistance during the training and preparation of cadres from the Cuban armed forces. The Czechoslovak side promised full support and gave its assurance that it will try to meet the stated requests.

The possibility of supplying Cuba with special technology as well as providing technical assistance was consulted with the Soviet Union a number of times, the most recent being in March 1960. The Soviet government adopted a positive viewpoint on the matter of supplying specialized technology, and with the purpose of agreeing upon a joint course of action sent to Prague in April and May 1960 General



Sidorovich, who discussed these matters with the general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the president of the Republic Comrade A. Novotný, and the deputy chairman of the government and chairman of the State Planning Commission, Comrade O. Šimůnek.

On 11-14 May 1960, closing discussions were held in Prague between the Soviet delegation led by Comrade General Sidorovich, and the Czechoslovak side which was led by the director of the main Technical Department of the Ministry of International Trade, Comrade František Mareš.<sup>24</sup> The consequences of the policy to supply specialized technology and offer technical assistance to the Cuban revolutionary government were discussed at these meetings:

1. The extent of the supplies:

The supplies of specialized technology from Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union cover practically all of the Cuban side's requests.

However, due to a shortage of the requested types, it will not be possible to supply Cuba with the following: 13 airplanes (model Avia-14), 24 rocket-launchers (model RM-130), and 4 radio satellites with a range of 250 Km. In part, it will be possible to satisfy a request for the supply of 7.62mm bullets for fully automatic gun type 52, and light machine-gun type 52.9mm cartridges for guns type 23/25, and airplanes L-60 in a joint version. The total of unfulfilled Cuban requests numbers about 150 million Kčs.

Of the entire value of requests presented by the Cuban side that reach about 1.016 million Kčs, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union can together supply special technology with a value of about 866 million Kčs, and materials of a civilian character valued at 40 million Kčs (costs at regular rates on other capitalist markets) according to CIF values. Of this, the Czechoslovak share of special technical supplies will number 569 million Kčs (or 66%) and 7.9 million Kčs (or 20% in civilian technology), whereas the Soviet share will reach 297 million Kčs (or 34%) in specialized technology, and 32.4 million Kčs (or 80%) in civilian materials.

According to the agreement with the Soviet representatives, Czechoslovakia will get one-third of the CIF price for the specialized technology from Cuba, so about 190 million Kčs, and from the Soviet Union 15% of the transport costs, so about 77 million Kčs. Thus against the calculated cost of the specialized technology at 569 million Kčs under the conditions of CIF, the Cubans will in total give the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic about 267 million Kčs, or about 47% of the regular rates of specialized technology. At the same time, Czechoslovakia will save on the naval transportation costs,

which the Soviets will provide free of charge at about 35 million Kčs.

When compared with the regular rates in capitalist markets the final settlement does present a difference of about 267 million Kčs, yet this is not comparable because it concerns technology which is not usable in Czechoslovakia, and at the same time unsellable in other capitalist markets. All of the specialized technology being considered for export to Cuba comes from a surplus of supplies at the Ministry of National Defense.

The question of the required amount of ammunition will apparently be one of the basic questions dealt with in the negotiations with the Cuban side. It is not possible to fully cover the Cuban side's requests for 7.62mm and 9mm ammunition from the ministry's supplies, and the remainder would have to be manufactured. If the Cuban needs are to be covered with at least 10 caliber shots for fully automatic guns, light machine-guns and guns, it would be necessary to manufacture another 116 million 7.62mm cartridges, and 150 million 9mm cartridges in Czechoslovakia. The costs of producing ammunition in this amount would be about 130 million Kčs at going rates. In contrast, the Czechoslovak side would get a total of 47 million Kčs in reimbursement from Cuba and the Soviet Union, though the export value of this ammunition would be 100 million Kčs according to CIF export rates. This means that the manufacture of such an amount of ammunition would be particularly unbeneficial for Czechoslovakia since it would mean a loss of 53 million Kčs in the export cost, not to mention that foreign currency expenses would not be covered in the settlement. Therefore, during negotiations the Czechoslovak side is thinking to alert the Cuban side to the fact that it will not be possible to secure ammunition supplies in a larger quantity than is proposed, and to make them aware of the need to construct a munitions works quickly—something the main Technical Department at the Ministry of International Trade is currently discussing. At the same time the Czechoslovak side will warn the Cuban representatives of the serious problems that would result from storing such a large quantity of ammunition. In the event that the Czechoslovak side should fail to convince the Cuban side of the advantageous proposed solution, it would then be necessary to solve the problem of manufacturing the higher number of ammunition, and therefore also how to decrease the losses that the manufacture of ammunition would bring for Czechoslovakia.

A reoccurring problem, though not as economically burdensome, is the supply of telephone switchboards TU-30 (10 pieces) and TU-20 (200 pieces), which are not possible to get from the Ministry of National Defense's supplies at the current time, and which it would also be necessary to manufacture.

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During the negotiations it will also be necessary to alert the Cuban side to the fact that the majority of the special technical supplies are of a second category, which either means that they were in storage or are used. For this reason it was decided upon with the Soviet representatives that materials of the second category will be sold at 10% less than those of the first category.

The possibility of also supplying spare parts in a 3-year joint venture along with most of the technical supplies is also being considered. Such a supply of spare parts could in a rough outline satisfy the Cuban side's requests until 1962 or 1963. The question of spare parts for the years 1962-1963 remains unsolved, during which time it will be necessary to acquire spare parts to secure medium and general repairs. Considering the fact that the specialized technical supplies have not been manufactured in either Czechoslovakia nor the Soviet Union for several years now, it would only be possible to partly satisfy the Cuban requests for spare parts after this time if they would be available in storage at the Ministry of National Defense. It is not possible to consider the manufacture of spare parts after 1962 and 1963 for the simple reason that in most cases the required tools and materials are no longer available in the factories. It will be necessary to warn the Cuban side of this problem, adding that the Czechoslovak side will be able to judge the possibility of supplying spare parts on a case by case basis, and that the Cuban side will apparently be forced to acquire spare parts for repairs from a part of the supplied special technology.

Closely tied to the question of spare parts is also the problem of undertaking repairs of the military technology supplied to Cuba. Czechoslovakia will offer to supply mobile repair shops to secure normal repairs. However, it will not be possible to arrange for medium and general repairs in permanent repair shops in Cuba considering the fact that neither the Czechoslovak side nor the Soviet side will be capable of securing the needed machines for such a factory. As an alternative in some cases, it would be possible to consider medium and general repairs on the supplied special technology in Czechoslovak repair factories, and this based on the assumption that the required spare parts will be available.

Considering the unique situation in Cuba, and at the request of the Soviet side, the first shipment of specialized materials will be sent prior to signing the contract between Czechoslovakia and Cuba. This shipment, valued at about 50 million Kčs CIF, will include 10,000 Czechoslovak 9mm guns, 500 light and 250 heavy machine guns, 100,000 hand grenades and 40 million cartridges. As part of arranging this shipment it is first necessary to send Czechoslovak specialists to Cuba to have them check upon the storage spaces, as well as secure the preservation and storage of the materials. At the

same time they would offer a basic lesson on how to use the materials. For the time being the Czechoslovak side would cover the expenses of sending these specialists to Cuba, and once the contract is signed these expenses would be charged within the framework of providing technical assistance.

## 2. Principles on which to close the agreement

On the basis of an agreement between representatives of the communist parties of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Soviet Union the supply of specialized materials to Cuba will be realized for only one-third of their CIF price. One-third of the entire value, thus 288 million Kčs would be paid in the years 1960-1969 in ten equal annual installments. According to the agreement made with the representatives from the Soviet Union, the Czechoslovak delegation will press for these payments to be made in a foreign currency, which would yield 28.8 million Kčs annually, and of those 19 million Kčs would go to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and 9.8 million Kčs to the Soviet Union. In the event that the Cuban side would refuse to pay in foreign currency it was agreed upon that a combination of payments can be accepted, such as: payment in a foreign currency and in goods, including payment in the form of Cuban goods only. Regarding materials of a civilian character, the Czechoslovak delegation will push for a maximum 5-year credit at the full value of goods supplied, which would make the Czechoslovak share of payments about 1.3 million Kčs. The Czechoslovak delegation will request the same method of payment as with the special materials.

As far as the guarantee on the extended credit, a bank guarantee will be requested from the National Bank of Cuba. The credit will be granted at 2% annual interest.

If it were necessary to accept payment in the form of Cuban goods, the Czechoslovak delegation will insist that maximum advantages be provided during the purchase of Cuban goods, and that a suitable assortment of Cuban goods be presented.

In relation to supplies of specialized materials Cuba will be given technical aid, both in the form of training specialists in Czechoslovakia, and in sending Czechoslovak specialists to Cuba. The Czechoslovak delegation will also press for the maximum technical assistance to be provided in Czechoslovakia, and only the essential bit in Cuba.

The Czechoslovak delegation should be authorized to provide a maximum 8-year credit for implementing the technical assistance in Czechoslovakia. A cash settlement will be requested for providing technical assistance in Cuba.

When realizing the supplies the Czechoslovak side must also arrange for the necessary technical documentation, and it will press the Cuban side to accept these in English because in Czechoslovakia there is no opportunity to arrange for a

translation into Spanish. The Cuban side would arrange for the translation from English to Spanish on its own.

On the basis of the agreement between representatives of the communist parties of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Czechoslovak delegation also discussed with the Soviet delegation the question of the Soviet Union assisting Czechoslovakia in realizing the supply of special materials to Cuba.

There will be an authorized agreement negotiated with the Soviet government, in which the responsibilities of the Soviet Union to Czechoslovakia will be anchored—Czechoslovakia being the carrier of all ties with the government of the Cuban republic, under conditions that will be negotiated between the Czechoslovak and Cuban delegations.

In relation to providing technical assistance to Cuba, the Soviet side will also secure technical assistance to Czechoslovakia both by sending Soviet specialists to Cuba through Czechoslovak channels, and by sending Soviet specialists to Czechoslovakia and granting material assistance. The question of material aid has not yet been fully agreed upon, for the Soviet representatives are of the opinion that the special materials which Czechoslovakia does not have on hand for training be bought in the Soviet Union, while the Czechoslovak delegation is of the opinion that the Soviet side should lend these materials. The Soviet delegation also agreed that if Czechoslovakia would provide technical aid under conditions of credit, it would adjust the payment conditions of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic for these same services. To this end, both sides will still discuss the details of technical assistance to be given by the Soviet Union.

The Czechoslovak side will secure the technical documentation that must be sent to Cuba with the special materials, and do the same for the Soviet materials. The Soviet delegation reasoned its position by saying that it does not have the opportunity to secure a translation of this documentation into the English language. At the same time it emphasized that with the supply of special materials to Egypt and Indonesia the same practice was utilized, with the Czechoslovak organizations being given the required documentation in Russian, and with the Soviet Union passing on only additions and changes to the documentation. The Soviet side binds itself to paying Czechoslovakia all the expenses related to the translation and preparation of the documentation for the Cuban side. As has already been proven in earlier operations, securing this request presents a difficult and laborious task. It means that all the documentation available in Czechoslovakia and related to the Soviet materials has to be looked over, corrections must be made according to the changes that have occurred, additions must be made, all of these changes must be

translated into English and the documentation re-written in English. The extent of this material is about 1,000 books and brochures (300,000 pages). It will be necessary to secure the required number of translators and clerks to fulfill this task.

In relation to arranging the transport of goods, the question of insurance was discussed and in an effort to keep the individual shipments and routes secret, the Soviet side will not insure the goods against war risks. The consequence is that the Czechoslovak delegation must ensure that in the event the materials would be damaged during the transport to a larger extent than is covered under regular insurance, the Cuban side will still be obliged to fulfill its responsibilities, even without receiving the materials.

During the discussions with the Soviet delegation an agreement was also attained stipulating that, should the Cuban side fail to fulfill its payment obligations to Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union will reimburse Czechoslovakia another 15%, so that reimbursements from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would total 30%, and this from the value of supplies delivered to the Czechoslovak border for export. This reimbursement would be paid through existing Czechoslovak-Soviet accounts.

The Czechoslovak and Soviet sides reached an agreement in that as part of its share, the Soviet side will carry all risks ensuing from the possible failure of the Cuban side to fulfill payments.

Considering that practically all of the supplied materials are of a second category, the Czechoslovak delegation will refuse any requests to provide a guarantee on the supplied goods.

During the discussions the Soviet side stated refusal with having a representative of the Soviet side join the Czechoslovak delegation for negotiations in Cuba and did not recommend the Czechoslovak delegation to come into contact with representatives of the USSR in Cuba. The Soviet delegation also refused to have the needed Czechoslovak specialists be transported to Cuba with the first Soviet shipment of special materials. Thus there is a question of how to best undertake the transport of the rather numerous Czechoslovak delegation. For to secure the storage, transfer and conservation of the first shipment it will be necessary to have about 12 Czechoslovak military experts in Cuba beforehand, who together with the members of the delegation will comprise a group of 25 people. It is probable that such a number will draw the attention of the public. Therefore, it will be necessary to weigh the question of transportation so that the shipments are conducted on a smaller scale and by way of various routes, or consider realizing the shipment with Czechoslovak airplanes of the Ilyushin Il-18.

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As for the actual negotiations, the delegation will be led by F. Krajčír and his alternate who also has signing authority, Comrade Mareš, the Director of the Ministry of International Trade's Technical Department.

5515/60 Strictly confidential!

## RESOLUTION

99<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 17 May 1960

Re. Point 28: Supplies of special materials to the Cuban revolutionary government (Comrade F. Krajčír)

Resolved:

The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

I. Takes note of the presented report.

II. Agrees

1. With the government of the Czechoslovak Republic being the negotiating party during the discussions about supplying specialized as well as some civilian materials to the Cuban revolutionary government, including these supplies from the USSR;

2. That due to the unique situation of Cuba, the first shipment of specialized technology should proceed without a contract with the Cuban side;

3. With the granting of an 8-year line of credit at 2% interest for the training of Cuban specialists in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The maximum amount would be 50 million Kčs, to be paid between 1960 and 1967, and as with the realization of technical assistance and training in Cuba, payment in goods is to be accepted only in the most critical of circumstances;

4. With the signing of these successive documents between the government of the Czechoslovak republic and the revolutionary government of Cuba:

a) Agreement on the delivery of specialized materials with a total value of about 886 million Kčs at CIF rates, including the USSR's share (USSR 297 million Kčs, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic 569 million Kčs). The Cuban revolutionary government will pay one-third of the CIF price, or about 288 million Kčs, so that two-

thirds of the price of materials will come in the form of a gift to the government of the Cuban republic.

This payment equaling one-third of the actual price will be made in foreign currency, or in Cuban goods, and in ten equal annual payments starting in 1960, possibly in 1961, with a 2% interest rate.

Included in the agreement will also be some materials of a civilian character originating from Czechoslovakia and with a value of about 7.9 million Kčs, and from the Soviet Union with a value of 32.4 million Kčs.

b) A protocol on granting technical assistance during the training of Cuban military experts in courses organized in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic or in Cuba;

c) An agreement on supplies of equipment for the manufacture of 7.62mm fully automatic guns, model 52, and 9mm guns model 23/25, as well as the relevant ammunition. In addition, this includes the granting of licensed documentation, technical aid connected with building the factory, and a 5-year line of credit at 2% annual interest to be paid between 1961-1965, and to a maximum of 20 million Kčs;

5. With the granting of a loan to a maximum of 30 million Kčs for the supply of civilian planes and sporting weapons of Czechoslovak origin. This would be paid in five installments during the years 1961-1965, at a 2% interest rate; the same conditions apply to shipments of some Soviet materials of a civilian character;

6. With the establishment of an appointed expert official for technical matters as part of the economic section of the Czechoslovak embassy in Cuba;

7. With raising the positions of employees from the Ministry of International Trade's main Technical Department, and on the suggestion of Comrade F. Krajčír, authorizing Comrade O. Šimůnek with carrying out the relevant measures.

## III. Responsibilities of:

1. Comrade F. Krajčír

a) In the name of the Czechoslovak government, to finalize an agreement with the government of the USSR on the shipment of specialized materials with a total value of about 297 million Kčs from the USSR to Cuba, and

this under the same conditions on which an agreement between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba will be based, provided that:

Through the established Czechoslovak-Soviet accounts, the government of the USSR will provide a reimbursement of 35% of the value of Czechoslovak materials shipped to Cuba, at intervals that will match those of payments agreed upon in the contract between the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba,

In the event that the Cuban government does not fulfill its responsibilities, the government of the USSR will, within the framework of the established Czechoslovak-Soviet accounts, reimburse the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic another 15% of the remaining value of Czechoslovak materials.

b) In discussions with the USSR, have them agree that the Soviet Union will transport the specialized materials originating in Czechoslovakia from the Czechoslovak border to the Cuban port at its own expense.

2. Comrade B. Lomský

a) To satisfy the Ministry of International Trade's requests regarding the first shipment so that this shipment is at the station Čierná n/T. at the latest by 21 May 1960.

b) To secure the shipment of specialized materials for Cuba according to the contracts signed by the governments of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba.

c) To secure, according to the requests of the Minister of International Trade, technical assistance both in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and in Cuba.

3. Comrade J. Ďuriš

a) To undertake, together with Comrade F. Krajčír and Comrade O. Šimůnek the necessary confirmations, should any arise from this resolution.

4. Comrade K. Poláček

a) To secure, according to the requests of the Minister of International Trade, supplies of equipment to be invested into the construction of a weapons and ammunitions

factory in Cuba, according to the agreement between the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba.

IV. The governmental delegation will be composed of: Head of the delegation, Comrade F. Krajčír, Minister of International Trade.

Alternate boss with signing authority on the relevant agreements is Comrade F. Mareš, Director of the main Technical Department, Ministry of International Trade.

Members of the delegation:

Comrade J. Knytl, employee of the Technical Department, Ministry of International Trade.

Comrade K. Černý, employee of the Technical Department, Ministry of International Trade.

Comrade A. Novotný, employee of the Technical Department, Ministry of International Trade.

Comrade Colonel Srovnal V., employee of the Ministry of National Defense.

V. Comrade F. Krajčír and Comrade F. Mareš are empowered with signing the documents presented in points II and III of this resolution, and with adding to the agreement with Comrade B. Lomský and Comrade K. Poláček by assigning other experts to the negotiations in Cuba.

To be undertaken by:

Comrade F. Krajčír

Comrade B. Lomský

Comrade J. Ďuriš

[Minister of General Engineering] Comrade K. Poláček

Those to be notified: [Premier] Comrade V. Široký

Comrade O. Šimůnek

Comrade L. Jankovcová

Comrade V. David



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**Documents Regarding Cuban Defense  
Minister Raúl Castro's Visit to  
Czechoslovakia, June-July 1960**

07/09/60

First Secretary of the CPCZ Central Committee



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Comrade Antonin Novotny

P r a g u e

I was accompanying the Cuban delegation led by Defense Minister Raul Castro. The delegation visited the CF Polepy and wine cellars in Zernoseky, in the Litomerice district. In the CF Polepy as well as in wine cellars, minister of defense Raul Castro spoke out strongly against imperialism, especially against the American one. On the other hand, he kept emphasizing the crucial role of the Soviet Union and socialist countries and their aid to colonial and semi-colonial nations in their struggle for independence and freedom. He stated that if the American imperialists attack Cuba, Cubans would fight to the last man.

The whole delegation was in a good mood when we were returning from Litomerice. I was in a car with Raul Castro and Luis Martino. During the ride, we exchanged opinions on some international and party issues. Raul Castro and Luis Martino were saying that Chinese Communist Party and China in general, who supposedly understood the importance of struggle for freedom in Latin American countries, was doing a lot of work there. It also followed from the conversation that both of them lean towards the Chinese opinions on international issues. Regarding that they said they made their own assessment of J.V. Stalin's work because he was a great fighter against imperialism. I told them that the CPSU, cde. Khrushchev or our party never said that imperialism would be any different than before, or that it was not necessary to fight against it. I emphasized that we fully support the position of the CPSU and the Moscow Declaration.

They were also saying that neither the USSR nor the CSR know the situation in Cuba well and that we do not understand the importance of the Cuban revolution. They said we could do a lot more work in Cuba than the People's Republic of China. I told them that the first secretary of the CP CC cde. Novotny stressed when receiving Jimenez (as cde. Krajcir said) that aid to Cuba had to be provided as the first priority, which shows that the CC of our party knows their situation and fully understands it. They rebutted: When Raul Castro arrived in the CSR, some American agencies wrote that he was removed from the function of the defense minister and that Fidel Castro took over that function. Officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs allegedly asked them whether it was true, which means they rather believed American propaganda than them [Cubans].

As for the USSR, Luis Martino said he talked with Soviet comrades ([he] didn't say which ones) who did not talk about the importance of the revolution and about the measures taken by the revolutionary government; namely they were

asking whether Raul and Fidel were of working-class origin, which supposedly means they probably didn't trust them. At that, Luis Martino emphasized it was not right because Marx and Lenin were not of the working-class origin either and yet they were Marxists.

They also said that Fidel Castro makes many mistakes, personal as well as political (he would for instance lose his temper and strongly stand up against small and middle bourgeoisie, which the Popular Party CC does not hold as correct), and Castro is always criticized for these shortcomings. They further said they were both members of the Party, that Martino has been a member for 23 years, that they did not agree with the opinions of Polish communists after the XX Congress, and that they hold our communist party in high esteem.

Dear Comrade Secretary, I considered it necessary to inform about these opinions before you receive the Cuban delegation.

With comrade's greeting,

Sejna Jan

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**Material for the Reception of Raul Castro,  
the Cuban Minister of the Revolutionary  
Armed Forces, July 1960**

in Brozik salon on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor on 13 July 1960 at 10:00 am.

C o n f i d e n t i a l !

Printed in: 3 copies

Copy No.: 1

File No. 027. 317/60-6/

Brief information about the current stay of Raúl Castro in the  
CSSR [Czechoslovak Socialist Republic].

In early morning hours on 27 June, a fourteen member Cuban delegation, headed by Minister of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces Raul Castro, arrived on a special plane. Raul Castro came to the CSSR on an invitation from [Czechoslovak Foreign] Minister [Václav] David at the occasion of the II. National Spartakiade.

At the time of Castro's delegation's arrival, the Cuban

economic mission headed by Antonio Nunez Jimenez, director of the National Institute for Land Reform in Cuba, was already on a visit in the CSSR as guests of Minister [of Foreign Trade Frantisek] Krajcir. The program of the Castro's delegation in the first few days was thus identical in some points with that of the Jimenez mission.

On 27th June, the delegations of the both Cuban representatives were accepted by the Minister of International Affairs c. David. In the course of a friendly and open conversation, minister David especially emphasized the international impact of the Cuban revolution and added that it is undoubtedly an attractive example for other Latin American countries. During the conversation, the Cuban representatives compared the revolutionary movement in Cuba with the coup in Guatemala in 1954 and pointed out the mistakes that the Cuban revolution avoided, unlike the movement in Guatemala. Then both Cuban representatives in unison highly praised the aid to Cuba from the socialist camp, and said that the CSSR was one of the top countries in this respect.

After the conversation, cde. David invited R. Castro and N. Jimenez for a dinner, which he arranged in their honor. A friendly and sincere atmosphere from the previous conversation continued at the dinner. R. Castro and his entourage spent the rest of 27th June sightseeing Prague.

On 28th June, Raul Castro visited Orlik to see the dam. During the tour of the dam, an improvised meeting took place of R. Castro with deputy ministers of defense of the PRC and the DPRK, which turned into a very friendly and cordial conversation among the three representatives. (The Cz. News filmed the whole meeting, and Raul Castro asked for 1 copy.) Two more meetings of Raul Castro and the Chinese and Korean deputies of national defense took place in the following days. It happened on 1 July at a small dinner, which Castro set up in his villa for the both mentioned Chinese and Korean representatives. Another meeting was on 3 July in the residence of the Korean titular, and soon after that also in the residence of the PRC titular in Prague. In all these meetings, the common platform of anti-imperialist fight of the Cuban, Korean and Chinese people was especially emphasized, and the need to mutually share and use the experience from this fight was signified. At this occasion, first the deputy Defense Minister of the PRC invited R. Castro for an official visit of the PRC, then his Korean colleague did the same and officially invited Castro to the DPRK. Raul Castro thanked [them] for both invitations and apologized that he would not be able to use these invitations at this time; however, he promised to use these invitations during his next trip to Asia or at some other convenient opportunity. During R. Castro's visit at the residence of the Korean titular, the talk was specifically

about the possibility to open diplomatic contacts between the DPRK and Cuba. Castro then invited the Korean youth delegation to attend the congress of Latin American youth, which was to open in Havana on 27 July. When the Chinese titular accepted R. Castro at his residence shortly after, he stressed that the Cuban revolution was fully supported by all Chinese people. In conclusion of the conversation, Raul Castro said that the visit of his delegation in Czechoslovakia was very fruitful because it showed where the Cuban people have real friends.

On 30 June, National Defense Minister cde. [Bohumir] Lomsky accepted R. Castro. They then talked about the issue of the origin and development of the guerilla movement in Cuba, strategy and tactics of guerilla warfare, as well as the current condition of the Cuban revolutionary army. The issue of establishing a regular army in Cuba was also discussed in greater detail. This conversation was very friendly, just as the preceeding meetings.

On 30 June in the afternoon, R. Castro and his entourage visited Lidice where he laid a wreath at the memorial to the victims martyred by fascism. From 1 to 3 July, the Cuban delegation was watching the Spartakiade (where R. Castro was the most impressed by the army routine), visiting a collective farm (CF) (CF Polepy and Zernoseky in North Bohemia region), and meeting with already mentioned Korean and Chinese representatives in Prague.

From 4 to 6 July, R. Castro went for a three-day trip to Karlovy Vary [Carlsbad], Mariánské Lázně and Plzeň. Besides touring factories and various facilities in these cities, R. Castro watched a full-day military program in the Karlovy Vary [military] area (this was already the second demonstration of military training shown to a Cuban delegation; the first one took place on 29 July in Caslav).

Since many titulars from embassies of friendly countries in Prague were interested in a meeting with defense minister R. Castro, visits of these diplomatic representatives are currently taking place in the residence of the Cuban delegation. On 7 July, R. Castro accepted in his villa the Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian titular suggested to R. Castro a visit to the PRB, which Castro at that time declined with regard to the current situation in Cuba and his prolonged absence from the country. On the other hand, Castro allowed for a possibility to open diplomatic ties between Bulgaria and Cuba.

Shortly after that, R. Castro accepted the Ambassador of the GDR. This meeting proceeded in friendly manner as well, and the importance of the visit of the Cuban economic mission, led by A.N. Jimenez, in the GDR was stressed.

On 7 July, R. Castro was also accepted by minister of international trade cde. Krajcir who later arranged for him a

courtesy dinner.

On Friday 8 July, R. Castro accepted the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Prague. R. Castro showed genuine interest in past battles of the Vietnamese Liberation Army, namely in the fortress Diem-bien-fu [Dien Bien Phu]. They also discussed the possibility of opening mutual diplomatic ties in the near future.

Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 of July were resting days for the Cuban delegation. On Saturday afternoon, the whole delegation saw a performance of *Laterna Magica* and then in the evening, it split into several groups to spend the Saturday evening and Sunday.

The visit of the Cuban delegation headed by Raul Castro is unfolding positively. Thanks to cordial and open conduct of R. Castro and his entourage, as well as to an openly friendly attitude, which Castro shows towards the CSR, the Cuban delegation is welcomed everywhere with heartfelt sympathy and uncommon interest. The Cuban delegation is expected to stay in the CSR till 22 July when Raul Castro with his entourage is to fly to the UAR [Egypt] for celebration of the [fourth] anniversary of nationalization of the Suez Canal.



With file No. 01783/60

Attachment No. 1

#### Brief characteristics of Raul Castro

Raul Castro was born on 13 June 1931. He is the brother of the Prime Minister Fidel Castro and one of the most outstanding Cuban revolutionaries. He joined the Fidel Castro's movement in 1953 when on 26 July, they led opposition groups into an attack against the Moncada barracks and the administrative building of the Batista organization in Santiago de Cuba. This historic date gave name to the whole revolutionary movement in Cuba. Then Raul Castro was arrested and imprisoned until 1955 when he was released in a general amnesty. Afterwards he lived briefly in exile in the USA and Mexico.

In 1956, he returned with an expedition of his brother Fidel to Cuba where they started to organize intensively a guerilla war in the Sierra Maestra [mountains] against the Batista dictatorship. Raul Castro was active as a guerilla and an underground operator under the code name Deborah.

After toppling the Batista regime on 1 January 1959, he entered the capital Havana victoriously alongside Fidel Castro. Ever since the revolutionary government seized power, he has held many top functions. He became minister of national defense on 16 February 1959, and when this bureau was closed, he was

appointed the minister of Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces.

Raul Castro has strong influence with his brother who respects him very much. He has a gentle demeanor and likes to act directly, without any formalities. The word is that Raul Castro and his wife Vilma Espin are members of the Popular Socialist Party [PSP] of Cuba. He has a very friendly attitude towards the CSR, which he visited for the first time in 1953 with a delegation of Cuban youth.



With file No. 01783/60

Attachment No. 2

The list of members of the Cuban delegation

- 1) Raul Castro Ruz, minister of Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, the head of the delegation
- 2) Efigenio Almejeivas Delgado – a police chief
- 3) Guillermo Garcia I
- 4) Ramiro Valdez Menendez
- 5) Belarmino Castilla Mas
- 6) Felix Lugones Ramirez
- 7) Felipe Guerra Matos
- 8) Diocles Torralba
- 9) Melquiades Ramos
- 10) Marcellino Sanchez Diaz
- 11) Juan Bautista Perez
- 12) Manolo Fernandez
- 13) Luis Mas Martin – personal secretary of Raul Castro
- 14) Mariano E. Seijo Torres

#### Note:

On orders from Raul Castro, a four-member group from the delegation in the CSR left for Cuba on 6 July. There were these delegation members: Felix Lugones Ramirez, Marcellino Sanchez Diaz, Juan Bautista Perez, and Mariano E. Seijo Torres.

Another four-member group is to depart for the USSR shortly. These are: Efigenio Almejeivas Delgado, Guillermo Garcia I, Belarmino Castilla Mas, and Diocles Torralba. This group is to return to the CSR on 20 July and rejoin the delegation, which is to visit the UAR [Egypt].

*[Source: National Archives, Prague, Czech Republic. Obtained by James Hersbberg, translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.]*

## **Report by Czechoslovak Embassy, Havana, on July 1960 Visit of Czechoslovak Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Jiri Hajek to Havana, 4 August 1960**

On 4 July, the state deputy, accompanied by the ambassador, visited Foreign Minister Raul Roa, with whom he engaged in lengthy exchanges of opinions on the current situation in Cuba, the next approaches of the revolutionary government, its current position among Latin American countries, and certain international questions.

Around noon, the state deputy, accompanied by the ambassador, paid a courtesy visit to the President of the Republic, Dr. O. Dorticos, with whom he had become acquainted in Argentina.

In the evening, Dr. Roa organized a dinner in honor of the state deputy, which was attended by all prominent officials of the Cuban foreign ministry, the designated Cuban ambassador to Prague, and employees at the Czechoslovak embassy. Later that night, the state deputy and the ambassador visited the chairman of the National Bank, Dr. [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara, with whom they held very lengthy and interesting political conversations on the present international standing of Cuba, possible ways to thwart United States aggression, and the support Cuba looks forward to receiving from other Latin American countries. It is interesting that, at this time, Guevara was convinced of planned American aggression. It is worth mentioning that this conversation was one of the best political conversations during the state deputy's visit to Havana.

Ambassador Pavlíček

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prague, Czech Republic, Politické zprávy (Political reports), Havana 1960. Translated by Francis Raska.]*



## **Documents Regarding Impending Visit to Czechoslovakia of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, president of the Cuban National Bank, October 1960**

The National Planning Committee 6333

File No. 007 396/60

Attachment III

### **Report**

About talks with the Cuban government representative Mr. Ernesto Guevara

I.

The president of Cuban National Bank Ernesto Che Guevara, who is actually one of the most influential personalities in the Cuban economy, is expected to visit the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic on 23rd October 1960. He is de facto in the function of a Deputy Chairman of the Cuban government, and as for importance, he ranks the third after Fidel Castro. He is originally an Argentinean; he acquired Cuban citizenship only recently.

He actively fought against the Peron dictatorship in Argentina, then alongside [Jacobo] Arbenz in Guatemala, and since 1955, together with Fidel Castro against the Batista dictatorship. In 1956, he was among the 82 of Castro's comrades who in the beginning of December landed in Cuba and out of whom only 12 were left by the end of 1956. He grew to be the most capable commander of the revolutionary army, and successfully led one of the key strikes against the Batista army.

We can assume that during his stay in the CSSR, he will namely want to discuss construction of a car factory in Cuba, granting of further credit of about \$50 million, and maybe, the question of possible cooperation within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance [COMECON].

He is scheduled to leave the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic for Moscow, supposedly to negotiate another credit earmarked for construction of a metallurgical factory with capacity of about 1.2 million tons, expanding the capacity of a steel mill from 130 thousand tons to 200 thousand tons, construction of an oil refinery, and for geological exploration. Mr. Guevara supposedly wants to negotiate in the USSR possible participation in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance to some extent.

We expect to discuss with c. Guevara the following:

- Agreement on rules of economic cooperation;
- Import of non-ferrous metals from Cuba, if possible long term;
- Sending a short-term expertise of the National Planning Commission on control and planning of the Cuban national economy;
- Sending experts requested by Cuba and accepting Cuban experts in Czechoslovakia;
- Some issues arising from current exchange of goods.

II.

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Proposal of our position on issues that need to be discussed with c. Guevara

1. Further development of economic cooperation between the Republic of Cuba and the CSSR

The Cuban government is going to start planned control of the Cuban economy.

Since Cuba currently lacks necessary know-how, experts and experience, a Cuban governmental economic mission, led by the Director of the National Institute for Land Reform A.N. Jimenez, visited the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in June of 1960 and consulted with the National Planning Commission's Chairman cde. Simunek and his first deputy Pucek on the issues of planned development and control of economy, and showed a genuine interest in Czechoslovak know-how, experience and experts.

At the end of discussions, Mr. Jimenez presented the Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Planning Commission cde. Simunek with a proposal, approved by some members of the government (including Fidel Castro), on economic cooperation in international trade based on specialization of production resources (translation is in Attachment No. 1).

The National Planning Commission recommends to grant the Cuban request and to accept the Cuban proposition of economic cooperation and to modify it according to the attached text of the Czechoslovak counter proposal of a framework agreement between the government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Cuba on principles of economic cooperation (Attachment No. 2) in order to clarify and align it in terms of the Czechoslovak economic possibilities and create a framework for gradual closing of concrete agreements.

Since this involves a politically important matter, it is recommended that the Politburo of the CPCZ CC approve the material before our position is conveyed to Mr. Guevara. If it is approved, it is recommended to propose to Mr. Guevara that the agreement be signed on behalf of both governments either in Havana or Prague. A meeting could follow of representatives of the planning authorities in Havana or Prague in order to work out details of the signed agreement.

2. Sending experts from the National Planning Commission to Cuba in order to provide expertise in planning and control of the economy

At the conclusion of discussions in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Mr. Jimenez sent a letter to the Deputy

Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Planning Commission cde. Simunek on behalf of the Cuban revolutionary government, in which letter he asks for sending an expert of the National Planning Commission to Cuba where he could get familiar, with the help of Cuban experts from the Central Planning Council, with the issues of the Cuban national economy, and could prepare outline recommendations for development of specific sectors of the economy (translation of the letter is in Attachment No. 3), on the basis of which the Cuban government could subsequently ask for complex expertise. He also asked cde. Krajcir in writing for sending a trade expert (Ministry of International Trade is getting ready to send him).

The National Planning Commission thinks it is right to grant the request of the Cuban side, and confirmed in writing its approval of sending an experienced expert. It is recommended to promise Mr. Guevara that an expert would be sent in shortest possible time. The Commission also thinks it would be constructive to recommend to Mr. Guevara that a 5 or 6 member group of experts from the National Planning Commission should be sent, which would consist of: 1 leader, 1 specialist for production issues, 1 for agriculture, 1 for issues of financial planning, 1 for international trade, and 1 translator, all at the expense of the Czechoslovak side; during 4-6 weeks, the group would get a better understanding of the main problems of Cuban economy, which are crucial for further development of economic cooperation between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Cuba. The date of their departure would be agreed upon later.

It is recommended to inform Mr. Guevara about work assignment of the group as follows:

- a. To prepare expertise of management and planning in a similar manner as the Soviet expert group did for us in 1951 recommendation of economic planning and how to deal with the most pressing issues of managing the key sectors of the national economy;
- b. To review possibilities of further development of mutual economic ties (i.e. beyond the closed agreement), namely a rapid increase of mutual shipments of goods according to the needs of both countries, in order to expedite import and distribution of those Cuban products that were traditionally made for the USA and other capitalist countries, which is especially urgent now when the USA is strongly restricting trade with Cuba;
- c. Also to study, which measures the Cuban side should take in order to secure long-term needs of both countries;



d. The results of the expert group's activities should be recommendations on organization of planning for Cuban economic authorities, and on the main problems of long and short term cooperation.

3. Possible import of non-ferrous ore from Cuba and cooperation in this sector

Based on consultations with experts from the Ministry of Metallurgy and Ore Mining who returned from Cuba at the end of September, there are several problems with ore mining and metal production whose solution by joint efforts would be beneficial to both sides. These are questions regarding exchange of goods, which can be resolved in short time, and questions of a long-term nature, which will require scientific and economic cooperation.

The core problems gravitate towards production of nickel. There are 2 plants in Cuba, the capacity of which allows for production of 50 thousand tons of nickel. The Cuban government nationalized one of them Moa with capacity of 25 thousand tons of nickel contained in the feedstock, before all aggregates could be made fully operational and before production problems could be resolved. The plant, built to the highest technical level and for new technologies, was soon afterwards shut down. That idled approximately 3 – 4 thousand people. Restarting the production will be a very complicated matter because Cubans in the plant are only in positions of middle technical level and know only basic technological parameters of production, and they do not possess documentation, which Americans removed or destroyed. Problems stemming from a unique technology and very complicated equipment are exacerbated by the fact that only part of the plant is located in Cuba, which does mining, ore preparation and production of feedstock - nickel and cobalt sulfides - while the other part of the plant, which makes final product from the feedstock, has been built in the USA. There is no documentation available for the second part of the plant either.

Given this situation, we cannot expect, even with the help of socialist camp countries, namely the USSR, that Cuba would be able to produce nickel in a closed cycle with the use of the technology introduced by Americans. However, we can assume that by collecting knowledge of and information about the first part of the process located in Cuba, and by trial runs of the technological guidelines, conditions could be created relatively soon for production support of this first part of the plant, which would be producing nickel and cobalt sulfides. Even though the socialist camp countries do not have the technology yet for processing this feedstock, the Soviet Union could possibly process these sulfides in some of

its plants by adding them to their production process, until the second part is built. It will be possible, though, to determine to what extent the sulfides can be added to production process only when the necessary experiments are done. Even for this partial solution, i.e. start-up of the Cuban part of the plant, an important prerequisite would be securing shipments of sulfur for the necessary production of sulfuric acid, which would be available from the plant Moa in capacity of 1,300 tons a day. Americans were shipping sulfur for this production in a molten state directly from the mainland.

Besides that, a technology is being developed in the CSSR for separating nickel from cobalt, which is different than that introduced by Americans. We hope that within 3 months from obtaining a required sample from Cuba, the feasibility of our method could be assessed for use with Cuban nickel and cobalt sulfides. This technology is much simpler and requires less investment than the one used in the second part of the plant located in the USA. It will be necessary to consult with the USSR on the many questions associated with production restart in Moa and how best to help Cuba.

Obviously, even if all goes well, resumption of nickel production will take a long time. Importing ore from fully equipped quarries whose capacity is estimated from 1.5 to 2 million tons of ore a year, could partially help Cuba in this situation. Composition of this ore is similar to that of the ore from the People's Republic of Albania, the difference being that the Cuban ore contains 1.3 to 1.4 % nickel compared to 1 % for the Albanian ore. By importing between 100 to 200 thousand tons a year of this ore with higher nickel content, it would be possible to increase nickel production in the Sered plant [Slovakia] during the third 5-year plan (desirable), and to build up reserves for the considered increase of the plant's capacity. Also the GDR [German Democratic Republic; East Germany] could import about twice the amount of ore, which would lengthen the production expectancy of a newly built nickel plant, and it would substantially increase their nickel production (ore in the GDR contains only about 0.7 % nickel).

The second nickel producing plant is Nicaro with capacity about 25 thousand tons. It uses a technology that Czechoslovak metallurgists know fairly well. It is basically the same technology as used in the Sered plant. The Nicaro plant is still in the hands of a capitalist company with predominantly American capital, which closed it in the first days of October 1960 under the pretense that they have to pay Cuba high taxes. Cuban militia secured the plant. Shutting down production in this plant is undoubtedly to be a repressive measure from the USA because the Cuban government declared it would nationalize the plant at a convenient time. As for securing production of this plant after nationalization,

the situation here is much better than in the case of the Moa plant. With short interruptions, Nicaro is producing since 1943 and it has a well-trained workforce knowledgeable about the production technology, as well as many middle management Cuban cadres. The CSSR could also contribute to ensuring proper operation of the plant by sending a group of up to 10 technologists and shop managers who are working with a large semi-production installation for nickel production in Vitkovice Steelworks. The USSR could possibly provide this kind of specialists as well. We should point out, however, that due to the change in ownership relationship of this plant, securing the delivery of about 7 thousand tons of ammonia a year is required, as well as a large quantity of coke for production of producer gas. Deliveries of these materials, and many other questions will have to be discussed namely with the USSR and some other socialist camp countries.

Cuba was getting a certain part of the Nicaro production in the form of sinter containing about 91% of nickel. The use of such material in the Czechoslovak economy has considerable potential. Following the nationalization of Nicaro, it may be possible to secure a considerable part of nickel deliveries for the Czechoslovak economy in the form of sinter.

Now let's move on to other possibilities of cooperation in utilization of Cuban natural resources.

By rough calculations of finishing capabilities, our experts estimated that Cuba is currently producing over 30,000 tons of rich copper concentrates containing about 10,000 tons of copper. There are other possibilities of increasing the resources of copper. The mined ore contains 2 to 7% copper. The concentrates were exported to the USA; the export was halted after the nationalization. Cuba is interested in building a plant for production of black copper, which would be exported. Building such a plant with capacity of 15 or even more thousand tons can be considered useful and advantageous for Cuba. Investment costs when using modern technology would be low, especially if it is not considered useful to simultaneously build a plant for production of sulfuric acid. Participation of the CSSR in such a construction could secure delivery of several thousand tons of copper. Until the plant is built, we should look for delivery and processing of copper concentrates partially domestically and (depending on the quantity obtained) in cooperation with other countries of the socialist camp.

Cuba also has considerable reserves of good quality manganese ores. As mined, they contain 37% of manganese and after processing from 48 to 49% of Mn. Currently, about 10 thousand tons of these processed ores is warehoused. Considering the difficult situation in supplying the Czechoslovak metallurgy with rich manganese ores, it makes

sense to look into possibilities of importing Cuban ores and into conditions, under which this could be secured.

Similar possibilities exist in chromium ores that, true, contain only 33% of chromium (III) oxide but they have suitable composition as for other components. Since it is difficult to obtain these ores from countries of the socialist camp, we should explore the possibilities of importing Cuban chromium ores.

Significant aid to Cuba would be making order in their geological survey, mine organization, and keeping good documentation in the mines. The current situation is rather dismal. Many nationalized plants work with a minimum of confirmed reserves, exploration is not organized into projects, there is practically no mining/geological and survey documentation, etc. Aid could be organized by sending a group of geologists, mining engineers and surveyors who would at the plants ensure smooth operation and also help with training the Cuban cadres. The USSR is planning similar aid.

The issues in ore mining and metallurgy can be summarized for negotiations with Mr. Guevara as follows:

#### Nickel

1. The Moa plant – to reach an agreement with the USSR about close cooperation and aid in bringing the Cuban plant to production, and about the most efficient approach to utilization and processing of nickel and cobalt sulfides.
2. The Nicaro plant – to consult with the USSR on the question of Czechoslovak specialists helping to ensure an uninterrupted production of the plant, preparing the necessary documentation for securing delivery of spare parts, and also the question of Czechoslovak participation in supporting the plant's production with materials and auxiliary materials [sic] (ammonia and so forth).
3. Import of ferro-nickel ores
  - a. Show interest in import of these ores up to at least 100 thousand tons a year for ensuring further growth of nickel production during the third 5-year plan;
  - b. In connection with the results of the upcoming negotiations with the APR about an increase in shipments of ferro-nickel ores, to explore possibilities of supporting an increase in capacity of the nickel plant in Sered by long-term shipments of ores from Cuba.
4. Import of nickel sinter  
Secure within trade relations shipments of nickel sinter up to the maximum the Czechoslovak economy can utilise.

### **Copper concentrates**

1. Explore possibilities of processing the copper concentrate in the CSSR and in friendly countries.
2. Explore possibilities of Czechoslovak participation in construction of a plant for production of black copper in Cuba.

### **Manganese ore**

Verify suitability and scope of possible import of this ore to the CSSR this year and in the future.

### **Chromium ore**

Explore usability and suitability of imports of chromium ores for the Czechoslovak economy.

4. Exchange of goods between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Republic of Cuba

Trade between Cuba and Czechoslovakia has been characterized by heavy Cs. trade surplus in recent years. The value of Czechoslovak export, almost exclusively consumer goods, was between 16 and 19 million CZK from 1954 to 1958. There was practically no import to the CSSR except for packaged tobacco worth small amounts of money. This situation resulted in a protest from the Cuban side and therefore, the Czechoslovak side started to buy sugar for re-export from 1955 to 1956. Exchange of goods was temporarily suspended due to introduction of licensing proceedings.

By negotiating long-term trade, payment, and credit agreements, and a protocol on scientific and technological cooperation, conditions were created for exchange of goods on a substantially larger scale, and for the necessary changes in the structure of Czechoslovak export. The pertinent agreements were signed in June of this year, and mutual trade is [scheduled to be?] increasing strongly in the coming months (Appendix No. 4).

Several Czechoslovak trade and technological missions visited Cuba, namely a special mission of the foreign trade enterprise Technoexport, and the already mentioned technological mission of the foreign trade enterprise Motokov. Negotiations of Motokov representatives resulted in closing contracts for 14 small engineering units (for instance production of locks, bolts, refrigerators, small gasoline motors, etc.) in total value about 35 million CZK; most of the shipments will be made in 1961. Negotiation of other representatives of Czechoslovak foreign trade enterprises resulted in unification of **especially** contracts for engineering goods. Engineering enterprises of

international trade placed orders for 1960 worth more than 24 million CZK in foreign prices by 1st October 1960, which is 244% of the original export plan for shipments of engineering goods. Non-engineering enterprises of international trade show slower increase of orders for 1960; their worth is 34.5 million CZK by 1st October 1960, which is 153 % of the plan. Since we can expect a continued flow of orders and a higher rate of their completion till the end of the year, we can count on total export worth more than 40 million CZK, which exceeds the plan almost up to 200%.

Beside trips of representatives of Czechoslovak foreign trade to Cuba, some leading Cuban trade officials visited the CSSR. The objective of the mission of A.N. Jimenez, Director of INRA (National Institute of Agrarian Reform), was to clarify and expedite shipments of some small engineering units, and to negotiate crucial measures in the area of economic cooperation. Mr. Maldonado, representative of the Bank of International Trade, which so far is the only authority of the foreign trade monopoly, visited the CSSR in August and presented the Czechoslovak side with a list of goods that Cuba wants to import from countries of the socialist camp in greater quantities in case of economic boycott of Cuba by the USA. The Cuban side was to specify quantities and values in this list in September. Based on this list, Czechoslovak foreign trade enterprises prepared preliminary reports of delivery possibilities; since the Cuban lists have not been amended and specified, these reports along with some offers from foreign trade enterprises were sent to the Czechoslovak Trade Department to be available to the Cuban side. Recently, the Cuban side presented the Czechoslovak Trade Mission a list of about 2,500 items of goods with requested quantities of import. The Czechoslovak delivery capabilities will be promptly reviewed and coordinated with other socialist camp countries, to which a similar list was also given.

Czechoslovak imports are hampered by considerable difficulties. True, the Cuban side presented an informative summary of their export capabilities but it became apparent that the current status of production and organization of Cuban exports is making purchases difficult. For instance, a trial shipment of iron ore did not happen because the ore was not available for shipment despite our ships being sent to a Cuban port twice upon Cuban invitation; promised shipment of copper concentrates did not materialize either for similar reasons. Only smaller shipments of sugar, hides, coffee and coco were carried out, and negotiations are pending namely about shipments of iron, manganese and chromium ores and concentrates of nickel and copper; possibilities of importing silk cord, sisal, etc. are being reviewed.

The current status of mutual exchange of goods indicates that in the near future (2 – 3 years), trade balance will show

a considerable surplus on the Czechoslovak side. This surplus is estimated about 20 million CZK for 1960, and 30–40 million CZK for the next year. For increase in imports from Cuba, it will be necessary to develop those Cuban production sectors that can create for the Cz. side interesting import opportunities; this applies namely to ore mining and to some kinds of agricultural production, for instance corn, palm core, and coco. Czechoslovak experts can help in this area. Importing sugar either for domestic consumption or for direct or indirect re-exports can also facilitate decreasing the trade surplus or for direct or indirect re-exports, the pertinent negotiations have been initiated.

When talking with Mr. Guevara, it would be good to convey to him the Cz. opinion on the development of mutual goods exchange and to point out especially the necessity of increased Cuban export to the CSSR, which would substantially contribute to further growth of exchange of goods.

Development and status of goods exchange between the USSR and the Republic of Cuba indicates that in the near future, Soviet import capabilities will surpass the export capabilities. A clause was incorporated into the Soviet-Cuban and Czechoslovak-Cuban trade agreements, which allow transfer of assets to third country accounts, provided all parties agree. The Soviet side has requested a preliminary information about a possibility of exporting some Cz. machinery in exchange for other goods, namely consumer goods, on the account of the Soviet-Cuban trade agreement.

We will propose in our discussion with the Soviet side to solve the problem of increased

Soviet purchases in Cuba by transferring the Cs. surplus balance of about 20 million CZK from 1960, and 30–40 million CZK for 1961. Transfer of the Soviet side's surplus remainders in interesting clearing accounts will be requested.

In connection with issues of barter and economic cooperation with the Republic of Cuba, correctness of the current system of territorial division of the foreign trade plan will be assessed. It may be useful to remove these countries from the capitalist sphere and to create in the foreign trade plan a sphere of countries with whom the CSSR and other socialist countries would develop and coordinate economic cooperation and technological aid.

### III.

Proposition of our position on issues Mr. Guevara wants to talk about based on preliminary information

#### 1. Credit request for construction of an automobile plant in Cuba

Cuban representatives, headed by Mr. Guevara, discussed

with the Czechoslovak delegation, headed by the General Director of Motokov cde. Kohout, granting credit and technological aid for construction of an automobile plant in Cuba. According to Cuban officials, it would be a plant with capacity of 15 thousand passenger cars, 5 thousand trucks, 3 thousand tractors, motorcycles, diesel motors, etc. Cuba already talked with representatives of Renault about building this plant, as well as granting credit. Having compared the proposal of Cz. experts with that of Renault representatives, Chairman of the Cuban government Fidel Castro informed the Cz. delegation that he preferred the Cz. proposal. He especially appreciated the social aspect of the Cz. proposal (an apprentice center, and so forth). According to projections of the Cuban government, the plant should be built from 1961 until 1965. Cz. experts prepared a preliminary proposal of construction stages; assembly would be organized in the first stage, for which halls were built in Cuba, and gradually other production lines would be built (foundry, motor shop, cog-wheel and mechanical parts production facility, and so forth). The total investment amount is estimated as about \$70 million. Considering that the Cuban side hasn't practically tapped into the provided credit of \$20 million, Cuban representatives would request additional credit of \$50 million. Mr. Guevara will probably talk about this question during his visit.

The Cuban side expects from construction of this plant and other small shops:

- a) A partial solution to the unemployment problem (unemployment is currently estimated as 500–600 thousand people);
- b) The automobile industry is considered in Latin-American countries as one of the important signs of industrialization;
- c) The Cuban government wants to utilize the halls that Americans built.

The following position is proposed on any request of credit for the Cuban Republic for construction of the above-mentioned plant:

- a) Point out to Mr. Guevara that the projected low batch manufacturing implies low efficiency and consequently, high capital costs;
- b) Recommend first organizing assembly from Czechoslovak parts. Their export can be facilitated with funds of the Ministry of Foreign Trade who expects decrease of exports of completed cars, and sees export of parts and their assembly at the destination place as means towards fulfilling the 5-year plan;

c) Recommend to Mr. Guevara that until 1965, Cuba concentrate especially on building facilities for production of tractors, trucks and other products, while construction of facilities for production of passenger cars could be organized after 1965. This approach would lower investment costs for building the intended plant from \$70 million to \$40 million for the time period until 1965. In such a case, credit of \$20 million would be required in addition to the \$20 million already granted. The additional credit could be created, as a preliminary thought, by transferring about \$10 million from credit reserves for less developed capitalist countries, and \$10 million from reserves for socialist countries. We can assume that this solution will be acceptable to Mr. Guevara because he himself does not support building the automobile industry in the foreseeable future, and prefers production of tractors and trucks. Granting larger credit is not feasible due to limitations of funding reserved for the 5-year plan. It would not be possible to cover larger credit both regarding credit reserves expressed in value, and regarding machinery and equipment required for such a credit;

d) As for assembly of passenger cars in Cuba from Cs. parts until their production is introduced, it will require negligible construction (estimated less than \$1 million), which could be drawn from the already provided credit. We suggest emphasizing to Mr. Guevara that payments for the shipped assembly parts have to be made within the normal trade agreement, and that Czechoslovakia is interested mainly in shipments of non-ferrous metallurgy products.

## 2. Exchange of opinions about participation of the Cuban Republic in the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance

According to the preliminary and unverified information, Mr. Guevara is going to talk in Moscow about Cuba joining the CMEA. Regarding this, Fidel Castro supposedly said that Cuba did not intend to develop complex heavy industry and would rather rely on heavy industry in socialist countries, especially in the member countries of the CMEA. It is, therefore, safe to assume that during his visit in Czechoslovakia, Mr. Guevara will discuss this issue with our representatives. According to preliminary information from the CSSR envoy to Moscow cde. Dvorak and from cde. Balaban, deputy of the CSSR representative, there is no official knowledge about this issue from the USSR. Therefore, if Mr. Guevara talks about this issue, we recommend to take this position:

- a) Discussion about this question is only informative; a decision can be made only after consultations with all member countries of the CMEA;

b) Inform Mr. Guevara about the conditions for membership in the CMEA, which are based on an accepted Statute of the CMEA. Emphasize that based on this accepted Statute of the CMEA, only European countries may become members of the Council, and that other countries can participate in the work of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance on selected issues.

c) Inform Mr. Guevara about the main objectives of the CMEA, namely coordination of plans for the next 20 years.

d) Delegate to cde. Balaban monitoring of this issue in the USSR and passing on immediately any information he obtains.

## 3. Providing technological aid to the Cuban republic

On 10 June 1960, the Minister of Foreign Trade signed in Havana a "Protocol on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Republic of Cuba." Based on this framework document, the FTE Polytechna sent in September 1960 its representatives to discuss concrete forms and general conditions of technological cooperation with the Cuban Republic. An agreement "General Conditions for Realization of Scientific and Technological Cooperation" was signed in Havana between the FTE Polytechna and two leading Cuban institutions:

- a) National Institute for Agrarian Reform (Instituto Nacional de la Reforma Agraria), and
- b) Central Planning Council (Junta Central de Planificacion).

At the same time, fundamental questions were discussed in the presence of our experts in Havana about our technological aid to Cuba with regard to differences in the Cuban economy compared to most of other less developed countries. The most pressing issues of technological aid in these three areas are:

- Providing leading experts in the main areas of industry and agriculture who could solve the organizational questions, organize the administration, and solve the problems of short-term production planning and its development, and the investments problems;
- Sending our production technicians to key enterprises and plants, sometimes only to one enterprise of a given [industry] branch, which has the best potential to become a showcase production facility where Cuban specialists could be trained, in order for these enterprises to start or increase production and to increase productivity.



- Organizing a system of training Cuban specialists either in Cuba in the existing or newly built vocational schools, or by sending Cuban apprentices and students for practical study to the CSSR.

Considering the political-economical situation in the Republic of Cuba, all these measures will have to be taken very quickly because primarily the economic situation in Cuba could become critical in a very short time.

Our delegation negotiated with the central authorities and also with individual production plants direct technological aid to the Republic of Cuba, and together, requests of the Cuban side were specified as for sending 64 Cz. experts [to Cuba] and sending 20 Cuban apprentices for practical study to the CSSR. The FTE Polytechna sorted out these requests for Cz. experts and passed them on to pertinent ministries and central authorities of the CSSR for expedient realization of the part regarding sending Cz. experts to Cuba, and sending Cuban apprentices to the CSSR.

At the same time, a group of 18 Soviet experts was staying in Cuba for several months and prepared reports about the current status of the Cuban economy and about the possibilities of its further development, especially in the following sectors:

- Mines and mining industry, metallurgy, geological and ore exploration, liquid fuels, energy and planning. Based on these reports and consultations with the Soviet experts, Cuban authorities prepared a list of about 170 experts whom the Chairman Fidel Castro requested, in a personal letter to the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers cde. **Khrushchev, to be sent to Cuba.**

It followed from the talks of our delegation with Mr. Guevara, as well as with Soviet technological aid representatives, and with the Trade Councilor in Havana, that the USSR, in cooperation with other countries of the socialist camp, would provide the above-mentioned 170 experts. Also, Mr. Guevara, who is the highest instance for economic issues in Cuba, directly asked that sending these experts be coordinated between the USSR and the other countries of the socialist camp.

On their own initiative, representatives of the FTE Polytechna have initiated talks with the pertinent USSR authorities for the purpose of joint coordination of scientific and technological aid to the Republic of Cuba. Since some requests for Cs. experts in some sectors are overlapping with the requests made by the Cuban side to the USSR (in the count of 170 experts), cooperation with the Soviet SCFER has been partially agreed upon. First steps in this direction

were also taken with representatives of the GDR and the PRP in Prague.

Based on the above-mentioned facts, we recommend drawing the following conclusions about providing scientific-technological aid to the Republic of Cuba:

- a) Tell Mr. Guevara that the request of the Cuban side for sending experts from the CSSR will be fulfilled without delay;
- b) Tell Mr. Guevara that we consider, in agreement with the Cuban requests, providing aid in the following areas as the most important and urgent:
  - Planning and management of the Cuban national economy,
  - Organization of the foreign trade monopoly,
  - Restarting ore mining and metallurgical production,
  - Providing a financial and banking consultant for the Cuban National Bank;
- c) Convey to Mr. Guevara that we agree to accept Cuban experts in the CSSR immediately, as per request of the Cuban side.

#### IV.

#### Other findings and ideas

After consultations with the experts from the Ministry of Metallurgy and Ore Mining who personally visited ore mines and plants processing namely nickel and copper ore, we came to a conclusion that when assessing Cuban requests for an agreement on economic cooperation in exchange of goods and sending experts, we should consider that:

1. The Cuban government and its economic officials still lack experience in actual management of the economy as a whole and of individual sectors, and thus are not always able to objectively assess their capabilities and to formulate their requests accordingly;
2. The Cuban economy is furnished exclusively with American machinery and equipment. In the short term, shortages of auxiliary and spare parts, and aggregates should be expected, which could paralyze the whole industry to a great extent;
3. Considering this, we would recommend to Mr. Guevara to prepare a short-term (for instance 3-year) plan

of reconstruction and development of the national economy as a basis for the economic policy of the Cuban government, and to offer help of Czechoslovak experts with preparation of the above-mentioned plan.

V.

We recommend that cde. Krajcir conduct the talks with Mr. Guevara, with the 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy of the Chairman of the State Planning Commission cde. Vlana participating.

We further recommend that Mr. Guevara be accepted by the President of the Republic and the 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary of the CPCZ CC cde. Novotny, by the Prime Minister cde. Siroky, with participation of c. Simunek, Krajcir and Vlana, and by c. Simunek with participation of c. Krajcir, Vlana, Smok, and c. Duris.

In agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we recommend to award Mr. Guevara the Order of White Lion of the first degree in recognition of his efforts in developing contacts between Cuba and the CSSR.

*[Source: Central State Archives, Prague, Czech Republic. Obtained by James Hersbberg, translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.]*

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### **Report to Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee (CPCz CC) on Consideration of Cuban Arms Requests, c. early 1961**

Report for the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party concerning the Interest of the Cuban Revolutionary Government in being supplied additional special Technology.

At the end of last year, the leading Cuban representatives, President [Osvaldo] Dorticos and Prime Minister Fidel Castro, expressed on various occasions their interest in being supplied with additional special technology and investment mechanisms, including appropriate technical assistance.

In a meeting on 16 December 1960 with the Czechoslovak Ambassador in Havana and in a letter dated 17 December 1960, President Dorticos asked the First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and the President of the Republic, Comrade A. Novotný, for assistance with the construction of anti-aircraft defenses for the country against expected hostile air strikes.

The Cuban Revolutionary Government intends to counter this threat by developing a radiolocation network and by organizing anti-aircraft defenses. To this end, it plans to

use anti-aircraft weapons supplied by Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. It wishes to purchase 5-6 fighter planes equipped with radiolocation mechanisms. At the same time, the Government expects Czechoslovakia to provide technical assistance and send a small group of specialists in order to organize anti-aircraft defenses and train 4-5 pilots to fly the supplied planes. During the process of supplying the special technology, it will also be necessary to train Cuban specialists to maintain and repair the supplied planes. Until the trainees return from Czechoslovakia, maintenance and repairs would be the responsibility of Czechoslovak specialists. Furthermore, it will be necessary to train Cuban specialists to use the radio-location equipment.

On the same occasion, the Prime Minister requested that radio stations be supplied in order to ensure the command effectiveness of the armed forces (the army and militia) as well as other radio stations to secure communication between provincial commanders. Among his other requests, it is necessary to mention the previous request to be supplied with 50 million 7.92 millimeter bullets and 400,000 magazines for 52čs automatic rifles.

The commander of the Revolutionary Army's tactical forces, Commandante Guillermo Garcia, communicated a wish through the prime minister for the supply of two mobile artillery batteries for divisions and machine equipment for the development of a permanent army repair facility for artillery materials.

The main technical officials at the Ministry of Foreign Trade discussed supply possibilities with the Defense Ministry and the Machine Ministry. From the discussions, it became clear that the Czechoslovak side is able to supply the mobile artillery batteries for divisions from Defense Ministry stockpiles, the magazines for automatic rifles (100,000 in 1961 and 300,000 in 1962) and two million 7.92 millimeter bullets from Defense Ministry stockpiles. The issue of equipment for the army repair facility is in the process of being clarified.

In recognition of the fact that the urgent Cuban demands have not been fully satisfied, supply possibilities have been explored in the Soviet Union and the Bulgarian People's Republic.

On 30 December 1960, the Deputy Prime Minister, Comrade O. Šimůnek, informed the Soviet ambassador in Prague, Comrade Zimyanin, via a memorandum of President Dorticos' request and requested that the Soviet Government inform him if it could provide the requested special technology for anti-aircraft defense and for the security of the command structure of the armed forces (copy of the memorandum enclosed-Enclosure 4). A reply from Comrade Zimyanin was received by Deputy Prime Minister, Comrade O. Šimůnek on 7 March. He mentio-

ned that the Soviet Government had decided to fulfill the request of the Government of the Cuban Republic and, in addition to anti-aircraft defense, would provide resources for coastal defense. Considering the fact that Soviet arms shipments to Cuba are no longer a secret, the Soviet Government believes that it would be useful if further supplies to Cuba take place without the participation of Czechoslovak organs. By the same token, Soviet specialists will be sent directly to Cuba.

The Soviet Ambassador further informed that the Soviet Government, in harmony with the opinions of the Czechoslovak side, believes that it would be useful if specialists from the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic were sent to Cuba as soon as possible in order to assist in the organization of anti-aircraft defense for the country using the already supplied materials. As a significant portion of the resources for anti-aircraft defense have been and will be supplied by the Soviet Union, the Soviet side considers it appropriate to send its own group of specialists to Cuba who, in cooperation with the Czechoslovak specialists, would solve all problems surrounding anti-aircraft defense in Cuba.

It is clear from the above-mentioned facts that it will be possible to satisfy fully the new Cuban requests, including the sending of a small group of Czechoslovak specialists who, together with Soviet specialists, will formulate a plan for the organization of anti-aircraft defense in Cuba. The training of Cuban pilots, which will enable them to fly fighter planes, as well as that of specialists for their maintenance and specialists of other supplied equipment, will be provided by the Soviet Union.

*[Source: Central State Archives, Prague. Obtained and translated for National Security Archive.]*



**Record of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) Politburo regarding Cuban Requests for Arms and Ammunition, 6 April 1961, with Attached Resolution on Same Subject, 18 April 1961**

POLITBURO OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE  
CZECHOSLOVAK COMMUNIST PARTY

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL!

7588/14

Regarding: The interest of the Cuban Revolutionary Government in being supplied with additional special technology.

Leading representatives of the Cuban Revolutionary Government have submitted via the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana new requests for supplies of special technology and investment mechanisms.

The requests have been dealt with by the State Planning Commission, the Defense Ministry, the Ministry of Industry, and the Finance Ministry.

Enclosure I

Suggested resolution

Enclosure III

Report

Enclosure IV

Memorandum for the record

Presented by: Comrade F. Krajčír

6 April 1961

Number of pages: 11

It is necessary that this material be returned within one month to the Technical Department of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party

ENCLOSURE I

Resolution  
143<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party on 18 April 1961

Regarding: The interest of the Cuban Revolutionary Government in being supplied with additional special technology (Comrade F. Krajčír)

Resolved:

The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party:

I. It takes into account the report on the interest of the Cuban Revolutionary Government in being supplied with additional special technology and investment mechanisms.

II. Agrees to the following:

- a) To supply 50 million 7.92 mm bullets to the Cuban Revolutionary Government of which 2 million will come from Defense Ministry stockpiles for one-third of their value on the basis of the reserve sum of the Czechoslovak-Cuban Agreement of 11 June 1960 on supplies of special technology reached between the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Government of the Cuban Republic and the other 48 million bullets will be re-exported from the Bulgarian People's Republic at full value. At least one-fifth, namely 5.3 million Czechoslovak crowns, will be paid for in hard currency in 1961. The remaining 21.2 million Czechoslovak crowns will be paid off in five annual payments based on Czechoslovak-Cuban clearing accounts at 2% interest beginning in 1962.
- b) To supply 2 mobile artillery batteries from the stockpiles of the Ministry of Defense at one-third of their value, namely for 423,000 Czechoslovak crowns on the basis of the reserve sum of the Czechoslovak-Cuban Agreement of 11 June 1960.
- c) To supply 400,000 magazines for 7.62 mm automatic rifles vz.52čs at a value of around 10.5 million Czechoslovak crowns on a cash, hard currency basis or through Czechoslovak-Cuban clearing.
- d) The construction of a permanent army weapon repair station and with the provision of any necessary technical assistance in order for it to be operational. The entire cost should be covered through Czechoslovak-Cuban clearing with 20 percent of the cost to be covered upon supplies of technical equipment. The rest would be covered on the basis of a 12 million crown loan, which would be repaid in five successive annual payments. The value of supplies will then exceed the initial twenty percent.
- e) To provision of technical assistance for the construction of anti-aircraft defenses in Cuba. A five member team of experts will be sent to Cuba according to those conditions set out in the agreement between the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Government of the Cuban Republic on supplies of special technology (Article 10, Section 2), which was signed on 11 June

1960 in Havana and later approved by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party on 28 June 1960.

III. Charges:

- a. Comrade F. Krajčír with the task of finalizing any additions to the agreement of 11 June 1960 or additions to established contacts concerning supplies described in Points II a to d of this resolution.
- c. Comrade B. Lomský
  1. with the task of freeing up 2 million 7.92 mm. bullets and 2 mobile artillery batteries,
  2. of preparing a group of specialists for the provision of technical assistance with the organization of anti-aircraft defenses on Cuban territory.
- d. Comrade K. Poláček with the following tasks on the basis of requests of Minister of Foreign Trade, F. Krajčír:
  1. To produce magazines for the automatic 7.92 mm. rifle model 52 Cz. by deadlines agreed upon with the Ministry of Foreign Trade.
  2. To formulate quickly along with the Ministry of Foreign Trade a final offer to build an army repair station keeping in mind Cuba's need to secure its ability to repair supplied weapons.
  3. To provide technical assistance in conjunction with the Defense Ministry technical assistance by sending Czechoslovak experts to Cuba or by training Cubans in Czechoslovak industries.
- g. Comrade J. Ďuriš with the task of providing loans in accordance with the provisions according to Points II a and II c of this resolution.

IV. Empowers Comrade V. Široký to decide on approaches to any new issues that may develop in future negotiations with Cuban representatives so long as they shall fall outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Trade.

To be acted upon by:

Comrade F. Krajčír

Comrade B. Lomský  
Comrade K. Poláček  
Comrade J. Ďuriš

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To the attention of:

Comrade V. Široký  
Comrade O. Šimůnek  
Comrade L. Jankovcová  
Comrade V. David  
Comrade B. Köhler  
Comrade A. Dubček  
Comrade V. Koucký

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**Czechoslovak Intelligence Reports  
Correspondence with Czechoslovak  
Embassy, Havana, Regarding Purported  
Assassination Plot against Fidel  
Castro and Coup Plot against Cuban  
Government, April 1961**

6<sup>th</sup> Division/Petrželka Lightning-Immediately  
30 April 1961

HAVANA

To my 025.113-According to an additional report from Pleskot:

Gramatges informed that the contact with the holder of the document in Cologne has taken place. The conditions surrounding the handover have not yet been agreed upon. Additional discussions should occur on 2 May. It appears as though the action against Cuba is still being prepared.

Hájek 025.114

326/111

6<sup>th</sup> Division/Petrželka/

30.4.61  
Lightning-Immediately  
HAVANA  
Pavlíček

Gramatges informs through Pleskot:

Ricardo Toriente, who arrived in Paris from Bonn tonight, received written information from H. Felske, Essen, Huyssenallee 33, offering detailed documentation on preparations for a counterrevolutionary coup against the Cuban

Government and an assassination attempt against Fidel Castro. The holder of the documents allegedly worked until recently at a consulate in Havana. Involved are microfilms containing detailed information about the organizers and place of action. He requests 28 thousand German marks for the materials. In negotiations over recent days on the conditions of the handover, Felske stated that, among other things, an assassination attempt is being prepared during a big public celebration and that a large amount of explosives have been transported to Havana by individuals whose families live there. Toriente believes that a possible assassination attempt could occur during celebrations marking 1 May. His go-between held discussions in Essen on 29.4 in the evening and requested evidence that the films on offer truly contain the mentioned information. He will receive a report by ten o'clock.

Pleskot will provide another report should anything serious develop.

Hájek 025.113



Telegram from Havana SP: 580  
Copy #9

Arrived: 29.4.61 18.10 Lightning, to be delivered immediately I, III

Decoded on 29.4.61 19.20

Exposed on 29.4.61 19.30

Hájek.

Send a lightning message immediately to Pleskot telling him to inform Cuban ambassador, Gramatges, of the arrival of the Bonn charges in Paris. He is carrying an important report, which Gramatges should immediately hand over to Pleskot. Arrange the immediate sending of the report. Allegedly involved is a big sabotage on 1 May based on information provided by Fernandel.

Pavlíček 179

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**II. CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE CUBAN  
MISSILE CRISIS, 1962**



**Report to Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) General Secretary Antonín Novotný on European Military Situation, n. d. [apparently between 22 and 28 October 1962]**

Report for Comrade Novotný

During the course of today no significant changes occurred on the European theater. The troops of the majority of NATO countries are on combat alert. However, no increased activity has been observed of strategic air forces or rocket units in Europe.

In the Federal Republic of Germany border zone with the CSSR, increased observation of our territory continues. This is accompanied by air reconnaissance flights.

In the Cs. [Czechoslovak] People's Army and the troops of the Ministry of the Interior, the activities of commanders and political personnel are focused on securing the fulfillment of combat readiness tasks. Thorough checks of their fulfillment are being carried out. So far the results of these checks show good readiness on the part of the armed forces, and only defects of a minor extent are being found. In the 13<sup>th</sup> Tank Division severe insufficiencies in the material outfitting of soldiers were discovered; care for the soldiers had been neglected. Control organs have adopted remedial measures.

Political organs in nearly all units and sub-units agree in their reports that the current measures taken by our armed forces have led to a marked strengthening of ties between the different class years of basic-service soldiers and reservists. Comrades are helping one another to unify the level of their readiness as much as possible. For example, instructors in the 322<sup>nd</sup> Artillery Brigade have committed to accelerate the training of 1<sup>st</sup>-year soldiers. In the 62<sup>nd</sup> Radio Company, 33 2<sup>nd</sup>-year soldiers have committed themselves to help work their 1<sup>st</sup>-year comrades into their functions. Similar cases of helpfulness and conscientious fulfillment of tasks are being reported in all the armies. The company of the Internal Guard in Strážské reports the signing of 237 individual and 21 collective commitments. There is also a high state of political morale at [MND]. Officers are working intensively on combat alert and readiness tasks.

Besides these positive expressions of understanding of the current international situation, isolated incorrect opinions and attitudes continue to exist. Appropriate attention is being paid to these issues on the part of the political organs.

On the basis of a resolution of the politburo of the CC CPCz, measures have been taken in all sectors as directed by the XI Department of the CC CPCz.

At the Central Committee of Svazarm<sup>25</sup>, inspection

is successfully being carried of the feasibility and readiness of plans for the transfer of the entire organization to a state of national defense readiness. Similar measures are being carried out at all regional and district committees of Svazarm. Increased watchfulness is being implemented at all Svazarm airfields, and measures are being carried out to fulfill the designated tasks. The secure storage of weapons, ammunition, and radio equipment is being reinspected to prevent their misuse. The regional and district committees of Svazarm have been instructed to ask for schooling from the state organs in explaining the current situation and in training the population in II level national preparations, which are proceeding intensively at present.

At its meeting the presidium of the Svazarm Central Committee has adopted a resolution condemning the aggressive acts of the government of the USA, and supporting the resolution of the Soviet government and the position of the government of the CSSR. The resolution was published in the Svazarm magazine *Obránce vlasti*.

Likewise at the Ministry of Justice and the General Procurator's Office, the measures assigned by the politburo of the CC CPCz have been carried out. Readiness in case of extraordinary events has been verified, and telecommunications links and readiness at all equipment have been verified. It has been ordered to increase watchfulness and wakefulness at all workplaces, and move consistently and in a timely manner against those who would misuse the situation.

Staff is on duty round-the-clock in all sectors.

*Signature*

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ (Prague), file Antonín Novotný, Kuba, box 124. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



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**Cable no. 319 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Vladimír Pavlíček), 24 [23] October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 10.815

Arrived: 24.10.62 16:30

Processed: 24.10.62 17:30 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 24.10.62 18:00

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NEWSFLASH!

According to talks with [Cuban foreign minister] Raúl Roa and [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev, it has been confirmed that [US President John F.] Kennedy has caved to the heavy pressure of the Pentagon, the CIA, and the monopolist circles and chosen the utmost dangerous route of provocations and blockades of Cuba. Within a few hours initial contacts between the USSR's ships and the American battleships should take place; according to Alekseev's information, the American battleships do not yet have instructions to stop the ships. Despite this, the Soviet friends are anticipating dangerous provocations. About eight ships are on the way. On the morning of 23.10. [October 23] two of the USSR's ships arrived without difficulty. The Cubans have cancelled all Pan-American [Airlines] flights and all domestic connections. Our ČSA [Czechoslovak Airlines] and Soviet TU [Tupolev] should depart normally. TU at night, and ČSA on the morning of 24.10 [24 October]. In the event of internal unrest, certain changes can be expected. Fidel [Castro] is satisfied with the pronouncement of the Soviet government, as well as with the situation in the country, which is calm. He will speak on the evening of 23.10 [23 October]. Battle preparedness has been strengthened in all sectors. This morning a US military plane crashed into a minefield in Guantanamo, causing a tremendous explosion and many dead. We are calming the Czechoslovak colony, instructing according to the lines of duty and the Party and taking the appropriate precautions. We will inform you further. The Vietnamese ambassador visited me: He had the same questions as Kříž [military attaché at the Czechoslovak embassy] about borrowing several pistols for the defense of the embassy. Send your views. We feel we can suitably decline since the Cubans ensure the defense of the embassy and the residence.

Pavlíček 319

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir..]*



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**Cable no. 323 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček),  
25 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 10896  
Arrived: 25.10.62 21:20

Processed: 25.10.62 24:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6  
Dispatched: 26.10.62 06:20

NEWSFLASH!

On the basis of information from the Soviet friends and our own in Washington, the Cubans have further expanded their battle preparedness and are now at maximum readiness. They evacuated some hospitals where the cases of the ill allowed, and increased security measures. They arrested a number of counterrevolutionary elements and all institutions, factories, and important objects are constantly under guard. Judging from the situation in Havana as well as in the provinces, the country is calm, although understandably nervous. People are not buying up goods, there is no panic—on the contrary, everything is working respectably and calmly. As a result of the increased danger, the industrial manufacturing sector is working better, though with understandably insufficient supplies of raw materials and in some places, insufficient numbers of workers. The labor unions, women, and youth are all helping the KRV [Cuban Revolutionary Front] very efficiently. The revolutionary unity is strong; there are no traces of sabotage or organized internal opposition that would have to be crushed. There was an even greater solidarity after Fidel [Castro]'s speech. Talks reveal a concern about whether it will be possible to secure a delivery of fuel and food supplies, both of which are in weak supply, in some places only enough to last 3-to-5 weeks. There are concerns about a possible invasion of mercenaries, concealed and supported by the blockade, and an attack on Guantanamo. The one-sided support of Latin American countries for [US President John] Kennedy supports these concerns. On the other hand, determination prevails, as does the need to oppose the USA or the mercenaries. The first Soviet ship has just arrived, allowed through based on the response that it is not carrying any military materials.

Pavlíček 323

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Report on "Extraordinary Measures"  
Regarding Czechoslovak Organizations,  
26 October 1962**

Report on implementation of extraordinary measures in the ROH [Revolutionary Trade Union Movement], ČSM [Czechoslovak Union of Youth], and National Front

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### **Central Council of Labor Unions [ÚRO]**

The Secretariat of the ÚRO discussed the ÚRO statement on the Cuban question and measures to implement extraordinary measures.

The statement of the ÚRO was submitted to the Czech Press Office, but was published only in the daily *Práce*.

A round-the-clock duty service of three comrades was established, consisting of the heads of department of the ÚRO and their representatives, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Central Committees of the labor unions. Similar measures were enacted in the labor union building on Gorký Square. A list has been made of personnel and their methods of instruction. The readiness of the vehicle park has also been secured. The ÚRO will always be notified of the absence of leading functionaries of the ÚRO, labor unions, and the [KOR].

Duty hours of the leading functionaries of the ÚRO are from 18:00 to 06:00 in the morning. From 06:00 to 08:00 comrades from the defense staff. Precise orders have been drawn up for duty service.

### Measures for archive materials

The Central Archive has already been deposited at a specified place outside the ÚRO building. An emergency materials plan was put into effect in accordance with orders from the CC CPCz. Com Kozelka informed the heads of department of the ÚRO and the Chairmen and the Vice-Chairmen of the labor unions' Central Committees of the necessary measures.

### Plan E

The World Federation of Labor Unions was not included in this plan. Yesterday morning (25.10.) Cde. Kozelka discussed these matters with Cde. Chleboun and Cde. Mevald, who drew up a list of comrades into two ranks, which is being speedily verified.

The defense headquarters of the ÚRO was joined by comrades from the World Federation of Labor Unions.

### Unresolved issues

The limit for the relief of ROH [Revolutionary Trade Union Movement] functionaries was assembled without the district labor councils, and without the World Federation of Labor Unions.

Now a request has been submitted to main headquarters, but a decision has not yet been made.

### **Czechoslovak Union of Youth [ČSM]**

A proclamation by the Central Committee of the ČSM was discussed and approved, and was published today in *Mladá fronta* only. The statement was submitted to the ČTK by the CC ČSM.

The statement of the University Council of the CC ČSM was also announced in the press.

An alert was declared for all political personnel of the CC ČSM, who were informed of the most important tasks.

The CC ČSM cancelled a number of planned meetings, so that functionaries of the ČSM can be utilized for active work among youth.

It also came to agreement with the municipal council of the ČSM on launching a campaign in the schools (meetings, assemblies) and the inclusion of foreign students.

In Prague and Bratislava foreign students, especially from Cuba, exhibited a tendency to go into the streets, and some voices advocated attacking the American embassy. The organs of the ČSM agreed with the foreign students that they will take part in joint gatherings with the ČSM in the schools.

Orders were prepared for duty service and methods of possible mobilization of CC ČSM personnel. Vehicles and drivers have been placed on alert.

### **M measures**

Adjustments and additions were carried out for the occupation of sectors from the standpoint of the present cadre profile of the CC ČSM.

Orders were prepared for evacuation, and measures taken for archival material according to orders from the CC ČSM.

### Some problems:

1. So far means of possible evacuation have not been set. From the Ministry of Transportation they have the order to go by train.

2. The question of archive materials from the CC ČSM, the International Students' Union, *Mladá fronta*, and the ČSM Central School has thus far not been resolved.

The archives of the CC ČSM are supposed to be deposited in the state archives, which have rejected them however, saying that the Institute for the History of the CPCz is responsible for this task. Here they refuse also, saying that it has not been approved by the Secretariat or the leading comrades of the CC CPCz.

The economic archive has also not been dealt with, because the CC ČSM has no place to put it, and no means. The same for the archive of the ČSM Central School.

Also unresolved is the question of relocating the archive to a selected place in Slovakia. No site or money has been approved with which the archive could be relocated.

3. The biggest problems are with the International Students' Union, which has not been considered up until now. So far there is no site or means to relocate the personnel of this organization. There is the possibility of relocating them if needed to the recreation facility in Pec, but there are no means of getting them there. The archive of that organization and what to do with it is an unresolved question.

4. There are also problems with *Mladá fronta*. They don't know what to do with the archive. It is an open question what to do in the event of extraordinary measures with the publishing house, and especially with the daily newspaper *Mladá fronta*.

5. In case of need the municipal CD command center will request in case of need from the CC ČSM buses and delivery trucks with civilian and girl drivers. The CC ČSM does not have civilian and women drivers, and all the Svazarm courses are full. This task has not been fulfilled.

#### National Front

The Czechoslovak Socialist Party and the People's Party have adopted a statement, which has been published in today's daily papers.

[Signature]

[illegible handwritten comments]

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ (Prague), file Antonin Novotny, Kuba, box 124. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



## Report to CPCz General Secretary Antonin Novotný, 27 October 1962

Top Secret

Report for Comrade Novotný

During the night there was no significant change in the military-political situation.

According to information from the Ministry of the Interior, [US President John F.] Kennedy offered [British Prime Minister Harold] Macmillan to arrange for mutual telephone contact for the purpose of exchanging opinions during the course of the next few days. The position of Macmillan on this proposal is not known.

In military circles in Great Britain indignation is being expressed that the government of the USA did not discuss its actions in the Caribbean area with its allies in NATO, namely with Great Britain. It has been confirmed that the armed forces of Great Britain are not participating through any measures in the current military-political situation.

The government of the USA is interested in not raising the slightest doubt about its determination to attain its goal. In the [UN] Security Council it presented the aerial photos of 4 missile bases and one airfield for jet airplanes in Cuba. In commenting on the submitted photos, an American army colonel had to admit that so far no atomic weapons had been found. Stevenson expressed the idea that he would go with a Cuban representative to Cuba to carry out an inspection of the bases.

President Kennedy has supposedly decided to call a special session of Congress to discuss the situation in Cuba in regard to alleged continued construction of missile bases.

On the evening of 26.10 [26 October] an official statement was released in which it comes to light that the USA is assuming the right to take further steps if construction continues on guided missile bases, which are being labeled as the main cause of the current crisis. Military circles continue to be fed reports of a possible invasion, preparations for which are linked to the continuing concentration of forces in the Caribbean area.

With the feeling that so far no positive result has been obtained in arranging talks between representatives of the USSR, USA, and Cuba, and the official statement of the USA, the situation among diplomatic circles in the UN on the evening of 26.10 [26 October] was described as deteriorating.

The American ambassador in Vienna has assured the Austrian government that there is no immediate danger of

war. He advised the Austrian government to avoid statements that might endanger their neutrality.

The Presidium of the West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) discussed the issue of Berlin at their meeting of yesterday, and expressed the opinion that at the beginning of November a restocking of the Berlin crisis can be expected.

The situation in the Cs. [Czechoslovak] armed forces is unchanged. Troops are undergoing intensive training according to adjusted plans. Staffs are verifying the accomplishment of assigned measures, and are implementing steps to increase coordination.

Evidence has been discovered of a deliberate impairment of the combat readiness of a MIG-15 plane that members of the headquarters of the 7th Army use for training. A scrap of paper had been inserted into the gun sight, preventing effective fire from the on-board weapons. The perpetrator has so far not been identified.

The state of political morale in the armed forces of the CSSR is still good. The current situation is spurring the majority of members of the army and Interior Ministry troops to more active and responsible activity in the accomplishment of duties. Commitments to more rapid training of recruits and reservists are being adopted. Cases are spreading of non-party army members requesting acceptance as candidate members of the CPCz. Inquiries on the possibilities of recruiting volunteers to go to Cuba are increasing.

Measures for supply of the population are being positively received, and it is reported that the wave of panic buying in stores has subsided in most instances.

Isolated cases of indiscipline are also being reported, such as absence without leave, and failure to report for duty. During the course of yesterday there occurred a desertion of two privates on basic service from military troop 8008 Plzeň. The motive for desertion was probably one of the soldiers' having been referred to the military prosecutor for failure to obey orders. The search for both of these deserters is being carried out by Public Security.

On 26.10.1962 [26 October 1962], 15 soldiers at a technical vocational school (where the officer corps is trained to serve anti-aircraft rockets) were found listening to a broadcast of Radio Free Europe in the Hungarian language, which was translated by one of the listeners. The report spoke of the border conflict between India and China.

Similarly, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> company of the Cheb brigade of the Border Guards, several members listened to West Berlin station Rias on a transistor receiver.

A private of the 151<sup>st</sup> engineer regiment was found taking 200 grenades off base. The case is being investigated.

In the area of Hradiště exercise yesterday afternoon, a foreigner on a visa, Arthur Roger Henrichs, who is an

American citizen, was apprehended while photographing the area. He was identified, and his photo apparatus was confiscated.

Among the citizens, increased interest is being shown in training in national preparation for Civil Defense II level. For example in the Přerov district, participation in training has risen from 40% to 90%.

A number of cases have occurred of reserve soldiers and officers requesting recall to active duty. Military district officials report increased registration discipline.

The political authorities of the 2<sup>nd</sup> army district warn that in the areas of Bruntál, Šumperk, Hlučína, and Odry, members of the German ethnicity are becoming active.

*[Signature]*

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ (Prague), file Antonin Novotný, Kuba, box 124. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Cable no. 326 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 27 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11043

Arrived: 27.10.62 15:30

Processed: 27.10.62 16:30 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 27.10.62 17:00

NEWSFLASH!

[Deputy Foreign Minister Antonin] Gregor.

That sent by you via Washington, and a discussion between Vrána and Pinner 26.10. [26 October] passed on this conviction of Fidel [Castro]'s about the danger of an invasion by the USA and mercenaries 27.10 [27 October]. If [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alexeev [Alekseev] confirms this information during the night hours, we will give the order to burn all classified materials except for the enciphered data, which we will destroy last. At the same time I will order the emergency measures for informing and organizing our citizens, as per the emergency plan.

Pavlíček 326



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*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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## **Report to CPCz General Secretary Antonín Novotný, 28 October 1962**

### Information for Comrade Novotný

During 28 October no significant changes occurred in the military-political situation.

In spite of the White House statement in which there are indications of willingness on the part of the USA to negotiate a resolution to the current crisis, aggressive preparations against Cuba continued overnight. Especially ongoing were the reinforcement and concentration of American ground and air forces in Florida and on the base in Key West, where Hawk anti-aircraft missile batteries are also deployed. The American government has officially proclaimed that the intensity of air force reconnaissance over Cuba will be increased, while American planes will destroy anti-aircraft facilities that attempt to defend Cuban airspace.

It has been learned that a light armored regiment from the strategic corps at Fort Meade, Maryland is at combat readiness and is prepared to move from the base. The American Defense Ministry has called 24 transport planes of the Air National Guard to active duty.

According to information from General Headquarters of the Ministry of National Defense, on 27.10.1962 [27 October 1962] at 16:00 h our time a Cuban anti-aircraft battery shot down an American U-2 reconnaissance plane about 20 km from Guantanamo. At 16:17 h a group of American planes penetrated to above Pinar del Rio province, and were repelled by anti-aircraft artillery.

In Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala, and other countries, exile intervention units are at the ready. Increased readiness has been observed at the Canadian Defense Ministry, where 50% of officers were at their stations during the night. Preparations for other measures toward heightened combat readiness has been observed in Italy. On 27.10. [27 October] police were put on alert in Rome, and instructed that possible internal unrest should be expected, especially in the event of mobilization. The mood among the ranks of the Italian police and army is strongly anti-American.

Among troops deployed on the Central European theater, no further extraordinary measures have been observed. Stand-

by patrols by American strategic B-52 airplanes continue in the Mediterranean area at the rate of 48 flights per day.

During the night continuing preparations were discovered to destroy routes of communications in the area of Ludwigsthal. Civil defense exercises were held in the area of the eastern Schönsee at 22.30 h.

The situation in the Cs. [Czechoslovak] armed forces is unchanged.

Troops continue to train for increased combat readiness. Repairs to equipment are being rapidly completed.

The commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army has relieved the commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Antiaircraft Detachment, Lt. Colonel Havider, for irresponsible attitude and failure to fulfill combat readiness tasks. In the same army, during a relocation of the 9<sup>th</sup> Mechanized Infantry regiment, there were motor breakdowns of some automobiles – the fault of recruit drivers.

The state of political morale in the armed forces continues to be good. The message from Cde. [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev to President Kennedy has become the focus of attention. In the Cz. [Czechoslovak] People's Army and the troops of the Interior Ministry, mass radio listening has been arranged for, and reports and meetings have been held. The response of all members has been very positive. During these political events interest was shown on other questions; especially anticipated is what position will be adopted on the Soviet position by Turkey and the USA.

Political activity continues to be pursued among the units, exhibiting results in the exemplary fulfillment of tasks and the adoption of commitments. Combat readiness is maintained at a high level. Preparations for the swearing-in ceremony of 1<sup>st</sup> year recruits were taken advantage of to explain the current international situation and the necessity for high combat readiness. In several units the ceremony has already taken place; in others it will take place today. The clarification of the meaning and sense of the oath has a very positive effect on the soldiers at this time. An equally positive impact is had by the speeches of representatives of local government organs, sponsor factories, and the participation of parents. Commitments to quality and timely fulfillment of tasks are adopted then and there at the assembly under the impression created by the oath-taking. From the ceremonial assemblies and meetings, greetings are sent to the district conferences of the CPCz in which soldiers assure the delegates that they will fulfill their assigned tasks.

Among the troops of the Interior Ministry – in the Internal Guard since the last report, 30 new collective and 333 individual commitments have been adopted relating to guard duty, heightening of combat readiness, attainment of the "Model Collective" award, fuel conservation, etc.

In regard to the statement by Cde. Khrushchev, some members have expressed the opinion that tensions have been further decreasing, and that it will no longer be necessary to observe all measures for maintaining combat readiness.

In the Blansko RMZ [Regional Military Zone] there was a gross breach of discipline by two officers, Major Koš, a former member of the government troops, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Kriš, who had been released to the reserves in 1950 and reactivated. The above-named expressed unwillingness to obey an order of the chief of the RMZ. The case is being investigated by the head of the Regional Military Authority and the RMA Political Department.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> Tank Division, listening to Radio Free Europe was discovered in the political education office. The commander of the army and the chief of political administration have taken the appropriate measures.

A drop has occurred in the increased buying within the territory of Prague. Buying continues near bus and train stations, where citizens from the country do their shopping.

Much buying has been observed on the *Malá Strana* as well, and diplomatic personnel are especially involved in this. Also the *Dům potravín* [Food Store] delivery service has recorded increased purchases by the embassies of foreign states. The increased purchasing tendencies continue within the Prague 5 district as well.

In the West Bohemia region there is constant demand for sugar, salt, butter, and flour. Cases have been discovered where citizens that have a vehicle are traveling to shop in neighboring regions. In Plzeň itself there is a great demand for salt. It is being said there that salt is a good protection against exposure to radiation.

Despite a certain drop, increased purchasing is being reported in other regions of the republic as well.

*[Signature]*

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ (Prague), file Antonín Novotný, Kuba, box 124. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Cable no. 328 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 28 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11091

Arrived: 28.10.62 15:00

Processed: 28.10.62 16:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 28.10.62 16:30

NEWSFLASH!

The night of 26.10 to 27.10 [26 October to 27 October] passed by in relative calm, although in absolute readiness and understandable nervousness. Materials were not destroyed as the alarming news of the Cubans was not definitely confirmed by [Soviet Ambassador] Alekseev and we decided to wait. In the morning hours of 27.10 [27 October], a U-2 rocket in Oriente [Province] along with gunfire shot down and fended off an attack by a group of US jet bombers, likely on a mission to examine the missile bases in Pinar del Rio. Caught a Pentagon announcement that if the Cubans do not leave a free zone for US flight inspections of Cuba and if an immediate dismantling of missile bases does not begin, there will be further action, including armed forces. Apart from that announced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that [US President John F.] Kennedy refused [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev's offer to negotiate, the bases will not be dismantled. With this comes the climax of the third, this time very dangerous, crisis where the Cubans anticipate a direct attack by the USA. Therefore we are undertaking the same security measures on 27.10 and during the night of 28.10.

Pavlíček 328

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCZ, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Cable no. 330 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 28 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11096

Arrived: 28.10.62 19:00

Processed: 28.10.62 20:30 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, TO

Dispatched: 28.10.62 22:00

ČTK [Czechoslovak Press Agency]

Amongst the lower staff of the ORI [Integrated Revolutionary Organizations], the reaction to [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev is understood correctly and with trust. Amongst the intelligentsia there is concern that a portion of the population will be fooled by the offer, that Cuba's defenses

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will be weakened as a result and inspections allowed, despite Fidel [Castro]’s claim that inspections will never be permitted and that defenses will continue to be erected. Therefore the news has not been published as of Saturday noon, although known since Friday. It will be explained as a peaceful measure by the Soviet Union with the goal of forcing the USA to negotiate, and at the same time unmasking them because [US President John F.] Kennedy will not allow the Turkish bases to be closed.

News sent by Štrafelda and Vavruš.

Pavlíček 330

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: “Antonín Novotný, Kuba,” Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Cable no. 332 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 28 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11097

Arrived: 28.10.62 20:45

Processed: 28.10.62 22:30 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, OMO

Dispatched: 28.10.62 22:45

IMMEDIATELY!

To comrade Kurk.

The KRV [Cuban Revolutionary Front] received a message from [UN Secretary-General] U Thant in the evening hours of 26.10, to which Fidel [Castro] responded on 27.10 [27 October]. Among other things, Fidel’s text says that Cuba is willing to discuss its problems with the USA in cooperation with the United Nations so that the crisis gets resolved. However, Cuba refuses to accept any sort of infringement of its sovereignty, such as a blockade or aggressive actions and demands by the USA which entail deciding what rights Cuba has, what kinds of weapons it has, which weapons are defensive, its relations with the USSR, and steps in international politics to which all nations are entitled and which compose the norms of UN standards—Cuba has a right to these so that it can ensure its security and sovereignty. The KRV is willing to accept suggestions in its

effort to maintain peace, but on the assumption that during the negotiations the USA will cease the threats and aggressive actions against Cuba, especially the naval blockade. Cuba is not breaching international law—in contrast, it suffered the aggressive actions of the USA, such as the naval blockade and a series of others, by which the rights of Cuba were trampled upon. Fidel is currently expressing the wish to weigh every proposal and if he regards it as a positive step towards peace, he invites U Thant as the Secretary General of the UN to Havana for talks about the current crisis, with the goal of preventing a dangerous war. The unrestricted respect of Cuba’s sovereignty is a necessary precondition for Cuba to be able to contribute to resolving the problems, together with all nations fighting for peace—the exception being that Cuba would be surrendered and asked to relinquish the rights which every sovereign state possesses. In the evening hours U Thant answered with a preliminary acceptance of the invitation to Havana; upon instructions from Fidel, [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa will immediately fly to meet the [UN] Security Council. Please pass along the briefly worded message from Fidel, as per the wishes of Minister Raúl Roa Kouro.

Pavlíček 332

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: “Antonín Novotný, Kuba,” Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Cable no. 333 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 29 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11134

Arrived: 29.10.62 17:45

Processed: 29.10.62 20:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 30.10.62 06:30

NEWSFLASH!

Other events gradually took place during 27 October which further dramatized the tense state of affairs; but on the other hand, in our view, these events clarified the position to such a degree that an invasion by the USA can scarcely be expected, and we can instead hope that the entire problem will be resolved through negotiations. Most important was [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev’s message to [US President John

F.] Kennedy which was replied to in a significantly different tone in the afternoon hours, as well as the exchange of messages between [UN Secretary-General] U Thant and Fidel [Castro] which promises that U Thant will travel to Havana. A binding factor can certainly be the fact that during the morning hours of 27 October the USA "tried," with embarrassing results, [to penetrate] the defenses of Cuba and thus a U-2 [reconnaissance plane] was shot down, and according to about 600 Cubans and friends, after gunfire and a quick attack, a US bomber unit from Pinar del Rio was also lost. The kind of panic these events caused can easily be imagined by the fact that the plane did not return to its base and could be regarded as lost, while [US Secretary of Defense Robert] McNamara did not admit that it had been shot down until the late hours of the night. The opinion of the Cuban people and their friends is that the current aggressive act of the USA was unleashed to unimaginable proportions of propaganda and was an act of camouflage, supported by constant threats of attack which were meant to break Cuba's defenses and probably to try to blackmail the USSR into backing down. Thus far, events have unfolded in the exact opposite manner and are only another confirmation of the failure of the Pentagon and the CIA. The internal situation has not seen any changes. The dignified, orderly, and quick mobilization, and above all the calm nature of the Cubans surprised not only all our friends, but above all the foreigners residing here. There is commentary to the effect that a similar calm, decisiveness, and courage should possess our Cuban friends in the area of working results. The results would be impressive. The entire country lives in a state of preparedness, awaiting a US attack which would for them end in catastrophe. Provocateurs appear only sporadically, their work having an immediately guaranteed effect. There is no sign of the USA's wish for an organized internal opposition. All tasks of civil defense, medical services, and others are fulfilled in accordance with Cuban possibilities and organizational capabilities. Battle plans with the Soviet friends are being fulfilled faithfully under very unfavorable conditions--strong winds and continual heavy rains and cool weather. Khrushchev's suggestions are understood and received well, with explanations and commentaries in the press, radio, and television. Expressions of solidarity from our countries and the entire world strengthen the fighting spirit of the Cubans and solidify the unity around the KRV [Cuban Revolutionary Front]. It is a great mistake that the Cubans do not inform the embassies of the socialist camp countries about the course of events and the internal measures. We are in close touch with Cubans at the highest levels, as well as with the Soviet friends and we inform the Polish, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Romanian, and partially the [East] German and [North] Vietnamese embassies, as they requested us to do so. All others in contact with the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs work quietly

in their posts; they are regularly informed of the situation by the embassy and are given directions in emergency situations. It is an unforgivable mistake to send more groups of tourists and women with children to visit our experts. Here we cannot understand that such groups are still being sent off under such dramatic circumstances; they certainly add to the embassy's problems. I ask for an energetic removal of these groups from further trips. If resorts are fulfilling the necessary quotas or rather we are dealing with paid trips without regard for a dangerous situation, this stance deserves criticism and should be stopped. Regardless, the embassy is arranging contact with all and providing information about the situation.

Pavlíček 333

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Record of the Conversation between CPCz first secretary Antonín Novotný and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, Moscow, 30 October 1962 (excerpt)**

[For the Czech record of the 30 October 1962 conversation in Moscow between CPCz first secretary Antonín Novotný and Nikita Khrushchev (i.e., excerpt containing Khrushchev's comments on the missile crisis), see the section below.]



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**Cable no. 335 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 30 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11.184

Arrived: 30.10.62 13:00

Processed: 30.10.62 15:15 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, OMO

Dispatched: 30.10.62 15:45

IMMEDIATELY!

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Kurk. From talks between [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa and [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev it became clear that Fidel [Castro] and the KRV, who are clear about [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev's orders to dismantle [the missiles], are nevertheless concerned that the general population and the army will not understand this step, and they are also concerned about the danger of the Soviet Union losing some prestige. Thus far the press and radio are commenting on the matter insufficiently and [sic] clarifying for the people all the measures and suggestions on the part of the Soviet Union. Thus, according to Alekseev, Fidel will evidently speak on television and clarify the entire situation. Furthermore, Fidel fervently tried to convince Alekseev that thus far he does not believe in any of the USA's guarantees and he is convinced of the USA's treachery in that, in the event of dismantling, they will [nevertheless] invade. According to Roa, [UN Secretary General] U Thant and his advisers will arrive in Havana on Tuesday 30 October to begin talks with Fidel and clarify the requests of the Cubans. After the negotiations end, Roa will return to the UN with U Thant. This evening a special messenger, [sent by Brazilian President João] Goulart, will arrive with a message regarding Brazil's position.

In Venezuela, there was a huge act of sabotage affecting oil equipment, which forced [President Romulo] Betancourt to mobilize and protect the equipment. Estimates say 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the equipment was ruined. The internal situation remains unchanged, as we reported last time. Calm prevails and battle alertness is heightened in connection with the constant threats of attack by the USA.

Pavliček 335

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



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**Cable no. 336 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlice), 30 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11213 V

Arrived: 30.10.62 21:00

Processed: 31.10.62 03:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 31.10.62 06:00

As we already indicated, the press continues to inadequately explain the situation and the importance of individual

steps made by the USSR. Usually it only registers. Among the current press clippings, pay special attention to *Revolucion* from 29.10 [29 October], to the proportions and placement of the message's titles, etc., which already resulted in protests by the revolutionaries and supported an undesirable discussion. Reasons for the weak press campaign: mainly busy, an inadequate understanding of the situation by *Revolucion*; we do not discount a focus unfavorable to the USSR's prestige. I send more details by messenger. Vavruš [Czech Press Agency reporter in Havana] has an opportunity to visit with military personnel and he is consulting his steps with the embassy.

Pavliček 336

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



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**Cable no. 337 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavliček), 30 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11208

Arrived: 30.10.62 19:50

Processed: 30.10.62 23:45 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 31.10.62 06:00

NEWSFLASH!

After [Cuban leader] Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points for guarantees were made public, the Cubans unfortunately did not at all understand the historic steps by [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev and instead believe that the USSR backed away from the USA, and that Cuban defenses have been weakened. They focused all attention on the fulfillment of Fidel's requests and think that this is decisive for the future course of events. The press, television, and radio are working very poorly and are probably wavering, including the former party supporter, [the newspaper] *Hoy*. In fact, in some instances it [the media] is apparently intentionally standing in contrast to the views of Khrushchev and Fidel and not clarifying the importance of the Soviet steps. According to the unconfirmed information of friends, including [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev, it seems that varying opinions were also expressed within the government. According to personal interviews with secretaries



of the CTC, there is an apparent total disorder of opinions. They do not understand the situation from a world-wide perspective, only a Cuban one, and their only vision remains the fulfillment of Fidel's requests. Today's party press hardly publishes anything about the USSR, and instead speaks of the indestructible nature of Fidel-ism in a prominent editorial. Fidel will speak on Thursday, probably after his talks with [UN Secretary-General] U Thant end. During discussions with Alekseev I learned of the Soviet friends' concerns regarding the losses in the USSR's position. Questions are being raised about whether Fidel was informed of the USSR's position and the dismantling beforehand, and about the fact that an agreement was reached on supervision by the UN -- an agreement that Fidel then rejected in reaction to [US President John F.] Kennedy's speech. There are even remarks about a new Munich. Together we are very uneasy about the current state of affairs; we are trying to provide explanations but assume that only Fidel's speech on 1.11 [1 November] will bring clarity.

Pavlíček 337

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Cable no. 338 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 31 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11281

Arrived: 31.10.62 19:00

Processed: 1.11.62 03:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 1.11.62 06:45

IMMEDIATELY!

The mood of the general population continues to be in a state of considerable confusion regarding the problem of dismantling. The situation is worsened by the difference of opinion among the mid-level staff, which echoes in the masses. According to the discussion with [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev, [Cuban leader] Fidel [Castro] understood the situation exactly, but he has to lead politically unstable and doubtful elements in their relationship to the Soviet Union. From this perspective, clarity is expected in his speech to be given on Thursday. It has been illustrated, and the

comrades understand how hard it is, especially now with an insufficient political party that is substituted by a very important unit around Fidel and his decision-making. We get our information from conversations with friends and some higher and middle functioning staff, because those highest around Alekseev are not within reach. The President [Dorticos], Fidel, Carlos and Rodriguez are in Havana, Raúl [Castro] in the east, and [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara in Pinar. Unfortunately, neither ORI [Integrated Revolutionary Organizations] nor any of the information services are clarifying the steps being taken by the Soviet Union. Things are evaluated on the surface level, in keeping with Cuban temperaments, and there is no lack of comment about another Congo, abandonment, the defense of Cuba, etc. Quick meetings called by ORI are not very effective. The categorical focus is on the fulfillment of Fidel's 5 Points, and thus the tense waiting for the meeting with [UN Secretary General] U Thant. All the while it is clear to Fidel himself that the maximum request for the liquidation of Guantanamo is unacceptable to [US President John F.] Kennedy. The mood has had a depressing effect on the Soviet friends, and while they are convinced there will be a positive ending, they are stunned and surprised by the Cuban reaction. According to some officials it will be necessary to explain much to the Cubans. Otherwise the internal situation has not undergone a change with regard to resoluteness, preparedness, and security, apart from the above-mentioned confused discussions. The latest information indicates that the situation is beginning to improve. On the other hand, supplies of food and fuel are decreasing and could be seriously threatened during prolonged negotiations. The total supply of vital products is estimated as being enough for only 3 weeks. Some Cuban officials expect that once the USA realizes the extent of the situation, they will prolong the negotiations in order to cause the most disruption. Security forces liquidate individual provocateurs quickly and effectively so this kind of activity is minimal throughout the country and absolutely unorganized—and thus has brought a deep sense of disappointment to the USA. If possible, we will try to learn some of the results of the talks with U Thant. The predominant opinion is that despite favorable commentaries and prospects about the negotiations, it is not possible to expect any improvement in relations between the USA and Cuba; in the event of a "guarantee," the dangerous situation will be postponed, not resolved.

Pavlíček 338

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Cable no. 339 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 31 October 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11279 Kr

Arrived: 31.10.62 19:25

Processed: 31.10.62 24:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 1.11.62 06:30

NEWSFLASH!

[Deputy Foreign Minister Antonin] Gregor.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez visited me and informed me of the crushing impressions and the situation in which Fidel [Castro] and the government find themselves with regard to the Cuban people; for Fidel was not at all informed of the order to dismantle [the missile bases] nor of the UN inspection, to which he was categorically opposed. At the same time they see no guarantees that could be given to Cuba for they do not trust the USA. Therefore they are focusing their efforts on having Fidel's 5 Points fulfilled. Explanations that Cuba was not abandoned are spreading in an explosive fashion amongst the population. Rodriguez confirmed that [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev learned of the order to dismantle from my telephone conversation, based on news from *Prensa Latina*.

A crushing mood also prevails amongst the Soviet friends. After receiving the order, the Soviet personnel absolutely did not understand and cried. Some experts and technicians refused to work further and there were many instances of drunkenness in old Havana. Rodriguez said that they are awaiting the arrival of [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan. Despite this, he said that the actions of the Soviet Union will have a catastrophic effect for the USSR's position, as well as that of the entire socialist camp and Latin America. He sees only a partial salvation of the situation in the form of perfect guarantees, in which he does not believe anyhow. The internal situation will depend much on Fidel's speech of 1 November. [UN Secretary General] U Thant's preliminary discussions are not yet known. The concrete negotiations should take place on 31 October. Brazil should send some of its suggestions, which [Brazilian President] Goulart will voice straight away. The position of our experts and technicians amongst the Cuban colleagues is difficult. They are met with a series of comments and innuendos suggesting that we all abandoned Cuba. There is also considerable disorientation

among a series of our friends. When possible, I ask for your information and directions.

Pavlíček 339

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



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**Cable no. 340 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 1 November 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11330 St

Arrived: 1.11.62 18:05

Processed: 1.11.62 19:15 Office of the President, G, Ku

Dispatched: 1.11.62 19:50

NEWSFLASH!

To [Czechoslovak Deputy Foreign Minister Antonin] Gregor.

As I informed earlier, confusion and disappointment are noticeably reflected in the mood of the population as a result of the Soviet Union's actions, which were not led by anyone, not even a government official. The press, radio, and television with its explicit focus on Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points only worsened the situation. In this respect there was an exceptional cooling amongst a segment of the intelligentsia and the middle classes, while this was much less the case amongst the others. There has also been a significant rise in nationalism. Only today is the press and radio preparing the ground for Fidel's appearance tomorrow, on 1 November, from the viewpoint of resolving the situation not only from a Cuban perspective, but a world-wide one for the preservation of peace. According to our information, Fidel visited the university where he expressed the hope that the negotiations will be successful and that he believes that Cuba's security will be secured with the help of the Soviet Union and all countries of the socialist camp. Up until this point, information from [UN Secretary-General] U Thant's talks indicate that the Cubans continue to insist upon Fidel's 5 Points being fulfilled, and they are opposed to UN inspections.

Pavlíček 340

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz,

(Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



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**Cable no. 341 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 1 November 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11.337 St

Arrived: 1.11.62 19:35

Processed: 2.11.62 01:00 Office of the President, G, Ku

Dispatched: 2.11.62 06:45

NEWSFLASH!

[Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa informed me of the results of the talks with [UN Secretary-General] U Thant. He qualified his [i.e., Thant's] manner as proper, with considerable sympathy and understanding for Cuba. Today, on 31 October, U Thant met only with the Cubans, without translators and other members of the delegation, among whom an Indian and an Arab were not pleasant. U Thant discussed the question of the Cubans' requests with them and acknowledged their right to submit the issues for consideration. The Cuban requests are based on discontinuing the blockade, fulfilling Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points, and not supporting an international inspection. The firmness of the Cuban government and the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people made an impression on U Thant. Apart from the negotiations he held talks with [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev, the Brazilians, and a Yugoslav. He asked Alekseev about the dismantling of the rockets and the manner in which they would be transported back to the Soviet Union. Alekseev said that he does not know anything about the bases and referred U Thant to the military experts. According to Roa, the Brazilians offered its good offices and were eager to present suggestions for the removal of Soviet bases on Cuba, but also for those of the USA in the entire Caribbean. They acknowledged Cuba's right to negotiate. In cooperation with the Brazilians, the Yugoslav also offered its good offices, wanting to gain support for the Cuban requests from Asian and African countries, especially those that signed the Belgrade Declaration. Furthermore, Roa informed us that during the night hours of 30 October he received a message from the Canadian government offering its good offices. Roa thanked the Canadian ambassador and referred to the discussions at the UN. At the end of the talks, in the name of the USA, U Thant requested information about

a US airman [Major Rudolf Anderson] who was shot down 27 October in the east. The Cubans provided information about the incident and promised to agree to ship his body to the USA. On the basis of preliminary information, the UN Security Council should be called together on 7 November and Roa will attend. Since the Cubans refused to budge on the issue of an international inspection, U Thant's entire group including [Cuban UN Ambassador Carlos] Lechuga departed together. The Brazilian delegation left that same day. Roa reported that Chile, Bolivia, and Uruguay refused to submit to the USA's pressure and break relations with Cuba. Of the Latin American countries, Brazil had the most correct approach, and Mexico was highly condemned for giving in to US pressures. Roa also praised the support of Yugoslavia and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, he revealed that Fidel will likely concern himself with two problems in his speech of 1 November. The first is the Cubans' orientation and the detention of anti-Soviet groups inside the country, actions supported by the Soviet Union in friendship and gratitude for the enormous help. The second point will be news about the results of negotiations with U Thant, the requests and guarantees granted Cuba. Roa openly admitted that while the government and Fidel are absolutely clear on the fact that the actions of the Soviet Union in the interest of preserving peace and preventing a nuclear war were correct, they cannot understand and accept the manner in which they were carried out -- [i.e.,] the very harsh political mistake, revealed also in [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev's documents, of presenting Cuba with a decision without preliminary talks or communications. They await [Soviet Deputy Premier] Mikoyan's explanations, which will clarify much. They have a real desire to quickly bring to a halt and paralyze the anti-Soviet campaign which was unleashed by counter-revolutionary elements and reactionaries, and caused much confusion. He understands the very difficult situation of Alekseev and the Soviet soldiers living in Cuba, and believes that the situation will improve after Fidel's speech, although it will be difficult to completely erase the incident from memory. Alekseev was present for the entire discussion and admitted big mistakes, expressing the hope that Mikoyan will clarify the situation. Roa said that the KRV very much welcomes Mikoyan's visit and sees it as an important political gesture given the current situation. Alekseev and Roa agreed that Guevara and Roa will be present for the arrival ceremony, without an invitation from the diplomatic office dealing with sensitive visits. Despite this, we are going to the airport with friends from countries of the socialist camp. I will send information about the course of the visit.

Pavlíček 341

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[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



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**Cable no. 347 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 1 November 1962 [received 2 November 1962]**

Telegram from Havana File # 11339

Arrived: 2.11.62 03:35

Processed: 2.11.62 05:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 2.11.62 06:00

NEWSFLASH!

Re. your 031.583

Your request will clarify the differences of opinions in the government, as well as our uneasiness. On the basis of [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev's last letter about the dismantling [of the missiles] supervised by the UN—without informing Fidel [Castro]—there was a harsh exchange of opinion in the government; we do not know the contents of the debate, but can for example deduce the views of the hitherto unbalanced socialist thoughts of members like [Minister of Education Armando] Hart, [economic advisor Raúl Cepero] Bonilla, [Minister of Health José Ramón] Machado, [Minister of Construction Osmani] Cienfuegos, Yadur [not further identified] and others. Also [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara, but he only learned of the dismantling in the evening hours of Sunday, was crushed and could not believe that the defensive agreement remained unfulfilled. Mory Jansov's commentary was also interesting, in line with [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa's viewpoint about which I write separately. Fidel prevented the danger of further divisions with the publication of his 5 Points and the request that unity be maintained at all costs in the government, as well as his personal explanation to the people about the USSR's actions meant to prevent a loss of prestige and block the anti-Soviet campaign. Our uneasiness then came at the stage where there were efforts to prevent disunity and divisions which would weaken the revolution and cause internal wavering. The situation on Monday and Tuesday resembled this exactly as the press, radio, and television were left to themselves, nobody directed them, causing the people to be let down; only the news that Fidel would appear and a national campaign to have Fidel's 5 Points ful-

filled contributed to a sense of solidarity and unity, although with deep reflections regarding the relationship to the USSR.

Pavlíček 347

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



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**Cable no. 346 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 1 November 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11.340 St

Arrived: 2.11.62 05:05

Processed: 2.11.62 06:10 Office of the President, G, Ku, Kl, 6, TO

Dispatched: 2.11.62 06:45

The Cuban press is stressing Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points and gathering other news from API without commentaries, and only a little from TASS. Journalists are very disoriented and embarrassed; some circles are even supporting anti-Soviet moods and anti-communism, although these tendencies are not determined. The press makes no mention of China's heightened position given its proclamation supporting the 5 Points and Cuba, nor of the Chinese-Indian conflict. We can expect the press to take some direction after Fidel's speech. Explain to ČTK [Czech News Agency] that Vavruš [a ČTK reporter] is consulting important steps with the embassy and cannot make note of certain negative realities included in our other, already sent messages. At a press conference we probed for reactions to the Czechoslovak government's gift—results are good and there were positive evaluations from our partners in East Germany (GDR), the USSR, etc. Details and analysis of individual tendencies in the press and the like will be sent by messenger. We recommend an increase of photos and materials about the situation via Prel and also the embassy.

Pavlíček 346

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



**Cable no. 348 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 2 November 1962**

Telegram from Havana

Arrived: 2.11.62 18:45

Processed: 3.11.62 01:50 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 3.11.62 06:00

Commentary related to [Cuban leader] Fidel [Castro]'s speech.

Together with our Cuban friends and our own, we think that Fidel's speech had considerable importance both domestically and abroad and shows his significant and quick political growth. His speech related the strength and unity of the Cuban revolutionary government to not allow an agreement under undignified terms, nor to allow the rights of the Cuban people to be trampled upon. As well, his evaluation of the internal situation and acknowledgement of the Cubans' fighting spirit and determination has and will have a large response internally and externally. I conclude that given the present situation where the UN is still discussing the matter and [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan has not yet arrived to clarify some open questions, he did a very good job of evaluating and explaining the situation regarding relations with the Soviet Union, and its views. He was able to speak openly about some disagreements that will be dealt with during joint talks, and on the other hand he clearly placed above all else the help and friendship of the USSR, as well as about the anti-Soviet campaign that was unleashed by the counter-revolutionaries and which was assisted by the unsuitable writings of the local press on Sunday 28 October. However, we would have liked to have heard an emphasis on the [critical] role of the USSR in saving world peace and preventing a nuclear war, although much of this could be deduced from the speech. He will probably concern himself with the entire situation after Mikoyan's visit and the talks end. Thus far the reaction to Fidel's speech means an absolute calming of the situation and a clear orientation for the Cubans in the current situation.

Pavlíček 348

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



**Report on Visit to Prague by Cuban Communist Party Leader Blas Roca Calderio, 6 November 1962**

Information regarding Blas Roca's stay in Prague

1. During his stay in Prague (1. – 4.11 [1-4 November]), Blas Roca met with Cuban ambassadors stationed in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and China, with whom he held talks; nothing of their content is known. While saying farewell to the Cuban ambassador in China, [Oscar] Pino [Santos], Blas Roca twice reminded him to convey his personal greetings to Mao Tse-tung [Zedong]. To comrade Petrov of the Bulgarian embassy in Prague, Roca said that of the socialist countries he likes Poland and Bulgaria the most. While he did not comment further on Poland, the comment regarding Bulgaria came in connection with the fact that he knew [Georgi] Dimitrov well and worked with him.

Blas Roca also spoke about solving the Cuban crisis with comrades Rumjancev and Sobolev of the OMS. The contents of their talks are in line with what he told us. However, with the Soviet comrades he did not speak with such sharpness and openness.

On Sunday at 10:00 am, therefore 4 hours before his scheduled flight to Cuba, Roca received a phone call at the villa from Havana, telling him to attend the meeting of the Bulgarian Communist Party. According to Roca, he will attend the Congress in Hungary and if there are no extraordinary changes, he will also be at the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

2. The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Paraguay, Oscar Creydt, told comrade Koernan: Via Cuba, the Paraguayan Party received a letter from the Communist Party of China in which the Chinese—on the basis of requests from the Communist Parties of Great Britain, New Zealand, Korea, and Indonesia—express the opinion that a council of representatives of communist parties should be elected for the purpose of discussing certain problems of the international communist movement. Creydt expressed the opinion that such a meeting will likely take place during the Bulgarian Congress.

[Handwritten addition]: (I think that this is a matter of the past. It will be necessary to ask comrade Creydt for precise details). [end of handwritten addition].

(Note: According to comrade Havlíček's information, a few days ago a Xinhua [Chinese state news agency] writer vis-



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ited the editorial offices of the magazine *Questions of Peace and Socialism* in Prague, and asked a representative of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Gibons, what sort of response would likely be raised within the Communist Party of Great Britain if the Chinese Communist Party were to release an independent statement regarding international questions).

6.11.1962 [6 November 1962]

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



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**Cable no. 350 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 6 November 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11532 Kr

Arrived: 6.11.62 14:30

Processed: 6.11.62 17:15 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, OMO

Dispatched: 6.11.62 17:30

To Kurk.

The situation regarding [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan's talks with the Cubans has been complicated by the unexpected death of comrade Mrs. Mikoyan which has struck Mikoyan deeply. The first meeting did not take place until 4 November. The Cuban delegation includes Fidel [Castro], the President [Osvaldo Dorticos], Raúl Castro, Che Guevara, Carlos R. Rodriguez, and [Emilio] Aragones. For now the Soviet side is composed of Mikoyan, [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev and the translator. The results are not yet known. [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa, to whom I passed on news from Ghana, indicated that according to [Cuban UN Ambassador Carlos] Lechuga there reigns a great deal of confusion at the UN regarding the next developments, for there is no one or coordinated set of views. Therefore [UN Secretary-General] U Thant is postponing a meeting of the Security Council. The USA has not reduced pressures and is in fact continuing to concentrate forces in Florida, strengthen Guantanamo, the flight inspections and the blockade. It is expected that a meeting of the OEA [OAS; Organization of American States] on 6 November will bring some developments, at least from the perspective of the USA. According to Polák, there is

much talk about the compromise proposal to "Finlandize" Cuba, a proposal which should be presented by Brazil. This would mean Cuban neutrality and an end to the base at Guantanamo. However, in reaction to some questions regarding Brazil's position, Roa said only that the Brazilians offer good services. There was a considerable calmness inside the country after Fidel's speech. However, many Cubans still retain considerable reservations about the USSR's actions, and they await Mikoyan's clarification. Security and defensive measures remain in effect and the people are prepared for a possible breach of faith by the USA.

Pavlíček 350

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



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**Cable no. 355 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 7 November 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 11594 V

Arrived: 7.11.62 17:15

Processed: 7.11.62 19:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6

Dispatched: 7.11.62 19:30

1. Roy [Mario Garcia] Inchaustegui was harshly criticized by [Cuban leader] Fidel [Castro] for the fact that instead of discussing Cuba's right to defense at the [UN] Security Council, he discussed the question of the authenticity of documents related to the bases. Moreover, they criticized him for the low level of readiness and the government's deviation from the Party line, which according to our information concerned only Fidel's speech of 23 October. [Inchaustegui was replaced as Cuba's UN ambassador by Carlos Lechuga on 30 October 1962—ed.]

2. We are asked about the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic's stance towards Fidel's 5 points. We are replying positively, in connection with [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan's acknowledged support. Yet I am still requesting an official viewpoint.

Pavlíček 355

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



**Cable no. 358 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 8 November 1962 (received 9 November 1962)**

Telegram from Havana File # 11677 Kr

Arrived: 9.11.62 03:00

Processed: 9.11.62 10:00 Office of the President, G, Ku, Š, Kl, 6

Dispatched: 9.11.62 10:30

According to the preliminary, incomplete, and sketchy discussions with the Soviet friends and the Cubans, the talks between [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan and the Cubans are continuing in great detail and with a large dose of patience on the part of Mikoyan. The Cubans remain adamant about refusing inspections, even on the open ocean, and they are absolutely against UN inspections. They are focused on Fidel [Castro]’s 5 Points which they persistently push. [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez’s speech at the ceremonial meeting marking the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of [the Russian Revolution of] October [1917] carried the same spirit, as he markedly underlined the 5 Points and strongly glorified 26 July. His words expressing confidence in the Soviet government’s support and greetings to [Soviet Premier] N.S. Khrushchev were reacted to very coolly by some [Cuban] government officials ([President Osvaldo] Dorticos, [Minister of Construction Osmany] Cienfuegos, [Commandante Jose Ramon] Fernandez, [Emilio] Aragones), without applause. Yesterday’s reception at the Soviet embassy drew huge numbers and the complete governmental delegation was marked by warm feelings and openness, but discussions still revealed the remains of doubtful tones regarding the USSR’s approach. Sinhu [Xinhua—state Chinese press agency] is making a special effort to feed those feelings with his blatant nonsensical information in a bulletin that the local press willingly accepts. There was even a comment about a new Munich. Let us believe in a solution, although it is probable that some issues of prestige and self-complacency are difficult to overcome without solid political arguments. We are counting on the fact that Mikoyan will inform us of the results at the conclusion of the talks.

Pavlíček 358

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: “Antonín Novotný, Kuba,” Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



**Cable no. 365 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 15 November 1962 (received 16<sup>th</sup>)**

Telegram from Havana File # 11.960 St

Arrived: 16.11.62 04:20

Processed: 16.11.62 05:45 Office of the President, G, Ku

Dispatched: 16.11.62 06:45

**NEWSFLASH**

A strictly confidential and scaled-down meeting of the leadership held in Prel on 14 November apparently gave the following instructions: Strict controls and reviews of news from the Soviet Union, and no publication in *Prensa Latina* of any news regarding peaceful coexistence nor about the solidarity of whomever with the Soviet Union, especially about the exports of arms, etc., until the situation is resolved. If possible, do not mention [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev. In the event of a critical situation, decisions will be made by Prel Carneado, an old member of the Party. Limitations placed on foreign correspondents and writers are also emphasized—they will get materials only from the director or his replacement. ADN and PAP allegedly protested. Vavruš is thus far without greater difficulties. Thus far unconfirmed information states that Pen, a former administrator and Revuelta’s successor, has been sentenced to death in connection with allowing a US reconnaissance plan to unfold—a government plan to establish a section for a secret agency within the offices of *Prensa Latina*, the goals of which are not yet known. Revuelta’s appeal is perhaps connected to the problems already mentioned, but he is not accused. Inspections and improvements in reporting are already underway—for example, the front page of *Pravda* let go of the question of preventing a world war, and support for Fidel Castro’s 5 Points remains, with a similar statement coming from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uruguay.

We are watching and consulting the entire question with the Soviet friends and will inform further.

Pavlíček 365

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: “Antonín Novotný, Kuba,” Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]



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**Cable no. 370 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 21 November 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 12.208 St

Arrived: 21.11.62 18:20

Processed: 21.11.62 20:45 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, 1, OMO

Dispatched: 22.11.62 06:35

**NEWSFLASH**

[Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan and [Soviet Ambassador Aleksandr] Alekseev invited all the friendly embassy leaders, except for the Albanians. Mikoyan provided information about the talks with the Cubans, though probably in a reserved fashion given the presence of the Chinese. Thus we did not consider it appropriate to ask deeper questions. Mikoyan said that it is necessary to look towards the future optimistically, although there will still be difficulties. The actions of the Soviet Union prevented a nuclear war and saved world peace. In time, nations will remember that the USA caused the situation and presented the danger of a nuclear war. Nothing about the Cuban revolution will change, it will be stronger and more resistant. In exchange for removal of the strategic materials, including bombers, Cuba will get a guarantee of non-aggression and the blockade will end. In effect, this means the end of the Monroe Doctrine and the Rio Pact. The OAS [Organization of American States] agreements also suffered a heavy shake-up. The Soviet Union, together with Cuba, agreed to a joint measure regarding the USA, and this will be negotiated after a discussion with them and [UN Secretary-General] U Thant at the Security Council. With Cuba's agreement, the Soviet Union will within one month remove the [IL-28] bombers, under a supervision which will be decided upon at the UN. Thus, the requests of the USA will be fulfilled. The joint requests of the Soviet Union and Cuba include an end to the blockade, an end to provocative flights, and negotiations regarding Fidel [Castro]'s 5 Points. The proposals of Brazil and Latin American states to create a non-nuclear zone are seen as favorable on the whole, although with some reservations which Cuba and the Soviet Union will state precisely at the UN. Where inspections are concerned, Mikoyan said that U Thant formerly had three alternatives prepared. The first was to be an inspection of Cuban territory by members of the United Nations Secretariat, the second by

ambassadors of Latin American countries posted in Cuba, and then the third inspection by ambassadors of neutral countries posted in Cuba. Given the one-sided approach and unfavorable conditions for Cuba, U Thant is currently considering creating a permanent watch unit at the Security Council which would undertake similar inspections if required. The proposal has not yet been discussed with the USA. That should create the conditions for negotiating an agreement at the Security Council. Mikoyan assured us that Fidel consulted U Thant beforehand on the point where the USA is warned that each airplane in flight will be shot down. [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev approved the approach. In the end he evaluated U Thant's role solidly, saying that he proved to be very objective. Mikoyan highly praised the honesty, solid nature and determination of Fidel and the Cubans, expressing the wish that there be more of such people and countries. He said that the Soviet Union still had inconsistent views some years after the revolution, never mind that all Cubans should not have them too and instead understand everything at once. They will understand with time. In conclusion, Alekseev told me that he will give me more information. From this I infer that Mikoyan did not go into great detail about his discussion with the Cubans in the presence of the Chinese, and that he will inform Alekseev of these details. Mikoyan's departure has not yet been fixed. I will send further information after my conversation with Alekseev.

Pavlíček 370

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Cable no. 384 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 24 November 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # ?

Arrived: 24.11.62 17:35

Processed: 24.11.62 23:40 Office of the President, G, Ku, 6, OMO

Dispatched: 26.11.62 06:40

**IMMEDIATELY**

At the time of this report our friend [Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan is awaiting the results of meet-

ings in New York, and preparing for a meeting of the [UN] Security Council in the event that an agreement is reached. As soon as the position of the Security Council will be negotiated he will fly to Moscow again, via New York. Meanwhile, we can still see reservations about the approach of the Soviet Union and often disappointment, as reflected in talks with and speeches of government officials, as well as in the mood of the general population. The Cubans claim that the Cuban revolution will suffer not only internally by way of Fidel [Castro]'s authority, the government's authority, and a slowing of the revolutionary process, but most especially in the Latin American countries and others fighting for national liberation and independence. At the same time they condemn as politically risky and harmful to the socialist camp the position of the People's Republic of China, and the speeches of the Albanians. They claim that in contrast to the earlier limitless confidence in the Soviet Union, not long ago supported by [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos at the UN and by Fidel, there is a markedly noticeable decrease in the country's prestige and a loss of trust. About three views of strong doubts are taking shape which also match the observations of the Soviet friends and correspond to difficulties during their explanations. The first reality is the Cubans' opinion that the USA did not give and is not willing to give any definitive guarantees, which not only confirms the continuation of flight observations and provocations, but also gives no indication of the withdrawal of forces from Florida and in the end also of the OAS [Organization of American States]'s last maneuver of organizing actions against the subversive acts of Cuba in Latin American countries. The Cubans refuse to believe any US guarantees. The second is the categorical and unchangeable view of Cubans regarding any kind of inspections on Cuba. They say that Cuba did nothing wrong and inspections indicate a humiliation and an attempt by the USA, the aggressor, to further provoke and insult Cuba. They do not even agree with inspections on the open ocean because it is an issue between the Soviet Union and the USA. They consider even this to be humiliating. Finally, as a third point they believe that the situation was bought out at far too high a price at the expense of the Cuban revolution, and without preliminary discussions with Fidel regarding questions of inspections; to this point only the Soviet Union and Cuba have fulfilled the concessions while the USA continues its arrogant provocative actions and declarations. They fully understand the Soviet steps taken to secure peace and avert a nuclear war, though they fear for the Cuban revolution because of the absolutely insufficient guarantees. The viewpoints expressed in conversations with us and other friends are decidedly reserved and one is able to observe the mixed feelings of confusion, disap-

pointment, and insufficient understanding, which the press, radio, and television all help to spread. We think that this is an unfortunate reflection of the situation in the government and ORI [Integrated Revolutionary Organizations]. Despite this, together with our friends in favor of honesty and diligence amongst the leaders of the revolution, we believe in a return to a better understanding, though not without a long and difficult road of explanations and discussions.

Pavlíček 384

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



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**Cable no. 388 from the Czechoslovak Embassy in Havana (Pavlíček), 28 November 1962**

Telegram from Havana File # 12540 P.

Arrived: 28.11.62 19:25

Processed: 28.11.62 22:10 G, HTS

Dispatched: 29.11.62 06:00

Re. your 1448.

The partner critically needs practice ammunition. According to the announcement he has no other option but to accept a delay in the terms of delivery. Lopez [not further identified] is not willing to negotiate directly with the Bulgarian People's Republic, nor with their new representative in Havana. He does not consider this proper. He is asking us, as allies, to discuss the delivery of the remainder, and if possible already in the first quarter of the year. According to Minfar's [Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces] list the number of outstanding ammunition supplies to be delivered stand at 40 204 000, as opposed to the 37 000 000 advised. Send word on whether the difference has not already been sent off in one of the prepared transports. I ask for a return reply. Message sent by Zachař.

Pavlíček 388.

*[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 122. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]*



**Czechoslovak Ambassador to the United States (Dr. Miloslav Ruzek), Report on Anastas Mikoyan's Conversations in Washington, 29 November 1962 (passed to CPCz General Secretary Novotný, 18 December 1962)**

Dr M. Ruzek  
TOP SECRET!

Comrade A. Novotný  
(Received in duplicate)  
18 December 1962

Minutes of the communications of Deputy Chairman of the Ministers of the USSR A. I. Mikoyan at the dinner in the Soviet Embassy, 29 November 1962

Comrade Mikoyan discussed his stay in Cuba and his talks with US President J. Kennedy in Washington, on 29 November 1962, in which Ambassador Dobrynin also participated. During the conversation President Kennedy brought up the idea of a certain division of spheres, in the sense that the Western hemisphere should be considered the area of American influence and that the USSR should not interfere in the Western hemisphere. There followed a discussion on the question of supporting revolutions, where Kennedy and [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk sought to show that the USSR supported revolutions against the USA. Comrade Mikoyan refuted this view and argued, using the example of Castro, in the sense that, after all, the USA had its representation abroad in Cuba, a monopoly of its affiliations, and many possibilities to influence the situation, and none of that helped. Fidel Castro had started out as a large estate owner, but developed into a socialist, not because of the support of the USSR but because of the development of socialist relations in Cuba. At this point Kennedy and Rusk disagreed, arguing that Castro was an enemy of the USA. Mikoyan pointed out that the USA itself had made Castro into an enemy of the USA (if one can even say that). The USA should try to understand the dynamics of the Cuban revolution and live with it in peace.

Concerning the topical question of the Cuban situation Kennedy argued that the American intervention became necessary after weapons had been brought to the island, and stated that the USSR would not have been able to sleep either

if the USA brought that sort of weapon to Finland. Mikoyan replied that the USA had its weapons in Turkey, which is even closer to Armenia than Finland is, and yet the Soviet political representatives sleep well because they are judicious people who know that these weapons are under American control, and that if the American top-level leadership gave the command for their use against the USSR, that would be suicidal for the USA.

Mikoyan argued that the USSR had made good on its obligations stemming from the exchange of letters between [Soviet Premier Nikita S.] Khrushchev and Kennedy, of 26-28 October 1962, and that it was therefore up to the USA to make good on its remaining obligations - namely, to give formal guarantees that it would not attack Cuba. Kennedy and Rusk argued that the USSR had not made good on its obligations to allow spot checks and to introduce controls against the redeployment of offensive weapons in Cuba, and that therefore the USA could not give formal guarantees. Mikoyan argued in response that Khrushchev, when he had reached an agreement with Kennedy, could understandably commit himself only in so far as it concerned Soviet property - namely, missiles and IL-28 aircraft - and not in the matter of inspection on Cuban territory, where the Cuban government has jurisdiction and does not want to permit inspection. The USSR therefore offered inspection carried out on the open seas, without allowing inspectors on Soviet territory, that is to say, on deck, and that had been agreed to even before Mikoyan's departure for Cuba. Kennedy and Rusk, nevertheless, stuck to their position, which they further argued by saying that guarantees against the re-deployment of offensive weapons in Cuba were necessary because China, too, could send similar weapons there in two or three years.

The question of the violation of Cuban airspace by over-flights of American aircraft and the question of bases on foreign territory were also discussed. Mikoyan protested against continuing over-flights over Cuban territory by American aircraft, and stated, among other things, that these over-flights were not necessary even for technical reasons, because considering the small width of the island of Cuba, the zone containing the whole territory of Cuba could be photographed from positions above the open seas. (This was confirmed to Mikoyan by John McCloy in New York.) Kennedy and Rusk defended the necessity of over-flights with the necessity of checking the dismantling of the IL-28s, and at the same time pointed out an article in the New York Daily Mirror, where it said that nuclear weapons in Cuba were concealed in caves. Mikoyan brushed off this argument with a joke, saying that articles like that were intended for idiots. During the discussion on bases in foreign territory Kennedy stated that their



bases in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe were becoming less important, and that they were planning to close them down.

Apart from the Cuban case, Kennedy mentioned Laos, but Mikoyan was not prepared to discuss the matter. Other international problems, for example Berlin, Germany, and the like, were not discussed.

Concerning the experiences from his stay in Cuba, Mikoyan reported that the orders from the Central Committee of the CPSU were along the lines that no pressure was to be exerted on Castro. Considering the Cubans complained that Mikoyan had not sufficiently defended their interests in New York (they believed the American press), Mikoyan made a statement to the press before leaving for Havana, in which he supported the five Cuban points. Castro appreciated that very much, especially because it was done back in the USA and not after arriving in Cuba. From the beginning Castro rejected talks with the USA and the efforts to obtain guarantees against invasion, arguing that weapons were a better guarantee for them and that it was impossible to set great store by American guarantees. He insisted on the five-point program, and did not even want to go to welcome Mikoyan at the airport. When, however, the agencies carried the news about Mikoyan making the statement in New York before his departure, Castro decided to go to the airport after all; [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos, however, did not go, which is, anyway, within protocol, because it was unnecessary for the head of state to be at the airport. During his departure, both Castro and Dorticos were at the airport.

After the withdrawal of the missiles the Cubans are left with three kinds of MIG—namely, the MIG 17, 19, and 21—as well as defensive missiles. According to Comrade Mikoyan, the American U-2 aircraft piloted by Major [Rudolf] Anderson had been shot down by a Soviet crew. There had also been other operations against American aircraft.

The population of Cuba behaved very well, and everything was flawless in the area of military measures. Economically there are many problems, but the harvest will be better. Intensive activity had been undertaken by the Chinese; they had organized blood donations, sent resolutions, etc. This activity, however, has had no influence on the leadership of Cuba. Before his departure, Khrushchev was told by Castro that Cuba was with the USSR and would continue to be with it. In this connection Mikoyan reiterated some of the arguments that he had used in discussions with Cuban representatives, concerning the pseudo-revolutionary 'positions' of the Chinese. The Chinese are very active in the use of revolutionary clichés, but have done virtually nothing useful for Cuba. Soviet garrisons were in Cuba, and if it came to a fight, they would give their lives, and not just give blood in a clinic. Instead of attacking Macao or Hong Kong and thus compli-

cating the relationship of the USA with her allies Portugal and Britain, the People's Republic of China had attacked India, a neutral country, and was trying to enter into friendly relations with Pakistan, a member of an aggressive pact. Even in carrying out her policies in Tibet, the People's Republic of China had made a lot of blunders, mainly in assuming that it was enough to have an agreement with the leading figures of the Lama system; ultimately the shortcomings had become evident, which the Chinese did not want to admit. Comrade Mikoyan compared the behavior of the Chinese during the Cuban crisis with the behavior of the ultra-left during the Peace of Brest-Litovsk in World War I, when Lenin had to defend a sober approach to the situation against the cliché-mongers. The USSR explained to the People's Republic of China that it would be better if India received arms from socialist countries, and it would, in fact, thus be possible to influence her in the event of international difficulties, rather than from capitalist countries. The Chinese do not want to understand that, and it was now coming about that [former Indian Defense Minister] Krishna Menon's position has practically been wiped out, while the position of the right-wingers, such as [Indian Finance Minister] Morarji Desai, had been strengthened, and the situation of the [Communist] Party in India had been made difficult. At the same time, Mikoyan stated that the delivery of Soviet MIG-21 aircraft to India, which was being written about a great deal in the press, depended on the concrete situation at the time they were to be delivered, in December 1962.

The Cubans value in particular the attitude of Brazil and of President [João] Goulart personally, who sent his own envoy to explain the position of Brazil. Mexico had been placed under pressure by the USA, and they submitted to that pressure. Another country with a positive approach to Cuba was Chile. Mikoyan further reported that the American communiqué that had been noted in the press after his conversation with Kennedy had been prepared by the USA at Mikoyan's request; he had asked Kennedy for them to prepare a communiqué in view of the fact that they were more familiar with the American press.

During the conversation Kennedy, using the same domestic-political reasons, explained his reluctance to issue a formal statement against the invasion of Cuba. In this, he reiterated his earlier statements that the USA had not intended to attack Cuba and that they had been concerned only with offensive weapons. In this sense, Mikoyan also said that Kennedy's statement at the press conference of 20 November 1962 had been discussed beforehand in correspondence between Khrushchev and Kennedy.

Mikoyan also replied to our questions on the situation in Cuba, particularly concerning the situation in industry and agriculture.

Washington, 30 November 1962

[Source: Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 193. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma and translated by Linda Mastalir.]

## Notes

1 Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"—Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958-1964* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), pp. 12-13.

2 "ice-breaker": Severo Aguirre, a leading figure in Cuba's People's Socialist Party (PSP), quoted in comments to a Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) official J. Hendrych in Hendrych's March 1959 memorandum on their conversation, presented here.

3 On the February 1960 visit to Cuba by senior Soviet communist figure Anastas Mikoyan, Nikita Khrushchev's closest associate on the Soviet party Presidium (Politburo), see esp. Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 2012); Sergo Mikoyan accompanied his father on this ground-breaking trip to the island, which he recounts in the book, an earlier version of which appeared in Russian.

4 For more on this story, see Hana Bortlová, *Československo a Kuba 1959-1962* (Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy v Praze, 2011); *Czechoslovakia and Cuba in the Years 1959-1962* (Praha: FF UK (ed. Scholia), 2011). ISBN: 8073083574, 978-80-7308-358-8.

5 See proposed CPCz Politburo resolution, September 1959, and associated documents, below.

6 Fursenko and Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"*, pp. 22-25 (quotation on 24).

7 See the report of a conversation with Dulles by UK ambassador Sir Harold Caccia, 24 November 1959, FO 371, The [United Kingdom] National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), Kew Gardens, England, copy available on the website of the National Security Archive (press release of 23 March 2001). A few months after this conversation, in March 1960, the Eisenhower Administration would secretly approve Operation Zapata, the plan that would a year later, after modification by the incoming Kennedy Administration, produce the fiasco at the Bay of Pigs.

8 Cuban Foreign Ministry Raúl Roa visited Prague in June 1961 and presumably discussed military aid, though the records are not reproduced here. More murky than the military relationship, the Czech documents from 1961 printed herein also point to intelligence cooperation between Prague and Havana—a couple of cryptic cables refer to assassination plotting against Fidel Castro. Of course, since the Church Committee investigation of the mid-1970s, there has been a voluminous literature concerning CIA involvement

in assassination plotting against Castro during this period, but a fascinating potential avenue for future research would be to carefully comb available intelligence archives of former Warsaw Pact countries in Eastern and Central Europe—especially with KGB and Cuban intelligence archives essentially off-limits—to gain some indication of whether, and to what extent, communist secret police were able to track such conspiracies. For Cuban intelligence report on CIA-aided preparations to invade Cuba by anti-Castro Cuban exiles around the time of the Bay of Pigs, see the selection of translated Cuban reports from January-May 1961 published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

9 "Czechoslovakia In Cuba," 17 June 1961, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) Czechoslovak Unit Background Report, Open Society Archives, box 16, folder 2, report 44, on OSA website.

10 Ibid.

11 On Mikoyan's missions, see Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, ed. Svetlana Savranskaya, cited above.

12 "Eastern Europe's Economic Commitments In Cuba," 12 November 1962, RFE/RL Background Report, Open Society Archives, box 14, folder 1, report 237, on OSA website.

13 See, e.g., Pavlíček's cables nos. 319 (October 24), 339 (October 31), 341 (November 1), all printed herein.

14 Czechoslovak (foreign ministry?) official, Stross, quoted in report from Hungarian Embassy, Prague, on Czechoslovakia-Cuba Relations, 25 June 1963, published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

15 See the report of Miloslav Ruzek, Czechoslovak Ambassador to the United States, on the 29 November 1962 meeting with Mikoyan, printed herein.

16 See the compilations of translated Polish and Hungarian documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

17 For the report of a Czechoslovak military delegation that visited Cuba in March-April 1965, led by Defense Minister Gen. Bohumil Lemskey, which met with, among others, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, see the compilation of translated Polish, Bulgarian, and Czech documents on East European-Cuban contacts in early 1965 published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

18 Václav David was the Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs.

19 František Krajčír was the Czechoslovak Minister of International Trade.

20 The first page of this report consists of a page with these hand-written notes.

21 The section in italics is added to the proposal in pen.

22 In the previous resolution proposal V. David's name was included only in the "those to be notified" column.

23 The main Technical Department of the Ministry of International Trade is de facto Omnipol. Apart from the export of so-called "special materials" under the company Omnipol, which concerns itself with foreign trade, the employees of the Technical Department were directly responsible for acquiring goods under embargo by the West.

24 Director of the Technical Department, Ministry of International Trade, František Mareš became the head of Omnipol at the end of the 1950s. His arrival ended a series of scandals (the incapability of the former Director, Antonín Podzimka, conflicts with the general staff of the Ministry of National Defense, with Minister of the Interior Rudolf Barák, the leak of information regarding a contract with Egypt, and especially the detainment of the Czechoslovak vessel *Lidice* that contained arms for Algerian rebel mutineers) that had accompanied the Technical Department's work. After a certain time František Mareš was succeeded by František Langer, another long-time boss of the Technical Department.

25 [Ed.note: According to Czech scholar Oldřich Tůma, Svazarm was a frequently used abbreviated name for *Svaz pro spolupráci s armádou* [Association for cooperation with the army], an organization for pre-military training of youth, military sports, etc.]

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# “We Were Truly on the Verge of War” —

## A Conversation with Nikita Khrushchev, 30 October 1962

Document Obtained by Oldřich Tůma

**E**d. Note: In the days after agreeing to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba, Nikita Khrushchev welcomed a series of high-ranking communist visitors to Moscow for the annual commemorations of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. One such guest was the General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) and President of Czechoslovakia, Antonín Novotný, who came to the Kremlin on Tuesday, 30 October 1962, for a bilateral conversation with the Soviet leader.<sup>1</sup> As revealed by the detailed Czechoslovak record of their talk excerpted below, Khrushchev used exceptionally candid language to defend his handling of the superpower confrontation, what he described as “six days which shook the world.” While well aware that many fellow communists (including the Chinese and Cubans) regarded his agreement under pressure from US President John F. Kennedy to remove the missiles as a humiliating surrender to the imperialists, Khrushchev stoutly defended his action as not only a necessary measure to avoid a catastrophic nuclear war, but actually a victory, since, he claimed, the Soviet missiles had attained their objective—safeguarding the survival of the Cuban revolution. As for the leader of that revolution, Fidel Castro, who had already indicated his displeasure with Moscow’s concession to the Americans, Khrushchev bluntly criticized him for failing to comprehend the true nature of war in the thermonuclear age, and being so “blinded...by revolutionary passion,” that at the height of the crisis, he had suggested in a letter to Khrushchev that the Soviets should be the first to use nuclear weapons, striking the United States should it attack Cuba, even though this would lead promptly to a global incineration.<sup>2</sup> Explaining why he had to “act quickly”—Castro and the Cubans were already grumbling about his failure to consult or even notify them prior to agreeing to Kennedy’s demands on 28 October—Khrushchev admitted feeling “completely aghast” at Castro’s approach. Nor was he impressed by Castro’s complaint that the Kennedy’s pledge not to invade Cuba was worthless because the imperialists could not be trusted; after all, he admitted frankly, the imperialists couldn’t trust them either—Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko had told JFK to his face that there were no atomic missiles in Cuba, “And he was lying. And how! And that was the right thing to do, he had orders from the party.” (The Soviet also had only scorn for the belligerent Chinese, mocking Mao Zedong’s glib dictum that imperialism was a “paper tiger” with the observation that it in fact was a tiger that was not only not paper but “can give you a nice bite in the backside.”)

*In many respects, this short record is one of the sensational documents to emerge from the communist world’s archives on Cold War history since the collapse of the Soviet bloc, and then the Soviet Union, a little more than two decades ago. Almost tantamount to an “oral history interview” of Khrushchev while the crisis was still fresh (and even still in progress, to some extent), his exposition to Novotný, while obviously self-serving, foreshadows the recollections of the crisis he would dictate into a tape-recorder at his dacha after being ousted from power in 1964—and his derisive view of Castro’s willingness to provoke global thermonuclear war for the sake of revolution would be excised due to its sensitivity from the first two volumes of Khrushchev’s memoirs that were smuggled out of the USSR and published in the West—Khrushchev Remembers (1970) and Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament (1974)—and only appear nearly two decades later, in Khrushchev Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes (1990). Here, contemporaneously and vividly, we can hear Khrushchev’s inimitable voice, strongly asserting the rectitude of his conduct—and to a lesser comrade of a subservient satellite in no position to contradict him—and blasting, even mocking, those who disagreed with him, yet also, clearly, still shaken by how close he and Kennedy had come only days earlier to going over the brink, and plunging their nations, and the world, into the nuclear abyss, dooming millions. This document was found by Oldřich Tuma in the CPCz Central Committee records in Prague and circulated to participants at the October 2002 conference (principally organized by the National Security Archive) in Havana to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the missile crisis, but has never before been published.—J.H.*



Minutes of Conversation between the Delegations of the CPCz and the CPSU, The Kremlin, 30 October 1962 (excerpt)

Present: CPCz: Novotný, Hendrych, Šimůnek, Dvořák  
CPSU: Khrushchev, Kozlov, Brezhnev, Kosygin,  
Kolesnikov, Zimyanin

[....]

### Cuba

Concerning the problem of Cuba, Comrade Khrushchev said: Today it is now possible to consider the danger of armed conflict to have been averted. The Americans may have flown over Cuba, but we have shot down one U-2 aircraft with our missiles [on 27 October]. The Cubans announced that they shot down a foreign plane. The Americans said that one of their planes had probably crashed into the sea (but it crashed into Cuba, and the pilot [Maj. Rudolf Anderson] was killed). We recommended to the Americans that they should not fly over Cuba, and they stopped.

How did this situation develop? We knew that the Americans wanted to attack Cuba. As early as in his conversation with [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko [on 18 October] President Kennedy was very reserved and very aggressively inclined concerning Cuba. Both we and the Americans talked about Berlin—both sides with the same aim, namely, to draw attention away from Cuba; the Americans, in order to attack it; we, in order to make the USA uneasy and postpone attacking Cuba.

The Americans announced maneuvers at sea—20,000 Marines. The focus of the maneuvers was “conquering the Island and overthrowing the dictator” and the code word was “Ortsac,” which is Castro backwards. (That, by the way, is a game we played in school.) The maneuvers were suddenly called off, allegedly after a storm at sea, but that was followed by the president’s speech [on 22 October], hysteria was unleashed in the USA, and a blockade was announced.

We believe that shortly before the beginning of the maneuvers, their intelligence discovered that our missiles were in Cuba, and the Americans became furious. Another possibility (as we have now been told by our intelligence) is that the presence of our missiles in Cuba was discovered by West German intelligence and then communicated to the USA.<sup>3</sup>

Naturally we wanted the presence of our missiles with atomic warheads to remain secret. That is obviously impossible in Cuba. They were hardly the most powerful missiles, but the Americans calculated well when it came to their range—they could have reached Washington and New York.

We now know the subsequent course of events. We had to act very quickly. That is also why we even used radio to contact the president, because the other means might have been too slow. This time we really were on the verge of war.

We received a letter from [Fidel] Castro in which he told us that the USA would attack Cuba within twenty-four hours.<sup>4</sup> That would mean nuclear war. We could not be certain that they would not do so. The presence of our missiles

provoked them too much; the Americans thus sensed the winds of war from up close. It was necessary to act quickly. That is why we issued the statement [on 28 October] that we would dismantle the missiles if the USA declared it swore not to attack Cuba. (The missiles, by the way, are of two kinds: some are placed on the ground, the others underground. The ones on the ground can be destroyed by a blast of air. We had both sorts of missile in Cuba, as well as our officers and technical staff. We were concerned about them, too.)

In a letter, Fidel Castro proposed that we ourselves should be the first to start an atomic war.<sup>5</sup> Do you know what that would mean? That probably cannot even be expressed at all. We were completely aghast. Castro clearly has no idea about what thermonuclear war is. After all, if a war started, it would primarily be Cuba that would vanish from the face of the Earth. At the same time, it is clear that with a first strike one cannot today knock the opponent out of the fight. There can always be a counter-strike, which can be devastating. There are, after all, missiles in the earth, which intelligence does not know about; there are missiles on submarines, which cannot be knocked out of the fight right away, and so on. What would we gain if we ourselves started a war? After all, millions of people would die, in our country too. Can we even contemplate a thing like that? Could we allow ourselves to threaten the world of socialism which was hard won by the working class? Only a person who has no idea what nuclear war means, or who has been so blinded, for instance, like Castro, by revolutionary passion, can talk like that. We did not, of course, take up that proposal, especially because we had a chance to avert war. What the Americans feared most, by the way, was that the missiles were in the hands of the Cubans and that the Cubans would start a war. That is why in our letter to the president we stressed also that the missiles were in the hands of our officers, who would not fire before receiving orders from the Soviet government. From our intelligence reports we knew that the Americans were afraid of war. Through certain persons, who they knew were in contact with us, they made it clear they would be grateful if we helped them get out of this conflict.

We agreed to dismantle the missiles also because their presence in Cuba is essentially of little military importance to us. The missiles were meant to protect Cuba from attack; they helped us to wrench out of the imperialists the statement that they would not attack Cuba, and they thus served their main purpose. Otherwise we can hit the USA from elsewhere, and we do not need missiles in Cuba for that. On the contrary, their deployment on our territory is safer for us and our technical personnel who look after them.

Concerning Turkey, in our second letter to the president we backed down from that stipulation. We understood that



these questions are too far removed from the concrete situation in the Caribbean and Cuba, that Kennedy could not answer them because he would have also to consult with other members of NATO, and the situation was too serious for us to postpone its solution.

### Conclusion:

How should one assess the result of these six days which shook the world? Who won? I am of the opinion that we won. One must start from the final aims we set ourselves. What aim did the Americans have? To attack Cuba and get rid of the Cuban Republic, to establish a reactionary regime in Cuba. Things did not work as they planned. Our main aim was to save Cuba, to save the Cuban revolution. That is why we sent missiles to Cuba. We achieved our objective – we wrenched the promise out of the Americans that they would not attack Cuba and that other countries on the American continent would also refrain from attacking Cuba. That would not have happened without our missiles in Cuba. The USA would have attacked Cuba. The proximity of our missiles made them understand, perhaps for the first time, that we have weapons that are at least as strong as theirs. Though they knew we had atomic weapons, they kept calming themselves by saying that Russia, with its missiles, is somewhere far away, whereas Cuba is right next door. But now they have felt the winds of war in their own house.

One might ask whether we made concessions. Of course we did. It was one concession for another. (Because ultimately it is no business of the United States what kind of weapons Cuba has.) But this mutual concession has brought us victory.

This clash (and we were truly on the verge of war) demonstrated that war today is not inevitably destined by fate, that it can be avoided. The Chinese claim was therefore once again refuted, as well as their assessments of the current era, the current balance of forces. Imperialism, as can be seen, is no paper tiger; it is a tiger that can give you a nice bite in the backside. That is why one has to be careful of it. At the same time, however, it is not a tiger that determines whether or not there will be war. The Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence thus gained a glorious victory and graphic confirmation. This encounter was truly a classic manifestation of peaceful coexistence, which is nothing other than continuous struggle, a sequence of conflicts, one concession after another. Only in such a struggle is it possible today to keep the peace and to win one position after another from the imperialists.

Castro now tells us that the USA cannot be trusted, that the USA can break its promise. Of course, they cannot be trusted. But we won't get anywhere with that sort of argu-

ment. Following that logic, a child in a socialist country would have to pounce on the imperialists almost as soon as it was born. Today, however, it will be harder for the imperialists to attack Cuba in front of the whole world. We cannot, after all, permit a war just because the imperialists cannot be trusted. (Comrade Gromyko, incidentally, stated that we have no atomic missiles in Cuba. And he was lying. And how! And that was the right thing to do; he had orders from the Party. So, the imperialists cannot trust us either.) One of the important consequences of the whole conflict and of our approach is the fact that the whole world now sees us as the ones who saved peace. I now appear to the world as a lamb. That is not bad either. The pacifist [Bertrand] Russell writes me thank-you letters. I, of course, have nothing in common with him, except that we both want peace.

Such, on the whole, are the results of these six tense days. (In the presence of Comrade Novotný and other members of our delegation, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU debated also the letter to Comrade Castro, in which the position of the Soviet Union in the whole conflict is explained, and the reason the USSR was unable to agree to Castro's proposal is also explained.)

[Source: *Central State Archive, Archive of the CC CPCz, (Prague); File: "Antonín Novotný, Kuba," Box 193. Obtained by Oldřich Tůma. Translated by Linda Mastalir.*]

### Notes

1 Among other leaders who came to Moscow at the end of October and in early November were Poland's Władysław Gomułka, East Germany's Walter Ulbricht, and, a few days later, Hungary's Janos Kadar. For Kadar's report on his talks in Moscow, given to his Hungarian comrades on 12 November 1962, see the collection of translated Hungarian documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis elsewhere in this issue of the *CWHP Bulletin*.

2 For Castro's 26 (actually 27) October 1962 letter to Khrushchev and other correspondence between them in late October 1962, see James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), pp. 474-91.

3 Ed. note: It is not clear where Khrushchev obtained this idea; no evidence has emerged to suggest that West German intelligence alerted the US government to the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba. For contacts between the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) during the crisis, see the collection of translated FRG documents published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWHP Bulletin*.

4 Ed. note: In fact, in his letter, dated October 26 but composed during the night of October 26-27, Castro judged a US attack "almost imminent within the next 24 to 72 hours." See Fidel

Castro to Khrushchev, 26 October 1962, in James G. Blight, Bruce J. Allyn, and David A. Welch, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse* (NY: Pantheon, 1993). p. 509-10.

5 Ed. note: In his October 26 letter, cited above, Castro advised Khrushchev that if “the imperialists invade Cuba with the goal of occupying it, the danger that the aggressive policy poses for humanity is so great that following that event the Soviet Union must

never allow the circumstances in which the imperialists could launch the first nuclear strike against it ....that would be the moment to eliminate such danger forever through an act of clear legitimate defense, however harsh and terrible the solution would be, for there is no other.”

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# Czechoslovakia and Cuba, 1963

Introduced by James G. Hershberg

**T**he two documents below offer communist-world insights into relations between Czechoslovakia and Cuba—and, more broadly, between the Soviet bloc and Havana—during 1963.

The first document, from the Hungarian archives, is a June 1963 report from Budapest's embassy in Prague on the state of Czechoslovak-Cuban relations, based on a conversation with a Czechoslovak foreign ministry official. It takes a basically positive view of the development of relations, reflecting increased optimism for closer Soviet-Cuban (and therefore Czechoslovak-Cuban) ties following the lengthy visit to the Soviet Union by Cuban leader Fidel Castro from 27 April to 3 June. Castro's trip included extensive meetings with Nikita Khrushchev, and was widely viewed as having overcome many of the tensions between Moscow and Havana that resulted from Khrushchev's decision at the climax of the Cuban Missile Crisis the previous October to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba, under United Nations inspection, a step taken without prior notification or consultation with the Cuban government. On returning to Havana, Castro made such positive comments regarding the Soviet Union that observers viewed Cuba as having moved closer to the Soviets and, therefore, further from Beijing in the emerging Sino-Soviet schism.<sup>1</sup> The translated document, along with other Hungarian materials published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*, was obtained by the Cold War History Research Center in Budapest for the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., in preparation for the October 2002 conference in Havana to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, a gathering the Archive co-sponsored.

The second document is a Czech record of a December 1963 meeting in Prague between a senior official of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) and a leading Cuban communist official, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, head of Cuba's National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA). Rodriguez, a member of the inner circle around Fidel Castro, candidly acknowledged some ongoing problems and "misunderstandings" in Czech-Cuban relations, though he tried to minimize them. Trying to rebut the "false" opinion that Cuba was backing the Chinese in international affairs,

he also tried to reassure his host (and through him, the Soviets) that some recent Cuban foreign policy moves (e.g., Havana's refusal to sign the treaty banning above-ground nuclear testing reached by the Soviets and Americans in the summer of 1963) "absolutely" did not reflect an alignment with the Chinese (who loudly denounced the limited test-ban treaty) but Cuba's own concerns; Rodriguez also felt compelled to explain (rather sheepishly) the fact that the Chinese embassy in Havana was allowed to continue spreading anti-Soviet propaganda.<sup>2</sup> On two other sensitive topics in which there was disagreement between Moscow and Havana, Rodriguez also discussed Cuba's promotion of a militant line to promote revolution in Latin America and its strong opposition to the "notorious" proposal of some countries (e.g., Mexico and Brazil) to create an atom-free zone in Latin America, which Havana opposed so long as it left unclear the right of the United States to use its bases in the Panama Canal zone and elsewhere for nuclear purposes. In sum, the document illuminates contacts between Cuba and the Soviet bloc (and between Cuba and Czechoslovakia, its most active partner within the Warsaw Pact<sup>3</sup>) at a delicate moment in their relationship, and in the communist movement as a whole. This document was obtained from the Czech National Archives by James Hershberg and translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.



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## DOCUMENT No. 1

Report from Hungarian Embassy, Prague, on  
Czechoslovak-Cuban Relations, 25 June 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
TOP SECRET!

499/top secret 1963.

Prague, 25 June 1963.

Official: L. Balassa

Subject: Relations between Cuba and Czechoslovakia

Typed by: OE  
Written in three copies  
Ref. No. 001254/1/1963.  
To Center: two copies  
To Embassy: one copy

Based on the above order, Stross, the deputy head of the Sixth Main Department [of the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs], reported the following:

Since the victory of the Cuban revolution, relations between Czechoslovakia and Cuba have been developing at the highest level. Czechoslovakia has provided the young Latin American republic with both political and economic help from the beginning. In the field of politics [the relationship developed] in such a form that Cuba has been visited by different government delegations at ministerial level /the visits of the minister of foreign trade, the minister of educational and cultural affairs, and the foreign minister, etc./ and from Cuba have arrived similar level delegations in Czechoslovakia besides the President of the Republic [Osvaldo] Dorticos. Czechoslovakia has sent lecturers to Cuban universities and colleges, and a large number of various experts. Czechoslovakia has built a cultural center in Havana, a lot of students have come on scholarship to Czechoslovakian colleges, specialized schools, and factories from Cuba. The exchanges of delegations between the two countries covered almost all spheres of party, state, social, scientific and arts life.

A direct air service has been set up between Cuba and Czechoslovakia, being the first among socialist countries, and they [i.e., the Czechoslovaks] have also provided help to equip the Cuban army. In the field of economy, based on trade agreements signed between them, they have provided loans of different size and length for the Cuban government. Recently, the problems coming up in the economy on both sides have made the talks last for a long time. The loans demanded by Cuba, the prolongation of loans, and, mainly, the demands concerning articles of consumption have an influence on the talks to some extent because of our difficulties, but, as a result of the mutual efforts of both parties, they will end with success.

During the talks both parties are looking for the best solutions. According to Stross's information, the signed agreements are precisely carried out on both sides.

Cuba's present economic situation is very difficult. There are objective and subjective causes of the difficulties. Before Cuba's liberation, she played the role of a complementary, mainly agricultural base for the United States. Her production was of mono-cultural [i.e., sugar-based] character, her products were bought by the USA at a price determined by the buyer, at the same time, the USA supplied the industrial

appliances needed by the country. Tourism played an important role in the country's economic life.

When economic life got under state control, Cuba did not have enough well-trained leaders and middle cadres, they did not have experience in the field of industrial planning and management and distribution. It cannot be ignored that from 1 January 1961, Cuba was in a state of permanent military preparedness, when the attention of the leadership was mainly drawn toward military-political matters and the problems of economic life were only of secondary importance. Despite the present difficult economic situation, the Czechoslovak comrades think that some economic consolidation will start, even if only slowly, with the help of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries. The firm price of sugar, Cuba's main product in world markets, will contribute to this, too. Production is getting systematic compared with the past and we can see the outlines of the prospects of the development of economic life. The assessment of needs has more and more come to the foreground when deciding about industrial and commercial tasks and in the field of distribution, too. One cannot ignore such problems as, e.g., that the existing Cuban industry is equipped mainly with American machines, the further functioning of which is made very difficult by the American embargo, which makes it almost impossible to get spare parts. So the mere functioning of factories is a great burden on the industrial leadership. Until recently, it has also been a problem that, since the victory of the revolution, few changes have been made in the organizational structure of industry and trade, basically, they have preserved it as it was inherited from the earlier system. As a consequence, while it was the industry that determined the need of new and old factories for machines to be bought, the distribution of purchased machines fell within the sphere of authority of the ministry of internal trade.

In the field of agriculture there have been long discussions about the line of production. Some suggested that they should give up mono-cultural production and start manifold production in the growing of plants. As a consequence, the territory of sugar cane plantations has decreased almost by half. According to the present position, on the remaining territory crops must be increased by the reconstruction of sugar plantations and the development of cultivation technology and, on the other territory under cultivation, they should grow mainly rice, peanuts, industrial plants /e.g. sisal/. The greatest guarantee of development is that the leaders now know the place and importance of economic problems in the life of the state and so, the solution of the problems of economic life is more and more moved to the foreground. The leaders can now also see that the development of Cuban economic life is far from being an internal question alone, but it is also an international

political question of special importance. The popularization of the revolution cannot simply be limited to some questions of principle, their influence may depend on to what extent Cuba can set an example to the peoples of Latin America in the sphere of the development of economic life, and in the raising of the standard of living of the masses.

Simultaneously with the understanding of economic problems, they started to realize a lot of other things. In the Cuban foreign policy, mainly toward the Latin-American countries, one could see the signs of dogmatism, avaturism [sic; adventurism] and subjectivism. One could seriously feel the Chinese Communist Party's influence on Cuban politics. These signs could be best seen in the guerilla fights in Guatemala and Venezuela, in the support of [Francisco] Juliao's Brazilian policy. The leaders of the Cuban political life and their enumerated allies did not understand properly the importance of winning over the national bourgeoisie in the interest of the revolution and they overestimated the role of peasantry as the leading force of revolution. They wanted to make Cuba a center of revolutions on the American continent, which resulted in the mechanical application of the experiences of the Cuban revolution to other countries, where the fight against imperialism and for national liberation had to be carried out in a different international situation and amid other internal political events, under different conditions.

They ignored that in every country every party had to work out their revolutionary tactic and strategy based on their own special situation. As a consequence of these realizations, e.g. they do not support the extremists any more in Brazil, but the BCP [Brazilian Communist Party].

In Cuba the formation of the Uniform Socialist Party has made little progress so far, which can be explained partly by the fact that the role of the party has not been clarified yet. Organization is also hindered by the lack of cadres, mainly middle cadres. The formation of the party and the triggering off of its activities are being realized after Castro's trip to the Soviet Union [27 April-3 June 1963]. One consequence of the mentioned lack of cadres is that after the creation of the basic organs they have not set up the district yet, so there is a large gap between the central leadership and the basic organs. Simultaneously with the organization of the party, we can observe the problems of ideological consolidation, the enforcement of the Leninist norms in the work within the party.

In the period of the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile] crisis and directly after it, the Cuban leaders generally did not understand the Soviet Union's position. As the majority of Cuban leaders come from the army, being equipped with modern weapons, they thought the conflict was a problem between Cuba and the USA only and could not understand that it would mean a fight between the camps. After the Soviet-American agreement, they

felt alone, they were influenced in this direction by the Chinese CP's position too, and that it had a great impact can be proved by [Anastas] Mikoyan's stay in Cuba longer than planned and that even at the time of his departure, he could not completely convince the Cuban leaders that the Soviet Union's position was right. Castro's trip to the Soviet Union meant a decisive turn in this field too.

As the Czechoslovakian comrades also see it, Castro's trip has had a decisive impact on Cuba's further development. The visit and the joint declaration published afterwards clarified the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union, the relationship between Cuba and the socialist countries. As a result of the visit, he considers unjustified certain dogmatic and avanturist [adventurist] views in the Cuban political life, and the Cubans themselves are beginning to pay more attention to the solution of economic problems, which they have only talked about so far. Castro still has a completely firm position and dominant influence in the sphere of ideology. His views are of decisive importance from the aspect of Cuba's general development. After his trip to the Soviet Union, he will completely clarify the role of the party as well, the party's organization will be accelerated.

Finally, Stross remarked that the relations between Czechoslovakia and Cuba did not change during the Caribbean crisis and the time following it, even amid the biggest hardships, and they are not changing in the future either. They treat their embassy accordingly, in the practice of which the problems of party and state relations are dealt with in the correct way as a result of the development. There has not been any change in the level of the relations either, and both parties do their best to carry out the signed contracts consistently.

Ambassador [Lajos CSÉBY]

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Budapest

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d.*  
*Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



## DOCUMENT No. 2

Memorandum of Conversation between Vladimír Koucky, Secretary of Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCz) Central Committee, and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Head



of Cuba's National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA),  
Prague, 12 December 1963

TOP SECRET!

2618/ 7

Record of a conversation with c. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez,  
member of the leadership of the Unified Party of Socialistic  
Revolution of Cuba (12/12/1963)

C. Rodriguez said, just like in his first conversation with c. [CPCz Presidium member Otakar] Simunek in the evening of the 11th of December 1963, that according to the opinion of the Cuban leadership, some misunderstandings persist with regard to relations between Cuba and the CSSR. At that, the Cuban leadership think that these misunderstandings do not involve the leading comrades. To c. Koucky's remark that misunderstandings can happen in various discussions and talks but these are no fundamental differences, and that misunderstandings can often be caused by certain nervousness because there are problems in every party and every country, c. Rodriguez said that according to his opinion, it is not just occasional nervousness but that some political, diplomatic and economic cadres display in many different ways some uncertainty related to the Cuban policy.

Leading Cuban comrades think that the ambassador to Cuba c. [Vladimir] Pavlicek, for instance, understands fully the complexity of Cuban issues while the rest of embassy officials and other diplomats in Cuba do not. The same applies to the Soviet embassy where Ambassador c. [Aleksandr Alekseyev] Alexeiev has very good contacts with leading comrades, and understands the situation in Cuba very well while the other diplomats are not as advanced. C. Rodriguez emphasized that the highest Cuban officials, including Fidel Castro, have very close personal contacts with especially these two embassies.

C. Rodriguez continued with the fact that one of the things that in the opinion of Cuban comrades caused some confusion, is promotion of Chinese publications, articles, and materials in Cuba. He said that the Cuban comrades could not agree with this Chinese activity and after consultation with c. Alekseyev, the Soviet ambassador to Cuba, c. [Emilio] Aragonés talked with the Chinese Ambassador in order to limit the scope of publications and materials published in the Spanish language.

It should be noted, c. Rodriguez further said, that in connection with all these activities of the Chinese Ambassador, a false opinion was created as if Cuba supported the Chinese

views. It shows particularly in this case that some comrades do not understand the conditions of the Cuban revolution. If a communist party took power in Cuba, there would have been a different situation. However, old Cuban communists now see even with the help of Fidel Castro, they are achieving number of successes, and they are aware that if Cuba were to use traditional forms of Communist activities while developing the revolution, it could lead to bad consequences. Particularly in this context, for example, Fidel Castro's statement that Cuba holds its "own line" was very much misunderstood. For instance, a CZPO (ČTK [Czechoslovak state news agency—ed.]) correspondent sent information, in which he directly said that Cuba's political line had changed; c. Rodriguez accepts with satisfaction that the material was not published in Czechoslovakia. Returning yet again to the issue of operation of the Communist Party of China, c. Rodriguez stressed that Cuba cannot take the same approach as the CSSR, and leading Cuban officials ask for understanding.

Another issue, which caused misunderstanding, is the position of the Cuban revolutionary government on the Moscow agreement about a partial ban on nuclear testing. The whole issue was widely debated in the higher circles of Cuba. In these discussions, Fidel Castro still hoped a possibility would arise that Cuba could become a party to the treaty. He was also aware that hesitation about signing the treaty might give the impression that the Cuban Revolutionary Government takes the same position on the treaty as the PRC [People's Republic of China]. C. Rodriguez stresses that their stance on the contract is Cuba's own and absolutely not that of the PRC. At that he pointed out that after his return from Moscow, Fidel Castro in his speech explained extensively the Cuban government's stance on issues of peace, peaceful coexistence, etc. At the same time, he suggested in his speech the possibility of negotiations with the United States, which could calm down the current tense situation between Cuba and the USA.

However, when negotiations about the Moscow treaty began, Cuba has become the object of a broad new wave of attacks from the United States. This of course created for the Cuban Revolutionary Government a new situation, in which they had no other choice, given the state of mutual relations with the United States, than not to sign the Moscow treaty. It would be a great mistake to believe that the Cuban Revolutionary Government takes the Chinese positions. C. Rodriguez stressed we can all see that there is no party nor government document that expresses support for controversial positions of the Communist Party of China. He further pointed out that Fidel Castro's speech in connection with the assassination of Kennedy [on 22 November 1963] was motivated also by the desire to clearly express differences in

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judgment of Kennedy as opposed to how he is judged by leading Chinese comrades.

According to the leading Cuban comrades, the Cuban line with regard to Latin America causes uncertainties as well. They decided in principle to patiently continue to develop relations with those countries that have until now maintained diplomatic relations with Cuba, i.e. Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, and Mexico. On the other hand, it is not possible to view the issue of Latin American countries through European eyes. Cuban comrades know very well what the situation in Latin America is. For example, they are surprised by some opinions at the Cs. Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding an assessment of actions of the Argentine President [Arturo Umberto] Illia. It seems to them that some comrades too much overrate his progressivism in comparison with what was in Argentina before his election.<sup>4</sup> Even though the People's Revolutionary Government of Cuba does not want to underestimate certain possibilities that are emerging in Argentina, it knows very well that the current regime in Argentina is aimed against the People's Cuba. In this context, c. Rodriguez mentioned the complaint of the Cuban Ambassador to Czechoslovakia about the reserved attitude of some staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs towards him.

Another issue about which C. Rodriguez spoke concerns Cuba's stance on the notorious proposal of some Latin American countries to create a nuclear-free zone in Latin America. C. Rodriguez said that the Cuban position on this issue has already been formulated in the past year in connection with the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile] crisis. Its position on this issue stems from the fact that the Cuban Revolutionary Government sees no advantage in creating a nuclear-free zone in Latin America in a situation, when in many Latin American countries, there are US bases, and the United States refuses to declare explicitly that it will not keep nuclear weapons at these bases. A speech by a Cuban delegate to the UN on this matter was very carefully worded in order for the Cuban position not to challenge the co-authors of the resolution on the nuclear-free zone in Latin America, namely Mexico and Brazil. In this context, Rodriguez rejected the alleged argument of some comrades, who compared the threat to Cuba from the United States to the threat posed by West Berlin to the socialist countries. Cuba does not think she might be under danger of nuclear war. On the other hand, she is aware of the danger of local wars in the Caribbean. Despite her own complicated issues, Cuba is trying to see things from a broader perspective.

S. Koucky responded to this part of Rodriguez's reasoning in the sense that our party understands the overall situation, in which Cuban comrades operate; on the other hand though, Cuban comrades should realize that, especially our

lower ranking comrades may have and indeed have different questions concerning Cuban positions. At number of meetings and gatherings, members of our party ask about Cuba's position on such issues as, for instance, not signing the Moscow Agreement; from our side, the position of the Cuban Revolutionary Government and leading Cuban comrades is explained in accordance with the way Cuban comrades formulate their policy and how they justify it. With regard to the issues associated with the position of the Communist Party of China, our party of course cannot pass in silence the fact that the Chinese CP in its literature grossly distorts the line of the international communist movement and attacks leading comrades of the CPSU and other communist and workers parties. He also emphasized that our party throughout its history has always assumed that it was necessary to adapt and possibly even to subordinate some of its own particular interests to the collective interests of the socialist camp and the international revolutionary movement.

Comrade Rodriguez then continued that the Cuban government and Cuban revolutionary comrades face a number of issues that must be addressed. They all realize that new problems may always arise. From this point of view, c. Rodriguez praises highly an article that was published in Pravda, in which some opinions on the development of the Algerian Revolution are newly formulated, and where the need is recognized for a broader understanding of issues related to building up socialism under various conditions (recognizes the need to take into account that religion, particularly Islam, will play a role in Algiers, which is deciding to go the socialist route). Cuban comrades, says c. Rodriguez further, realize that world peace is a question of paramount concern for Czechoslovak comrades. In contrast, the question of world peace does not have such a decisive influence on the masses in Cuba. They [Cuban comrades] believe that cadres of the fraternal parties should understand the situation in Cuba better. Yet some misunderstandings appear in specific contacts between Cs. and Cuban officials. Many comrades push their own opinions, and try to do separate analyses without consideration of the overall development of the revolution in Cuba. The worst is that some political uncertainties and differences are then reflected in economic relations. Some uncertainty about Cuba has its impact on business. Cuban comrades consider recent development of economic negotiations as unsatisfactory. Although they are aware that it is impossible to avoid problems, they still believe it is necessary to look above of all for what unites us and not what divides us.

He stressed that we must never forget about the enemy's activity when considering all these issues. He reminded [us] of his and Guevara's talks in years 1959-1960, when a purchase of capital equipment for Cuba was negotiated and when the

revolutionary leaders had to overcome misconceptions of their experts who looked with respect on the capability of socialist countries in terms of technology deliveries to Cuba. Also, very strong divisions over pricing for different products appear in many discussions. Further, as for the technological level of many products and equipment that are shipped to Cuba, there are shortcomings and Cuban comrades have to overcome in many aspects opinions of their own cadres who were used to the often perfect American technology.

After several queries of c. Koucky about the situation during the creation of the Unified Party of Socialist Revolution [PURS] of Cuba, in order to clarify some delays in organization of the party (the founding congress may convene in the second half of 1964), c. Rodriguez again emphasized that it was necessary to understand the special political situation that existed in Cuba. He explained that there were many anti-communists in Cuba, who, at the moment, especially under the guise of combating sectarian tendencies (Escalante case<sup>5</sup>), are actually trying to fight against communism. It is necessary to do everything possible to avoid creating suitable opportunities for their dark intentions. Cuban leaders have many concerns with the problem of youth in Cuba. For example, the entire leadership of youth organizations had to be replaced recently, because it did not follow the correct policy.



In subsequent partial conversations, c. Rodriguez stressed many times that an old former member of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba was deliberately sent on a trip to Czechoslovakia, GDR, Poland, and finally to the Soviet Union, so that communists in these countries could better understand the complex issues of the development of the Cuban revolution and also in order to prevent various problems and misunderstandings, which may arise

In a conversation with c. Koucky, the question of replacement of our ambassador to Cuba, and the case of our

Ambassador-designate c. Kocman has been also discussed. C. Rodriguez confirmed that among some Cuban comrades – he specifically named [Joaquín] Ordoqui, there are certain objections to his appointment as an ambassador to Cuba, and that he himself believes as well that this appointment should be abandoned. C. Koucky replied that c. Pavlicek is to be replaced within 2 months and that a new Cs. ambassador will be sent to Cuba.

On the way back, c. Koucky informed c. Rodriguez of the main issues discussed at the December plenary session of the CPCz Central Committee.

*[Source: Czech National Archives, Prague, CPCz CC collection, Kuba folders. Obtained for CWIHP by James Hershberg and translated for CWIHP by Adolf Kotlik.]*

## Notes

1 On Hungarian perceptions of the aftermath of Castro's spring 1963 visit to the Soviet Union, see translated documents in the collection of Hungarian materials elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

2 For more on Sino-Cuban relations during this period, see the collection of translated Chinese documents and analysis by Sergey Radchenko and James G. Hershberg elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.


3 For more on the evolution of Cuban-Czechoslovak relations from 1959-62, see the collection of translated Czechoslovak documents elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

4 The Argentine elections were held on 7 July 1963 and Illa became president on 12 October 1963—ed.

5 A reference to the so-called Escalante affair, in which Fidel Castro purged from the leadership some members of the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), led by Aníbal Escalante, in March 1962, charging them with "sectarianism." This was seen as reflecting lingering tensions between Castro's "26th of July Movement" guerrillas and the old, urban, pro-Moscow communist party—ed.

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# Hungary and the Cuban Missile Crisis:

## Selected Documents, 1961-63

Introduction by Csaba Békés<sup>1</sup> and Melinda Kalmár<sup>2</sup>

I.

**H**ardly a year after the Berlin Crisis peaked, a major East-West conflict erupted due to the installation of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba, bringing the world the closest it came to a direct superpower clash during the Cold War era. The unique feature of the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was that in this case, originally the idea of changing the status quo by exporting revolution to Cuba had never occurred to the Soviet leadership, yet it still arose, in an indigenous way, thanks to the victory of the revolution led by Fidel Castro.

In Cuba the fighting guerillas under Castro's leadership overthrew the pro-American Batista regime at the beginning of 1959. By 1960 the new left-wing system was rapidly expanding political and economic relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and it became increasingly likely that Cuba would soon become a member of the Soviet alliance system. The Eisenhower Administration initially implemented a wait-and-see policy, and hoped that with financial means it could topple the revolutionary regime. Later, however, US officials considered more urgent and extreme political and military solutions. In January 1961, shortly before John F. Kennedy became president, Washington broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba, and a few months later, in April, CIA-trained armed Cuban emigrants landed at the Bay of Pigs. Even though this military action failed, it became clear to the Cuban leadership that on their own they could not guarantee their country's security against the United States. Therefore, in July 1961, they signed a military agreement with the Soviet Union under which Soviet medium- and intermediate-range nuclear missiles were later installed in Cuba.<sup>3</sup> It appears that this momentous and provocative Soviet decision had double aims. On the one hand the missiles were to defend Cuba against a possible American attack, for in such a case the USA would have had to risk nuclear retaliation as well as a direct military conflict with the Soviet Union. On the other hand with this step Khrushchev made an attempt to establish a global strategic balance at a time when the United States was significantly ahead of the Soviet Union in intercontinental missiles production, and this could not be hidden anymore due to satellite reconnaissance (Washington had made clear to the world in October 1961 that the "missile gap," if there were one, favored the United States, not the USSR).<sup>4</sup> In this situation the geographic location of Cuba had a significant

strategic advantage because the installed Soviet nuclear missiles in the country—which had been produced in great numbers in the Soviet Union by that time—could threaten basically the entire territory of the continental United States. Khrushchev hoped that if the installation of the missiles could be kept secret, the American leadership would have to accept the fait accompli, all the more because the missiles installed in Turkey just recently threatened Soviet targets in a similar fashion. The calculation however, did not work, as the US intelligence discovered the missile sites under construction in Cuba in mid-October 1962. Kennedy, after considering all the possible responses, announced in his 22 October speech that he ordered a sea blockade ("quarantine") around Cuba, effective two days later, to prevent further shipment of missiles to the island. The Soviet and Eastern-European cargo ships which were on their way were approaching the island on 24 October, therefore undeniably there was a risk for an outbreak of a direct Soviet-American armed conflict. However, in the end, the conflict did not escalate into a military clash since Khrushchev called back the ships in time.

Kennedy also demanded the removal of the missiles which were already in Cuba, and indicated that otherwise the US was ready to make a preventive strike on the country. Intensive communications commenced between the parties, using various channels, the most important being the backchannel between the president's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and Soviet ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin.

We now know that during the crisis management both parties showed great flexibility and an ability for working out a compromise solution, although at the time this could be publicly perceivable only on the Soviet side.<sup>5</sup> At the categorical American response Khrushchev quickly retreated, as soon as it became apparent for him that otherwise there was a serious danger of a direct superpower clash. In his message on 28 October Khrushchev promised to withdraw the missiles, and this did happen relatively soon (at least the medium-range and intermediate-range missiles, as opposed to the tactical nuclear weapons, still essentially undetected), in early November. In exchange, Kennedy effectively guaranteed that the USA would not invade Cuba.

We now know, that the Soviets would have retreated without conditions, but the American leadership, being not aware of this, and also extremely worried about the potential escalation of the crisis, facilitated the Soviet retreat even further: Kennedy, besides making a public announcement promising

that the USA would not attack Cuba, made another, secret concession as well: he also promised the withdrawal, within 4-5 months, of American Jupiter missiles from Turkey.<sup>6</sup> This meant nothing less than that the American administration made a secret pact with the Soviets behind the back of their NATO allies. It is no wonder, that in exchange Kennedy asked that there be no written traces of this deal on the American side. So now it was the Soviet's turn: Ambassador Dobrynin, after hesitation, eventually was willing to withdraw the Soviet letter, which contained the American promise.<sup>7</sup>

So the peaceful solution of the crisis was at the same time a *victory and a fiasco for both superpowers*. The United States successfully barred the construction of a Soviet nuclear striking force on the American continent, but they had to give up on invading Cuba (despite withholding a formal commitment due to the absence of UN ground inspection of the missiles' dismantling and removal from the island). For the Soviets it had caused a significant loss of prestige from the perspective of international politics, as they had to withdraw their missiles from Cuba, nevertheless they had achieved one of their main aims, securing the survival of the revolutionary Cuban communist regime.

Based on all this, it can be said, that during the resolution of the Berlin and Cuban crises, which are still deemed to be the most dangerous ones of the Cold War from the aspect of world peace, the threat of starting a Third World War was in reality not as immense as world public opinion thought at the time. And this was exactly because while solving the crises, the leaders of the superpowers showed a great sense of responsibility and moderation. The lesson of these two grave crises was clear for both parties: in the future the emergence of such dangerous conflicts that could result in a direct superpower clash, threatening the destruction of human civilization, must be avoided at all costs, primarily through enhanced cooperation between Washington and Moscow. Arguably, the peaceful solution of the Berlin and Cuban crises became further successful test cases of the mechanism of compelled cooperation between the superpowers.<sup>8</sup> All this significantly contributed to both creating new, more effective, institutionalized forms of superpower cooperation and to the success of the evolution of a new wave of the détente process unfolding from the early 1960s. The first concrete results of this understanding were the establishment of the hot line between the White House and the Kremlin and the conclusion of the partial nuclear test ban treaty in the summer of 1963.

## II.

During the conduct of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Moscow's policy towards its allies was exactly the opposite of how it

had behaved while solving the Berlin problem a year earlier. Then the Soviet leadership consulted continuously and frequently with the Warsaw Pact member states, and with the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the coordination was downright intensive.<sup>9</sup> This time, however, the Soviet response was prepared in the utmost secrecy, moreover during the resolution of the crisis they did not inform even the Cubans about the possible course of events. This is why news of the evolution of the crisis—of which they heard from the media—caught the countries of Eastern Europe totally by surprise and unprepared.

In Budapest it was not only the danger of a direct East-West military conflict, and the fear of a new world war that caused acute worries. It was also alarming that even in case of the eventual peaceful resolution of the crisis, a war hysteria could develop in the society which would be hard to control by the leadership. Such a turn could then seriously disturb the progress of internal pacification that had been going on successfully since the upheavals (i.e., revolution and Soviet invasion) of 1956.

Based on the currently available sources, a precise picture still cannot be drawn about the Hungarian leadership's actions, or of what information it possessed and when, during the crisis. At 10 a.m. on 23 October, the Hungarian minister of defense received the following telegram via military channels from Marshal Andrei Grechko, Commander in chief of the Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact: "Considering US President D. Kennedy's [sic] provocative announcement on 23 October 1962 and the increased danger of the outbreak of war caused by the Western aggressors, I hereby propose:

1. To introduce increased combat readiness for all troops of the services of the armed forces subordinated to the Supreme Command [of the Unified Armed Forces].
2. Please, report on the arrangements made by you on 24 October." (Document No. 8)

The "proposal" was put in effect on the same day and in Hungary mostly the air force and air defense units were put into combat readiness.<sup>10</sup> Thus it is very probable that the Hungarian army was actually mobilized directly by Moscow, without the prior knowledge of the local party leadership. The same day the Political Committee (e.g., Politburo) of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP) held a regular meeting but according to the transcript of the session the situation in Cuba was not even mentioned there.<sup>11</sup> The session was probably over by the time the news of Grechko's telegram reached the political leadership.



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Sometime later, however, after the news about a lengthy Soviet government declaration<sup>12</sup> arrived in Budapest, an ad hoc group of top leaders under the direction of HSWP First Secretary and Premier János Kádár and including the deputy prime ministers and the foreign minister, worded a short declaration on behalf of the Hungarian government in which it condemned the aggressive moves of the United States, threatening the independence of Cuba.<sup>13</sup> The government itself, however, was convened only two days later, on 25 October (Document No. 9), when the cabinet members had to retroactively approve the announcement. However, there must have been considerable hesitation in the leadership—perhaps they were hoping to get more information from Moscow via diplomatic or party channels—so the declaration was not published the next day, on 24 October, but only a day later, on the 25th in the HSWP's daily, *Népszabadság*. At the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 25 October, Kádár, who since September 1961 held both the position of Prime Minister and the first secretary of the HSWP, enlightened the cabinet members about the Cuban situation probably based on the information gathered from Marshal Grechko.<sup>14</sup> His report, however, as we now know, was very deficient. Kádár said, after reviewing the American moves, that combat readiness was ordered in the Soviet Union, but reserves were not called in. A significant number of new Soviet forces were transported to the territory of the GDR, while Poland made troop reinforcements on the Oder–Neisse border, and Bulgaria did the same at its borders with Turkey and Greece. Besides these measures, in every member-state of the Warsaw Pact the militaries were put onto combat readiness. Kádár also told the government that at the “request” of Marshal Grechko the Hungarian military leadership had also introduced the “necessary measures” and he now asked the Council of Ministers to retroactively approve that move as well.

Although the Hungarian leadership obviously did not possess adequate information about the situation, Kádár rightly evaluated the crisis as the gravest international conflict since the Second World War. While he evidently had no first-hand information from Moscow, as a pragmatist and one who knew Khrushchev's thinking rather well, he concluded that now the conflict would very likely be solved peacefully. This conclusion rested mainly on two factors: there was no clash between Soviet and US ships, “when the blockade and the ships should have clashed,” and in the meantime the Soviet Union announced that Moscow was ready to participate in a summit meeting. This convinced Kádár that now “the most critical danger is over and diplomacy has come to the fore.”

In accordance with this, the government authorized the “extraordinary cabinet,” as the ad hoc group of a few top leaders—now complemented by the minister of defense—could

be called, to take the necessary measures in connection with the crisis. During the following days, most probably this ad hoc crisis managing body handled the problems resulting from the crisis, although no documents of any kind have been found pertaining to its activity. The official organs of the Hungarian party did not deal with the situation connected to the Cuban crisis, according to the minutes of the Political Committee and the Secretariat meetings held on 2 November.<sup>15</sup> Prior to that, on 25 October the Secretariat had decided by instant voting to send an MTI (Hungarian News Agency) reporter to Havana. This also suggests that the leadership already ruled out the possibility of a superpower clash at that stage. It seems the idea of convening an extraordinary session of the Central Committee, that would have been a logical move in such a grave situation, had also not arisen; at any rate, no such meeting took place. In the given situation the Hungarian leadership could not do much, because they could have no impact of any kind on the course of events, although the potential result of the crisis, if disadvantageous, would have crucially affected Hungary's fate as well. That is why the only field for activity became that of propaganda: state and party authorities tried to strengthen the population's empathy for Cuba, and organized solidarity meetings in factories and plants.

The most spectacular and largest mass rally was held in the Sports Hall in Budapest on 26 October where the main speakers were deputy prime minister Gyula Kállai and Cuban ambassador Quintin Pino Machado. At the rally a message was adopted to be sent to UN acting Secretary General U Thant asking for his mediation to solve the crisis.<sup>16</sup> In another important gesture of solidarity, János Kádár received the Cuban ambassador along with two journalists of the Cuban paper *Revolution* and their conversation was published on the front page of *Népszabadság* next to the Hungarian government declaration on 25 October. Nevertheless, it is striking that when on 31 October Kádár addressed the party conference in Budapest, in preparation for the 8th congress of the HSWP held in late November, his speech contained not one word about Cuba or any other international issue.<sup>17</sup> According to the confidential reports on the mood of the people at the time of the crisis, there was no war panic in the country, the population trusted the Soviet Union that it would avert the danger of a violent conflagration successfully.<sup>18</sup> All of this is quite plausible, especially as the leadership did everything it could to make the people understand as little as possible about the true nature of the crisis.

Significant first-hand Soviet information was only given to the Hungarian leadership in the beginning of November. On November 5 at a closed, special meeting of the Political Committee of the HSWP, János Kádár reported that during

a phone call with Khrushchev that morning, they agreed that Kádár would immediately travel to Moscow.<sup>19</sup> In the last days of October and the first days of November several Soviet-bloc leaders also visited the Soviet capital, so Kádár's explanation seems logical, according to which the meeting was requested by him, because "people could misunderstand" if the Hungarians did not participate in such a consultation. However another explanation is also possible: On 2 November, a British citizen, Greville Wynne, was arrested on charges of espionage in Budapest, while visiting the Budapest International Fair.<sup>20</sup> On the 14th he was transferred to the Soviet authorities with the explanation that most of his crimes were committed against the Soviet Union. Indeed, Wynne was a British diplomat in Moscow acting as an intermediary for the famous Soviet spy Oleg Penkovsky, who was selling military secrets to British intelligence. Wynne was sentenced for spying to eight years in prison in May 1963. He was released in exchange for the Soviet spy Gordon Lonsdale, serving a fifteen year prison term in Great Britain, in 1964. We know nothing of any similar case, neither from previous nor from later times, so it is not impossible, that this important international issue was at least one of the main reasons for Kádár's hastily-arranged visit to the Soviet capital on 7-10 November. The information about the Cuban crisis acquired in Moscow was not much more extensive than was already known by the Hungarian leaders by that time: the Soviet Union reached its goal, for basically it had managed to acquire an American guarantee that the Cuban communist regime would survive<sup>21</sup> (Document No. 10).

### III.

The leaders of the Warsaw Pact member-states learned a serious lesson from the Cuban Missile Crisis, suddenly grasping the extent of their defenselessness and vulnerability. It was especially hard for them to understand, that if the Soviet leaders had considered the Berlin crisis, which had generated significantly lower international tension, important enough to hold regular consultations with the allies, then how it could have happened that a third world war had nearly broken out while the members of the eastern military bloc just had to stand by and wait for the denouement without any substantial information. Nor had they known that, contrary to the claims of Khrushchev's propaganda, it was not the Soviet Union, but the United States that had a significant superiority with respect to intercontinental missiles at the time! It was the Romanian leadership that drew the most radical conclusion from the case: in October 1963, the Romanian foreign minister, requesting utmost secrecy, informed his American counterpart that Romania would remain neutral in the case

of a nuclear world war. On the grounds of this standpoint, he requested the Americans not to set Romania as a target for a nuclear strike.<sup>22</sup> Thus the Romanian "trend" of conducting a deviant policy, which had appeared in the economic area as early as 1958 and was officially acknowledged in 1964, can be attributed, at least to a significant extent, to the impact of the Cuban Missile Crisis

The Polish leadership was equally indignant at the events, furthermore, they considered, that the Soviet leaders did not understand the significance of the affair and the Kremlin would continue to regard preliminary consultations with the allies as unimportant. Among other things, the Polish leaders objected to Moscow's lack of consultation with Warsaw Pact member-states concerning the nuclear test ban treaty, especially since they had to sign it as well after the treaty had been concluded. During his negotiations in Budapest in November 1963 (Document No. 25), Gomulka stated that Cuba intended to join the Warsaw Pact, which would pose a significant threat to the security of the eastern bloc as well as world peace.<sup>23</sup> Therefore he firmly stated that should the request be officially submitted, Poland would veto Cuba's admission. A similarly negative Polish stand prevented another Soviet Bloc ally, Mongolia, from joining the Warsaw Pact during the same year. This plan was seen in Warsaw as a clearly anti-Chinese move that would seriously exacerbate the Soviet Bloc's relations with Beijing and make the Sino-Soviet split irreversible. The Polish position, nevertheless was based on the legal argument that the Warsaw Pact was a *European* defense alliance, therefore extending it to Asia would be a violation of the organization's statute. To avoid similar unexpected challenges in the future, the Polish leaders proposed intensifying preliminary consultations within the Warsaw Pact, and significantly boosting the political role of individual member-states.

Although the Hungarian leadership was much more cautious in criticizing the Soviet behavior than the Poles, it basically agreed with the Polish views pertaining to the nature of future co-operation within the Warsaw Pact. Kádár, during his visit in Moscow in July 1963, proposed to establish a Committee of Warsaw Pact Foreign Ministers, long before the plans to reform the Warsaw Pact were officially placed on the agenda in 1965-66.<sup>24</sup> The clear objective of the initiative was to place the Soviet leadership under the pressure of necessity for consultation and information provision as well as to enforce the multilateral nature of the decision-making process. Kádár clearly stated to Khrushchev in July 1963 that "the question is that there must not be a case when the Soviet government publishes various statements and the other governments read them in the newspaper.... I thought of a preliminary consultation. I have also told [Khrushchev], that experience showed it is better to dispute sooner rather

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than later.”<sup>25</sup> The proposal was rejected by the Soviet leaders—who, nevertheless, themselves came forward with this idea two years later—on the pretext, that at a time when a “sovereignty disease” broke out, the reaction of the member-states would be wrong, and they would only misunderstand the intention.<sup>26</sup>

#### IV.

The Hungarian documents published here shed light on the prehistory, the history, and the aftermath of the crisis. Most of them are reports of the Hungarian Embassy in Cuba, which opened in December 1961. They give detailed accounts on the position and the views of the Cuban leadership on many issues. During these years Fidel Castro and his comrades were working hard to make Cuba a solid member of the Soviet bloc, enjoying the same privileges as the “old” Eastern European allies of Moscow, including extending the Soviet “nuclear umbrella” to their island. As it was formulated by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez during the crisis, “Cuba’s territorial sanctity and possibility of normal life” should be guaranteed not only by the United States “but in some form by the Soviet Union as well” (Document No. 11). However, they thought all this was compatible with their having a special approach to the issue of peaceful coexistence, the prospects of the revolution in Latin America, the Soviet Bloc’s split with Albania and the emerging rift between the Soviet Union and China. Hungarian Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód visited Cuba between 28 December 1961 and 6 January 1962, and conducted important political talks with Prime Minister Fidel Castro, Foreign Minister Raúl Roa, and senior communist Carlos Rafael Rodríguez. The long report prepared after his visit (Document No. 2) sheds light on the views of the Cuban leaders concerning the above mentioned issues of international politics, also highlighting important differences of opinion. While Fidel Castro deemed the probability of an American invasion to take place “not very high,” the foreign minister explicitly warned his Hungarian partner that an American invasion is to be expected “at around the meeting of the foreign ministers of the states [belonging to the Organization of American States] scheduled for 22 January.”

Castro, who during the missile crisis urged Khrushchev to start a nuclear war against the US if it attacked Cuba, had raised a comparable idea ten months earlier, during his talks with Mód in January. He explained that now the Soviet Union had an advantage in terms of military technology. He suggested he did not know “whether the advantage would remain, increase or, quite the contrary, decrease or totally disappear in the future. Therefore, as long as the Soviet Union has this advantage, we need to make use of every opportunity

to strike a blow at imperialism.” It is obvious then, that in October 1962 Castro, himself believing Khrushchev’s lies about the state of the missile competition, made his infamous proposal on the false assumption that Moscow had a significant advantage vis-a-vis the US in the nuclear race, while now it is clear that at the time Washington in fact enjoyed considerable superiority in ICBMs over the Soviets.<sup>27</sup>

After the crisis, feeling betrayed by Moscow because of the withdrawal of the Soviet missiles, the differences of opinion with the Soviets were made much more explicit by the Cuban leadership than before, especially during the period between November 1962—when the tensions surfaced during Kremlin emissary Anastas Mikoyan’s visit to Cuba to mollify Havana—and the spring of 1963, when Castro visited Moscow and held extensive talks with Khrushchev. Several reports of the Hungarian Embassy in Havana are dedicated to documenting the anti-Soviet sentiments and the emerging divergences in the Soviet-Cuban relationship (see especially Document Nos. 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, and 19). The overly optimistic Cuban position concerning the role of the Cuban revolution and the prospects for Latin American revolutions, as defined by the Second Havana Declaration of February 1962, was unacceptable not only for the CPSU and East European communist parties but also for several Latin American communist parties. In the summer of 1962, when defense minister Raul Castro visited Moscow, Khrushchev explained to him that while the Soviet party did not want to interfere in the affairs of other parties, he thought that “the Cuban party should have a debate with the mentioned [Latin American] parties if they did not agree in everything, the Latin American parties could not be neglected, and one could not make decisions instead of them. ‘After all, you are not the Comintern,’” he added sarcastically.<sup>28</sup>

Following the crisis, the main source of disagreement—according to the Hungarian Embassy reports—was that the Cuban leaders and especially Fidel Castro, despite all the Soviet (and Mikoyan’s in particular) efforts, did not believe or understand that, in connection with the missile crisis, Moscow’s aim was to ensure Cuba’s independence and her rescue from the threat of US invasion. They “were convinced that the Soviet Union was only maneuvering and being tactical, she used the Caribbean crisis and its solution and Cuba only as instruments in the political game with the United States.”<sup>29</sup> Their suspicions were further exacerbated by the fact that the Kremlin was indeed unwilling to give an explicit or iron-clad guarantee for Cuba’s security. As reported by Hungary’s ambassador, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez told him on 23 October 1962 that “Cuba was ready to agree to the removal of missiles and etc. if Cuba’s sanctity was ensured

also by the Soviet Union.”<sup>30</sup> During Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily V. Kuznetsov’s talks in Havana in January 1963, Fidel Castro also hinted unequivocally at the demand for a Soviet security guarantee, by saying that “Cuba’s situation was singular because the European socialist countries are guaranteed by the Warsaw Treaty.”<sup>31</sup> Castro contradicted even the basic Soviet argument, i.e., that in turn for the withdrawal of the missiles Kennedy had formally obliged himself not to attack Cuba and thus Moscow had guaranteed her security. Kuznetsov had a hard time explaining that “there were several ways of making agreements between states and governments, one form of talks and agreement was e.g. what had been realized by the published correspondence” of Khrushchev and Kennedy.<sup>32</sup> In such a mood it is not so surprising that at their first casual meeting in a theatre Castro greeted his guest with the following words: “I do not offer you a cigar, because Khrushchev, too, gave the cigar I presented to him to Kennedy.”<sup>33</sup> (However, the Hungarian reports from Budapest’s embassies in both Havana and Moscow also point to the improvement in Cuban-Soviet relations, and Fidel Castro’s impressions of his superpower patron, after he visited the Soviet Union in the spring of 1963—see Document Nos. 22, 23, and 24.)

Finally, to demonstrate that the leaders in Havana may have learned a lesson from the missile crisis in several ways, let us mention a quote from a report in March 1963: “Raul Castro mentioned to the Romanian ambassador in the past days, and it is not likely to be his private opinion, that for Cuba among the possible [US] presidents at present Kennedy is the best”<sup>34</sup>



## DOCUMENTS

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### DOCUMENT No. 1

Hungarian Embassy in Havana, Report on Secret US Documents, 22 August 1961

The Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic  
to Comrade Foreign Minister Endre Sík  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

Havana, 22 August 1961.  
57/1961./top secret

Subject: The secret documents of the State Department of the United States.

Encl.: three documents<sup>35</sup>

Cuban Minister of Industry Che Guevara made two secret documents of the United States public at the CIES [Inter-American Social and Economic Council—ed.] conference in Montevideo [i.e., Punta del Este, Uruguay, in August 1961].<sup>36</sup> The documents were passed to the Cuban government by “friendly hands” in a way not specified further. One of the documents is addressed to the United States’ ambassador to Venezuela, [Teodoro Moscoso—ed.] in which the members of the US State Department present the principles concerning Venezuelan economic policy. The other secret document contains a summary report on the position of Latin-American states and the Latin-American public opinion concerning Cuba.

Both documents are extremely valuable. Their authenticity cannot be doubted, as even the American delegate [C. Douglas] Dillon participating at the Montevideo conference did not dare to doubt their authenticity.

The publication of the documents made an extremely great impression both at the conference and in Venezuela. The Venezuelan America-friendly government protested in a note to the Cuban government, they considered the publication of the document interference in their internal affairs. In their reply to the note, the Cuban government explained it in detail that the publication of the document took place just in the interest of Venezuela and other Latin-American peoples. (I have sent the press cuttings of the notes in a letter.)

I do not wish to make any special comment on the documents themselves, they speak for themselves.

I suggest that their exact Hungarian translations should be sent to all our embassies to Latin-America or maybe to all our embassies to capitalist countries. Our embassies to Latin-America and Washington should study the documents thoroughly by all means. I request you to inform our Embassy also about the opinions concerning this.

I have expressed our gratitude in a note to the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs for sending the document.

Miklós Vass  
chargé d’affaires ad interim

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL)* [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 2. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]



## DOCUMENT No. 2

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód's talks with political leaders in Cuba, 9 January 1962

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Havana, 9 January 1962

Subject: Deputy Foreign Minister Péter Mód's political meetings in Cuba

Comrade Mód visited Cuba between 28 December 1961 and 6 January 1962. He conducted important political talks with the following personalities:

- 1./ With Cuban Foreign Minister Raul Roa on the day after his arrival,
- 2./ With Prime Minister Fidel Castro on 3 January,
- 3./ With Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, one of the leaders of ORI and the chief editor of its central paper, on 3 January
- 4./ With the secretary of the county organization of ORI Oriente in Santiago de Cuba on 4 January.

Although I was present at Comrade Mód's every meeting and occasionally also participated in the discussion, I will not separately indicate what Comrade Mód said and what I said and I will not specify which answers refer to his or to my questions.

### 1./ Meeting with Foreign Minister Raul Roa

Foreign Minister Raul Roa explained that in his view the United States was preparing for another invasion against Cuba. There are several signs of this attempt, and the Cuban party also has some confidential information on these preparations. Actually, one should say that the invasion has already begun, not only in the form of political preparations and actions but also in a military sense. The United States has sent various agents, diversionary troops and saboteurs to Cuba through various illegal channels; weapons, ammunition, explosives, various types of bombs, transmitter-receiver units and various other equipments are constantly being smuggled into Cuba. The agents and saboteurs arriving in Cuba were ordered to kill, explode and destroy wherever they can. All this can be seen as the initial phase of the invasion. He stated that if the USA had begun using these tactics last winter on

the same scale, it would have caused immense damages to Cuba, whose consequences would have been unpredictable. Since then, however, the so-called *Comités de Defensa de la Revolución* (Committees for the Defense of the Revolution) have been organized all over in the country in cities and villages. Thanks to their activity, the tactics of the United States have ended in failure and the damages caused by them are insignificant.

(By way of explanation I note here that on the one hand these committees were created at every workplace, and on the other, in the cities they were based on blocks of houses while in the villages the setup depended on the nature of the particular place. Their members were workers and ordinary people in general with a revolutionary conviction who signed up on a voluntary basis. There were a lot of women, housewives and old people among them since young people and those who were willing to take a greater sacrifice were doing service in the armed militia—also on a voluntary basis, giving up most of their free time. The work of each committee is led by the chairman elected by the members. Their task is to defend the revolution at their workplace or at home against the sabotage of counter-revolutionists as well as agents and saboteurs coming from abroad. They do not have an office, a budget, a uniform or any equipment of their own. They seem to be operating quite effectively.)

Furthermore, Roa said that one of the main political tools used for the preparation of the invasion was the OAS [OEA in original, for *Organizacion de Los Estados Americanos* or the Organization of American States]. The United States made every effort in the OAS—in vain—to maintain or get unanimous support for the resolution regarding Cuba. However, there has been a qualitative change in Latin America. The Cuban revolution gave rise to a new situation in every country. Although the Cuban revolutionary government declared itself to be Marxist-Leninist and the revolution to be a socialist movement, the OAS is no longer an obedient executive body that remains loyal to the USA to the very end. Several countries, among them some of the most important ones, object to the invasion plans of the United States. The political secretary of state [at the Cuban Foreign Ministry], Dr Carlos Olivares, is just visiting the Latin American countries and—as far as it can be seen in the short telegraphs—he was given definite promises for the support of Cuba in several places (Brazil, Ecuador, Chile and Mexico), or at least for not adopting the American proposal that appears in the guise of a Colombian motion. He reported on bad news only from Argentina; it seems that [Argentine President Arturo] Frondizi decided to back Kennedy. A unanimous resolution is simply out of the question. Thus, the USA will take care not to submit, or not to have another country submit, a proposal that explicitly



condemns or imposes sanctions on Cuba. There are two reasons for it: 1./ The USA wants to prevent the OAS from splitting apart or possibly being totally disintegrated as a result of the opposition of the Latin American countries. This does not mean that it will not make every effort to obtain a two-thirds majority in accordance with the regulation, that is, 14 votes; 2./ The military sanctions proposed by the OAS requires the approval of the [United Nations] Security Council, which cannot be obtained because of the Soviet Union's right of veto; there is no point politically in trying to put military sanctions to a vote under such circumstances, with Brazil, Mexico, etc. objecting.

Nevertheless, all this does not mean that the USA will now give up on the political and military role of the Latin American countries in the invasion. As the OAS charter provides that in case one of the member states is attacked, the military sanctions adopted as retaliation will come into force immediately and in this case the only thing the charter requires is to inform the UN, there is a clear danger of self-aggression [i.e.—a US-organized provocation that could be blamed on Cuba]. Self-aggression may take place against the American base in Cuba (Guantanamo) where there are many Cuban counter-revolutionists that can be used for such a purpose, or against a Central American country, also using Cuban counter-revolutionists hired by the USA. This is what can explain the USA's efforts in the OAS.

Then the foreign minister stressed that the situation was extremely tense and we were having hard times. He was convinced that the USA would take serious action, perhaps including a second invasion at around the meeting of the foreign ministers of the OAS states scheduled for 22 January [in Punta del Este, Uruguay]. The invasion is to be expected right before, during or right after the meeting, depending on the course of preparations for it. He requested that this information be forwarded to the Hungarian government and announced that as soon as he had more detailed information, he would summon the ambassadors of the socialist countries one by one and inform them so that they could also report to their respective governments.

Finally I should note that Roa repeated the information that in the spring he will travel to the Soviet Union at the invitation of [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko and spend only two weeks there. Right before this visit, or after it, he will accept our invitation and visit Hungary too.

## 2./ Conversation with Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

After a rather casual introductory part, upon learning that Comrade Mód had lived and worked for quite some time in France and I had come to Cuba from there too, Fidel

Castro asked us about our views on the situation and the activity of the French Communist Party. When he heard that although we did not wish to criticize the PCF's policy or pass a judgment on it, we could not help mentioning the fact that we had some doubts whether their policy was right, he explained his own opinion. According to Fidel Castro, the French party's policy is not bellicose and fails to mobilize large masses of people, which is especially apparent in their policy regarding the Algerian war. He believes that it is not right to have only legal options in sight and consider only parliamentary methods.

Then suddenly, he put the following question: "Are there any preparations underway for negotiations between the Soviet Communist Party and the Chinese Communist Party to eliminate the antagonism between them? The answer was very briefly this: "I hope so." Next the Prime Minister explained at length how concerned he was regarding this antagonism, saying that in his view this was one of the major problems in the present situation, and with Albania the entire problem further intensified. Any break in the unity of the socialist camp can severely harm the fight against imperialism and the USA. The coordinated international action against the imperialists is threatened by serious dangers. One of the first signs of this danger is what happened at the meeting of the Peace Council in Stockholm. It should not go on like this and become even more serious, or else various international consultations, congresses and actions will meet with failure and the imperialists will benefit from arguments made public and from deepening antagonism. At the moment it seems that as soon as a discussion is started at an international forum, the disputed issues between the Soviet and the Chinese parties immediately come up. As if thinking aloud, he examined its impact on the international political situation, especially regarding the international position of Latin America and Cuba, and then spoke about the need for somebody—it could also be them, the Cubans—to take the initiative in order to resolve the issue.

Then he asked what the Soviet–Chinese debate was really all about; what was the essential reason for their antagonism.

The answer was practically the following: the Chinese view and position that differ from those of the Soviet party cannot really be understood in and of themselves because they are obviously based on the internal Chinese situation, the local conditions and working methods, etc. However, as we have not been to China, we don't know the Chinese conditions. Fidel Castro largely agreed with this but when he returned to this point during the conversation, he provided a different answer to this question, somehow like this: the Soviet–Chinese antagonism is essentially based on practical problems that arise in the cooperation between the two countries. He doesn't

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know the origin and details of these problems, nor does he fully understand the entire range of problems. He has heard about various things, including some problems that emerged along the common border, some kind of a complication that emerged in connection with a tribe there.

Fidel Castro returned again to analyzing the extremely harmful consequences that may follow from breaking up unity in the socialist camp, and the analysis of the international, especially the Latin American situation led him to conclude that this was the worst time possible for a debate like this and especially the worst time for the deepening of the antagonism between the Soviet and the Chinese parties.

The response to this analysis was as follows: it is always the worst time for a debate or antagonism to emerge within the socialist camp during the fight against imperialism. However, Hungary and the history of the Hungarian counter-revolution demonstrate, among other things, that the issues raised at the 20th and the 22nd congresses of the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] must be addressed and resolved. The failure to resolve the range of problems called a personality cult would, sooner or later, have led to much more serious complications than the confusion that has been caused by raising the issue.

Fidel Castro first explained in detail that the personality cult, everything that this term covers, should not be the topic of dispute. A personality cult is indefensible, and anybody who supports a personality cult is unable to conduct a political debate. He gradually returned to presenting the joint fight of the socialist camp against imperialism, stressing that coordinated action was not only possible but also necessary, despite any differences and specific features. The Soviet Union and Cuba are examples for that. We, he said, are talking about something in a way that the Soviet Union should not speak about, or at least not in this way. The differences in terms of actions and statements, he added, are only apparent among the rest of us; in reality they are coordinated. Despite any debate or antagonism, it should be like that in the entire socialist camp.

During the conversation Castro suggested that the Soviet-Chinese debate might have very harmful consequences here in Cuba too. For now it has not been made widely known but the public wouldn't understand it anyway. He noted that the nations that are engaged in a difficult, perhaps armed fight see things differently from those that are already enjoying the results of the fight they have already fought.

Here is where this part of the conversation ended. When we were saying goodbye before leaving, Fidel Castro noted he was not sure why he had raised these issues to us since he hadn't discussed anything like this with any of the delegations he had received before.

As for the probability of the invasion and its impact on Latin America if it occurred, Castro essentially said the following: in the present situation—disregarding the unpredictable factors that characterize the USA—the probability of the invasion to take place is not very high. Should it occur, a serious reaction with unpredictable consequences can be expected first of all in Venezuela. The situation in Venezuela is very unstable and [President Rómulo] Betancourt can hardly hold out.

Talking about the Latin American situation he said there was an opportunity for objective, armed revolutionary fight in several countries, mainly in Venezuela and Brazil but elsewhere too. These opportunities are not being utilized although their utilization could easily result in the acceleration and completion of the process that would, on the one hand, mean the total liberation of Latin America and on the other, a fatal blow to the American imperialism that would lose all of its strength. The United States is now making strong efforts to win or enforce the support of as many governments as possible against Cuba in order to keep the Latin American countries in a semi-colonial state. It is using huge economic pressure to achieve that. For example, there are serious economic problems in Brazil and if the situation doesn't change significantly, in two years a serious revolutionary situation may develop in that country. In some sense the USA is in a dead-end street. Instead of supporting highly reactionary layers of society, it should promote a land reform that would help the emergence of conservative land owners who are loyal to capitalism. By refusing to give loans and money it can only increase bitter feelings and create a revolutionary atmosphere. Sooner or later it will have to give money. Some of the Latin American governments still appear to be unable to recognize and make the best of this. The suspension [i.e., poor functioning—CSB] of the Alliance for Progress by Kennedy is a short-sighted policy. Chile's approach—which was surprising even to him—is typical. It seems that the conservative Chilean government took the firmest stand against the invasion [at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961—ed.] and by the side of Cuba's autonomy, apparently firmly resisting any economic pressure by the USA. Chile intends to rely on the Soviet Union in these efforts by significantly increasing Soviet-Chilean trade. In order to characterize the USA's difficult situation he mentioned the rapidly growing economic strength of the Soviet Union which is gradually becoming an important factor in dependent countries and in states being liberated as well as elsewhere. All this is taking place in a situation when on the one hand the imperialist powers are coming up against one another in different parts of the world (e.g. in Congo) and on the other hand, they are afraid to attack the Soviet Union because of its advantage in terms of military

technology. Fidel Castro suggested he didn't know whether the advantage would remain, increase or, quite the contrary, decrease or totally disappear in the future. Therefore, as long as the Soviet Union has this advantage, we need to make use of every opportunity to strike a blow at imperialism.

As for some of the other topics that were raised during the meeting, I need to mention that Fidel Castro sees the liberation of Goa by India [from Portugal in December 1961] as a major defeat for the USA. He finds it unlikely that Indonesia, that is, Sukarno, will decide to take a similar step [to capture West Papua New Guinea, i.e., West Irian Jaya, from the Netherlands—ed.]. He believes that Sukarno has made the best of the situation; although he is bluffing, the results can already be seen: the Netherlands has already made concessions and is willing to negotiate.

[insertion:] At the time of the preparations for the Moscow conference held in 1960, "when there was no collective leadership in the revolution yet" in Cuba, the Cuban position was worked out by a group made up of Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, and Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara as well as several other old communist leaders (Blas Roca, Anibal Escalante, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez), which was then represented by Anibal Escalante who participated in the preparation of the Moscow conference. At that time there was consensus on the issues to be discussed.<sup>37</sup>

### 3./ Conversation with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez

This discussion addressed not only one but several issues of which I will report on the most important ones.

We informed Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, one of the Cuban leaders whose relationship is perhaps the best with Fidel Castro, about Fidel Castro's statements on the relationship between the Soviet and the Chinese parties. Comrade Rodriguez said the following as an answer to this: the problem of unity and cooperation among the socialist countries and parties is extremely important for Fidel Castro, just like he is taking care of the unity of all the revolutionary forces in Cuba. The Soviet-Chinese relationship is causing problems in Cuba too. The old Communists see everything clearly; however, the situation is different with other revolutionists who have just joined the communists but have been raised in a different way. Fidel Castro's careful and expedient work and caution are required to ensure unity and development for everybody. There had been a long debate in the leadership and it was difficult to achieve a unanimous decision on the adoption of Blas Roca's article, which was then published in the December 4 issue of *Cuba Socialista* in 1961 (I wrote about it in my report 199/1961). By way of an example, he

noted that when the Soviet Union recalled its ambassador and the entire embassy from Albania [in August 1961—ed.], several of the new people thought it was exactly what the United States did to Cuba. Our experienced comrades had to work patiently for a long time to ensure that the honest but inexperienced and uninformed young people who had just joined the Communists, the Communist party, began to see things in the right way.

In addition, he said that in their talks with the members of the Cuban government and other leading politicians, the Chinese ambassador to Havana [Shen Jian] and the officials of the Chinese embassy always bring the conversation to the disputed issues and the result is: anti-Soviet propaganda. He mentioned one single example. He was asked to contact the Chinese ambassador and discuss the issue of reducing the volume of Chinese trade. After discussing the trade-related questions the ambassador started talking about Enver Hoxha's article, so the conversation ended in a rather unpleasant atmosphere with Comrade Rodriguez pointing out the position of the party.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez was afraid that it would not be possible to prevent this debate from becoming public until the end of time, which will raise serious problems.

Later, when talking about economic matters, Comrade Rodriguez said that last year the Cuban state budget had a deficit of 400 million pesos (that is, dollars). They prepared a balanced budget for 1962, and essentially it will certainly be balanced. The current budget, without loans, etc. and investments to be implemented, amounts to 750 million. 270 million was earmarked for military spending for 1962 (obviously, this figure will not be made public). 115–125 million will be spent on education and culture. According to current plans for the future, the actual industrialization of the country will begin at around 1970; by that time they will have all the necessary conditions in place, e.g. metallurgy. At the moment, they are focusing all their resources on agriculture. The results will soon come and show their effect gradually in the near future.

As far as the talks on the Hungarian-Cuban exchange of goods are concerned, he noted that their results were satisfactory.

Later the conversation turned back to Fidel Castro again, and Comrade Rodriguez said the following: Fidel Castro and Soviet ambassador [Sergei M.] Kudryavtsev met on 2 January. Comrade Kudryavtsev requested the meeting because he had received a long telegraph from Moscow and he wanted to provide Fidel Castro with some information on international affairs, especially regarding Latin America. At the same time, he wanted to suggest in some way what kind of statements the Soviet Union would see as right and necessary regarding some issues that affected the Latin American countries and

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also some other matters. After three years [*sic*; Kudryavtsev was actually appointed in July 1960, roughly one-and-a-half years earlier—ed.], it was perhaps the first time that the Soviet ambassador was able to send home a reassuring telegraph after the speech. Fidel Castro had never delivered such a successful speech before from the point of view of international political relations. When leaving the rally, Fidel Castro turned to Carlos Rafael Rodríguez in his car: “Tell me, did I break with any country today?” The political nature of the speech was shown by the fact that under its immediate impact even the Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto], who has just arrived in the country, and the ambassador’s deputy of Ecuador rushed to Castro still on the stand and very warmly congratulated him.

The foreign ministers’ meeting of the OAS states will be held on 22 January. The so-called Second Havana Statement will be issued on the same day. Fidel Castro has already prepared the draft, whose tone is very aggressive. This will be discussed by the leadership later. It will be based on the following principles: Cuba has the right to build socialism. Nobody has the right to intervene in it under any title. Worded in the necessary form, the Statement should also include that the independent Latin American countries have the right, at their own discretion, to be faithful to a different social order.

#### 4./ Conversation with the ORI<sup>38</sup> organization in Santiago de Cuba

Unfortunately, Raul Castro was not in Santiago de Cuba when Comrade Mód visited Oriente County, so he only had a chance to meet with the ORI’s secretary. The conversation was about the situation of the party in the county. I can summarize it as follows (this county is significantly different from the other five counties in several respects): the county’s population is 2 million and 250 thousand. The number of party members is a bit over 8 thousand, about half of which came to the ORI from the 26th of July Movement. The creation of party branch organizations, so-called nuclei [*núcleos*] is nearly complete, and their number currently amounts to 1200. The average number of members in a branch organization is between 6 and 7. There is a branch organization in every state farm, in the majority of cooperative farms and sugar factories as well as in the major industrial plants, transportation and commercial companies, etc. In addition, there are branch organizations set up by residential districts as well as special branches organized for scattered villages in the highlands. Most of the members are between 20 and 40 years of age, with 20 to 30 year-olds slightly exceeding the number of 30 to 40 year-olds. The ratio of women is 11%. The number of black and other colored party members slightly exceeds the

average national ratio of colored people (which is roughly 30%) in the city itself and along the coastal region of the county, while it is below the national average in other parts of the county, with a county average below the national average. Members of the working class have a relative majority among the party members; the number of peasants is also significant, while intellectuals are very rare in the party.

Unlike the national leadership, which is not complete as it still has only 17 members, the county leadership is complete: it has all the requested 35 members. Unlike in the other counties, here, the county leadership also has a head: Raul Castro.

Credit should be given not only to the revolutionary nature of the county but also to the special form of organization in the highlands and the work of the ORI for the fact that there have been no counter-revolutionary gangs active in the territory of the county for a long time and for about a year, there hasn’t been a single perpetrator of diversionary attempts or sabotage acts that has been able to flee punishment; all of them were caught successfully.

After Comrade Mód’s departure I contacted Soviet ambassador Kudryavtsev and informed him about the meeting with Fidel Castro, especially about the discussion regarding the Soviet–Chinese debate. I added that both Comrade Mód and I had the impression that Fidel Castro might have received more information from one of the parties than from the other one.

Comrade Kudryavtsev made the following comments: Fidel Castro has received all the documents, including that of the 22nd Congress [of the CPSU]. After returning from Moscow, Blas Roca gave a detailed account, which was followed by a three-day long debate in the leadership of the ORI where Fidel Castro took the correct position. Speaking about the Chinese embassy in Havana he pointed out that the number of staff working there far exceeds the number of staff at the Soviet embassy, although the Soviet Union has a huge volume of trade with Cuba, there are a large number of specialists working in the country, and the Soviets provide a lot of aid for Cuba, while China is not doing anything like that. Under such circumstances, the main task of the Chinese embassy can only be propaganda—this may be the reason for the Cuban sympathy with China. He wonders what Castro may have meant when he talked about the border and a tribe, unless he was referring to the Mongolian People’s Republic. True, the Chinese are not happy about the existence of Mongolia, although they have never raised this issue. Anyway, what could be done now that Mongolia is already an independent state? With its excessively left-wing ideology and fake revolutionary slogans that assist the reactionary forces in the long run, the Chinese propaganda managed to have an effect on several Cuban leaders too, e.g. on Minister of Industry

Ernesto Guevara, who cannot understand the need and the conditions for peaceful coexistence.

/János Beck/  
ambassador

*[Source: Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives] Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 2. d. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.]*



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### DOCUMENT No. 3

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on the Federal Republic of Germany and Cuba, 16 March 1962

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To Comrade János Péter, Foreign Minister  
Budapest

Top Secret!  
98/1962/ top secret  
Havana, 16 March 1962

Subject: The Federal Republic of Germany and Cuba.

There are normal diplomatic relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Cuba. The FRG is represented in Havana by an ambassador, who has a staff of seven diplomats and numerous administrative and assistant staff.

As I have already reported, the Cuban Republic did not recognize the GDR [German Democratic Republic; East Germany] officially because the GDR considers it more valuable than formal recognition that the so-called Political Commission headed by the ambassador may demonstrate in reality in Cuba, that is, in Latin-America, day after day the existence of the two self-governing and independent German states. Formal recognition would probably have meant the FRG breaking off diplomatic relations with Cuba corresponding to the Hallstein doctrine.

The number of the staff of the Embassy of the FRG, considered very large among Havana conditions, can by no means be justified by the diplomatic, economic, or other relations between the FRG and Cuba. The political relations between the two countries are well known and need no comments. Their trade relations can be considered insignificant compared with other great Western countries. Neither the

public, nor the Cuban authorities, know of any diplomatic, political, or maybe cultural or other work by the Embassy of the FRG. It may be presumed and I have heard this opinion of the Cuban side several times that the Embassy of the FRG took over the intelligence work of the USA Embassy after their leaving [in January 1961]. Anyway, once I found, myself, that on a commercial ship calling at the Havana port, among the crew there traveled an officer of the FRG military navy disguised as a sailor. Certainly this was not the only case.

At the great Cuban national events, at the receptions held to commemorate national holidays, etc. the ambassador of the FRG is present regularly and asks the protocol chief every time, pointing at the ambassador of the GDR, who this man is and what he is doing here. The protocol chief always explains that he is the head of the GDR political mission, who has been invited similarly to the members of the diplomatic corps to represent his country. The West-German ambassador is usually satisfied with the answer and it has happened several times that the protocol chief or other foreign affairs staff asked him whether he wanted to protest about it or something like that and he answered no and said he only wanted to point out and state the fact.

It seems that it is the interest of the Bonn government to maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba, they may not carry out the break off required by the Hallstein principle or if they did so, only with a heavy heart, because, on the one hand they would change their position in the Latin-American countries for the worse and on the other hand, it would make its now intensive penetration into the new African countries more difficult. West Germany tries to act differently from other imperialist countries in Latin American and African countries and she wants to penetrate into them with her great economic power as deeply as possible. Her anti-Cuban attitude or even her break off [of diplomatic ties] with Cuba would meet with antipathy in some of these countries in the leading circles themselves and everywhere in the various progressive or even patriotic petit bourgeois and other circles—and this would prevent her penetration. The Cuban side is aware of all this, but at present it is also in the interest of Cuba to maintain diplomatic relations with as many countries as possible, it would be particularly disadvantageous to heedlessly provoke breaking off diplomatic relations with one of the NATO countries.

János Beck  
ambassador

*[Source: Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives] Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top*





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## DOCUMENT No. 4

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on meeting with Yugoslav Ambassador Boško Vidaković, 19 March 1962

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

Top Secret!  
94/1962/top secret  
Havana, 19 March 1962

Subject: Conversation with Yugoslavian ambassador to  
Havana, Boško Vidaković

I had a long meeting with Yugoslavian ambassador to Havana Boško Vidaković on 17 March. During this [meeting,] Vidaković made the following remarks worth mentioning:

In some parts of the Cuban public, mainly among the petit-bourgeois and intellectual supporters of Fidel Castro, who are not Marxists though, but who have been the supporters of the revolution for a shorter or longer time, he can feel a turning point in their attitude toward Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav embassy. While in the past he met with rebuffs everywhere, many called him a revisionist openly and refused any relationship with him, now more and more people visit him, they are most willing to talk to him, they inquire about the Yugoslav situation ("What is Yugoslav socialism?" "How are production and distribution organized?" etc.) This has two causes in his opinion: 1. The Cuban economic situation, the difficulties in provision, organizational problems and the political problems within the leadership, the interrelationship among the three political organizations united in the ORI. 2. The political problems within the leadership, the interrelationship among the three political organizations united in the ORI.

He knows from a completely reliable source that among friends Fidel Castro made the following statement two months ago: "He is completely aware of the help and is

extremely grateful to the socialist camp, first of all, the Soviet Union whose all-embracing help has made the preservation and development of the Cuban revolution possible. However, he is still considering the idea of revolution according to the Chinese."

Four months ago Minister of Industry Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara, saying "you have not signed the declaration of the 81 parties, you are revisionists," refused to have talks with him about the development of Cuban–Yugoslav relations, he considered trade relations with Yugoslavia the same as e.g. with Belgium and refused to listen to the Yugoslav suggestions, helpful proposals.

The second Havana declaration was written by Fidel Castro alone—and he knows it from a reliable source—he had not discussed it with any Cuban leading politicians. He discussed the declaration only with one person, a Uruguayan professor, who is something like his counselor.

Fidel Castro presented the declaration to the leadership of the ORI before its reading at the mass meeting, and they approved it. Referring to another—not named but completely reliable—source, he said that Blas Roca did not agree with the declaration in many points, but he accepted it in the interest of the unity of the ORI, that is the leading layer of the Cuban revolution. Vidaković has just returned from his trip to Latin America lasting for a few days, during which he had the opportunity to see that the communist parties generally did not approve of the declaration. In Brazil the party criticizes it strongly and [Brazilian Communist Party leader Luís Carlos] Prestes threatened the Cuban party with public action if they did not give up propagating views in Brazil that were contrary to the position of the Brazilian party. He considers it a typical fact concerning the declaration that the Western members of the Havana diplomatic corps all consider the declaration to be "the work of the communists," although the old communists cannot have agreed with it because it was not written in the spirit of the XXII. [CPSU] congress and [the doctrine of] peaceful co-existence.

The behavior of the Cuban delegation at the Punta del Este conference [in January 1962] was determined by Fidel Castro. Neither President of the republic [Osvaldo] Dorticos, nor Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa agreed with the appointed line, but they could do nothing but stick to it. This resulted in the isolation of the Cuban delegation, in that they refused or avoided meeting several Latin American statesmen and politicians. If the Yugoslavian diplomats had not helped, they would not even have known what was happening around them. Foreign Minister Roa is too clever and too realistic to agree with Fidel Castro's inflexible and leftist revolutionary line, he does not often think what he says, or does things without personal conviction.

The communists, however, did not agree with the sharply anti-Yugoslav articles published in the party's daily, the HOY about 10 months ago, as Vidaković was told by the editor-in-chief of the paper Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, but they were forced to publish the articles according to the Chinese wish. He considers revolting Fidel Castro's two latest speeches, in which he attacked those who had committed sectarian-dogmatic mistakes (cf. numbers 14 and 17 March 1962 of the Havana reports), because he continued in public the fight between the different groups going on behind the scenes in such a way that he gave no freedom of choice to the other party. According to Vidaković, Fidel Castro attacks the people of the Directory of 13 March on the one hand, and he makes it possible that the communists could be blamed for the consequences of the mistakes on the other hand, although it is just the communists who will make up for the damage caused by the egocentric and megalomaniac Fidel Castro.

Relying on Yugoslavian expert calculations, Vidaković thinks that Cuba is in a catastrophic economic situation. If there should be any deterioration, they must count on a change in the opinion of the peasantry (the first signs of this can already be seen), which would mean the beginning of the fall of the system. To prevent this, during 1962 and in the first months of 1963 the socialist countries must give a new loan—mainly in the form of transportation of food and articles of consumption. According to his calculations, this demand from the side of Cuba will be 100 million dollars.

Vidaković also said that the official Cuban side's attitude toward Yugoslavia had changed. Now their economic relations are better. They gave a 10 million dollar loan to Cuba (not state, but bank loan). If the Cubans follow the agreement and carry out the deliveries, this loan may be doubled in the future or even trebled.

In the sphere of politics, the Cubans seem to begin to understand his reasoning, which is the following concerning the Yugoslavian–Cuban relations:

Yugoslavia does not wish to interfere in internal affairs. But she would not like if in Cuba there was something like a cold war going on in connection with Yugoslavia. Out of general socialist interest, Yugoslavia wishes to provide help to Cuba unselfishly, she is willing to give loans as well besides the mutually advantageous trade. She has provided political help already before (e.g., she achieved that Cuba was able to participate at the Belgrade conference [of the Non-Aligned Movement, or NAM, in September 1961—ed.] against all the resistance) and will do so in the future too. It is an obvious interest of Cuba to maintain good political and economic relations with Yugoslavia, as the USA's policy—Cuba's economic isolation—is going to have its results gradually and it

is Yugoslavia that could serve as a gate toward the Western powers and neutral countries.

I have tried to sum up briefly what I heard from Vidaković. During the whole conversation, the Yugoslav ambassador represented the position of the XXII. congress, he referred to it and supported the old Cuban communists against the Chinese influence and Fidel Castro being under this influence. What he said reflected this position on the one hand—I do not know yet whether this is a position represented only by him and only toward myself—and the opinion of his circle of associates on the other hand. At the same time, he mentioned some things that give food for reflection. Concerning all this I am going to talk to other people and come back to the individual problems.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives] Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 5

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Talk with Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos, 15 June 1962

János Beck  
Top Secret!  
ambassador  
Written: in six copies:  
Minister Péter  
First Deputy of the Minister P. Mód  
Deputy Minister Szarka  
Deputy Head of Department Szűcsné  
Embassy Department.

Subject: A visit to President of the Republic Dorticos on 15 June 1962

I was received by President of the Republic Dorticos on 15 June and we had a conversation lasting one hour and 45 minutes. I requested the hearing explaining the fact that I was going on my usual annual holiday and before it I would like him to discuss with me all the problems he wanted the Hungarian government to be informed about.

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The president said the following concerning the different problems:

#### Agriculture

Some time ago the Cuban leadership considered the solution of agricultural problems the most urgent task mainly in order to ensure the provision of the country with food on the one hand, and the production of their most important source of foreign currency, of sugar on the other hand, and finally to provide a part of the industry with raw material later. To achieve this, they started the complete reorganization of the INRA (National Institute of Land Reform), which is managed by the newly appointed director Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. As a result of the serious measures of the government and the INRA, they achieved at last—said the president—that they were on firm ground concerning agriculture. The results can be observed gradually, but the early results will be felt in the public supply itself only next year. The production of poultry (mainly chicken) and pork is increasing. There is also an increase in the production of various roots (batata and other roots that are considered primary goods of general provisioning in Cuba).

The stock of cattle is about five and a half million heads, but they are economical with them to ensure the possibility of multiplication. Maybe the number of slaughters could be raised, and the quantity of beef for consumption could be increased, but they are waiting, among other [reasons] because it will be inevitable to raise the consumer price of meat as well. For the rise in prices they must wait for the best moment politically and also prepare for it.

The present shortage of food cannot be done away with in some months anyway, it will last until the next winter and even until the next year.

In the long run the food situation will be substantially improved by fishing. Before the revolution fishing was carried out by quite primitive devices and the quantity that was caught played an irrelevant role in provisioning.

There have been taken serious measures already to increase fishing, but only a few days ago did they start to eliminate radically those mistakes that hindered the development of fishing. First of all, we must mention that the fishermen got so little money for the fish and the fishermen were paid so low wages in the cooperatives, which were formed a long time ago and which have acquired a dominant role in fishing (besides egalitarianism), that it was not worth fishing and they tried to sell the few fish they caught on the black market. They have already bought and will receive bigger fishing vessels from the Poles, and some bigger trawlers from the Soviet Union, which will make it possible not to fish only in the near coast shallow

waters but in the open seas as well, e.g. first in the Bay [i.e., Gulf] of Mexico, later in the South American seas. Both the Poles and the Soviet Union are sending the ships with crews and the crews are going to fish together with the Cubans for at least half a year to teach them the industrial fishing methods. The solution of the wage problem has changed the mood of the fishermen from one day to the other, the result of material incentive can be seen in the quantity of fish on the market right away, but from the point of view of general provisioning there will be a considerable result concerning fishing only in the distant future.

Concerning sugar, the situation is the following: the dry weather has caused damage in the sugar crop in prospect as well, as the planned 3000 caballerias could not be sown in spring, so only a part can be harvested in 1963. They are going to sow in the dry (winter) period as well, differently from the usual practice, but it will be harvested only in 1964. The prospects of next year's sugar production are worse than this year. Even if all preconditions are fulfilled, that is, all planned tasks are carried out according to the plans, next year there will be a maximum of 4.5—4.7 million tons of sugar, that is, less than this year, [a situation] which is further aggravated by the circumstance that next year will be started without any reserve of sugar contrary to this year. Next year in the harvest already 1,000 harvesting machines will take part and harvest about 30% of sugarcane. But there will still be a shortage of manpower, which, similarly to this year, but to a much smaller extent, will be made up for by unpaid or voluntary permanent work. Mechanization will be of the size to do away with the shortage of labor force only by 1964 or 1965.

As far as the harvesting of coffee is concerned, there still remains the great shortage of manpower, so harvesting will be solved with voluntary work and e.g. by deploying students who receive grants in this work during harvest time. As in the past years a lot of people have left agriculture and e.g. started to work in public projects, they are going to take measures to redirect the labor force to agriculture.

To increase agricultural production in prospect and to eliminate the serious damage caused by the dry weather, one of the most important devices will be the creation of a water economy system at high technical level. The highest level Soviet expert delegation has been to Cuba, and after the departure of their leaders the remaining experts started work right away. There is a possibility to reach an immediate result or one that can be seen in, let us say, two years by a smaller investment, but they will start to make long-run plans as well to be able to begin the bigger jobs as well to the best of their ability. In Cuba earlier there was no water economy, they could not make a step without Soviet help. This help means expert help from the highest level to the simplest skilled worker and the manufacturing and delivery of material equipment.

### Industry

After they started tackling the crucial problems of industry, prospects have become better and normal progress seems guaranteed. These problems were mainly problems of norm and wages. They are far from being solved, that is, the planned solution from having been carried out, but they have started definitely. (Concerning this, the president repeated what I had written in my previous report on this question.)

### Plan

This year's plan is not and will not be ready. It is strange and astonishing, but they have not been able to make a plan. The next year plan of 1963 is being prepared, it will be ready soon, but the president stressed that it would be a plan with a lot of unreliable and inexact details. Concerning the long-run plan, he emphasized even more that he personally could not trust even the main numbers. (Let me remind you that President of the Republic Dorticos is also the president of the Cuban Party's Economic Committee.) In contrast with the agriculture and industry, where the Cuban leaders believe, even if only in recent times, that they have reached firm ground after the swamp, concerning planning and organization, they do not know where they stand. As the president expressed himself, they have not managed to create the spirit of planning and organization and he cannot report on any long-run idea either. They do not even know at this moment which line to take to change the situation radically. The cadres working in central planning are quite weak, often much weaker than in the subordinated organs, that is, the comrades working in the ministries and elsewhere. But it is worth thinking over whether they should be moved higher to do central planning jobs, because they may fail in the central work and then the smaller detail planning jobs that are carried out tolerably in some places may become worse too.

(Here I wish to interject that, according to the news spread in Havana, there have been talks going on for a long time whether Minister of Industry Ernesto Guevara or Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the president of the National Institute of Land Reform, should be appointed to the leading post of the Planning Bureau. Even if for others, but the highest leadership of the Planning Bureau will be obviously substituted.)

### The counter-revolution

The plan of the United States and the preparation for it is probably that she tries to increase the economic difficulties, which would contribute to the creation of a counter-revolutionary base in the population and the latter would provide a

ground to carry out some kind of aggression. The saboteurs and counter-revolutionary organizers arriving from abroad, who organize and direct the internal counter-revolutionary forces, in contrast with the last year or the past situation, now receive not only superficial training and are not only poorly armed and supplied with financial means but are people at a higher level from all aspects and work in a new way. The experiences of the Cuban counter-revolutionary work have been evaluated by the USA, she has assessed the real internal situation realistically and on the basis of this, after long and thorough training, she is sending to Cuba people equipped with the most modern technical devices. Besides the excellent technical equipment, she provides them with a great sum of money contrary to the past. For example, recently such a group of seven people has been caught in the Eastern part of Cuba just after landing, who, apart from the modern and many arms, had serious technical equipment and not false but real Cuban money to the value of several ten thousand dollars per capita [person]. This Cuban currency is probably bought through legal emigration on the one hand, and maybe without any network of agents, through Western embassies on the black dollar market on the other hand.

The Cuban situation may be generally characterized—continued the president—by greatly increasing class struggle. After the elimination of old groups of bandits, now, partly in Las Villas and mainly in Matanzas county there appear newly organized and functioning groups of bandits. Following direct external direction, they partly lean on the richer peasants with a counter-revolutionary spirit, and partly on the middle and poor peasants, who can be easily deceived because of the sectarian and other mistakes committed by the Cuban leadership, and also they win their base in areas with scattered populations by terrorist intimidation. They carry out sabotage actions, which consist of setting places on fire, explosions and other actions, and they also kill people. In Matanzas county in most recent times the situation has become so much worse that they approached the highways as well, and raided vehicles or people. The make-up of the groups is always the same and it shows where the line of class struggle can be drawn in Cuba at present: the members of the groups are the sons off well-to-do farmers, clerical people, and people under their influence and the ex-members of the armed forces and power-enforcement organizations of the old system or their relations and the smaller part is made up of the petit-bourgeoisie of towns.

The Cuban leadership cannot allow the spread of this movement, not even its existence in such size in a county neighboring Havana. But they cannot allow either, what the counter-revolution has already tried, that the counter-revolution formed even one group of bandits in the farthest county, Oriente county, which has always been the main fortress of

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the revolution. Therefore they have started the execution of the necessary measures both in the political and military lines. For this the experiences in Matanzas gave good grounds.

As an interjection, here I would like to report on the events in Matanzas, the details of which I have heard from President Dorticos: The counter-revolution managed to form a group of armed bandits of about 200 people out of small groups of 5-10 people in this county. These groups have been more and more active and in the past days they have managed to incite the population to a counter-revolutionary demonstration in a small village near the small town of Cardenas of Matanzas county. The main cause of the counter-revolutionary success is not to be found in the skillfulness of the counter-revolutionaries and their leaders in the USA, but the faulty policy led by the Cuban leadership and organs for a long time. Vice-Premier and Minister of Defense Raul Castro said that recently he had received reports one after the other from the commanders of the individual units that proved that the peasants began to see their only defender and help again in the Cuban revolutionary army exclusively, while they looked upon the party organizations and their leaders, that is the ORI, just because of the illegal sectarian arbitrary and terrorizing methods, as similar to the defeated authorities of the Batista-regime. The peasants often turned to the commanders of the individual units, not only with their problems, but with their complaints about the procedures of the ORI leadership and secretaries too. The organizers and leaders of the counter-revolutionary demonstration, the members of one of these groups of armed bandits were caught by the authorities right away and four were immediately sentenced to death through a summary procedure and shot dead. In the population the summary sentence met with protest against the renewal of death sentences and executions familiar from the time of the Batista regime. After this, the highest leadership immediately visited this place, gathered the whole population in the main square and explained for hours what had happened, then asked them to appoint and elect new leaders in place of the arrested and executed and fleeing counter-revolutionaries who held some post in the local administration or were the chemist, a cafe-owner and other bourgeois elements and in place of the badly functioning administrative and economic organs. It was during this assembly that the population of the village understood that the new revolutionary system was not the same as what they believed it to be on the basis of the activity of the local petty monarchs and under the influence of the counter-revolutionaries, and they appointed the new leaders after several hours of debate, rejecting one by saying that he was a drunkard, the other [because he] belonged to the circle of friends of the counter-revolutionary cafe-owner, etc. In this village the counter-revolution will have no base any more. A

few days later in the town of Cardenas, President Dorticos held a mass meeting and observed a military parade. After the parade some parts of the army together with the other organs and a part of the population began the all-embracing great military action against the groups of bandits in the county.

#### The Party

During the conversation President Dorticos emphasized that one of the main difficulties in eliminating economic problems and faulty political methods was that in Cuba there was not a party. The organization of the party has started only just now in the truest sense of the word (after the Escalante case) and it is going on very thoroughly and carefully, but slowly. They try not to make any new mistakes and strive to build a strong, uniform and firm Marxist-Leninist party. He does not doubt the success of this work.

During the conversation, mainly answering my questions, he stated that the provisioning of the population was not guaranteed this year and any food supply Hungary could help with, independently of quantity and quality, would be welcomed. He also said that they did not only need counselors, experts undertaking technical or other help in central and national work, but also at much lower levels for the solution of a small detail, to manage a smaller enterprise or institution, and sometimes for the solution of a particular task within a firm or institution requiring new technical or organizational skill, similarly to the Soviet Union, who lends us not only high and middle level experts but also skilled workers to organize e.g. the water economy and fishing.

He also stressed that in all cases when we thought that their Ministry of Foreign Trade or some organ or official within it wished to purchase something or in such quantity that did not correspond to our general situation or our prospects of development, or we could see that they missed to buy something that our more experienced organs or people considered necessary, we should not fulfill the wish of their Ministry of Foreign Trade but stand up for our position considered right and, if needed, even in smaller questions, if it could not be solved otherwise, we should turn directly to him, because even smaller things might have such major significance that he, as the head of the Cuban Party's Economic Committee, wished to deal with.

János Beck  
Budapest, 25 June 1962

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL)* [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila



*Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 6

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Cuban President Dorticos' Trip to New York, 16 October 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!  
375/1962/Top Secret

Written: in four copies  
Three to Center  
One to Embassy

Havana, 16 October 1962.

Subject: The New York Trip  
of President of the Cuban  
Republic Dorticos

As I have already reported in another form, Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa informed the heads of the missions of socialist countries about the New York trip of President of the Republic Dorticos and his speech at the UN in advance of the announcement in the Cuban press.

All the chiefs of mission of the diplomatic corps were present without exception at Dorticos' and Roa's departure. It was conspicuous that Fidel Castro was not present.

As we learned from the press the day after, half-an-hour after take-off, the plane carrying the president of the republic, the foreign minister, and their entourage turned back so that some technical defects could be repaired, and the defect in the engine was fixed at the Havana airport. Prime Minister Fidel Castro arrived in the meantime and he had a long conversation with President Dorticos and Roa and the plane left only afterwards, now definitively, for New York.

Of course, the above sparked a great sensation and provided an opportunity for further guessing within the diplomatic corps, too.

During my visit with him, the Polish Ambassador [Bolesław Jeleń—ed.] expressed his deep disapproval about the case, bringing it up as an example of the carelessness and hot-headedness of the Cuban leaders. According to him, what

happened was the following: as usual, Fidel Castro arrived late, the plane could not be held up because of the presence of the diplomatic corps, so he ordered the plane, already on its way to New York, to return so that he might give his final instructions to the delegation.

According to the above-mentioned comrade, Fidel Castro did not pay attention to the danger that the plane should pass certain points at given times, nor did he consider that it was dangerous for the plane, which was loaded with the fuel needed to reach New York, to land with the tank almost full. He considered the return order to have been given at random and without responsibility.

I inquired of some leading functionaries of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the causes of the return of the plane. They all referred to the minor technical defects also published in the press, which could not be fixed in the air and the plane [i.e., the pilots] did not want to make a forced landing before New York on the territory of the USA.

On the basis of these different opinions, I consider it likely that Prime Minister Castro wanted to have some talks with the delegation after the official farewell and it is possible that the recall took place on purpose and knowingly—but not because of the delay and out of hot-headedness.

President Dorticos' speech of October 8 at the UN was broadcast on Cuban radio and television. The television [broadcasts] grasped very skillfully those moments when American delegate [Adlai E.] Stevenson produced his notebook and took notes.

When returning to Cuba, President Dorticos was again welcomed by the chiefs of mission of all the diplomatic corps at the airport. All the chiefs of mission, including the papal legate, were present. So was Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

At the mass rally following the arrival, on the balcony of the presidential palace, however, I could see only the chiefs of mission of friendly and neutral countries.

The general assembly made an unforgettable impression on me. The square in front of the presidential palace, and the side-streets leading there, were black with the immense, unbelievably enthusiastic crowd, which fêted their returning president. Prime Minister Fidel Castro's speech (we have published its essence in a press review) was such an expression of faith in Soviet-Cuban friendship, the crowd shouting "Never" frenetically when Fidel Castro asked, "Can we give up friendship with the Soviet Union?" was so deeply sincere, the sight of the two flag-bearers cheered by the crowd, who raised the Soviet and Cuban flags and intertwined them, was so moving that whoever saw it—and probably the observers of the Americans were present—could not doubt for a moment that this crowd, these leaders would rather choose "Fatherland

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or Death” proclaimed in their slogan but would never leave the road of alliance with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.

Erzsébet Görög  
Chargé d’Affaires ad Interim

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



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## DOCUMENT No. 7

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella’s visit to Cuba, 16 October 1962

The Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic  
to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest.

Havana, 16 October 1962  
386/1962/top secret

Top Secret!  
Written: in four copies

three copies to Center  
one copy to Archives of Embassy

Subject: The visit of Algerian Prime  
Minister Ben Bella to Cuba.

At midday on the day of courier dispatch, 16 October, Algerian Prime Minister Ben Bella arrived in Havana on the plane of the revolutionary Cuban government sent for him.<sup>39</sup>

After returning from the airport, I wish to report briefly on Ben Bella’s reception, which was grandiose. The press has been releasing articles for days about the visit of the Algerian Prime Minister, underlining the common features of the fight of the Algerian and the Cuban people for national independence.

At the airport, headed by President [Osvaldo] Dorticos and Prime Minister Fidel Castro, the Cuban military and political leaders, the heads of diplomatic missions (with the exception of the French and Belgian ambassadors, I could see all the others were present) were meeting the Algerian Prime

Minister and the car of Ben Bella, sitting with Dorticos and Fidel Castro, was hailed by immense crowds on the road leading from the airport to the town and decorated by signs with the picture of Ben Bella.

At the airport Fidel Castro gave a quite warm speech, in which he stressed how much he appreciated the heroic armed fight of the Cuban people and the Algerian people for their independence and the personal courage of Prime Minister Ben Bella, who was making his first official visit abroad to Cuba, which was threatened by blockade and American aggression.

Prime Minister Ben Bella replied to the welcome speech, also translated into French, in Spanish, for which he received special applause. He emphasized how happy he was to have been able to come to Cuba, to the country he had wanted to get to know so much and he said that the heroic fight, the victory at Playa Giron [i.e., the Bay of Pigs] was viewed as their own, national affair by the Algerian people.

Ben Bella underlined that by the victory of the Algerian people, the exploitation of man by man would cease and never return to his country.

Apart from this term, Ben Bella—in contrast with Fidel Castro—did not use any Marxist terminology, he talked about social progress but not socialism.

I was standing between the papal legate and the Chilean charge d’affaires in the line when Ben Bella and his suite got off the plane, the legate—with whom we had a really friendly conversation—remarked, “Look, there is a priest in Ben Bella’s entourage too.” To which the Chilean charge d’affaires replied: “Of course, Ben Bella is a clever man!” The Cuban deputy protocol chief—who was standing near us—said that the priest was one of the ministers of Ben Bella’s government. I will report on the further events of the visit and its evaluation in my next report.

Erzsébet Görög  
chargé d’affaires ad interim

[Source: *Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) [Hungarian National Archives], Budapest, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Top Secret Documents, XIX-J-1-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



## DOCUMENT No. 8

Soviet Marshal Andrei Grechko, Commander of the Warsaw Pact, telegram to Hungarian Minister of Defense Lajos Czinege, 23 October 1962

Highly Confidential!

To: Comrade Lajos Czinege, Colonel General—Minister of Defense of the Hungarian People's Republic

Considering US President D. [sic; "J."] Kennedy's provocative announcement on 23 October 1962 and the increased danger of the outbreak of war caused by the Western aggressors, I hereby propose:

3. To introduce increased combat readiness for all troops of the services of the armed forces subordinated to the Supreme Command [of the Unified Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact].

4. Please, report on the arrangements made by you on 24 October.

23 October 1962

Grechko, Marshal of the Soviet Union,  
Commander in chief of the Supreme Command of the Unified Armed Forces  
of the Warsaw Treaty Member States

23 October 1962 10.05 am—Reported to Comrade Köteles, lieutenant-general

23 October 1962 7.15 pm—Clarified with Colonel General Dagajev<sup>40</sup>—"Effective as it was stated in Comrade Grechko's oral instruction."

Reported to: Comrade Köteles lieutenant-general, Comrade Tóth major general, and Comrade Szűcs major general, on 23 October 1962 at 6.50 pm.

Major Golovány

[Source: *Hadtörténeti Intézet Levéltára*, [Archives of the Institute for Military History]. MN VIII. 29. fond, 1962/T-4. d./6. ő.e.; published in "A dolgozó népet szolgálom!" Forráskiadvány a Magyar Néphadsereg Hadtörténelmi Levéltárban őrzött irataiból, 1957–1972 ["I serve the working people!" Documents from the Archives of the Institute for Military

History, 1957–1972], eds. Róbert Ehrenberger, Erika Laczovics, József Solymosi, intro. Imre Okvát (Budapest: Tonyo-Gráf Nyomdai és Grafikai Stúdió, 2006), p. 106. A short article, containing essentially the same information about Grechko's instruction appeared in the HSWP daily *Népszabadság* on 24 October 1962, with the notable difference that according to the published version Grechko contacted the liaison officers of the Warsaw Pact member states stationed in Moscow and there was no reference to his telegram to the defense ministers. Translated for CWIHP by Sabine Topolánszky.]



## DOCUMENT No. 9

Minutes of the Meeting of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government (Council of Ministers), Budapest, 25 October 1962

### Participants:

Comrade János Kádár, Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,  
Comrade Béla Biszku, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,  
Comrade Jenő Fock, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,  
Comrade Gyula Kállai, Deputy Prime Minister of the Hungarian Revolutionary Worker's and Peasant's Government,  
Comrade Dr Ferenc Münnich, Minister of State,  
Comrade Sándor Czottner, Minister of Heavy Industry,  
Comrade János Csergő, Minister of Metallurgy and Machine Industry,  
Comrade Frigyes Doleschall, Minister of Health,  
Comrade Ödön Kisházi, Minister of Labor,  
Comrade István Kossa, Minister of Transport and Postal Affairs,  
Comrade Imre Kovács, Minister of Food Administration,  
Comrade Pál Losonczy, Minister of Agriculture,  
Comrade Ferenc Nezvál, Minister of Justice,  
Comrade Ms József Nagy, Minister of Light Industry,  
Comrade János Pap, Minister of the Interior,  
Comrade János Péter, Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Comrade János Tausz, Minister of Domestic Trade,  
Comrade Dr Rezső Trautmann, Minister of Building and Construction

Members of the government

Comrade György Aczél, First Deputy Minister of Culture,

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Comrade Gyula Karádi, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade,  
Comrade Jenő Köteles, First Deputy Minister of Defense,  
Comrade György Lázár, Vice-President of the National Central Planning Office,  
Comrade Béla Sulyok, First Deputy Minister of Finance,

Representing the ministers in absentia

Comrade Sándor Rónai, Speaker of the Parliament,  
Comrade János Brutyó, Secretary-General of the National Council of Trade Unions,  
Comrade Attila Borka, First Deputy-Chairman of the Central People's Supervisory Committee,  
Comrade György Péter, Chairman of the Central Statistics Office,  
Comrade Géza Szénási, Attorney General,  
Comrade József Veres, President of the Executive Committee of the City Council of Budapest,  
Comrade Dr Tivadar Gál, Head of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers,  
Comrade Géza Neményi, Head of the Information Office of the Council of Ministers,  
as permanent invited participants of the government meetings.

Before discussing the agenda:

1./ Comrade János Kádár announces that Comrade István Dobi is on leave, Comrades Pál Ilku, Jenő Incze, and Dr Miklós Ajtay are abroad, Comrades Rezső Nyers and János Oczel are visiting places outside Budapest, and Comrade Lajos Czinege is sick.

The Government acknowledged the announcement.

Agenda:

1./ Information on the international situation.

Presenter: Comrade János Kádár

Comrade János Kádár informs the members of the Government on the international situation that has arisen as a result of the aggressive steps taken by the USA against Cuba and on the measures taken by the Hungarian Government.

He proposes that the Government should retroactively approve the government statement<sup>41</sup> drafted on 23 October (and then published) by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs as well as

the measures that have become necessary in the international situation which has emerged.

The Government approvingly acknowledged the measures that had been taken.

Comrade János Kádár proposes the Government to authorize the Prime Minister to take, together with the Deputy Prime Ministers, the Foreign Minister, and the Defense Minister, any pressing measures that may become necessary in this tensed situation on behalf of the Government.

The Government granted the requested authorization.  
Dated as above.

[signature]	[signature]
/János Kádár/	
/Dr. Tivadar Gál/	
Prime Minister	
Head of the Secretariat,	
Hungarian Revolutionary	
Hungarian Revolutionary	
Worker's and Peasant's Government	
Worker's and Peasant's Government	

Comrade János Kádár: I welcome all the comrades and hereby open the session of the Council of Ministers. I announce that [Minister of Defense] Comrade [Lajos] Czinege is sick and is undergoing medical tests in the hospital. [Chairman of the Presidential Council] Comrade [István] Dobi is on leave, Comrades Ilku and Incze are abroad, and Comrades Nyers and Oczel are visiting places outside Budapest.

We have convened the Council of Ministers to provide information on the Cuban situation.

The current tension is due to the statement made by United States President Kennedy on 22 October and the measures specified in the statement. You, Comrades, know the statement, so I will cite only the main points. The first measure was the announcement of a blockade around Cuba, which means a blockade both in the air and on the sea. They are monitoring the situation in Cuba and will deem any attack coming from Cuba as an attack by the Soviet Union. They evacuated all the family members from the American stations in Cuba and commanded nearly 100 vessels to the waters surrounding Cuba. The United States' troops were put on high alert, the granting of leave was discontinued, military service at the naval forces was extended by one year, and other measures were taken to complement these steps.

In the same speech they called upon the Soviet Union to withdraw their arms from Cuba as they had been informed that the Soviet Union has mid-range missiles in place in Cuba. The statement concludes by saying that the Cuban people are oppressed and calls upon them to rise in revolt. This statement was complemented by another statement issued by the United States government in which it was published that the blockade would begin on 24 October at 3 p.m. Central European Time.

The Soviet and the Cuban governments gave an adequate response to this decision of the United States government. They evaluated the American steps, basically stating that the blockade and the additional steps breach a wide range of international laws and violate Cuba's sovereignty, while the obstacle to free navigation also violates the sovereign rights of every country. The statements made it clear that the steps taken by the United States were warlike and unlawful, which the statements rejected by saying that the Soviet Union and Cuba would take the necessary measures to prevent the USA from realizing these steps.

It is worth noting a few things about the various steps that the United States has taken. I have already mentioned the 100 warships; these are quite large vessels and the number of effective force serving on them may be as many as 20,000. Two naval command headquarters were set up, as is usual under warlike circumstances: one for commanding the forces in the coastal area and one for the open waters. The USA put its forces stationed in Europe on high alert, and here the most important thing is that the number of patrol aircraft equipped with nuclear weapons was increased significantly. The number of these aircraft—which have been constantly in the air for years—is usually 4, 5 or 6, but now it was raised to 42 in the Mediterranean region and Europe.

As far as the NATO High Command is concerned, no special military measure that would be binding for the NATO countries was taken. If I remember well, the only thing that happened was that Italy's air force and air defense were put on alert, and so was the Greek army.

On our side, the following events took place: the existing effective force of the Soviet Union's army was put on alert. The granting of leave was discontinued, but those on leave were not ordered to return, nor were the reservists called up. Certain units of the Soviet army carried out the maneuvers that are necessary in such a situation. Part of this was putting the army of the German Democratic Republic on alert.

As far as the member states of the Warsaw Treaty are concerned, the Polish People's Republic mobilized significant troops along the Odera border section, and so did Bulgaria along the Turkish–Greek border. All the member states of the Warsaw Treaty put their existing troops on alert.

In this situation we also need to consider what to do. It was necessary to make a political statement. We drafted the statement of the Hungarian government on the basis of the proposal made by the Foreign Minister [János Péter] and, given the urgency of the matter, we had it approved by the deputy prime ministers and had it published.<sup>42</sup>

The commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Treaty [Marshal Andrei Grechko] is maintaining proper contact with and has informed the commanders of the Hungarian People's Army that are under the command of the Warsaw Treaty. The commander-in-chief requested us to take measures and inform him about them. We did that. Comrade Köteles<sup>43</sup> and other competent comrades worked out the proposal, which we approved and informed the commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Treaty about them. The essence of the measures involved putting some troops of our army on alert, primarily in the air force and the air defense force. In other units we discontinued granting leave without ordering all those already on leave to return to service and without calling up reservists. Currently, the various commanders stay closely together and are in union. In addition, we made preparations internally to take further action if need be: the fuel reserves of the divisions were filled up, etc., and anything else that appears to be necessary in a situation like this [was done]. We also informed Marshall Grechko of our measures. He expressed his thanks for providing such effective support for him as the commander-in-chief in the present situation.

In my view, this is the most serious international conflict that has emerged since the Second World War. As for the steps taken by the US government, it should be known that there was no negotiation with the allies in advance, and that's what the reaction to them by some of the NATO member states reflects. Essentially, the NATO member states officially endorse the US steps but their informal statements make it very clear that they are offended and feel that they should not take part in any such military action. This is what the French and the English positions seem to suggest.

This step of the US government is especially dangerous because it suggests some kind of conceited arrogance, some frenzy by certain American politicians, which is based on the fact that ever since the USA was established as a capitalist state it has never been defeated anywhere, and also on the belief that America has control over the entire world. This is supported by a wide range of facts. The American capitalists made incredible amounts of money during the First World War. The USA rarely got involved in dangerous or risky situations in the Second World War. They made a lot of profit during the Cold War period too, ousting their allies from different places whenever the occasion arose, e.g. Indochina or India. They even undertook to support the Algerian free-



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dom fighters to some extent just to soften up the French in another respect.

We must understand the USA's motives very well because we need to consider the situation on the bases of these motives. They keep bragging, suggesting that they can make it in every situation, they are very strong, and nobody can face up to them. The Americans are characterized by the politics of bluffing; they find pleasure in scaring others. This is one of the aspects of this thing, although it is quite dangerous because it may lead to undesirable steps.

The other thing coupled with it is an atmosphere of panic, which has a number of realistic reasons. The position of the USA has become weaker in connection with most of the key international issues. The Common Market raises a lot of problems, which hit the American capitalists hard too. Their position regarding the issue of West Berlin is very bad. In Laos they were happy to be able to get out of the situation, and they don't have much to expect in Vietnam either. I could continue this list on and on as far as mentioning the fact that the UN is gradually slipping out of their hands too. There is an obvious deterioration in their general position. It is also important to know that there are very effective weapons in Cuba.

It is also worth considering that the position of the current US government is not rosy at home either. It looks like the Kennedy cabinet had a lot of progressive votes during the presidential elections; the trade unions supported them and cherished great hopes in a positive sense, but nothing has really been fulfilled. These supporters are already dissatisfied, and so are many of the aggressive monopolist circles. This is the kind of situation in which they decided to take this step. They deserve to be called a country playing with fire in a hazardous manner, and anything can come out of it.

In addition to the measures mentioned before, we have decided on launching a certain political campaign too. We can mobilize the Hungarian public in the correct manner regarding this issue. There are ad-hoc political meetings in the factories. Ten days ago I was asked to give an interview to Cuban journalists, and it seemed right to make use of this opportunity.<sup>44</sup> We also have some ideas how to proceed. We will continue with the campaign and we are planning to organize an important meeting today where several different representatives of society will voice their position. This meeting will be held this afternoon in the Sports Hall.<sup>45</sup>

We have introduced a duty service in the Worker's Militia, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Party. As far as we can tell now, the Hungarian people have taken the developments of this situation soberly. Some comrades kept calling us during the night asking what the latest news was. One of the county party secretaries was working on his report; another one said

there was some positive concern in his county. The Ministry of the Interior complained that it could hardly dissuade a youth group from going out to protest. There is a healthy sense of sympathy with Cuba among the public.

This had been the situation until last night. Of course, there had been various developments on both sides in terms of both military and political action. As far as the political aspect is concerned, it's worth mentioning the document that is known to all the comrades already: all the three governments involved, the USA, the Soviet Union, as well as Cuba, demanded to convene the [UN] Security Council, all of them expressing the view that some kind of negotiation is required. This claim provided some basis for the work of the Security Council, which was complemented by several other things. The different governments issued a wide range of [draft] resolutions, including the governments of the socialist countries. In addition, a group of 40 non-allied states within the UN also discussed the situation and took action. Apart from a group of African countries, three neutral European states, Finland, Austria and Switzerland, also participated in this action. They also worked out their own position, urging negotiations and for every party to make an effort to prevent a military clash. The UN Secretary-General [U Thant] spoke in this spirit at the session of the Security Council held during the night, suggesting that the United States should lift the blockade and the Soviet Union should stop supplying Cuba for two weeks. Neither the USA's, nor the Soviet Union's, response to this suggestion is known at this point.

Other viewpoints on the situation cannot be disregarded either. Peace movements have also made their force tangible. [British philosopher Bertrand A.W.] Russell has also emerged, and what actually happened was that Khrushchev, Kennedy, and Russell began exchanging messages, some of which gave rise to hopes that it might be possible to prevent the further intensification of the conflict, and some of the positions appear to support the truth of our position politically. It is worth noting that the statement of the Soviet government<sup>46</sup> issued the day before yesterday was regarded even by the English and several others as very moderate and as calm as was possible in a situation like this. The Soviet government's statement has made a very good impression. Russell acted in accordance with this, primarily condemning the USA. In his telegraph sent to Khrushchev he asked the Soviet party to try its best to avoid being provoked. In his message to the US president he called upon the US to stop provoking the other party. Making the best of this opportunity, Khrushchev gave a very good response, pointing out several important political aspects and unveiling the dangerous nature of the American position. Khrushchev said that if a particular situation emerged, the Soviet Union would take action by using

its defensive weapons. The response makes it clear that there is room for negotiation and it also demonstrates that the Soviet Union is ready to participate in a summit meeting too. This approach made a good impression on the entire American public.

Yesterday there was a critical point in the afternoon when the blockade and the ships should have clashed. With respect to this, the tension has eased a little bit since then, as there is no news on any clash yet. So far there has been no clash between the ships that keep up the blockade and the ships that are bound for Cuba with supplies. It seems now that the most critical danger is over and diplomacy has come to the fore. I need to add though that the danger is certainly not over yet.

I request the Government to acknowledge the government statement that has been issued and the measures that have been taken to increase defense preparedness. The Government should give authorization to take any other necessary action in case of an emergency in consultation with the deputy prime ministers and the ministers of defense and foreign affairs. The situation changes from hour to hour, so prompt action is crucial at such times.

As a general task we suggest that the level of readiness that applies to us should be maintained but otherwise we should continue to work as usual. Whenever we have a chance to talk to people at various events and meetings, we should promote our fair standpoint and request the support of the Hungarian people. We should make it clear that this support requires discipline, composure, and, especially, hard work. We may have made a mistake when we omitted one section of the Soviet government's statement which was specifically addressed to the Soviet people, expressing the view that in the current situation the Soviet government is sure that the Soviet people will work even harder and will do everything they can to increase the defense capabilities of the country and accomplish any other goals of their work. This part was omitted from our statement but it should be taken into consideration when the tasks are being carried out.

[Minister of Domestic Trade] Comrade János Tausz: Since this situation emerged, we have been monitoring the sales of goods more intensively, as is usually the case at times when people are likely to hoard goods. There are signs of hoarding here and there but they are quite sporadic, not general at all, so there is no cause for concern in view of the situation we saw in the morning. I understand that our task is to bear in mind that the requirement to be prepared also applies to us in the sense that we should run our reporting service with even more vigilance.

As far as the supply of goods is concerned, I believe we should continue with our correct policy of not imposing any restrictions. Restrictions tend to backfire, generally costing more than what we can gain by them. Should any local problems arise, we will try to localize them.

Comrade János Kádár: Obviously, we should pay attention to all sorts of phenomena; however, we should make sure that our reassuring measures do not drive people to believe that there should be chaos. I don't know the reporting service of domestic trade but it must be a huge organization. If any extraordinary tasks are given to the reporting service there, maybe one hundred thousand people will get the order and the same number of people will begin to wonder why there is no panic when there should be panic. Comrade Tausz should not order the reporting service to carry out any extraordinary tasks; our domestic trade organization is socialist enough already to report to the competent authorities should any signs of a hoarding craze break out. Instead we should approve of the normal procedure with respect to our reserves; that is, the reserves should be filled up. This point of time is not bad with respect to hoarding; it would have been a lot more inconvenient at the beginning of June.

[Minister of Metallurgy and Machine Industry] Comrade János Csergő: Not underestimating the dangers inherent in the US steps, it occurred to me whether these steps and the [US mid-term Congressional] election campaign that is underway are related. Isn't it just a mere election trick?

János Kádár: It's unlikely that the two are related but the issue should be viewed in accordance with its significance. The weakening of the position of the Kennedy cabinet is not temporary, it has been obvious for some years now, and it is not characteristic of the current period only. It should not be seen as a mere election bluff, though. We should not assume that they commit such a stupid [action] and use a short-term bluff like this because it would result in complete political destruction. The elections will be held on November 6. This crisis cannot be maintained at this level until that time. Certainly, the internal political situation has a role in it too.

Now I would like to inform the comrades about some of the diplomatic steps that the US government has taken recently. The US chargé d'affaires to Budapest [Horace G. Torbert, Jr.] contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday at around 10 a.m. and requested to be urgently received by a senior official of the ministry. We were busy working on the government statement, so we put it off a bit, and eventually the audience took place in the afternoon at around 4 p.m. The ambassador's deputy handed over the USA's statement to

our government and added some remarks that can be seen as threatening. He said it would be a grave mistake to doubt the resolution of his government because it will implement all the steps that are contained in the statement. He also requested that the Hungarian government should continue to ensure communication between the American mission in Budapest and its administration. That was a clear signal as to how serious the situation really was.

Last Saturday [October 20] our chargé d'affaires in Washington [János Radványi] was summoned by the State Department and was given a piece of paper. This was part of trying to figure out the Hungarian position through diplomatic channels that has been going on since the summer. This time it was a specific proposal submitted by the American party to the Hungarian government. Its essence can be summarized as follows: they said if the Hungarian government was to declare, of its own free will, that nobody was in prison due to the 1956 events, the American cabinet would be willing to do a number of things. In such a case the US would be ready to take action in the UN and state that there have been changes in Hungary and the US no longer believes that the Hungarian issue should be put on the agenda. In addition they listed a number of other things that could be done: agreements have been proposed, disputed issues could be negotiated, the Mindszenty issue<sup>47</sup> could be discussed, ambassadors could be exchanged, etc. It could be called a real peace proposal. It appears that the USA's position is not very good regarding this issue either; therefore, they are seeking a way out.

We ordered Comrade Radványi to say, if the parties concerned happen to meet, that he has sent this proposal to Budapest where it will be studied carefully. The percentage of the votes on the Hungarian issue at the UN General Assembly is seen even by Western observers as a defeat for the US government, which does not seem to be too promising for them going forward. The US is also in a bad position as far as the issue of mandates is concerned.

I propose that the Council of Ministers should approve the government statement that has been issued and the measures that have been taken, and should authorize the government to take any other steps if need be.

As for the meeting planned for today [i.e., the mass rally in the Sports Hall in Budapest], we think it should be organized by the Party Committee of Budapest, the Popular Patriotic Front, and the Council of Trade Unions. There will be two key speakers: Comrade Gyula Kállai and the Cuban ambassador. Comrade Gyula Kállai will speak on behalf of the Central Committee of the Party and represent our well-known position. I request the government to acknowledge that.

[Minister of Food Administration] Comrade Imre Kovács: Does anybody know what the Soviet Union is planning to do regarding its future supplies for Cuba? To what extent will the Soviet Union take into account the blockade and will its ships be defended?

Comrade János Kádár: I am aware of the legal position and the most important thing here is the joint statement issued by the Cuban and the Soviet governments in September which declared that the Soviet Union is supplying Cuba with weapons that can help Cuba preserve its independence. The latest Soviet government statement says that the US step is illegal, and then there is Khrushchev's letter, which puts it in a popular language, saying that you should not give a robber just part of your money because he will come back for the rest anyway. I don't know anything more specific regarding the other things, I could only present assumptions but there's no point in doing so.

I don't know what each of the two parties is doing on the sea. The sea is huge, it's dark at night, but there has been no clash so far. The US wants to kill Cuba and the socialist world should not let it happen, nor should the progressive forces accept it because if they shut their eyes to it, the Americans would attack us the next day. All the relevant international laws say that our position is right and the USA's aggression is directed not only at the socialist countries but it also affects the fundamental norms of international life.

Cuba has taken adequate measures and ordered mobilization. The Cuban people are resolute and obviously count on the support of the socialist world.

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Council of Ministers, XIX-A-83-a-245. jku.—1962. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.*]



## DOCUMENT No. 10

Hungarian Socialist Workers Party First Secretary János Kádár's account of his visit to Moscow to the HSWP Central Committee, 12 November 1962

Strictly confidential!

Printed: in 3 copies

Attended: the members and the alternates of the Central Committee, the Heads of departments of the Central

Committee—according to the attached list, along with the Chairman of the Central Revision Committee.

[...]

Comrade Lajos Fehér:

I welcome all the comrades. The first item on the agenda is the negotiation of the congressional report, presenter: Comrade János Kádár.

Comrade János Kádár:

Last week, pursuant to the [HSWP] Political Committee's [i.e., Politburo's<sup>48</sup>] decision, I was in Moscow, I met with the Soviet comrades, and if you allow me, before I move on to the actual agenda, I would like to mention certain details concerning this trip.

The first and perhaps the most important is, that neither from our side, nor from the Soviet comrades' side, did arise any kind of burning question, what would have pressed this meeting. But as it turned out, last Sunday [4 November 1962] the Soviet comrades and we independently from each other thought that a meeting would not be wrong in this situation. As you know, on different issues though, but discussions were going on with most of the sister parties from the member countries of the Warsaw Pact during the previous days and week. We also had to take into account that people may misunderstand the situation here: such negotiations are ongoing with all parties, but not with us. Last week on Monday [November 5] we contacted Comrade Khrushchev via phone and we mentioned this, and we agreed that such a meeting never does harm.

At the discussion we naturally dealt with various issues of the international situation and with several current economic problems in the Hungarian-Soviet relationship. The meeting was useful and had a cordial atmosphere. Entirely new issues were not brought up or raised, we only clarified the situation on a few known issues and realized that we share the same opinion in all of the relevant issues. And it is splendid.

On the 8th I spent almost the whole day with the Soviet comrades. The company was more than just the members mentioned in the communiqué, there were other comrades from the Central Committee, and their relatives were involved too. The atmosphere was as if the Soviet comrades would have been just amongst themselves.

I was urged by Comrade Khrushchev, [Frol] Kozlov, [Leonid] Brezhnev, [Rodion] Malinovsky, and all comrades one by one and also together to forward their best wishes and greetings. I told them that a Central Committee meeting would be held on Monday. Also in the name of the

Communist Party of the Soviet Union they wished our party a pleasant work for the Congress. I felt it necessary to share this.

As to the agenda:<sup>49</sup> firstly, I would like to mention, that the external conditions for preparing the report were not very favorable, because the amount of time that we were to spend on this work, due to the tension of the international situation, the Political Committee could not devote to this. This text which is in your hands should be evaluated as follows: at a certain point it seemed that it was necessary to prepare a report after all, because of this I have dictated a text. Afterwards a four-member committee, set up for this purpose, dealt with this text: Comrade Szirmai, Comrade Orbán, Comrades Darvasi, and Endre Molnár are involved, who assist in data collection and wording. Then this draft was put on the agenda of and discussed in the Political Committee, then the Political Committee's comments—this again relates to my trip—were included in the text by the committee in question. Currently, this is how the case stands.

Regarding the future,—I will tell you this soon—if the Central Committee will have discussed the text which is to become the basis of the report and if the main directives are accepted, all we have to do is to finish it in two days and then, I think, I have to work on it to make the language smooth—and this will become the report. This is the idea. The work itself has requirements that around Thursday morning or shortly after we have to hand it over for translation, otherwise the Congress cannot work properly, because they have to hand the text to the foreigners. Currently, these are the conditions of the work. This additional work, of course, cannot differ from the approved principles.

I would like to mention, that in certain international issues one must take sides clearly and precisely. Now, briefly I wish to say a few words concerning these international issues.

First, of the Cuban question. The root of the question that raises great international tension, is the victorious people's revolution in Cuba that evolved further into a socialist revolution which has been constantly undermined by the United States imperialist circles from the beginning in hope of crushing, overrunning, terminating the Cuban revolution. Concerning the issue—most likely justly—the US sees a great, lethal danger against the country. Especially since the Cuban revolution shook all of Latin America under the American imperialists' feet. Since these South American and Latin American countries are colonies of the United States and the situation differs entirely from what the official reports declare in the United States. Furthermore, the domestic situation in these Latin American countries, the citizen's spirits, views, ambitions, hopes, fights are not the same as the American diplomats' views and positions talking there on behalf of them. Therefore the existence of the Cuban revolution indeed, means a lethal

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danger for the domination of the United States. This is the reason why the only goal was—through the economic embargo, through diplomatic tools, and through aggression if necessary—to annihilate the Cuban revolution. This is the root of the tension concerning Cuba. And these steps were carried into effect consecutively in the United States. The United States attempted political isolation, had already introduced an economic blockade around Cuba in order to crush the country economically. Also, they attempted invading the country by armed counter revolutionists last April. Hence, introducing all means available. Apparently inefficiently. The fact, that the United States was not able to achieve its goals by any means—that have been previously mentioned—depended solely on the determination and endurance of the Cuban people [and] furthermore on the brotherly help that the Cuban people enjoy on behalf of the entire socialist world and other progressive international partners. I do not think it is necessary to point out, that in this fight, for Cuba the biggest and primary help has been granted by the Soviet Union.

Due to constant American threatening and different attempts the situation evolved into an actual threat. In the past few months it became evident, that the United States has not refrained from using any means. Consequently, an agreement has been reached between the Soviet government and the Cuban government—a quasi military and defense agreement in which they have agreed that the Soviet government will provide proper weapons to Cuba and place them in the country. This agreement is several months old. The execution itself has been in effect ever since. Evidently, this could not have been kept in secret from the United States forever—though this has not been the intention at all—since in early September the two governments published the agreement in front of the whole world. They declared that such an agreement exists, according to which the Soviet Union grants weapons to Cuba. This event naturally caused general distress in the United States especially within government and imperialist circles. Concerning their former plan of attacking Cuba—we believed that the American government was basically influenced by two main factors: The first being the aggressive circles of the United States Department of Defense that is naturally backed up by the entire weapons industry of the United States, the monopolies that pursue a politics of war and aggression, circles that believe in [the] arms race, circles that suffer from self-delusion and are puffing, bluffing constantly by nature. This factor have been made even worse by a general panic, hence aggression—the belief that they are better and stronger than all the rest—and a general desperation were present simultaneously. These were the two factors that motivated the American government. It has to be said, that both were visible in the government's actions. Moreover

there is a certain minor disagreement between the Pentagon, the interest groups associated with weapons, and another group represented by Kennedy. There is a slight difference between these views and interests, however only minor, not important. In relation to this, the American elections were an external factor. The comrades know what kind of actions the Republican Party Eisenhower, Nixon, and the others have taken [on this issue]. At the end they were agitating that in fact communists were leading the United States. This also forced the government to take different actions. Therefore, the situation became as it was what triggered the events on the 22nd of October on the US government's side.

They announced the Cuban blockade, and were simultaneously prepared for amphibious landings and for a direct American invasion of Cuba. Both were already decided plans on 22 October.

We have to see this as a reckless game, when a certain group does not think of future consequences and puts all its eggs in one basket. This happened on 22 October and actually prevailed throughout this tense period. The Americans were determined to start another World War, rather than giving up on the termination of the Cuban revolution. Steps were taken accordingly. At that time, the ring of naval ships was publicly acknowledged that was set around Cuba. This was one of their force alignments, besides this there was another force alignment: 70 miles from Cuba on American territory significant forces were joined, three or four air transportable, most modernly equipped divisions, marine divisions, etc., namely made up of 7-8 divisions that would have served for the invasion of Cuba.

The third force alignment of the United States' government occurred in the European region, where mostly reactive forces were mobilized. The comrades are familiar with these planes, that carry around nuclear weapons, that have been in use for years. The number of these planes were raised by five times the usual number, then war ships in the navy and those stationed around the European region (equipped with nuclear weapons at the Mediterranean) were joined around Sicily and without mobilizing the entire army were combat ready (including the partial mobilization) that the comrades know very well from the news. This is what the government of the United States has done. Something was also done by the NATO organization, however not as much as the United States has done. What happened there, was the following: the United States did not cross-check these decisions with her allies, legally pulled together the so-called Organization of American States [OAS]—this was the ally who they referred to. The United States did not cross-check these actions with the NATO. Consequently, NATO allies were not that active.



Some kind of monitoring system, a certain preparedness was present in the forces of NATO powers as well, but without any particular mobilization. Thus, this was the situation on the 23rd of October.

In the meantime on our side the following event took place: Cuba ordered a general mobilization, that the Cuban people managed effectively. Approximately one million people were armed during that time. The Soviet army was put in combat readiness, without calling in reserves. Essentially, the same happened with the rest of the armies of the Warsaw Treaty. In our country also. Not the entire army [was mobilized], but at certain divisions from air defense, air reconnaissance, and also at certain land forces preparedness was ordered by our government, since in times like these, all means of defense should be available.

In connection with this, I would like to mention a fact that is certainly well known by the comrades, that in this critical situation and also in the context of these measures our army both in the senior leadership, and in the entire personnel of the army, the behavior and the attitude was commendable. There was serenity, determination, and solidarity. Similarly, the population's behavior is well known by the comrades. You all know perfectly, that comparing to the last year's tension [regarding Berlin] it can only be said that our population stood one's ground calmly and politically well. This is a crucial point in this situation. It can be said, that testimony of high skill of political maturity, consciousness, correct political behavior were shown by the Hungarian masses, the toilers, and this discipline obviously demonstrates a general and fundamental trust towards the Soviet political system, towards the policy of our party and government. People knew that the situation was serious, but they did not have knowledge of the details, the moments, the hourly changing situation, they had no information and yet the Hungarian working people behaved so honorably in this situation, which is an evidence of general and fundamental trust in the matter of the socialism, towards the forces of peace, towards the Soviet Government's policy and towards the Hungarian Government's policy. This is a rejoicing and a very significant thing!

What is to be done by responsible parties in this situation? Here I mean the affair in the afternoon of the 23rd [of October], when the ships were due to meet.

When I gave a toast on the 8th [of November] in Moscow I also mentioned that in a situation like this I would like to be anybody but Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev. Generally we envy everybody, except the Soviet leaders, because their position is like no others'. I said, that the view here is that at a push or if we cannot find a solution in an issue we can always go somewhere, we go to Moscow, and one will surely be smarter from it. But where you go in critical situations

that are hard to tackle, that's your secret. But they cannot go anywhere. It can be said that an enormous responsibility rests on the Soviet comrades, when socialism, the socialist revolution, the cause of progress, the case of peace should be protected. In this situation the question was not the blockade, because the blockade is the blockade, that had to be there in Cuba. Actually, the issue here was the clash. The Americans were ready for the amphibious landing. A certain kind of minor clash did indeed happen. The main issue was not the blockade, between the US warships and the Soviet ships since there was a certain manoeuvring in order to delay the clash. The joined forces of the United States began the landing and the invasion of Cuba. Meanwhile, one of their reconnaissance aircraft was shot [down] over Cuba [on 27 October]. This aircraft is also significant, because in such an impulsive situation it happened for the first time—and I would say, from our side—that a weapon was used. Two anti-missile projectiles were launched—the two together means a 100% effectiveness—and the aircraft was shot down indeed. Such a situation occurred. What could be done if the options seemed like the Americans would manage the landing in Cuba or would arrive to the shores of Cuba? A strike should be launched at the United States. This is inevitable, it is not possible to fight in any other way. Furthermore, if they land in Cuba, they shall be destroyed. These two options together—this is not so difficult to figure it out—would have meant, that the main goal in this particular issue is the rescue of Cuba, or otherwise Cuba will be destroyed. That was the Third World War's seat of the fire, and in that case, that would not leave anything behind. The other [option] was that the [political] fight begins.

The Soviet comrades were thinking in that situation, and they came to the decision that is known to us. The opinion of the Soviet comrades in this issue is—and it is necessary to tell, that when we here were analyzing the situation, we were lead to the same conclusion—that the two basic goals are the protection of the Cuban revolution and the preservation of peace.

The decisions made by the Soviet Government served these two basic goals superbly. The US government declared that there were offensive weapons there and therefore they would attack Cuba in the spirit of self-defence. The Soviet Government therefore decided to pull-out these offensive weapons. Only the United States shall declare, that Cuba will not be attacked. Then the two main goals have been reached. That is what essentially happened.

The opinion of the Soviet comrades is, that these weapons have accomplished their task, without being compelled to shoot with them. Because neither the Soviet, nor the Cuban government's plan was to deploy any weapons there and then attack the United States, but to deter the enemy and protect Cuba and the Cuban revolution. Certainly, during those

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hours it looked—and there were such voices in the United States—as if the Soviet Union had retreated. But after two days, these people realized too, that they have not achieved the same thing as they wanted, and started to rampage and began to attack their own government anew. How come that non-aggression will be guaranteed? If the Cuban revolution remains and the United States guarantees non-aggression, they are in the same situation as they were, indeed, in a worse situation. Because, so far—since the victory of the revolution in Cuba—they always pronounced that they would destroy it and now they had to declare that they shall respect Cuba.

This was a truly responsible, correct, and revolutionary communist measure. It has served the fundamental purpose. What is there currently? Currently, the situation is that the United States is in diplomatic hot water and the wrestling is going on with the usual devices of politics. The United States Government invented that there are some kind of bombers [i.e., the IL-28s], and those shall be pulled out, too. The reply for this was that those are basically not offensive, and this is the point where the usual political and diplomatic wrestling starts, which means, that the issue is not completely solved yet. Simply we are far from that moment now, where we were in the afternoon on the 23rd of October, when the world and mankind was on the eve of the Third World War. We are far from that now. The issue has not been solved completely yet, the usual political and diplomatic struggle is still going on—of course, the Soviet government made it clear for the US government that they may keep on complaining about these bombers if they want, but they should think it over too, because the original situation can be set back.

And from that there is nothing good for the United States. Probably this political question now roughly will be resolved. I am saying roughly, because American imperialism will remain and the Cuban revolution will remain, too. And the two countries will continue to be neighbors. So the problem will be solved in this sense. Eventually, the irreconcilable antagonism will remain.

Anyway, probably we will return to our original position and will continue the old fight. The Soviet government promised to the United States, that after the elections have finished in the US, the Berlin issue will be brought up. And this promise will be kept by them. The wrestling will continue in this question as well. Similarly, the negotiations on the termination of nuclear-weapon tests, and the conclusion of an agreement will be put on the agenda, which is a realistic option. Currently it looks that it is realistic. It is possible that such an agreement will be concluded. Apart from that, it is quite clear to us, that from this tension the world's people have learnt a lesson and we have to continue our general anti-imperialist propaganda and fight increasingly, to continue the

fight in the issue of general disarmament, the elimination of the Cold War, etc. It is certain, that the conditions for this are much better than previously. The United States with her steps resulting from aggression and panic exposed herself completely as illegitimate, provocative, offensive, etc. Therefore people know that the preservation of peace was threatened greatly by the US Government and the Soviet Government was the one who saved humanity's peace. Currently this is the situation. For us the situation is the same as it was previously, we adopt the same policy, but at the same time vigilance is necessary, a certain level of readiness is necessary and the previous fight goes on. I would like to mention too, that in the general situation there are things also that are not the most pleasing for us. For example, the Soviet government's and the Cuban government's views are not exactly the same in certain issues. The situation is that not everything could be reconciled in those critical hours. It was not like the First World War in 1914, when there were six months for the parties to mobilize the forces to begin a serious clash, here it was about half-hours and [periods of] fifteen minutes. The Cuban government has some views that are not identical with the Soviet government's views. All in all, this not a world disaster, because at the same time, on the main questions there is consensus, but still, it left a small gap, wherein immediately joined our Chinese comrades, and with their usual revolutionary behavior they are hitting the tambourine. Why retreat, etc. ...

They interpret the measures of the Soviet government as concessions. For us, this is the inconvenient aspect of the situation, but we hope that the correct opinions will fully prevail. This situation will be clear and they will understand that with blustering, with phrases, and with slogans like "down with imperialism!" the world can be brought to flames extremely quickly. And it is not the communists' task to set the world on fire. This is the same as the principle of peaceful coexistence. If it is not a correct principle, then it has a logic. If that is impossible, then the other possibility has to be applied and then the Soviet Union has to start the war. If there is no chance of resolving the conflict peacefully ... This is why the Chinese comrades' logic cannot be accepted, besides, it is not Marxist, it is not realistic, it does not reflect reality.

Regarding our Congress, the topic on the agenda means... I ask for the compliance of the Central Committee, so we may clearly and unmistakably express that we absolutely agree—not only generally with the behavior and the decisions of the Soviet government but—also with the questions concerning Cuba and that we feel absolute solidarity towards those decisions. Those meet the interests of the Hungarian people, and they also meet the interests of the Hungarian revolution as well as the interests of the international proletariat.

[...]

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, Central Committee, M-KS-288. f. 4/60. ő.e. Translated for CWIHP by Annett Szűcs and Sabine Topolánszky.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 11

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Soviet-Cuban Divergence, 29 November 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter

Budapest

TOP SECRET!  
436/1962/Top Secret  
Written: in four copies

Three copies to Center

One to Embassy Archives

Havana, 29 November 1962

Subject: The appearance of  
a divergence of opinions  
between Cuba and the  
Soviet Union.

I still do not know what agreement between Cuba and the Soviet Union was the basis for sending the so-called "strategic arms" to Cuba in October. As a consequence, I have also no idea about what consequences the Soviet and Cuban sides reckoned with concerning the transportation of strategic arms to Cuba. But it is obvious that both sides were trying to calculate the expectable consequences and to determine in advance their position and tasks concerning them.

On the afternoon of 23 October, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez said during the visit paid to him that he, that is the Cuban leaders, thought that there was not only the possibility of war but the Cuban crisis might be solved in another way, too. As he said, there could be talks about reducing the Cuban army's armament to the defense weapons described in the well-

known definition. By the well-known definition he meant the definition given by the President of the United States, the government of the United States. But the Cuban government could agree to this only if Cuba's territorial sanctity and possibility of normal life were not guaranteed only by the United States but in some form by the Soviet Union as well.

I have been informed by the Polish ambassador [Bolesław Jeleń] that there was an exact plan between the Soviet Union and Cuba concerning what they would do in case of an expectable and calculable reaction from the United States. The government of the United States reacted in such a way that was not on the list of foreseen possibilities. Consequently, such steps had to be taken by the Soviet Union and in such form that had not been calculated. Neither the Polish ambassador nor I could check the correctness of this information.

Neither I, nor the socialist ambassadors to Havana, have been able to form a clear picture of what happened from the morning of 27 to the morning of 28 October 1962. We are aware only of the following facts:

At around 10 o'clock on 27 October Saturday, a quite powerful American jet bomber formation flew over West-Cuba, Pinar del Rio county. I could not determine how many planes this quite powerful formation included, but according to some news, the number of American bombers was several hundred. At the same time from one point 600 anti-aircraft guns started firing at the formation, the bombers turned around at once and left for the USA at high speed. A quarter of an hour later a U-2. type plane flew in over West-Cuba at a great height and it was shot [down] with a missile. (In my report sent earlier it was a mistake that the U-2 had been shot in Oriente near the Guantanamo base.) After these two incursions until Sunday dawn no air activity could be experienced from the American side over Cuba. Moreover, the radar devices in Cuba showed that in Florida all air activity ceased after these two incursions. On Saturday afternoon we could hear the ultimatum-like demand of American President Kennedy, which was followed by Comrade Khrushchev's letter on Saturday night [sic; actually Sunday morning, Washington and Havana time—ed.], in which as a reply to Kennedy's promise to guarantee non-aggression toward Cuba, he announced the disarmament of missiles and their removal from Cuba. While in Comrade Khrushchev's previous letter, in which against the removal of missiles he offset the removal of American missiles from Turkey, he mentioned Cuba as a country whose government should approve the control in order that it could be carried out, in this later letter of his the Cuban government and the necessity of the Cuban government's approval is not present. At least it is not included in the text the Cuban organs, the Cuban press, and I have received here in Cuba.

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All of us here in Havana know that neither the Cuban government, nor the Soviet ambassador, Comrade [Aleksandr] Alekseyev, was notified in advance of this letter of Comrade Khrushchev, but all of them learnt it from the press and radio.

These two letters of Comrade Khrushchev to Kennedy, that is the letter of 27 October, in which he offset the removal of American weapons from Turkey against the removal of missiles, and the letter of 28 [October], in which he acknowledged Kennedy's promise and promised to dismantle and remove the missiles at once, had the effect of cold water on the Cuban masses. From reliable sources I learnt e.g. the following minor fact: Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara, the minister of industry, one of the most important Cuban leaders, was staying in Pinar del Rio county on Saturday 27 October and was reviewing the military units on the parade. In the meantime he received the news that the radio tower was transmitting Comrade Khrushchev's letter in which he undertook the removal of missiles if the USA withdrew her similar weapons from Turkey. Enraged, he dashed his cap to earth and repeated furiously that this was perjury as he, himself, had had talks in Moscow and they had talked about a different thing. I also consider credible the other information according to which Prime Minister Fidel Castro reacted more or less the same way too. He, completely broken, told President of the Republic [Osvaldo] Dorticos to take over the conduct of affairs for some time because he needed at least one month to recover from this great blow. He wanted to be a private individual for that time.

I share the opinion with others that maybe nowhere in the world did the wide masses have such love and enthusiastic respect for the Soviet Union and Comrade Khrushchev himself as could be experienced here in Cuba right until the 27 of last October. But from the 27th to the 28th, that is, in 24 hours, the mood of the masses changed from one extreme to the other. Out of the mass of phenomena I would like to mention only a few typical ones.

In some of the military units they expressed their opinion in the following way: It is all the same who comes, whether the Americans or Russians come, we will fire, we will defend ourselves even if all of us die. Many people turned to the Soviet Embassy on the phone and in letters and asked what would come now, whether the Soviet Union would leave them alone, whether they would be defenseless against the Americans and so on. The people in the streets, on the buses, the officials in the various ministries we talked to all expressed their feelings of despair, abandonment, and disappointment. We could hear all kinds of anti-Soviet positions, such as the Soviet Union is only a super power just like the USA and she leads power politics, or she used Cuba only as a means of solving her conflict with the United States, and so on. Many

were upset by the fact that she connected the removal of missiles from Cuba with the withdrawal of American weapons from Turkey, that is, she put a sign of equality between Cuba and Turkey and used them as the objects or means of bargain between the Soviet Union and the United States. Several people protested that they talked about Turkey and not the Guantanamo American base. These voices and remarks were not limited to passers-by or minor officials of different offices, I had the opportunity to witness that in the Cuban government itself, within the national leadership of the Cuban party there were many of one or other of the mentioned opinions and turned against the Soviet Union more or less.

From government members and the members of the party's national leadership and, of course, from lower-ranking people we could hear such disappointed remarks as the Soviet Union, with this step, undermined Cuba's international prestige once and for all, she made it impossible to continue the American policy, moreover, hindered the possibility of the victory of Latin American revolutions for a long time.

The feeling of disappointment in the Soviet Union had a demoralizing effect on the one hand, and demobilized the Cuban masses on the other hand. These days the Cuban press and radio reflected this mood of the masses, and as this mass feeling was present among the leaders as well, they could not stand up against it, but by taking no position, by publishing not well-selected news and information, by keeping important news a secret, they contributed to causing a chaos and an anti-Soviet nationalist mood.

Fidel Castro, seeing this more and more sharp atmosphere, decided to stand up against it in a radio and television speech. So the speech of 1 November took place. As far as this speech is concerned, I think that it was necessary, and the form Fidel Castro told it was correct and had due influence. But I do not want to say that I agree with what happened during the preceding days, that is, what made the speech necessary in this form, nor what happened after the speech from the Prime Minister's side. Several people in Cuba, the Cubans themselves, but most of all the foreigners doubt whether it was necessary and right that in his speech Fidel Castro announced to the whole world that there was a divergence of opinions between the Soviet Union and Cuba. I think this announcement was necessary, because the mood of the masses was such that denying these divergences of opinion would not have done away with this mood but would have intensified it. On 1 November, Fidel Castro could not say more and in a warmer voice about the Soviet Union and the Soviet people than he did say, because at that moment, the people would not have accepted any more and anything warmer. But we should add that we who watched Fidel Castro on television had the impression that the statement that he trusted the government

of the Soviet Union, the party of the Soviet Union, and the political leadership of the Soviet Union was difficult to make even for him. We had the feeling that he was not completely convinced about it. This could be specially noticed in his case, because he was used to saying on the radio, on television, and in the different conversations and speeches what he thought, even if it was not always political and tactical.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 12

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Cuban–Soviet Divergence, 30 November 1962

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

440/1962/ top secret  
Written in four copies

Three copies to Center

One copy to Emb. Archives

Havana, 30 November 1962

Subject: The perceivable signs of the Cuban-Soviet Divergence of opinions.

The Cuban leaders personally and the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs have shown it to the outside world several times that there is a divergence of opinions with the Soviet Union, the relations with the Soviet Union are different from earlier relations. I would like to list a few examples.

For the arrival of Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not organize such a reception at the airport as they usually do to welcome not only the

prime minister or vice-premier, but a lot of times the deputy minister of foreign trade as well. The diplomatic corps were not notified at all, the Czech, Polish, GDR, Romanian and Bulgarian ambassadors and I decided together to meet him at the airport in spite of the lack of any invitation. The original idea of the Cuban side was that Comrade Mikoyan would be met only by Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa and Minister of Industry Ernesto [“Che”] Guevara. Fidel Castro decided to come to the airport at the last moment. He was really present together with his brother Raul Castro and some other leading functionaries. The reception can be considered cool compared to the usual receptions in Cuba.

The original idea concerning 7 November was that the center of trade unions would organize the ceremony. This was like that last year, too, when the ambassadors of socialist countries were invited to the celebrations and were given seats in the presidium, and there, apart from the head of the foreign department of the trade unions, the Soviet ambassador, that is, the Soviet charge d'affaires ad interim, gave a solemn speech. But this year the ambassadors of socialist countries were not invited. Then, on the morning of November 6, they changed the plan and the ORI, that is, the Party's Central Committee, became the organizer, and the ambassadors of socialist countries were notified on the phone that they would receive the invitation to the ceremony during the day. Then we were really present at the celebration, where we were seated in the first rows. The ceremony itself started three quarters of an hour late. At the presidential table numerous Cuban leaders were seated, the president of the republic and Comrade Mikoyan in the middle. But Prime Minister Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, and Ernesto Guevara were not present. As I learnt later, Fidel Castro, his brother, and the minister of industry arrived at the entrance of the theater, but then changed their minds and did not come in to the ceremony. At the celebration, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez gave a speech apart from the Soviet ambassador [Aleksey Alekseyev]. During the ceremony the president of the republic [Osvaldo Dorticos] behaved quite coolly, we must say, toward Comrade Mikoyan sitting next to him, and when Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, citing the Fidel Castro speech of 1 November, said that they trusted the government of the Soviet Union and the party of the Soviet Union, President of the Republic Dorticos did not applaud. We must say that the television that transmitted the speech was clever enough not to show him at this point and all other parts when the president of the republic or other leaders behaved coolly or demonstratively, but we could see the applauding audience.

When the Soviet ambassador to Havana gave a dinner in the honor of Comrade Mikoyan, at which present were President of the Republic Dorticos, Prime Minister Fidel



Castro, and all the Cuban leaders, the next day the press mentioned it in a hidden place with small print and very briefly, it reported only the fact with the comment that the dinner took place in friendly atmosphere. I can see in “*Népszabadság*”, which has arrived since then, that our party’s paper reported on the dinner in a more conspicuous place, in more detail.

Finally, I would mention the fact that it is true that at Comrade Mikoyan’s departure at the airport all Cuban leaders were present beginning from the president of the republic, but the diplomatic corps were not invited, and the farewell can again be called cool compared to the farewells usually organized in Cuba.

This is not a very conspicuous sign of the divergence of opinions, but I would like to mention here the following: During his tour of Europe Comrade Blas Roca was in Denmark when these events happened in Cuba. In one of his statements in Denmark he agreed with the position of the Soviet Union. This was also published in one of the papers in Copenhagen. To counterbalance it, presenting it as the news of the *Prensa Latina*, HOY published it on the first page on 31 October that in Berlin Comrade Roca, talking to the Spanish people living in Berlin, said the condition for the solution of the Cuban situation, that is the crisis of the Caribbean, was the acceptance of the five points and the article did not say a word of the Soviet position. According to my information, Blas Roca did not make such statement in Berlin at all. This was published in Cuba to counterbalance Comrade Blas Roca’s standpoint. Besides, he was called up and, as I hear, lectured and ordered back to Cuba at once. Although, according to the plans, he would have had to represent the Cuban party in Moscow at the 7 November celebrations. As a result of the ordering home, according to my information, there was no one as a delegation in Moscow from the Cuban side. When Comrade Blas Roca was waiting for an airplane in Prague to return to Cuba, he received the instruction not to return but to go to Sofia and represent the Cuban party there. And in Sofia to inform him and discuss the political questions with him, one of the functionaries of the party center at home was sent there.

János Beck  
Ambassador

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



## DOCUMENT No. 13

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Cuban–Soviet Divergence, 1 December 1962  
Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic

To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest.

TOP SECRET!  
443/1962/ top secret  
Written: in four copies

Three copies to Center

One copy to Emb. Archives

Havana, 1 December 1962

Subject: The essence of Soviet-Cuban divergences  
of opinion.

Since my return from New York on 20 October I have not once managed to talk to Cuban leaders. Since then no ambassadors of the friendly countries, including Czechoslovakia, have managed to contact any Cuban leaders. As for the Czechoslovakian ambassador [Vladimír Pavlíček], being the first representative of socialist countries to Havana, he used to meet first of all Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa several times a day and often the other leaders as well. Foreign Minister Roa first of all because in the United States Cuban interests are represented by Czechoslovakia, between the Czechoslovak embassy to Washington and the Havana embassy there is a special direct code connection and courier service. In this period he has not been able to get in to Cuban leaders and Foreign Minister Roa, who had the closest and most confidential relationship with him, has behaved toward him coolly, or even if this coolness has become relaxed in the past days, he has not been willing to say anything important to him.

As, similarly to the other socialist ambassadors, I was soon convinced that I could not get in to the higher leaders, similarly to them, I decided to turn to lower-ranking Cuban functionaries working in different places and talk to them about the political problems. So since the end of October my colleagues and I, first of all counselor Görög and commercial counselor Sós, have talked to 20-25 middle functionaries.

I have had the closest relationship with Czechoslovakian ambassador Pavlicek since the beginning of my stay in Havana. We have often exchanged our information, we have always discussed the different problems. This relationship has become

even more intensive in this period of crisis, and meant sometimes several phone conversations a day or, if necessary, meetings at night in each other's apartments. I have had almost such a close relationship with the Romanian and Polish ambassadors as well. They have met about 20-25 middle functionaries too, we have exchanged our opinions, we have discussed our conclusions, so what will follow in my report is not only my opinion but what I concluded from our conversations and their comparisons concerning the crucial issues.

I consider three factors important and I would like to deal with them one after the other. The first one is the individual attitude of Cuban leaders. I must say, when it comes to Cuban leaders, I think of three people, Prime Minister Fidel Castro, his brother Vice-Premier Raul Castro, and Minister of Industry Ernesto ["Che"] Guevara. As during the crisis it has turned out that no other than these three people have a serious and important say in the government, the party secretariat, and most of all in the party's central committee, as a matter of fact, the opinion of these three people in crucial matters cannot be successfully contradicted even by their closest colleagues. So President of the Republic Dorticos or Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the director of the national land reform institute, could not have a significant influence on the events.

The fact that Cuba became a country independent of the United States, the greatest imperialist power, unaided, through the movement led by Fidel Castro, that Cuba could develop the fight for independence and the democratic revolution into a socialist revolution on her own, made the people especially jealous and sensitive concerning everything related to the independence, self-government, and freedom of the country. This can be understood, as it is a relatively small country enjoying the benefits of modern technology but lacking industry, a mono-culture country with colonial conditions, which was liberated after several centuries of colonial or half-colonial oppression. This sensitivity and jealousy concerning freedom, self-government, and independence is especially strongly reflected in leaders, most of all, in the mentioned three leaders.

As for the leaders, this is also complemented by the fact that they arrived at the socialist revolution, Marxism-Leninism, in a different way from all other countries. This is also coupled with the individual ambitions of leaders, which is partly the consequence of the fact that they have been appointed to lead a historic movement and victorious revolution and such a country that is in the center of world politics at the moment.

The second factor, which plays a role at every level, in the great masses of the Cuban people as well, but is particularly strongly seen among the leaders, can be called revolutionary romantics with many petit-bourgeois and anarchist features.

It can also be mentioned here that the Cuban people and, of course, the present leaders of the Cuban people have never experienced any great events shocking the whole Cuban society like a war, revolution, or natural catastrophe.<sup>50</sup> So they know nothing of the country-wide misery, decay following the great war, the participation of large masses in the revolutionary fight, or the famine striking the whole society or at least its majority or other similar blows. It is a characteristic of the great Cuban masses and, I must repeat, particularly of the leaders, the different ranks of leading layers what can be described by the Spanish expression: *inmolación*. This could be translated as self-sacrifice. Here can be mentioned the lack of knowledge and under-estimation of economic building work, of doing small jobs for a long time every day and imagining all solutions by great, heroic, revolutionary deeds.

The third and most important feature, which is, however, related to the first two, is political. In the political ideas of Cuban leaders the idea that there have been three great revolutions in the world plays an important role. The first is the Russian revolution, the main significance of which is, however, limited to Europe. The second is the Chinese, which concerns Asian people mainly. And finally, the latest, the third is the Cuban, which is crucially important to Latin America. Taking such an idea as a starting point, the Cuban leaders often judge the events of world importance not from the aspect of the world-wide victory of socialism, or from the aspect of the international world movement, but from the so-called Latin American aspect.

This point of view is not Marxist. But when Latin America is concerned, their conception, opinion diverges from or is contrary to the Marxist-Leninist conception several times. The "Second Havana Declaration" could be a good example, which judges the origin, course, and victory of Latin American revolutions differently from the Marxist way in various aspects. (The preparation of the revolution and the revolutionary fight are not carried out by the Marxist-Leninist party, but mainly the small group of partisans supported by peasants, the working class joins the fight only later, and the Marxist class analysis and class aspects are completely ignored). The Cuban leaders under-estimate the role of the party in Cuba herself, which is proved by the extremely slow organization of the party. According to my information, the official number of the members of the party does not reach four thousand. The reorganization is going on very slowly and since the [Anibal] Escalante case about two thousand earlier party members were excluded.

The above-mentioned explain taking offence toward the Soviet Union not having discussed her urgent steps with the Cuban leaders in the gravest moments of the crisis, this way already offending Cuba's sovereignty, for ignoring

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Cuba's self-government, independence during the talks with the Americans when she discussed control and other issues concerning Cuba's sovereignty. That they were unwilling to accept the solution suggested by the Soviet Union for weeks meant they did not disagree with the method only, but to some extent with the aim of the Soviet Union too, probably they always had in mind their idea about their Latin American role.

Finally I would like to present Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan's opinion concerning the Cuban leaders, which I agree with:

The Cuban leaders are young, honest people, they are true to the revolution, the people; in a difficult situation in their country they were able to ensure a greater unity and had less chaos than other nations would have had, for this they deserve respect and appreciation, and there is every reason to trust them and the impending progress in the future.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 14

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Anastas Mikoyan's meeting with socialist ambassadors, 3 December 1962

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Prepared in: 24 copies

Received by: members and substitute members of the Politburo,  
members of the Secretariat,  
Comrade Árpád Pulai and  
Imre Hollai

### C o p y

of the report prepared by the embassy in Havana on 3 December 1962.

Subject: Comrade Mikoyan's meeting with socialist ambassadors.

Neither I nor the other socialist ambassadors had a chance to meet with the Soviet ambassador during the entire period of the crisis. We have not had a chance to meet with Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan either since his arrival, except for the reception at the airport, which obviously did not give us an opportunity to speak with him. The first time we were able to meet with him was right before his departure.

On 20 November, before Comrade Mikoyan's departure, we were invited by phone to attend a cocktail party at the Soviet embassy together with our spouses. The event at the Soviet embassy hosted by the ambassador was attended by Comrade Mikoyan, the delegation led by him as well as several officials of the embassy and their spouses. The ambassadors who were invited to and attended the event included, apart from myself, the Czech, the Polish, the Romanian, the GDR, the [North] Korean and the [North] Vietnamese ambassadors as well as the Chinese, the Bulgarian, and the Mongolian ambassador's deputies.

This cocktail party conversation took place after a day earlier I had contacted Comrade Byelous, first envoy of the Soviet embassy—this being my third approach during the crisis—to ask him a few questions regarding the situation and discuss my view of it with him. At the same time, I complained to him that for several weeks we had been unable to meet either the Cuban or the Soviet leaders and we had not received any information from them. I added that several colleagues, at least the Czech, the Romanian, and the Polish ambassadors had expressed the same complaints. Comrade Byelous said he would try to convince Comrade Mikoyan that he should receive and inform all of us. This is how the cocktail party took place.

We spent at least one-and-a-half hours with Comrade Mikoyan. At the beginning of the conversation, during which we were all standing, Comrade Mikoyan informed us about the situation for about 15 minutes, which was immediately translated into Spanish by the interpreter. The essence of the information provided by him was that the Cuban and the Soviet governments, including Comrades Khrushchev and Fidel Castro in person as well, fully agreed with the evaluation of the situation and the tasks to be done. However, the information did not really cover more than what was published that day or in a few days later.

Comrade Mikoyan said that the Cuban government also agreed with the Soviet Union's view that president Kennedy's statement on Cuba's territorial integrity meant a great victory for Cuba and the Soviet Union as well as for the entire socialist camp. I need to note that the Cuban leaders had not publicly given any sign, either on that day or since then, whether they agreed with this view.

As for the tasks to do, Comrade Mikoyan did not go beyond what was made public in a few days after the discussion took place.

I asked Comrade Mikoyan on his view regarding the confusion that had emerged among the Cuban people and in the minds of a few Cuban leaders in connection with the situation. Drawing on his own experiences, Comrade Mikoyan told us in detail about the unprecedented confusion among the people, in the communist party, and the Central Committee at the time [March 1918] of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty in the young Soviet Republic, when for a time Lenin was in a minority and managed to get his position through only by threatening to resign from all of his functions in the party and the government. At that time Comrade Mikoyan was working in Baku as a party secretary. He said there was an awful lot of confusion in this party organization too, where most members of the party committee took the wrong position. He also mentioned that for a reason he could not recall now, he took the correct position and published an article on it in the local paper. At this point I took the opportunity to repeat my question in another way, and asked him when a similar article was going to be published in Cuba. However, Comrade Mikoyan pretended that he had not heard the question and went on explaining the Soviet–Russian situation during the time of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. He concluded by saying that the government and the party in Cuba were headed by excellent revolutionaries that were loyal to the people and were able to create and maintain a unity in this extremely complex situation which would certainly have been impossible in any other place. However big the confusion may have appeared to us, it was much smaller than it would have been among other leaders in another country. He was convinced that Cuba was going to see healthy development.

The first envoy of the Soviet embassy, Comrade Byelous, told Comrade Mikoyan that I had spent years in prison during the time of the personality cult in Hungary, which gave Comrade Mikoyan an opportunity to talk about personality cults in general, explaining his views and impressions on Mátyás Rákosi<sup>51</sup> and several former or present leaders of the European socialist countries. He held, first and foremost, Stalin responsible for the personality cult in the European socialist countries, so I felt obliged to say that I could not fully agree with this statement. Although Stalin himself and the prevailing international situation undoubtedly had a significant impact on the socialist world and Hungary, there were no unlawful trials in the other socialist countries during the period of the personality cult that could be compared to what took place in Hungary and what consequences these trials had there, which demonstrates that Rákosi's responsibility cannot be seen as of secondary importance. Then Comrade Mikoyan

talked at length and even provided some examples, saying that indeed, he himself had a chance to see that e.g. the Bulgarian or other leaders acted differently from Rákosi, and it was also obvious that in many cases the initiatives provided by Stalin were softened by them, while Rákosi tended to do more than what was expected from him.

During the entire conversation Comrade Mikoyan took every opportunity to give hints to and make remarks for the Chinese ambassador's deputy present regarding cooperation within the socialist camp, the coordination of actions, and real, comradely collaboration. So, for example, when he was talking about his experiences in Hungary before the counter-revolution and then about his stay in Hungary during the counter-revolution, he stressed how strong the contact had been between them and the Chinese comrades, mutually informing and directly cooperating with each other. The Chinese diplomat did not say a single word during the cocktail party, and when Comrade Mikoyan was talking with the guests surrounding him about the period of personality cults and his own experiences in the Soviet Union, as well as about Poland, Bulgaria, or Hungary, he retired further back and didn't even ask the interpreter to translate some of the conversation.

Although apart from some details Comrade Mikoyan didn't give us actual information, the way he talked about the already known facts and the way he evaluated the Cuban situation did help both me and the other socialist ambassadors to get a better picture of the situation.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 15

Hungarian Legation in Washington (Radványi), Report on Mikoyan's visit to Washington, 5 December 1962

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL!

Received by: members and substitute members of the Politburo,  
members of the Secretariat,  
Comrades Árpád Pullai, Imre Hollai, Ferenc Szücs and Sándor

C o p y

of the report made by the embassy to Washington on 5 December 1962

Subject: Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington

Comrade Mikoyan's four-day visit (from 29 November to 3 December) was made possible and necessary by the events that had taken place prior to it: negotiations between [Soviet deputy foreign minister Vasily V.] Kuznetsov and [US negotiator John J.] McCloy in New York, recent communication between Khrushchev and Kennedy, and Kennedy's already known press conference [on 20 November] in which he announced the lifting of the Cuban blockade.

The visit had aroused considerable interest, and the comments and news on it were treated by the press as a central issue. Before the visit, the comrades announced during talks conducted at the State Department that Comrade Mikoyan would be staying in Washington for a few days as Comrade [Soviet ambassador to the United States Anatoly F.] Dobrynin's guest and during this time he would be glad to meet with American officials. After consulting President Kennedy, the State Department answered that they were pleased with Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington and added that the American government officials were also ready to meet with him. They also raised the possibility of receiving Comrade Mikoyan as an official state guest. Comrade Mikoyan politely evaded this opportunity.

Then the program was worked out under which Comrade Mikoyan met with President Kennedy in the White House, State Secretary [Dean] Rusk at a lunch and Interior Secretary [Stewart] Udall at a dinner. He also met with [Attorney General] Robert Kennedy at this dinner.

This latter meeting was treated very cautiously. Although the Soviet comrades announced that the meeting would take place, they did not reveal any details about it.

The former American ambassador to Moscow, [Llewellyn E.] Thomson, was appointed by the American government as a permanent attendant during Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington. When he arrived and four days later left, the event at the airport was attended by the staff of the Soviet embassy as well as the ambassadors of the Socialist countries to Washington, and on behalf of the American party by Ambassador Thomson and chief of protocol Thonesk. Naturally, the representatives of the press were also present. Comrade Mikoyan had a one-and-a-half-hour unofficial meeting with them on the night before his departure.

On 29 November, Comrade Dobrynin invited the ambassadors of the Socialist countries to a dinner on the occasion of Comrade Mikoyan's visit to Washington. During this dinner,

Comrade Mikoyan gave an account of his experiences gained at the meeting with President Kennedy, and made some comments on his visit to Cuba and also on China.

I. Comrade Mikoyan characterized his meeting with President Kennedy as open, honest, and objective. The main issue of the discussion was Cuba; the issue of disarmament was merely touched upon. The president wanted to talk about Laos, too, but Comrade Mikoyan evaded this issue by saying that he had not prepared to discuss it.

In regard to the Cuban issue, Comrade Mikoyan strongly demanded that, since the Soviet Union had already performed its obligations stemming from the Khrushchev-Kennedy agreement, the American party should provide formal guarantees for not attacking Cuba. In his answer President Kennedy gave two arguments. On the one hand, he referred to Comrade Khrushchev's letter of 28 October in which Comrade Khrushchev promised to implement international monitoring on the territory of Cuba. On the other, he explained that given the internal situation (public opinion, the Senate), he was not able to give formal guarantees without international monitoring.

In his answer Comrade Mikoyan called Kennedy's attention to Comrade Khrushchev's letter of 26 November in which the Soviet leader expressly stated that the Soviet Union was ready to enable the international monitoring of dismantling the Soviet missiles provided that the Cuban government also agreed to it. As an explanation, Comrade Mikoyan noted that although the missiles were in the ownership of the Soviet state, jurisdiction over the Cuban territory was obviously exercised by the Cuban government.

Kennedy gave voice to the counterarguments provided by McCloy in New York, stressing that the United States also needed guarantees that Cuba would not receive new mid-range missiles either from the Soviet Union or, in a few year's time, from China.

Comrade Mikoyan left this latter comment by Kennedy unanswered. As an interesting piece of detail, Comrade Mikoyan mentioned at this point that on his way to Havana he met with McCloy in New York and agreed on the monitoring of the missiles on sea. Then Kennedy said that certain American newspapers, relying on information from Cuban émigré sources, were writing about Soviet missiles still being kept secretly in the territory of Cuba. Comrade Mikoyan called this allegation ridiculous; he said that to his knowledge the air and ground reconnaissance of the United States had already covered every square mile of Cuba. The president admitted that too and noted that he had given orders to the Pentagon not to violate, if possible, the Cuban air space and take photos only by flying in international air space.



Returning to the issue of the American guarantee, President Kennedy asked Comrade Mikoyan to let Comrade Khrushchev know that during his presidency the Soviet Union should not be concerned about any invasion of Cuba by the United States.

At this point Kennedy asked Comrade Mikoyan what position the Soviet Union would take if, for example, the United States decided to set up missile bases in Finland. Would people be able to sleep well in Leningrad in such a situation? Comrade Mikoyan noted that they would sleep just as well as the people in Armenia because of the bases in Turkey, since the United States is aware of the counter-strike they should expect in the case of an attack. Kennedy noted to this that by now the significance and value of the American missile bases deployed in Europe had changed a lot. The United States and the Soviet Union both have intercontinental missiles that can reach each other's territory. At the same time, the Polaris-type submarines make the bases in England, Italy, and Turkey redundant. The American party had already worked out a plan, he said, to eliminate these bases. Kennedy had already given orders to the Pentagon in this regard.

When Comrade Mikoyan told the ambassadors of the friendly countries about it, he also added that to his knowledge these missiles were outdated, and even if they were to be or had already been dismantled, they were still there.

Comrade Dobrynin said (at a later meeting) that to his knowledge the dismantling of the Thor missiles had already begun by the Americans because the Polaris submarines to replace them were already in place. The Turkish bases had Jupiter-type missiles which were also outdated.

I would like to note here that according to the information received from the Czechoslovakian ambassador to Washington [Karel Duda], one of the main reasons for replacing NATO commander-in-chief [Lauris] Norstadt was that he objected to Kennedy's plan to eliminate the missile bases in Europe. Another piece of relevant information that belongs here is what military attaché Varga obtained during a conversation from colonel Roberts, the newly appointed military air attaché to Budapest. The colonel said that the complete dismantling of the missile bases in Europe—because they were outdated—could be expected in the near future.

Kennedy and Comrade Mikoyan had a lengthy conversation on the issue of the Cuban revolution. Kennedy kept on saying that Castro was the enemy of the United States and therefore, his presence in the Caribbean region represented a danger to them.

Contrary to this, Comrade Mikoyan insisted that Castro had been made an enemy by the United States and the best course of action would be to make an agreement with him on the basis of the principle of peaceful coexistence. Kennedy did not accept this view and then asked Comrade Mikoyan

in a humorous tone: after all, for how long has Castro been a Communist? Answering in the same tone, Comrade Mikoyan said Castro had been a Communist for about one-and-a-half years, adding that this course of development might be dangerous to Kennedy too. Kennedy evaded this by saying that he was immune to these kinds of dangers, although in his family [Edward] Kennedy, who had just been elected senator [from Massachusetts], also had some socialist views.

At the end of the meeting the two parties issued a mutually-agreed joint communiqué, stressing that the negotiations to settle the Cuban issue should be conducted in New York by Comrade Kuznetsov and McCloy and [US UN Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson. They also agreed that in addition to the Cuban issue Comrade Mikoyan would negotiate with Rusk on several major international issues and there would also be a confidential meeting between Comrade Mikoyan and Robert Kennedy.

II. During the conversation Comrade Mikoyan said that he had left for Cuba<sup>52</sup> with the task of not pushing Castro at any cost regarding the international monitoring.

On the basis of the information received it was clear, he said, that the main difficulty in the first few days would be to convince Castro. He made his well-known statement [when departing New York City for Havana] in order to achieve that, in which he supported Castro's five points [issued on 28 October] although it was clear to him that, for example, it was impossible to negotiate with the Americans on the evacuation of Guantanamo.

Castro, who originally did not wish to come to the airport, eventually came to meet Comrade Mikoyan after the communiqué mentioned above. During the first meeting Castro and Che Guevara stated openly to Comrade Mikoyan that they did not need the American guarantees. They did not have any confidence in such guarantees, so the Soviets should just leave the missiles where they were and the Cubans would defend themselves.

It took long discussion for Comrade Mikoyan to convince Castro and his companions that in the present situation Cuba could only be saved by political means. By the way, Castro and his companions received the Brazilian, Chilean, and Mexican rapprochement very well; especially [Brazilian President João] Goulart's special envoy [Gen. Albino Silva] whose action was seen by the Soviet Union positively from the point of view that it could end Cuba's isolation.

Comrade Mikoyan characterized Brazilian president Goulart as a clever, smart and realistic politician who did not execute the American orders at one hundred percent, thereby getting ahead of Argentina and achieving a leading role in the South American region.

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In regard to the internal situation in Cuba Comrade Mikoyan said that sentiment among the people was good, the leaders were honest and pure people but they had very little experience and were not shrewd enough. They often combined revolutionary enthusiasm with romantic elements. The petit-bourgeois layers of people living in the cities were worse off than before the revolution but the living conditions of the workers and peasants had improved. Some of the land had been collectivized and state farms had been set up on them; and there were plans to accelerate this process. Comrade Mikoyan advised the Cuban comrades that they should act cautiously and slowly as far as the about 50% of land still in private ownership was concerned.

As an example of the bellicose nature of the Cubans, Comrade Mikoyan mentioned that after the Americans repeatedly flew in the Cuban air space, Castro and his leaders, in accord with the Soviet comrades, set their air defense system in action. The Americans always avoided fighting in such a case. Comrade Mikoyan noted at this point that anybody who stated that the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft had been shot down by a Soviet missile—was not wrong.

III. Comrade Mikoyan spoke very negatively about China's activity in Cuba. He said that with their ultra-left-wing views the Chinese confused some of the [Cuban] leaders, especially mid-level leaders, but they practically failed to help upset the enemy. For instance, they could have occupied Quemoy [Jinmen] and Matsu [Mazu] or Macao without any real risk. Instead, they were sending hundreds of thousands of petitions and attacked India, whereby they managed to turn India, at least temporarily, into a country supporting the western camp, to disrupt the Indian Communist Party and give a chance to the Indian right-wing to gain ground, etc.

Finally, Comrade Mikoyan openly said to the Cuban leaders that the Chinese position regarding Cuba was totally wrong. Castro and his colleagues understood this view and in his message addressed to Comrade Khrushchev Castro especially emphasized that Cuba was fully on the Soviet Union's side. As an example, Comrade Mikoyan mentioned the Tibetan and the Hungarian issues. He pointed out that the Chinese, in alliance with the top-level aristocracy, created a situation in Tibet that led to an uprising and they failed to draw the necessary conclusions from it. On the other hand, the Hungarian leaders, together with the Soviet comrades, acted on the basis of self-criticism, admitting that Rákosi and the Communists were mainly responsible for the 1956 events.<sup>53</sup>

The Cuban issue was only briefly touched upon during the meeting between Comrade Mikoyan and Rusk. They exchanged ideas in more detail on general disarmament [and]

the ban on nuclear explosions, as well as on Berlin and the German issue. Essentially, the parties confined themselves to repeating their already known position. As a new element, Comrade Mikoyan noted that the Soviet Union was ready to give permission to set up sealed instrument boxes in the territory of the Soviet Union. The Soviet government also agreed that the boxes should be delivered to, set up in, and then removed from the country by an international monitoring committee to be set up later.

As far as disarmament was concerned, the issues discussed included the Brazilian proposal submitted to the UN on making Latin America a nuclear-free region and the measures to be taken in order to prevent an unexpected attack, which had already been discussed in Geneva.

As for the Berlin issue, Comrade Mikoyan raised the need for the withdrawal of troops stationed in West Berlin. Referring to their NATO obligations, Rusk said that it was not viable. Neither Comrade Mikoyan nor Rusk excluded the possibility of conducting further negotiations by representatives of the two parties on the issues mentioned above. Finally, Comrade Mikoyan suggested that the principle of progressivity, a "step-by-step" approach should be applied when discussing these issues.

János Radványi

Chargé d'affaires

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated for CWIHP by András Bocz.]



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## DOCUMENT No. 16

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Soviet-Cuban Conflicts, 24 January 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic

To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest  
TOP SECRET!

36/1963/Top Secret

Written: in four copies

Three to Center  
One to Embassy  
Havana, 24 January 1963

Subject: The essence of  
Cuban–Soviet conflicts

Ref. No.:443/1962/top secret

The observation of events happening since my report submitted by the December mail and the various meetings taking place since then make it possible to prove what has been reported on the one hand, and to draw new conclusions on the other hand.

The Cuban position concerning the place and role of the Cuban revolution and the origin and course of Latin American revolutions is well-known. It was defined by the Second Havana Declaration, it has been completed and commented on by numerous speeches of the Cuban leaders and a series of editorials and lectures. It is not only the Soviet party and with them the European communist parties that cannot approve this position, but also numerous Latin American parties. Ambassador [Aleksandr] Alekseyev said that, in the summer of 1962, when Raul Castro visited Moscow, Comrade Khrushchev had a long conversation with him. He explained to Raul Castro that the Soviet party or himself, Khrushchev, could not interfere in the affairs of other parties and did not want to either, he could not give his opinion about the Havana Declaration, for example, but he thought that the Cuban party should have a debate with the mentioned parties if they did not agree in everything, the Latin American parties could not be neglected, and one could not make decisions instead of them. “After all, you are not the Comintern,” added Comrade Khrushchev.

I asked Ambassador Alekseyev what Raul Castro thought about this, whether he understood what Comrade Khrushchev meant. He answered: no.

Comrade Alekseyev said that the main Cuban leaders and, first of all among them Fidel Castro, despite all the Soviet efforts, had not [believed] and did not believe or understand that, in connection with the Caribbean crisis, the Soviet Union’s aim was to ensure Cuba’s independence and her rescue from invasion. They are convinced that the Soviet Union was only maneuvering and being tactical, she used the Caribbean crisis and its solution and Cuba only as instruments in the political game with the United States.

Why do they not understand[?], I asked. He gave no answer. As the saying goes, ill-doers are ill-deemers, I continued, is that right? Alekseyev’s deputy, Byelous answered yes, it was nationalism.

I consider unnecessary to list here as evidence the facts that may be read, heard and observed day-by-day on the basis of which I came to the conclusion already earlier that in the Cuban leadership nationalism played an important role.

In Soviet-Cuban relations Cuba’s security and the Cuban ideas about it also play an important role.

Already on 23 October last year, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez told me (and at that time I also reported it) that Cuba was ready to agree to the removal of missiles and etc. if Cuba’s sanctity was ensured also by the Soviet Union.

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister [Vasily V.] Kuznetsov, visiting Havana recently, talked to Fidel Castro as well. Comrade Kuznetsov told us (the ambassadors of socialist countries) that during the conversation, without explaining his ideas and wishes, Fidel Castro had made three or four unmistakable hints, saying e.g. that Cuba’s situation was singular because the European socialist countries are guaranteed by the Warsaw Treaty, the member-states of the Warsaw treaty looked upon this or that so, but they...etc.

This repeated hint could have served as an answer to Comrade Kuznetsov to some extent, who, during his report on his talks concerning the Caribbean crisis, confirmed to Fidel Castro that the Soviet Union considered Cuba a member of the socialist camp, that is, Cuba was guaranteed by the socialist camp.

The idea occurs that the Cuban position concerning the solution of the crisis is not only a result of non-understanding, but, to some extent, also of extortion toward the Soviet Union. Other ambassadors representing European socialist countries and I have also experienced such a train of thought on the Cuban side as could be summed up in the following way: During the crisis and its solution it was proved that, because of Cuba, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union was willing to start a nuclear war, what would happen then in case of a local war by traditional arms started directly by the USA against Cuba?

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j–Kuba, 3.d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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**DOCUMENT No. 17**

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Hungarian Embassy, Havana (Beck), Report on "The Visible signs of the Cuban-Soviet Conflict," 25 January 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

41/1963/top secret Written: in four copies

Typed by: Elemérné Vajda three to Center one to Embassy

Havana, 25 January 1963

Subject: The visible signs of the Cuban-Soviet conflict

Ref.No.: 440/1962/top secret

Through some conspicuous cases, I would like to show how the Cuban leading personalities, the Cuban press, radio, and television reflect the change in the Cuban-Soviet relations.

President of the Republic [Osvaldo] Dorticós's behavior at the national cultural congress was the same as at the celebrations of 7 November.

Carlos Rafael Rodríguez continued the theoretical part of Cuban-Soviet economic talks in Moscow. During his stay in Moscow, he carried on talks with the Soviet Union's highest leaders and with Comrade Khrushchev himself, he participated at the Supreme Soviet session, where he had a seat in the presidium together with Comrades Khrushchev and Brezhnev and the Yugoslavian President Tito. The Soviet Information Bureau gave only one photo to the Cuban press of the session of the Supreme Council, so in the Cuban papers was published the picture of the presidium of the mentioned composition. When Carlos Rafael Rodríguez returned from Moscow /I happened to be at the airport at that time/ from Cuban side he was only met by his family and from his office by a few colleagues and by no one from the government or the leadership of the ORI. On the whole, his trip was little discussed in the papers.

Comrade [Soviet deputy foreign minister Vasili] Kuznetsov came to Cuba formally at the invitation of the regular Cuban UN-representative, Carlos Lechuga. No official welcoming ceremony was organized at the airport. Foreign Minister [Raúl] Roa gave a reception in the honor of Comrade Kuznetsov, where from the Cuban side only the following people were present: Members of the government: INRA President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Minister of Communal work Osmani Cienfuegos and JUCEPLAN President Reginaldo Boti, From the ORI leadership: Juan [Joaquín] Ordoqui, the doyen of the late communist party. There was little reaction to his stay in the press. The biggest photo and news item showed his visit to the HOY redaction [i.e., editorial headquarters—ed.] /He was together with Blas Roca in the picture/.

The delegations visiting Cuba on the occasion of 1 January were given dinner by the ICAP, where Blas Roca gave a speech. In his speech he did not even mention the Soviet Union and talked little about the socialist camp, although at the main table was sitting astronaut [Pavel] Popovich, so by the composition of the delegation, by sending non-political personalities, the Soviet Union offered the opportunity to be talked of suitably without mentioning the disputed questions or even hinting at them. The Soviet delegation, in which also participated high-ranking soldiers /e.g. the commander of the Moscow district/ as special guests, considering the local circumstances and customs, we must say, was little dealt with by the press.

At the congress of Latin-American women, the leaders of the Cuban delegation headed by the president of the alliance of Cuban women, Vilma Espín /Raul Castro's wife/, behaved in a scandalous way toward the non-member Soviet delegate, Comrade Fyodorova /they avoided shaking hands with her, did not talk to her, seated her in the wrong place, etc./ In a way shocking the majority, Vilma Espín and her associates delayed the telegram to be sent to Comrade Khrushchev about the solution of the Caribbean crisis, which had also been voted on according to the rules, and forced its rewording.

Instead of listing similar events, I would like to add that, at the various celebrations and meetings, they prevented the masses from singing the International as usual by transmitting e.g. the march of the 26th of July Movement on the loud-speakers. Once I was present when, after the march, someone from the crowd shouted to the tribune: "And what about the International?"

The leaders put up with the fact but do not seem to like that the masses often shout the slogan: "Fidel, Jrusciov, estamos con los dos!" *Fidel, Khrushchev, we are with you!*

In his speech of 1 November last year, Fidel Castro said that he relied on the leadership of the Soviet Union. Since then the Cuban leadership has taken a step backwards practically.

The press does not publish anything either from abroad or from inside that does not completely support the leaders' daily positions, even if it concerns a party or government statement, greeting or a declaration made in Cuba, or a decision of a congress, etc.

János Beck

ambassador

to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter

Budapest

[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d.]

*Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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**DOCUMENT No. 18**

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Soviet Deputy Foreign Ministry Vasily Kuznetsov, 28 January 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

46/1963/t.s.

Written: in four copies

Three to Center

One to Embassy

Havana, 28 January 1963

Subject: Comrade Kuznetsov's Report

On the evening of January 17 in the apartment of the Soviet ambassador [Aleksandr Alekseyev], Comrade Kuznetsov gave a report to the Polish, Czechoslovakian, Romanian and Bulgarian ambassadors and me. (The GDR's ambassador was back home at the party congress.)

During the report he talked about the meetings between the Soviet Union and the USA concerning the Caribbean crisis, about the talks on disarmament, the ban on nuclear experiments and Berlin. I consider it unnecessary to report on this part because Comrade Kuznetsov said that in New York there had been close cooperation between the Soviet Union and the other socialist missions concerning one group of the questions. And about his meetings with Kennedy he informed the socialist missions already in the USA.

Comrade Kuznetsov had no pre-determined program for his stay in Cuba. He had his most important, single conversation with Fidel Castro on the 17th. It lasted about two hours. Previously, on the evening of the 15th, Comrade Kuznetsov participated at the special closing sitting of the Latin American women's congress together with the Soviet ambassador, where Fidel Castro gave a speech (I will report on this separately). Here, in the theater, he was introduced to Fidel Castro before the beginning of the special sitting, who said to him, "I do not offer you a cigar, because Khrushchev, too, gave the cigar I presented to him to Kennedy."

Comrade Kuznetsov, who had never met Fidel Castro before, was surprised at this reception. And the speech heard afterwards shocked him. He scolded his ambassador why on earth he had to be there.

After such preceding events, he looked forward to the longer talks and meetings with Fidel Castro a bit worried. By the 17th, however, Fidel Castro had calmed down and proved a completely different person during his conversation with Comrade Kuznetsov. The conversation, which was interpreted by the Soviet ambassador, consisted of two parts. At the beginning, for about 40 minutes Comrade Kuznetsov reported on the talks between the Soviet Union and the USA on the Caribbean crisis, then a lot more briefly and not mentioning some of the important details he had mentioned to us, he outlined the talks concerning other problems.

Fidel Castro listened to him very carefully, without interjections, then he said he completely agreed with the Soviet Union concerning the essence of the talks on the Caribbean crisis, and he thought that they, that is Cuba, should not do or say anything that would lessen the Soviet Union's possibilities for maneuvers. But he criticized some things concerning forms.

At first Fidel Castro contradicted the evaluation according to which the USA president formally obliged himself not to attack Cuba or allow any other American states to do so. Comrade Kuznetsov had to explain it for a long time that there were numerous ways of making agreements between states and governments, one form of talks and agreement was e.g. what had been realized by the published correspondence of Comrade Khrushchev and Kennedy. After long explanations, Fidel Castro understood it finally.

Comrade Kuznetsov did not mention any other important things that Fidel Castro would have told him, except for the repeated hints, which I am reporting on in my report No. 36/1963.t.s. submitted by this mail.<sup>54</sup>

Comrade Kuznetsov evaluated the conversation saying that Fidel Castro and the Cubans seemed to be forced by the situation to follow the correct policy.

During the conversation started following Comrade Kuznetsov's report, I told what I had heard from Blas Roca about the "details of form" Fidel Castro was criticizing. (Cf. my report No. 479 submitted by this mail.)

Instead of Comrade Kuznetsov, but with his approval, Ambassador Alekseyev gave a reply and repeated very emphatically that Blas Roca's statements were not true basically. The Cuban leaders had received the right explanation both from him and Comrade Mikoyan, when he was here. Concerning Khrushchev's letter of 28 October to Kennedy, the situation was the following: when it was ready, it was published immediately and announced on the Moscow radio. The statement



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concerning it sent by the Soviet government to the Cuban government arrived three hours after the publication as a result of the necessary double encoding and listening-in. The situation, however, did not make it possible to wait for three or more hours.

Anyway, the Soviet side has explained that at that time they considered this step pre-harmonized with the Cuban government and they have the right to stick to this evaluation.

János Beck

Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 19

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on "Relations between Cuba and the socialist countries since the [Cuban Missile Crisis] crisis," 28 January 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

47/ 1963/ top secret Written: in four copies

Typed by Elemérné Vajda three to Center  
one to Embassy

Havana, 28 January 1963

Subject: The relations between Cuba and the socialist countries since the crisis.

Since the Caribbean crisis a by-stander has not been able to see any change in the relations between Cuba and the socialist countries. I could characterize the pre-crisis situation in the following way: The Cuban leadership /the party and government/ was on the right track to form such a relationship with the Soviet Union and the other countries as was between us and the Soviet Union for example.

The crisis and its solution, however, brought up a lot of facts from the Cuban side that make it possible to achieve this only through a longer and more crooked development, in the long run. It has turned out that within the layer of Cuban leaders the number and, most of all, the influence of those who may be really called Marxists and communists is smaller than we believed. We can feel the impact of various nationalist or petit-bourgeois opinions and of the practical standpoints

and measures originating from them. I would like to mention only a few phenomena: instead of the economic building work, they still pay the most attention to "world revolution," that is, as the Cubans put it, to the Latin American revolution; the organization of the party needs a long time undoubtedly, but its dragging-on results only from the fact that the importance and role of the party is underestimated; there has not evolved yet a form of collective leadership that can really be called collective; cooperation with the socialist countries is one-sided in the most different fields, it consists mainly of help provided to Cuba.

Before the crisis, the Cuban leaders at most different levels, beginning from the Prime Minister and the president of the republic [Fidel Castro] talked to the ambassadors of socialist countries, even if rarely, but always completely frankly and openly. It was so in the case of the delegates of different ranks visiting Cuba. These conversations did not only make the acquaintance with the Cuban situation possible, but for the Cuban leaders also the acquaintance with foreign opinions and examples, the lessons that could be learnt from them, etc.

Since the crisis Cuban leaders at all levels have avoided us and the delegations arriving from the socialist countries. If there is a conversation, it is far from being as rich in information as before, conversations are formal and empty.

But the main fact is that, without the socialist camp, mainly and first of all, the Soviet Union, revolutionary Cuba cannot go on existing even for days. The leaders are aware of this and, even if in a wavy line, they are leading the country in the direction to become a real and organic part of the socialist camp. Despite all the conflicts, individual opinions concerning the Caribbean crisis, or the divergence in various matters, they are on the side of the socialist camp and the Soviet Union. The elimination of nationalist and petit-bourgeois phenomena, however, will be achieved only by a long development.

So basically there has not been, nor can be expected, any change in the relationship of Cuba and the socialist camp.

János Beck

ambassador

to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter

Budapest

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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**DOCUMENT No. 20**

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on Conversation with Cuban foreign ministry official re Hungarian-Cuban relations and Sino-Soviet split, 12 March 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

131/1963/top secret Written: in four copies

Official: Erzsébet Görög three to Center

Typed by: Vajdáné one to Embassy

Havana, 12 March 1963

Subject: The opinion of the head of the

III. Political Department of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs /Socialist countries/ about the Cuban-Hungarian relations and the Soviet-Chinese dispute.

On 6 March, Comrades Görög and Sütő invited to a dinner the head of the Third Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador [José] Fuxa and the official in charge of Hungarian matters, Siomara Sánchez.

Comrade Görög asked Ambassador Fuxa if they were satisfied with the Cuban-Hungarian relations.

Ambassador Fuxa thought that the relations between the two countries were very good. He could say so both on the basis of the reports received from their embassy to Budapest and on the basis of the friendly, good relations between the Hungarian embassy to Havana and the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He has heard very good opinions about the Hungarian party congress and he has issued the instruction to compile the materials referring to it as he wants to study them more closely.

He considered that the good relations between our countries were characterized by the friendly atmosphere in which the cultural talks had been carried out, by the useful exchanges of delegations of recent times, etc.

He mentioned that they were going to invite opera-singer András Varga, whose invitation was urged by Ambassador Quintin Pino Machado.

Siomara Sánchez, the official in charge of Hungarian matters, told frankly that when he was moved to the Hungarian department, he had not been very happy about it as he had known little of Hungary, he had considered it a not very relevant small socialist country. But after study-

ing Hungarian matters more closely, he dealt with Hungary with enthusiasm and interest. Comrade [First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party János] Kádár's speeches, the Hungarian party congress had made him unbelievably enthusiastic, he wanted to learn Hungarian. /On the day following the dinner, Comrade Görög sent him a Hungarian-Spanish and a Spanish-Hungarian dictionary./

According to my instruction, Comrade Görög tried to get information about Ambassador Fuxa's position concerning the Soviet-Chinese argument. Ambassador Fuxa—as the Cuban state and party functionaries usually—evaded taking a position, he only answered that the dispute was unfortunate, and he asked back whether she knew if there would be an inter-party meeting between the communist parties of the SU and China.

Otherwise, the dinner took place in a really friendly atmosphere, and even if it did not provide any genuine information, it served as a good starting-point for the creation of the possibility of further exchanges of opinion between the diplomats of the embassy and the competent officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

János Beck  
ambassador

to Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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**DOCUMENT No. 21**

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on US–Cuban Talks, 31 March 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To Comrade Foreign Minister János Péter  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

144/1963/Top Secret

Written: in four copies

Three to Center

One to Embassy

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Havana, 31 March 1963

Subject: Cuban–USA Talks

It is well known that from the American side, “lawyer” [James] Donovan participated in the talks concerning the release for compensation of the mercenaries taken captive at Playa Giron [the Bay of Pigs]. Since then, from the Cuban side, Fidel Castro himself has had talks with Donovan at the level of theory and politics, only the technicalities were discussed with Donovan at a lower level.

On “lawyer” Donovan himself, I would only like to make the comment that formally he acts as a private individual and as such did he lead the talks with the Soviet Union earlier concerning the release of [Francis Gary] Powers, the pilot of the shot [down] U-2 and his exchange for [Rudolf] Abel, the spy arrested and convicted in the USA, and it was also he who directed the exchange itself from the American side.

In connection with Donovan’s frequent trips to Havana, the Western diplomats had the opinion that through him Fidel Castro carried on talks with the USA government and Kennedy himself, moreover behind the Soviet Union’s back, without informing the Soviet Union. Yugoslavian ambassador Boško Vidaković, who appears such a friend of the Soviets before the socialist ambassadors that he looks more Catholic than the Pope, is saying directly that Fidel Castro is playing a double game and he is blackmailing or wants to blackmail the Soviet Union.

The public (abroad) knows only that Donovan’s latest trips to Havana were aimed at getting American citizens released from Cuban prisons or their exchange for Cuban diplomats arrested in the USA.

During his conversation with the Czechoslovak ambassador [Vladimír Pavlíček] a few days ago, Prime Minister Fidel Castro, without mentioning the contents of his talks with Donovan, said the following:

He has got to know an intelligent and clever man in Donovan, who is a very hard-talking partner but, on the whole, not ill-willed. Seeing the Cuban reality, he acknowledged a lot of things, the USA would lead a different Cuban policy if it were he who directed politics or had a decisive say in it. During his talks with Donovan, he—that is, Fidel Castro—provided an opportunity for the US government, that is, Kennedy, twice to take relevant steps to normalize relations with Cuba, but Kennedy did not use these opportunities. Never mind, says Fidel Castro, if Kennedy does not consider the situation right for it.

Donovan’s talks with others (e.g. a Cuban under-secretary of internal affairs) were extremely violent and pointed, but they have never hindered further connections.

All I would like to add to this is (although it is a repetition) that the Cuban press and Cuban leaders have recently been making distinctions—at last!—in connection with the USA, they do not put everything and everybody in the same category. (There are not only Yankees, but also Pentagon, extreme imperialist circles, “the raging,” etc., as well.) Raul Castro has mentioned to the Romanian ambassador in the past days, and it is not likely to be his private opinion, that for Cuba among the possible presidents at present Kennedy is the best.

János Beck  
Ambassador

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 22

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Fidel Castro’s Television Report on his Trip to the Soviet Union, 6 June 1963

The Embassy of the Hungarian People’s Republic  
TOP SECRET!

242/1963/top secret

Written: in four copies

Typed by: Vajdáné three to Center  
one to Embassy

Havana, 6 June 1963

Subject: Some comments on  
Fidel Castro’s television report  
on his trip to the SU

Prime Minister Fidel Castro’s television report on his [27 April–3 June 1963]. trip to the SU was presented briefly in the press review of 5 June, and since then the Center has probably received it in its whole length too.

I would like to complete the speech with a few things, however, that were not shown in the press review and cannot even be felt when reading the complete text.

Fidel Castro answered the questions of the journalists on the day after his arrival [in Cuba], that is, still under the

influence of his SU experience. But what always fascinates Fidel Castro's listeners during his speeches apart from his unheard of oratorical skills are his basic honesty, frankness and sincerity.

This time Fidel Castro was not an orator. He had chosen the form of a television interview because he had felt—with excellent sense of politics—that this subject was not a subject to be given an orator's speech about.

Fidel Castro is a passionate, excellent orator, but I had never heard him speak with such deep and sincere emotion. When he was talking about the Soviet nation, the Soviet people, he was almost disturbed by the journalists' questions.

Anyway, he seemed to be irritated by the journalists' questions lacking logic and sometimes being even provocative / the "dangerous" lag in agriculture/. He sharply criticized the Cuban press. When he was talking about the fact that the Cuban press had published exaggerated praising articles about his reception, in a subdued voice he said to Ithiel Leon, the interviewer of the *Revolución*: "I will talk to the *Revolución* separately!" Probably he was hinting at Juan Arcocha's disgusting reports always ranking him with Lenin, which I already reported on in the previous mail.

The keynote of the whole report was given by Fidel Castro's human modesty. There have been a lot of arguments about whether there is a personal cult in Cuba, what is meant by the special Cuban "cult of hero," whether what surrounds Fidel Castro here can be called a personal cult. Independently of the fact that the essence of a personal cult cannot be seen in the externals but in the lack of collective leadership and in unlawful acts, I would like to stress that it was not out of affected modesty on his part but out of sincere conviction that Fidel Castro, who attributes a great importance to the reaction of the masses, shifted the great celebration he received in the SU to the Cuban revolution and stressed that it had concerned rather the future than the achieved results. And in his report he rejected even more firmly the effusions addressed to his person and he raised his voice only when he was talking about the mistakes.

Fidel Castro's television interview has also shown what turn the Soviet experiences and talks will mean in Cuba's economic, internal, and foreign political life and first of all, in the question of party building and the role of the party.

Erzsébet Görög  
chargé d'affaires ad interim

to Comrade Foreign Minister  
Budapest

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign*

*Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3.d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 23

Hungarian Embassy in Moscow (Szipka), Report on Soviet-Cuban Relations, 21 June 1963

Embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic  
To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Budapest

TOP SECRET!

486/top secret/1963

Moscow, 21 June 1963

Subject: Soviet-Cuban  
Relations.

001254/1/top secret/1963

Official: Pál Mányik

Written: in three copies  
Two copies to Center

One copy to Embassy

Since the victory of the Cuban revolution Soviet-Cuban relations have been characterized by continuous development. This is also a result of the anti-imperialist, socialist character of the Cuban revolution and the consistent, internationalist politics of the Soviet Union. The appearance and consolidation of the first socialist state on the American continent is due to the existence and never-ceasing continuous support of socialist countries, mainly the Soviet Union.

It is well-known that the Soviet Union has provided all help to defend the independence and restore the economy of the revolutionary country from the beginning. From the beginning the Soviet Union has fought for the rights of the Cuban people in the UN and at other international forums. The Soviet Union has sent her representatives and specialists to Cuba to assess on the spot what the Cuban people needed. Parallel to the Cuban progress, personal connections between the two countries are increasing. Economic and cultural delegations have visited each other's countries. It was a great help to the Cuban economy threatened by American economic blockade that the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries supported them generously and directly when they took over the surplus of sugar of the country, which has a mono-

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culture economic structure, and they provided the most needed means and loans to rebuild the country's economy.

The visit of the Cuban government delegation headed by Raoul [Raúl] Castro to the Soviet Union last fall [sic; summer] and the agreement signed as a consequence was of historic importance too. The declaration published about the talks pointed out unambiguously and clearly that the Soviet Union undertook the responsibility to defend Cuba's independence by all means—including the most modern military technology as well—if the imperialists should attack Cuba. It is well-known that during the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile] crisis the Soviet Union carried out this duty by providing the country with appropriate military technology, then, replying to the aggression of the imperialists, making definite and flexible political steps, she ensured Cuba's sanctity and, by this, peace in the whole world.

In the days of the crisis and afterwards, as a result of the complicated international situation, we could observe the signs of hesitation in the statements of some Cuban leaders, which the imperialist press and the opponents of the policy of peaceful co-existence tried to exploit. At the same time, Comrade Fidel Castro and other leaders have always stressed definitely the extremely important help received from the Soviet Union and the inviolable friendship with the Soviet Union. The Caribbean crisis meant great experience for the leaders of the Cuban revolution from an international political aspect too. Since then the events following it have proved numerous times the rightness of the Soviet politics. The Cuban leaders have seen this politics justified in connection with the situation of their own country as well. This was expressed to full extent in Comrade Fidel Castro's historic trip to the Soviet Union [27 April-3 June 1963]. It is well-known that Comrade Fidel Castro's declarations unambiguously and definitely pointed out their full agreement with the foreign policy steps of the Soviet Union.

The news published about the talks and agreements of Fidel Castro and his delegation in the Soviet Union show that the relations between the two countries will develop at an even greater pace in the future and are based completely on the principles of Lenin concerning cooperation between the socialist countries. The agreements signed here determine the direction of relations between the two countries for a long time.

Both among the representatives of the competent departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and among the leading members of the Cuban embassy, we can observe the opinion that Soviet-Cuban relations are developing in a really good direction and are characterized by sincere, comradely cooperation.

There was a great reaction in Cuba to Castro's visit, which increased the unity of the two countries. The mentioned opinions, however, reflect Cuba's present economic difficulties as well. But the country's leaders can see well that these difficulties can be counterbalanced only by persistent and pre-planned work, by the complete mobilization of the people for work. The party being formed now will play a crucial role in providing foundations for this development.

Cuba's international position has become consolidated due to Castro's visit and the political reactions to it. According to the head of the Latin American Department of the [Soviet] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cuban leaders have understood that they should achieve a firm position. They have understood that they belong to the American continent, the neighborhood of American imperialism, which requires a determined but, at the same time, flexible policy. In recent times, we have seen that the Cuban leaders have reacted in a reserved and moderate manner to the USA's policy and there has been a decrease in the sharpness of the declarations against American policy in general. The Cuban leaders can see that the Americans cannot ravage around freely in the Caribbean and the Soviet Union can defend the country's sanctity. They can also witness that Kennedy has given up aggressive experiments for a time and has taken measures to control Cuban emigrants. The head of the American Department of the MID [MFA; Ministry of Foreign Affairs] has considered recently that, although the Cuban crisis cannot still be looked upon as being solved, the tension has decreased considerably in the past weeks. There are still provocations and they can expect them in the future too, but it seems that it is not so important any more for Kennedy to maintain the tension in Cuba and American politics is paying attention mainly to other international issues. Kennedy can see that the Soviet Union always stands up for Cuba and Cuba has not become isolated. Fidel Castro's visit to the Soviet Union warned even the American leading circles to take a more sober position.

Comrade [Vladimir] Bazikin has said that they are not sending a high level Soviet delegation this year to Cuba's national holiday on 26 July, because Comrade Khrushchev is expected to visit Cuba in the near future. This will probably take place in August. At the celebrations of 26 July last year, the Soviet Union was represented by Comrade Nina Popova, and they are likely to send a similar delegation to Havana this year as well.

During the conversation Comrade Bazikin confirmed that the Cuban press had published the letter of the Chinese CP. It is difficult to understand why the Cuban comrades considered this necessary.



As a result of the talks of the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963, the Soviet-Cuban goods exchange agreement concerning the year of 1963 was signed on 6 February 1963. According to the agreement, the Soviet Union is going to supply Cuba with crude oil and oil-products, black and non-ferrous metal, artificial fertilizers, chemical materials, sawn timber, cellulose, paper, cotton, various machinery, instruments, wheat, wheat flour, animal and vegetable fat, canned meat, medicine and other industrial, agricultural articles and articles of consumption to Cuba. In exchange Cuba supplies the Soviet Union with sugar, alcohol, articles containing nickel, tobacco, cigars and other articles.

The Soviet government provides Cuba with a long-term loan under the best conditions to counterbalance their advantage concerning the balance of foreign trade.

At present, the Soviet Union is on the first place in Cuba's foreign trade, about half of it concerns the Soviet Union. Such important needs of the people's economy as, for example, crude oil and oil-products, mineral artificial fertilizers, sulfur, asbestos, cotton, sawn timber, trucks and special cars, machine-tools and a lot of other important needs are satisfied completely from Soviet imports. Similarly, it is the Soviet Union that provides Cuba's population with bread and wheat flour completely.

Besides this, the Soviet Union also provides technical-scientific help to Cuba. Concerning the geological research work, the reconstruction of metallurgy works, power plants, oil-processing factories, car service stations; and concerning the building of educational institutions, the development of nickel and chemical industry, irrigation work and hospital equipment, Cuba receives considerable help from the Soviet Union.

A direct maritime and air connection has been established between the Soviet Union and Cuba. There is also a direct phone and telegraph connection between the two countries. In the Soviet Union there are a great many Cuban students, and a lot of Cuban workers attend professional re-training courses in the Soviet Union.

In 1960 an agreement was signed on Soviet-Cuban cultural and scientific cooperation. Since then they have laid down in cultural work plans the specific actions of cooperation every year. In the past three years the volume of cultural and scientific exchange has almost trebled. The work plan of 1963 signed in March (similarly to previous work plans) reflects the Soviet comrades' intention to help in all of its points. In 1963 about 350 specialists are travelling to Cuba and about 400 Cubans to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union provides Cuba with help in all spheres of culture and science, mainly in the training of specialists and in the organization of new

institutions to be set up. In the near future about 120 Soviet specialists are travelling to Cuba to help with the building of a technical network, and numerous professors and university lecturers are going there to convey their experience in teaching economics. At present 100 Russian-language teachers work in Cuba and 75 would-be language teachers and translators study in the Soviet Union. This year about 360 Cubans attend the Soviet Union's higher education institutions (out of them 138 students will start their studies this year).

According to the cultural and scientific work plan, a group of 25 Soviet artists, the ballet of the Great Theater and, at the request of Comrade Fidel Castro, probably the Ukrainian Popular State Ensemble will travel to Cuba. In the Soviet Union the Cuban popular dance ensemble and popular orchestra will appear as guest-artists. They will organize the week of Cuban and Soviet films respectively to show the latest films of the other countries. The Soviet Union will send an exhibition of books, graphics, and posters to Cuba and will receive an exhibition of theatrical scenery. Besides the above, a great many directors [and] choreographers will travel on study trips to the Soviet Union. The work plan prescribes the regular exchange of publications between the central libraries; too.

The societies of artists (writers, composers, journalists, architects, theatrical and fine art artists, etc.) will exchange delegations according to the work plan. The Alliance of Soviet Fine Art Artists will send an industrial art exhibition to Cuba and will present a considerable part of the material to the Cuban comrades.

There is remarkable progress in health and sports relations between the two countries as well. At the request of the Cuban comrades, several expert physicians travel to Cuba, in the field of sports, apart from the various tournaments; the work plan includes sending Soviet trainers to Cuba.

According to the work plan, there will be a regular exchange of programs between the Soviet and Cuban radios and televisions.

The Soviet-Cuban scientific cooperation will become a lot wider through the agreement on scientific cooperation signed in Moscow recently. The Soviet comrades will provide help in the solution of various scientific problems and organizational help in the organization of a science academy in Cuba.

From the above it is clear that, in the present stage of Soviet-Cuban cultural and scientific cooperation, the most important factor is the help of Soviet comrades in training specialists in the various fields of science, education and culture and the experience they convey in the organization of the newly formed Cuban institutions.

I request you to send a summary report on the development and present situation of Hungarian-Cuban relations so that the Soviet organs could be informed about them.

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Ambassador

[József SZIPKA]

[Source: *Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.*]



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## DOCUMENT No. 24

Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Görög), Report on Reactions to Fidel Castro's Trip to the Soviet Union, 23 June 1963

The embassy of the Hungarian People's Republic TOP SECRET!

255/ 1963/ top secret Written: in four copies

Typed by: Elemérné Vajda three to Center one to Embassy

Havana, 23 June 1963

Subject: The reactions in

Cuba to Fidel Castro's trip to the Soviet Union

Supplement: one

We still cannot assess the consequences of Fidel Castro's trip to the Soviet Union, little time has passed since his return.

But what are the results and reactions that can already be seen and heard?

What we have to emphasize first of all are the progress in socialist competition and the definite increase in efforts made in the field of production. Party organization has accelerated remarkably, even in the country local organizations and district committees are formed one after the other. The Cuban daily press and magazines deal with the details of the visit continuously, they always publish pictures of the visit and they deal a lot more with the SU than before. It is true, however, that the Cuban press—including the party paper, HOY [TODAY] also—published the 25 points of the Chinese party and the Chinese bulletin, the Sinhua [Xinhua, the Chinese state news agency—ed], is full of anti-Tito articles based on the Chinese press and cites the news of the Albanian press a lot, but the Cuban papers have not taken over anything since Fidel's return apart from the 25 points.

Out of the photos of Fidel Castro's trip, the party's agitation [and] propaganda committee has organized an exhibition, where the masses go as on a pilgrimage.

The public opinion is satisfied with the visit. The ordinary Cubans usually emphasize two things: the question of the price of sugar and the increase in Cuba's international prestige.

In the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs the general reaction */I have talked to 5-6 higher employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the question/* is the following: the visit has proved that Fidel Castro is not the "puppet" of the Soviets, Comrade Khrushchev talked to him as to an equal. Generally the grandiose reception has calmed down the agitation of Cuban national dignity of last October.

Reactions among the writers, artists, and the intelligentsia are quite weak, except for the more serious economic and technical intelligentsia, who were happy about Fidel's statement that the economic way of looking at things should be enhanced, people should think "in an economic way."

But the majority of writers and artists were indifferent to the visit. As they have a great fear of the SU's cultural policy, they do not like socialist realism, they worry about their "artistic freedom." I have talked to Fayad Jamis about this question, who—although he did not agree with this—said it would be completely impossible today in Cuba to apply the SU's cultural political principles. Fidel does not want to do so either.

The western diplomats accredited to Cuba stress mainly the following: Khrushchev managed to win Fidel over to his side in the Soviet-Chinese dispute. This opinion is shared by the French, English, and Egyptian counselors, [and] the Indian charge d'affaires, who recorded the fact with satisfaction. I will report on the English ambassador's opinion elsewhere.

The new Israeli charge d'affaires, who was on a first visit to me on 21 June, said that the normalization of North-American relations—despite the fact that Fidel Castro offered to do so repeatedly in his television interview—could be hardly imagined before the American presidential elections [in November 1964].

The visit stirred the Cuban anti-Communist emigration too. According to unverifiable news [reports], in the past two or three weeks there have been several attempts of landing and infiltration by small groups of 8 to 10 people without central direction. The aim of the Cuban emigration having their headquarters in Florida is to press the US government to make an official promise according to which if the Soviet army in Cuba interfered in putting down a Cuban "internal revolt similar to the Hungarian uprising of 1956," the USA would provide immediate military help.

The aim of the anti-Castro Cuban inroads is probably to provoke "Soviet interference" and to make it possible to turn to the US government with such an accusation.

I consider it unnecessary to emphasize that there is no danger of internal revolt. There are smaller active counter-revolutionary groups, but the Cuban army and militia are eliminating them one after the other.

Erzsébet Görög  
chargé d'affaires ad interim

to Comrade Foreign Minister Péter János  
Budapest

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 25

Views of Polish Leader Władysław Gomułka on the Cuban Proposal to Join the Warsaw Pact, 20 November 1963

[...]

On behalf of Cuba, Comrade Fidel Castro has suggested that Cuba should join the Warsaw Treaty. We believe that this suggestion is of great importance if it were to be put forward officially (so far it has not been).

We believe that by realizing this it would meet with total disapproval in the capitalist world. We would not support their entry and there are several reasons for this:

- 1) Cuba's accession would fundamentally change the present character of the Warsaw Treaty. Now, the emphasis in the Warsaw Treaty is on defense against the FRG's [Federal Republic of Germany's] militarist demands and imperialist tendencies. The treaty does not deal with the entire world, but rather primarily with West Germany. In case of the [Cuban] entry, the nature and fundamental principles of the treaty would have to be changed, and it should be expanded to the entire world. In our opinion, at present this would not be a correct move and this would not be the opportune action even against the United States.
- 2) The accession of Cuba would not mean the increase of her security; on the contrary, Cuba would likely provoke greater threats against the country.
- 3) By Cuba's joining [the Warsaw Treaty], the atmosphere

of the Cold War would return and would surely influence the ongoing détente process unfavorably within the international political community.

The United States would consider this action as if the Soviet Union has stationed missiles in Cuba, it would create a war scare and would turn international public opinion against us.

Cuba is so far away geographically [from Europe] that when thinking realistically we should know that we cannot support or defend the country immediately. However, the United States would surely take more severe actions against Cuba. Our [positive] decision on Cuba's entry would be beneficial for [US President John F.] Kennedy, since by this he would feel justified and relieved from his publicly announced responsibilities concerning Cuba.<sup>55</sup>

In case of signing [a treaty with Cuba], according to the Warsaw Treaty, armed forces, Soviet armed forces, thus nuclear weapons could and should be shipped to Cuba. In this case the critical situation that occurred two years ago [*sic*: one year ago] would be repeated. Kennedy then could make the world believe that the Warsaw Treaty does not serve the purpose of defense against the Federal Republic of Germany but rather the purpose of attacking the United States.

Since [in such a case] the United States would feel that her territories are threatened, they would surely attack Cuba more severely, with diversion, boycott, stopping ships, etc. All this would influence also international trade unfavorably.

Last but not least this would strengthen unity within NATO.

Against the counter-revolutionary diversion there is no way to protect Cuba, and as a sanction—it is difficult to imagine—to throw saboteurs to Turkey or Greece or to torpedo Western ships.

Diversions of the United States are carried out by conventional weapons, as it is close geographically, alas, there is no need for nuclear weapons. We however, could not grant any support by traditional means, only by nuclear weapons. However, in principle we only apply nuclear arms for defensive purposes, surely not for attacking. We will never initiate an attack, while in case of a diversion in Cuba we wouldn't even realize who the aggressor really was. However, in case we and the United States would intervene, it would surely result in a [major] war.

If Cuba formally requests to join member-states of the Warsaw Treaty, we will decline. Unfortunately Fidel's suggestion is not new and he continues to force this idea onwards determinedly which is the reason why this issue is so serious.

The Cuban leaders somewhat feel suspicious about us and the Soviet Union. Cuba fears to be left alone. On the other hand, on certain issues they do not support the position of the Soviet Union. They did not sign the [Partial] Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Concerning the Warsaw Treaty, if Cuba were to take action, they will surely apply pressure, the Soviet Union will find herself in a hard situation, declining the proposition will surely be difficult. These issues were discussed between [Polish Foreign Minister] comrade [Adam] Rapacki and comrade [Soviet foreign minister Andrei] Gromyko who fully shared our opinion.

We have been informed about that comrade Khrushchev intends to return Castro's visit [to Moscow in the Spring of 1963] and travel to Cuba. Prior to this the debate [on Cuba's accession] in the Warsaw Treaty<sup>56</sup> would surface, hence our intention of discussing this issue with the Hungarian comrades.  
[...]

[Source: *Notes on Władysław Gomułka's views on the issues of international politics. 20 November 1963. Minutes of the HSWP Political Committee session, 26 November 1963, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/320. ő. e. Translated for CWIHP by Sabine Topolánszky.*]

## Notes

1 Csaba Békés, Ph.D. is founding director of the Cold War History Research Center ([www.coldwar.hu](http://www.coldwar.hu)) and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Political Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, both in Budapest. He is also Associate Professor at Corvinus University of Budapest and a recurring visiting professor at Columbia University. His main field of research is Cold War history, the history of East-West relations, Hungarian foreign policy after World War II and the role of the East Central European states in the Cold War.

2 Melinda Kalmár, Ph.D. is an independent historian and an associate researcher of the Cold War History Research Center in Budapest. Her main field of research is the history of the Communist system and its ideology in Hungary, 1945–1990. Her recently completed monograph on the topic, based on a 25 year archival research, will be published in 2013.

3 About the Cuban missile crisis see, e.g., Vladislav M. Zubok and Constantine V. Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 258–274; and Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *“One Hell of a Gamble”: Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy, 1958–1964* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1997). See also articles and documents on Cuban missile crisis published in the CWIHP Bulletin, esp. issues no. 5 (Spring 1995) and 8/9 (Winter 1996/1997).

4 Earlier Khrushchev—since the facts could not be verified—did everything he could to make the world believe that the Soviet Union possessed a huge arsenal of intercontinental missiles, and thus

was way ahead of the United States in this field. In an October 1961 speech, US deputy defense secretary Roswell Gilpatric made clear that in fact the reverse was the case. It turned out that in 1962 the US had four times more ICBMs than the Soviet Union. Fursenko and Naftali, op. cit., p. 171. In the following years the disadvantage continued to grow until 1967, and finally only in 1969 the Soviet Union managed to exceed the number of the United States' intercontinental missiles.

5 Due to Khrushchev's demand Kennedy secretly agreed to dismantle the American Jupiter missiles which were installed in Turkey. Since this formally required the approval of NATO, it did not happen until the following spring. About this secret Soviet–American deal only very few officials—including the President, his brother, Robert Kennedy, and Secretary of State Dean Rusk—knew in the US administration.

6 Fursenko and Naftali, op.cit., pp. 281–283.

7 Telegram from Soviet Ambassador to the US Dobrynin to the USSR Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962, CWIHP Virtual Archive, [www.cwihip.org](http://www.cwihip.org).

8 On a new concept of superpower cooperation during the Cold War see Csaba Békés, “Cold War, Détente and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution,” in Klaus Larres and Kenneth Osgood, eds., *The Cold War after Stalin's Death: A Missed Opportunity for Peace?* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), pp. 213–233.

9 See Csaba Békés: “Titkos válságkezeléstől a politikai koordinációig. Politikai egyeztetési mechanizmus a Varsói Szerződésben, 1954–1967” [“From secret crisis management to political coordination. Political coordinating mechanism in the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1967”], in János M. Rainer, ed., *Múlt századi hétköznapiak. Tanulmányok a Kádár rendszer kialakulásának időszakáról*. [Everydays in the past century. Essays on the period of the emerging of the Kádár regime] (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2003), pp. 26–30.

10 After the Cuban missile crisis the combat readiness ended in Hungary on 22 November 1962. The tendency which started in the Spring of 1961 continued, therefore the defense expenditure was increased again in this period. According to the proposal of the Ministry of Defense in September 1962 the number of the army was to be raised to 85,000 by 1964, and 92–95,000 by 1970. In reality the increase became much more dynamic: in August 1963 the real headcount was already 106,400, and the planned number for 1970 was 120–122,000. Report of Lajos Fehér to the Political Committee, 30 August 1963. MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/312. ő. e. See also: the Introduction to Hungary and the Warsaw Pact, 1954–1989. Documents on the Impact of a Small State within the Eastern Bloc. Edited by Csaba Békés and Anna Locher, Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, web site: [www.isn.ethz.ch/php](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php), 2003.

11 Report from the Session of the HSWP PC, 23 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5./280. ő. e.

12 It was published in the HSWP's daily, *Népszabadság* on 24 October 1962.

13 Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Ministers, 25 October 1962. MOL, XIX-A-83-a-245/1962 ő. e.



14 No written records have been found on Grechko informing the Hungarians about the situation concerning the crisis at that stage, only a vague reference is available about his “oral instruction,” obviously by telephone (Document 8.). It is also possible that Moscow’s ambassador in Hungary provided some information to the Hungarian leaders, since according to the minutes of the CPSU Presidium meeting discussing the Cuban situation on 22 October, “the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should inform Ambassadors representing the countries in the Warsaw Treaty,” A. A. Fursenko, ed., *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954–1964* [CPSU CC Presidium, 1954–1964], Vol. 1, *Chernovye protokoly nye zapisi zasedanii, stenogrammy, postanovleniya* [Draft Protocols of Meetings, Stenographic Records, and Decrees] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2003). Available in English at <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/kremlin>. Nevertheless, no record of such information has yet been found in the Hungarian archives.

15 Minutes of the HSWP Political Committee, 2 November 1962, MOL, M-KS-288.f. 5./281. ő.e., Minutes of the HSWP Secretariat, 2 November 1962, L, M-KS-288.f. 7./ 146. ő. e.

16 *Népszabadság*, 26 October 1962.

17 Speech of János Kádár at the party conference in Budapest, 31 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288.f. 11. 1048. ő. e.

18 Information report about the reactions to [lit. “echo”] the American provocation against Cuba, 24 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288.f. 11/1038. ő. e., Note about the reactions to the American provocation against Cuba, 26 October 1962, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 11/1041. ő. e.

19 Minutes of the special closed session of the HSWP PC, 5 November 1962. MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5./281/1. ő. e.

20 Greville Maynard Wynne (1919 –1990) published his memoirs quite soon after his release. See *The Man from Moscow: The Story of Wynne and Penkovsky* (London: Hutchinson, 1967).

21 János Kádár’s account on his Moscow visit at the session of the HSWP CC, 12 November 1962, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 4/60. ő. e.

22 Raymond L. Garthoff, “When and Why Romania Distanced Itself from the Warsaw Pact,” *CWIHP Bulletin* no. 5 (Spring 1995), p. 111.

23 Document No. 20. On Poland, see also Wanda Jarzabek, “Hope and Reality: Poland and the CSCE, 1964–1989,” *CWIHP Working Paper* No. 56 (May 2008); Douglas Selva, “The Warsaw Pact and the German Question, 1955–1970,” in Mary Heiss and S. Victor Papacosma, eds., *NATO and the Warsaw Pact: Intrabloc Conflicts* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2008), pp. 178–192.

24 The Hungarian leadership first proposed the establishment of the Committee of Foreign Ministers as early as 1958 but the Soviets did not even reply to the suggestion at the time. See Baráth Magdolna, “Magyarország a szovjet diplomáciai iratokban 1957–1964,” in *Múlt századi hétköznapiak*, 79. The forming of this body was originally decided on at the first meeting of the WP Political Consultative Committee in January, 1956 in Prague, but no action followed that decision. As is known, it was eventually established in 1976.

25 Account of János Kádár on the visit of a party and government delegation in the Soviet Union, Minutes of the HSWP PC session, 31 July 1963, MOL, M-KS-288. f. 5/309. ő. e.

26 See the Introduction by Csaba Békés to *Records of the Meetings of the Warsaw Pact Deputy Foreign Ministers, 1964–1989*, edited by Csaba Békés, Anna Locher, Christian Nuenlist, Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, [www.isn.ethz.ch/php](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php), 2005.

27 Fursenko and Naftali, op. cit. 171.

28 Document No. 16.

29 Document No. 16.

30 Document No. 16.

31 Document No. 16.

32 Document No. 18.

33 Document No. 18.

34 Document No. 19.

35 Not published—ed.

36 Guevara actually made these documents public during his speech on 8 August 1961 to the conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay. See Guevara, “Economics Cannot Be Separated from Politics,” 8 August 1961, and reproduced at [www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1961/08/08/1961.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1961/08/08/1961.htm)—ed.

37 This paragraph was added to the document later on a special sheet titled “Insertion”—trans.

38 In July 1961 three revolutionary organizations were merged to form the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI), acting as the Communist party of Cuba. Soon, in March 1962, it was reorganized as the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution (PURSC) which, eventually was renamed the Communist Party of Cuba in 1965—CB and MK.

39 Just before coming to Cuba, Ben Bella had stopped in Washington and met with US President Kennedy—ed.

40 N.P. Dagajev, Colonel General was head of the 10th group at the Soviet general staff. At the time this organ was in charge of coordination with the Warsaw Pact member states’ military leadership—CB and MK.

41 The Hungarian government’s statement was published in the HSWP’s daily, *Népszabadság*, on 25 October. The declaration of the Hungarian government—CB and MK.

42 The Hungarian government declaration adopted on 23 October was published in *Népszabadság* on 25 October. It is worth noting that Kádár gives no explanation, why the declaration was published only on 25 October, and not the day before, if preparing it had allegedly been so urgent that an ad hoc group had to do it on behalf of the government—CB and MK.

43 Jenő Kőteles, lieutenant-general—First deputy minister of defence who was acting minister while Minister of Defence Lajos Czinege was hospitalized during the crisis—CB and MK.

44 Indeed, Kádár received the Cuban ambassador along with two journalists of the Cuban paper *Revolution* and their conversation was published on the front page of



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*Népszabadság* next to the Hungarian government declaration on 25 October—CB and MK.

45 A detailed account on the mass meeting, including the speeches of deputy prime minister Gyula Kállai and Cuban ambassador Quintin Pino Machado, was published in *Népszabadság* on 26 October. At the rally a message was adopted to be sent to UN Secretary-General U Thant asking for his mediation to solve the crisis—CB and MK.

46 The Soviet government declaration of 23 October was published in *Népszabadság* on 24 October—CB and MK.

47 Cardinal Mindszenty, the head of the Hungarian Catholic Church, sought refuge at the US legation on 4 November 1956 at the news of the Soviet military invasion, crushing the Hungarian revolution of 1956. He stayed at the mission for fifteen years, eventually leaving Hungary in 1971, after long and complicated negotiations among Hungary, the US, and the Vatican—CB and MK.

48 Here and below, the term “Political Committee” is used for this top-ranking party body, which was functionally equivalent to the “Political Bureau” or “Politburo” as it was called in some Communist countries, but not in Hungary—CB and MK.

49 This Central Committee meeting was dedicated to discussing the report of the Political Committee for the forthcoming 8th congress of the HSWP that was held in November 1962—CB and MK.

50 Beck is obviously talking about the lack of experience of the current, post-World War II generation in Cuba and when making general comments on the country’s history, he fails to remember the long struggle for independence from

Spain in the nineteenth century. His claim that the present leaders know nothing of “the participation of large masses in the revolutionary fight” clearly indicates that he regarded the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro as more a coup d’état than a genuine popular uprising—CB and MK.

51 Mátyás Rákosi—Head of the Hungarian Communist Party and the Hungarian Workers’ Party from 1945 through July 1956—CB and MK.

52 Mikoyan talked about his visit to Cuba in the first days of November 1962—CB and MK.

53 This was a serious obfuscation. While the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party indeed placed Rákosi and his clique on top of their “four reasons of the counterrevolution” list in December 1956, in official Soviet propaganda the main instigators of the 1956 events were the “Western imperialists”—CB and MK.

54 See Document No. 16.

55 An evident allusion to Kennedy’s political commitment not to invade Cuba in exchange for Khrushchev’s agreement to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba—ed.

56 Eventually no such debate took place and the Cuban proposal was never discussed in the Warsaw Pact—CB and MK.

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# Poland, Cuba, and the Missile Crisis, 1962:

## Ciphered Telegrams from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Warsaw

Documents obtained and introduced by James G. Hershberg, and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska

As a loyal Warsaw Pact ally of the Soviet Union, communist Poland dutifully endorsed Moscow's decisions and actions during the Cuban Missile Crisis, harshly criticized Washington, and loudly supported revolutionary Cuba against the threat of "imperialist" aggression. However, these public stands masked somewhat more nuanced views that included occasional disagreement with Fidel Castro's revolutionary government; recognition of occasional Soviet-Cuban tensions, especially after Nikita Khrushchev's decision, over Castro's head and without advance consultation with Havana, to withdraw Soviet missiles from the island under UN inspection; and acknowledgments of varying currents of opinion within the Cuban leadership and population.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the Polish communist leadership, despite their fealty to the Kremlin, was not given advance notice of the secret Soviet missile deployment, and had only strictly limited enthusiasm for the notion of risking World War III for the sake of defending Cuba. A year after the missile crisis, Polish leader Władysław Gomułka, in private consultations with Warsaw Pact comrades, disdained the idea of allowing Cuba to join the alliance.<sup>2</sup>

For the most part, Polish diplomats left policy determination to the higher political (and ideological, i.e., communist party) level, and focused on reporting information to their superiors in Warsaw, led by Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki. And here the documents printed below offer a fresh source of hard information on a multitude of topics, including inter-communist interactions, often tightly cloaked at the time, not only on Polish-Cuban relations but Soviet-Cuban ties and on Soviet-Polish coordination regarding Cuba. They also provide first-hand, contemporaneous testimony as to the actions and atmosphere in Havana, Moscow, and Washington as the crisis occurred—albeit through the lens of Polish diplomacy.

The translated documents presented below, with one exception<sup>3</sup>, are ciphered telegrams (*szyfrogramy*) from Polish diplomatic outposts in 1962 that were obtained by the author during a research trip to Warsaw in 2003 from the *Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych* [Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] and translated for CWHIP by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).

Those preceding the outbreak of the missile crisis in mid-October 1962 cover several important events in that eventful year. The cables from Poland's ambassador in Havana, Bolesław Jeleń, in January-February concern Cuba's perspective on the gathering of the Organization of American

States (OAS) which occurred in Punta del Este, Uruguay, and took action, at Washington's behest, to further isolate Havana. Several additional cables in March-April concern what was known as the "Escalante Affair," a still-murky episode in which Fidel Castro purged, on the charge of "sectarianism," some members of the government affiliated with the *Partido Socialista Popular* (Popular Socialist Party (PSP), i.e., the pro-Moscow communist party, starting with its leader, Aníbal Escalante, who was forced to go into exile in the USSR; the Castroist leadership also indicated displeasure with the Soviet ambassador, Sergei Kudryavtsev, who was promptly recalled and replaced, putting Soviet-Cuban relations "on the verge of a crisis," as one important account states.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly thereafter, further cables from Warsaw's embassy in Havana document a June 1962 visit to Cuba by Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki, who met with Castro and sought to overcome what the Cuban leader complained was a "certain cooling in our mutual relations"—and by extension with the broader Soviet bloc in the wake of the Escalante affair. Rapacki's controversial visit also caused friction with Washington, arousing criticism from anti-Castro activists that complicated the Kennedy Administration's efforts to convince Congress to ease restrictions on trade with Poland.<sup>5</sup> (There were some rumors at the time that Rapacki also sought to mediate tensions between Moscow and Havana, or Washington and Havana, or both—but no evidence has emerged that he made any progress if indeed he tried.)<sup>6</sup>

In September 1962, several Jeleń cables report contacts both on assessment of purported mounting US threats to commit aggression against Cuba and Soviet assurances of aid, meant to deter any such American attack—but no direct indication of the dramatic secret action that Khrushchev was already taking to send nuclear weapons to the island.

As the crisis actually breaks out, the documents enable the reader to follow its evolution through Polish embassy reports from Havana, Moscow, and Washington. Although efforts to obtain records of Gomułka's consultations in Moscow with Khrushchev in late October/early November were unfortunately unsuccessful—the Polish leader, like other Warsaw Pact notables, came to mark the annual celebrations of the Bolshevik Revolutions—a cable from Warsaw's envoy to the Kremlin does record a noteworthy conversation with Aleksei Kosygin, who would become the Soviet premier after helping to oust Khrushchev two years hence. "The situation of the

past few days has been exceptionally tense,” said Kosygin on October 30. “We were on the brink of war.”

The cables from Havana record the dramatic shift in mood from readiness to fight off an American invasion to shock, puzzlement, and even chagrin at Moscow’s decision to remove the missiles—and then the complex and mysterious maneuvering in Cuban-Soviet relations as Anastas Mikoyan, Khrushchev’s closest associate in the Kremlin and now his emissary to inform and, if possible, mollify Fidel Castro, flew to Cuba and spent several weeks in talks with the Cubans.<sup>7</sup> The Pole’s reports of his talks with colleagues, including of course the Soviet ambassador, Aleksandr Alekseyev, but also others, both communists and non-communist, significantly enrich the record of the “secret” Soviet-Cuban crisis of November 1962 that followed the far better known US-Soviet crisis during the “thirteen days” the previous month. And, given the continued reluctance of Cuban authorities to release more than a limited number of internal records regarding the international aspects of the crisis and its aftermath—including its political and diplomatic contacts with the Soviets—the Polish records also provide invaluable evidence as to the reactions of Cuban leaders to developments before orthodox interpretations took hold (especially once Fidel Castro gave his own views).

Even though the Poles naturally lacked insider access to the secret decision-making deliberations of the Kennedy administration, their ambassador in Washington was able to report some intriguing tidbits and gossip from well-informed or at least well-connected Washingtonians such as White House aides Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and Walt Rostow and journalists Charles Bartlett and columnist Joe Alsop. And bringing it all together, in late November, the Polish ambassador in Washington reported a conversation with Anastas Mikoyan, who was passing through on his way back to Moscow after his long visit to Cuba. Mikoyan described his conversations both with John Kennedy and with the Cuban leadership—and, not surprisingly, put a rather rosy spin on the latter, compared with the version of those exchanges that emerges from internal Soviet records. The Poles did not get the full story, but they certainly heard more than US officials—let alone uncleared American newspaper readers—could easily learn about what was happening inside the complicated communist realm.

## DOCUMENTS

### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 2 January 1962

#### Ciphergram No. 150

Dispatched from Havana on 01.03.1962 at 23:30 and received at 01.05.1962 at 13:50

Came to the Decoding Department at 01.05 at 16:50

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI<sup>8</sup>

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>9</sup>

...

5) There is an opinion among a small group of the heads of Latin American diplomatic posts that the US would push through the sanctions against Cuba, except for the military ones, as far as possible. The English and French [ambassadors] are implying that they are, once again, afraid that the US would make a mistake in their assessment of the internal mood in Cuba. During the group discussions with Western diplomats, the USSR ambassador emphasizes that the danger exists of expanding the conflict if a direct US intervention [in Cuba were to take place]. [However,] in a personal conversation with me, he expressed some doubt as to the possibility of a direct US intervention given the current situation.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 17 January 1962

#### Ciphergram No. 764

Dispatched from Havana on 01.17.1962 at 18:30 and received at 01.18.1962 at 14:04

Came to the Decoding Department at 01.18 at 16:50

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI,<sup>10</sup> Urgent

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>11</sup>

[This report] regarding Punta del Este<sup>12</sup> [has been compiled based on] the conversations with, among others, Blas Roca [Caldeiro],<sup>13</sup> [Raul] Roa [Garcia],<sup>14</sup> and [Carlos] Lechuga.<sup>15</sup>

- 1) Colombia is introducing four draft resolutions:
  - a. Calling on Cuba to break its relations with the communist bloc.
  - b. The statement saying that the socialist system is incompatible with the principles of the OAS [Organization of American States].

- c. The obligation not to receive military bases of socialist countries by the American nations.
- d. Appointing a permanent inter-American commission for control of communist infiltration and giving it extensive powers in the area of membership applications and executive powers. [This commission would be] analogous to the one which was formed during World War II in 1942. In practice, such a commission would have the authority to limit the sovereignty of the members of the OAS; [however,] especially strong resistance is being expected as far as the formation of such a commission.
- 2) The United States and some other participants are expected to introduce corrections to the above mentioned resolution drafts in order to apply sanctions according to Article 8 of the Rio Treaty<sup>16</sup> as the justification of the report of the International Peace Commission, which will be presented at Punta [del Este] ([these are] consequences of the Peruvian resolution in the OAS, see our previous report).
- 3) Argentina's position is still not clear. It is expected that [Argentina will introduce] drafts, stating that the communist system is incompatible with that of the inter-American [system], as well as [drafts] defining the deadline for Cuba to adopt [a political system] of a representative democracy (the latter point is still not completely specified).
- 4) Mexico will not introduce its own drafts. It will question, from the legal point of view, the authority of the consultative organ of the OAS in the area of adopting resolutions which are going beyond those of the Rio [Treaty]. Such [resolutions] can only be adopted, according to the Mexican theory, by the same means that the treaty itself was adopted, that is, prior to the pan-American conference whose resolutions still need to be ratified. This approach opens up opportunities for possibly not adopting the resolutions from Punta [del Este]. Sanctions adopted according to the Rio Treaty (except for those in the military area), after all, apply to all of the [OAS] members.
- 5) The latest changes within the Bolivian government, especially the [appointment] of their new foreign minister, are unfavorable to Cuba.
- 6) It is expected that the following are Brazilian resolutions: the [political] system [which is based on] the principles of Marxism-Leninism, is incompatible with that of the inter-American [system], [but] according to the principle of self-determination, Cuba has the right to adopt such a system. This fact itself therefore justifies the recognition of Cuba as a separate neutral status. Interlocutors (Roa): confirms the exchange of views [regarding this issue] with Brazil. [According to] Roca: they are assessing the Brazilian resolutions as cloudy, but also containing positive aspects, because they oppose [the imposition of] sanctions [on Cuba] and open up a possibility for conducting negotiations; the actual state of Cuba's international relations is neutralism.
- 7) Cuban tactics at Punta [del Este]:
- [The adoption of an] offensive [position] by pointing out the aggressive aspects of the US; [the adoption of] flexible [tactics] in order to strengthen the trends which are against [imposing] sanctions [on Cuba] and those which are calling for further negotiations, but without compromising [Cuba's] already established internal system. ([Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos [Torrado] and [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez in the Cuban delegation represent the composed [calm] elements in the discussion, as opposed to the well-known nervous reactions of Roa.)
- 8) According to Roca, they are moving the deadline for the massive People's Assembly from January 22 to January 28, because the Second Havana Declaration will be the response to the resolutions at Punta [del Este], and they are not going to be known yet on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. In addition, adopting the [Second Havana Declaration] could further complicate the negotiating position of Cuba at the [Punta del Este conference].
- 9) [This information is based on] the conversation with the Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto]: his definition of the Brazilian line is overall in accordance with our point 6 mentioned above in this cable. He states that one should not reject the possibility of reaching *modus vivendi* under the conditions of Cuba's neutrality, and that one should create such conditions which would mold the Cuban system once Cuba is faced with reality. Brazil is not going to break relations with Cuba.
- [Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 25 January 1962

Ciphergram No. 1155

Dispatched from Havana on 01.25.1962 at 21:

00 and received at 01.26.1962 at 13:42

Came to the Decoding Department at 01.26 at 17:30

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI,<sup>17</sup>

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>18</sup>

- 1) The information we are getting here from Punta [del Este] is fragmentary. We have noted disappointment here caused by the position assumed by Mexico, which has been far removed from the one they have assumed until now. In [Blas] Roca's article (see our claris 15), one can sense the allusion to Mexico's new position. [Carlos] Olivares, with whom I had talked today, sees this change as the expression of the complexity and inconsistency of the Mexican policy, but at the same time he allows for the possibility that Mexico is trying to create more space to maneuver at the negotiating table. According to Olivares, looking from the practical point of view, positive elements are predominant in the Brazilian position presented at Punta [del Este].
- 2) [This information has been compiled based on my] conversation with [Aleksander I.] Adzhubei<sup>19</sup> and [Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Sergei Mikhailovich] Kudryavtsev on the 24<sup>th</sup> of this month. Adzhubei pointed out that in his conversation with [Fidel Castro], Fidel decisively rejected the concept of "Finlandization"<sup>20</sup> of Cuba. On his part, Kudryavtsev emphasized that the Cuban delegation left [for Punta del Este] with a clear directive of exploiting the Brazilian concept in order to obtain a negotiating opportunity. A.[dzhubei] and K.[udryavtsev] think that neutralism of a Finnish type, although with some reservations, is an acceptable option. They are both in agreement that in Fidel's thinking the idea has not yet emerged as to reconciling his actual position as the people's leader on the [Latin American] continent with that of a national leader.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 3 February 1962

Ciphergram No. 150

Dispatched from Havana on 02.03.1962 at 17:00 and received at 02.03.1962 at 13:50

Came to the Decoding Department at 02.03.1962 at 16:00

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI<sup>21</sup>

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>22</sup>

[Regarding the Eighth Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of American States at] Punta del Este

- 1) There is no complete picture in the Cuban press regarding the resolutions adopted at [Punta del Este] and how each country voted on specific resolutions. Generally, there has been information published pertaining to the five adopted resolutions:
  - a. Cuba's exclusion from the inter-American system;
  - b. Cuba's exclusion from the inter-American defense committee;
  - c. Prohibition of supplying weapons and strategic materials to Cuba by the members of the OAS [Organization of American States];
  - d. "Solidarity towards progress;"
  - e. Concrete steps [taken by the OAS nations] to defend the [Western] Hemisphere.

It is still not known what other resolutions had been adopted. Also, the lack of the complete response to the adopted resolutions makes it all difficult to provide you with a fuller analysis.

- 2) [Based on] the conversations with, among others, ambassadors to USSR, Brazil, and Mexico, one can present the following remarks:
  - a. Given that the OAS charter does not allow for the exclusion of a nation [from the organization], they used an exclusion formula of [excluding] the current government of Cuba from its participation within the borders of the OAS (see Article 32 of the OAS Charter).<sup>23</sup> The OAS Council was entrusted with the



implementation of this resolution. The six abstaining countries [Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Bolivia, and Ecuador] do not agree even with this form of exclusion unless the charter is revised, a task that belongs to the pan-American conference. A complex discussion is expected to take place regarding this issue at the Council [meeting] of the OAS.

- b. According to Brazilian and Mexican [ambassadors], the conference at Punta del Este possessed the authority to exclude Cuba from the Defense Committee which is an autonomous organ associated with the OAS, but which is not subject to its authority.
  - c. It is not clear whether other than the prohibition of arms trade there were any other economic sanctions, as well as any concrete steps to defend the [Western] Hemisphere (with the possible application of the provisions of the fourth conference of [OAS] foreign ministers in 1951).
- 3) [Cuba's] exclusion from the [inter-American] system is also considered to be its exclusion from its obligations to the Rio Treaty. The Mexican and Brazilian [ambassadors] point out that it does not mean that Cuba is protected from the [Rio] treaty being used against it, since the sanctions included in Article 8 of the treaty<sup>24</sup> are foreseen to be used not only towards the countries which are associated with it. Both ambassadors assess that the resolution was carried out with the support of the necessary minimum of votes; [they assess this] as a defeat of the OAS and this is the fault of the United States; they stress that their governments did everything they could so such a conference would not take place. The result of such voting is unprecedented. In the case of the anti-communist [OAS] declaration [made] in Caracas in 1954, only Mexico and Argentina abstained from voting and only Guatemala voted against it.
  - 4) They are all of the opinion that because of [Cuba's] exclusion [from the OAS], the argument that the OAS [members should first turn to] the Security Council of the UN in case of a dispute between Cuba and the members of the OAS (see Article 20 of the OAS Charter)<sup>25</sup> is no longer valid.
  - 5) There is a general opinion that the United States will exploit the decisions made at [the] Punta [del Este conference] in order to further undertake anti-Cuban steps.

- 6) We still cannot discern as to how Cuba plans to counteract as far as the decisions made at Punta [del Este]. Among other things, there is speculation that Cuba will appeal to the UN on the basis of the fact that the OAS is a regional organization within the [jurisdiction] of the UN.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



## Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 5 February 1962

Ciphergram No. 1675

Dispatched from Havana on 02.05.1962 at 20:30 and received at 02.06.1962 at 13:35

Came to the Decoding Department at 02.06.1962 at 15:40

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI<sup>26</sup>

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>27</sup>

- 7) The following conclusions can be derived from the conversations with some of the members of the Cuban delegation and the texts of the adopted resolutions at [the Eighth Meeting of Consultation of Foreign Ministers] in Punta [del Este]:
  1. The United States was not able to obtain the sanctions to the extent initially proposed by Colombia. Even though the US has not achieved the maximum, it achieved quite a bit, including obtaining new tools which could be exploited in their future anti-Cuban actions.
  2. All of the resolutions (see the enumeration according to our claris 27) were adopted unanimously with Cuba voting against them. The unanimous vote pertained also to the political part of resolution IV<sup>28</sup> (only its legal and executive part in points 3 and 4)<sup>29</sup>; as a result the entire resolution was adopted by a majority vote of 14 countries.
  3. The connection between the principle of self-determination and the form of the so-called free

elections has been achieved through resolutions I [Communist Offensive in America], III [Special Consultative Committee on Security Against the Subversive Action of International Communism], and IV [Holding of Free Elections].

4. The Security Commission [Resolution II] was initially thought out as one comprising of the members who were designated by the Inter-American Defense Committee. However, adopting a formula of selecting its members through the process defined in point 2-a of Resolution II<sup>30</sup> seems to tone down the original resolution. At the same time, points 1 and 2-c<sup>31</sup> of this resolution may give the Committee far reaching powers.
5. Resolution VIII, point 2,<sup>32</sup> opens up the possibility of further reaching economic sanctions than the suspension of non-existing arms trade.
- 8) The members of the Cuban delegation state that only Brazil showed a commendable position. They are expressing their disappointment with the attitude of Mexico [in handling] the problems at the conference.
- 9) The first opinions within the diplomatic corps regarding the Second Havana Declaration proclaimed on 4 February, express fears that it can further exacerbate the already worsening relations between the government of Latin America[n nations] and Cuba in the future.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



## Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 24 March 1962

Ciphergram No. 4098

Dispatched from Havana on 03.24.1962 at 18:00 and received at 03.25.1962 at 14:53

Came to the Decoding Department at 03.25.1962 at 19:30

To: [Director General Jerzy] MICHALOWSKI, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>33</sup>

I. I am relaying the information presented today by Blas Roca<sup>34</sup> and Emilio Aragonés [Navarro]<sup>35</sup> (secretary of the ORI [Organizaciones Revolucionarias Intergradadas<sup>36</sup>] to the heads of the diplomatic posts of the countries of the socialist camp. They asked that we relay this information to the central committees of [our] parties.

1. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of this month, the national leadership of the ORI made a decision to exclude Anibal Escalante from the leadership of the ORI. A. E. remains a member of the ORI, but he's been removed from all the leadership positions.
2. [They said that the] motives [for the removal of Anibal Escalante were as follows]: as an organizational secretary of the ORI, A. E. used brutal and arbitrary methods of management, as well as intrigues aimed at concentrating control in his hands over the party and national apparatus. He used these methods towards other comrades regardless of their previous organizational membership [that is, whether they belonged to the former Popular Socialist Party or the "26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement"]. He managed to [take] control of a series of ministries, among others, the Ministry of Internal Affairs; he undertook the steps in order to control the military cadres. A. E.'s arbitrary behavior could be already be detected in the 1940s, when he served in the leadership of the Popular Socialist Party, and later [when he was active in] the underground and [finally] after the collapse of the [Fulgencio Batista]<sup>37</sup> dictatorship. Various circumstances did not allow for putting an end to [Escalante's behavior] during these different periods.
3. The discussion related to the activities of A. E. began in February of this year under the older leadership. The resolution from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of this month was adopted without the participation of the new members of the current leadership (which was approved on the 8<sup>th</sup> of this month – see our Claris<sup>38</sup> 54), all of who did not participate in the previous phase of the discussion. [The resolution] will be presented to the public by Fidel [Castro]. The discussion focused only on [issues such as Escalante's] work methods and organizational matters, and not on the ideological issues.
4. The [Cuban] leadership will, unconditionally, adopt methods of collective leadership. They will

hold meetings once a week under the current composition (24 members). The secretariat meets daily regarding [making] current decisions. They accelerated the process of creating the Revolutionary Party Cells (the equivalent of our POP [Basic Party Organizations]). They have not openly carried out their activities everywhere until now; the[se] activities were predominant in workplaces, especially among the management and administration. The membership selection to the Revolutionary Party Cells will be carried out strictly by taking political and moral aspects into consideration. The party will be composed of the cadres and it should count no more than 10 thousand members. The [party] congress will take place no earlier than at the end of the year.

5. There will be changes in the positions of provincial committee secretaries in four provinces (there are six provinces overall [in Cuba]). [These changes] are not connected with the activities of A. E., and they are a result of the weaknesses [exhibited by] some of the current secretaries.
6. In order to streamline [the work of] some departments, there will be some changes in the leadership. The most significant change pertains to the position of the minister of internal trade, because the poor organizational situation in the area of distribution. These changes do not have any political background (see our Claris 69 – [Manuel] Luzardo – from the former Popular Socialist Party, Celia Sanchez – Fidel's secretary until now).
7. There is going to be a change regarding the position of the head of the Security Department in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Brahantes is the one who is holding this position; he is a secretary and Fidel's aide.

II. In our Claris 67, we have already reported that the members of the "26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement"<sup>39</sup> are numerically predominant in the secretariat and the commission. The only one from the former Popular Socialist Party<sup>40</sup> who is currently a member of the secretariat is Blas Roca (the function of the organizational secretary is fully held by [Emilio] Aragones). As far as the organizational commission, only Luzardo remains [as the member of the former Popular Socialist Party]), and L. Pena holds a position in the syndical commission.

III. The information, which I presented in the first point of this cable, was relayed separately and individually to the ambassadors from the USSR, the PRC, and Albania, all of whom were not invited to the general meeting [of socialist countries]. [The North] Korean [ambassador] sent his secretary even though he attended a party soon before the meeting. The charge d'affaires represented the [North] Vietnamese embassy.

IV. Anibal Escalante – an old member of the leadership of the Popular Socialist Party and its long-time organizational secretary. He worked for the Comintern and represented the Popular Socialist Party at the conference of 81 [communist and workers'] parties.<sup>41</sup> After the formation of the ORI, he served as the organizational secretary. He joined the new leadership of the ORI that was approved on the 8<sup>th</sup> of this month.

[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 5 April 1962

Ciphergram No. 4864

Dispatched from Havana on 04.05.1962 at 12:30 and received at 04.06.1962 at 14:17

Came to the Decoding Department at 04.07.1962 at 18:20

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI,<sup>42</sup> EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEN<sup>43</sup>

- 1) The issue of the Escalante affair (see our ciphergram 101 [that is 4098] dated 03.24.1962) is still not entirely clear. Based on the knowledge we have acquired so far, it seems that the issue was broached to the leadership circles by Fidel [Castro] as a result of complaints [he received] regarding the fact that E[scalante] was removing those party members who were the members of the former "26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement" while staffing the party and state apparatus, as well as the local administration, [with his own people]. Also, the local organizations and institutions of the ORI [Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas]<sup>44</sup> included a minimal number of the active

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party members of the former “26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement.” In practice, E. adopted the line of limiting the authority of the state administration and [strengthening that of] the party apparatus.

[As far as] the leadership of the ORI (which has been composed of the entire leadership of the former Popular Socialist Party [PSP] since March 8 of this year, to which eight leading party activists of the former “26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement” have been added (see our notes 2421/14/61 from July 10, 1961), the entirety of its organizational matters was concentrated in the hands of E. This fact did not seem to bother him. Also, it was not clear among the leaders of the former Popular Socialist Party as to the role of the party and the government in a socialist system. There was no division within the [Cuban] leadership between the members of the former PSP and the “26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement” regarding the E. affair. [Moreover], the methods adopted by E. were unanimously condemned. However, Fidel [Castro] accused the former leadership of the PSP for their inability to control the work [carried out by] E. and tolerating his methods, even though E.’s methods had been known before. Today, some of the members of the former PSP think that E.’s activities not only caused a great damage in the building of the state and party apparatus, but also influenced the emergence of anti-communist moods in Cuba.

- 2) Fidel’s presentation of the E. affair in his televised statement on March 26 caused a great shock. In some circles the statement was interpreted as the expression of deep rifts within the leadership between the old communists and the [members of the] former “26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement.” In some local organizations of the ORI, some of the old communists have been removed only because of their membership in the former organization [PSP]. The leadership reacted by announcing the communiqué which was signed by Fidel [Castro] (as the first secretary of the ORI) [and] which made all changes in local organizations impossible unless they were carried out with the permission of the state leadership. The situation became especially difficult for [the province of] Oriente where a commission of the secretariat, including [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos and Blas Roca, had to arrive in order to make organizational changes. There were expected changes in the leadership of the ORI in four provinces, but such changes were only made in two provinces (Oriente and Havana). In both cases, the positions of the first secretaries were appointed from among the combatants of the “26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement,” but those who were also former sympathizers of the ORI. (As far as Havana, Domenech, who was Fidel’s former

secretary, became the first secretary.) There are some changes, which are expected as far as some positions in the CTC [Confederacion de Trabajadores de Cuba – The Workers’ Central Union of Cuba]. The entire campaign is being carried out under the banner of combating sectarianism and strengthening the revolutionary unity.

- 3) Escalante left for Moscow soon after his removal. According to [Soviet Ambassador Sergei Mikhailovich] Kudryavtsev, the [Cuban] leadership made a decision that E. should leave for one of the socialist countries. He chose the USSR and Fidel was the one who, allegedly, personally put in a request to facilitate E.’s reception by the USSR.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 14 April 1962

Ciphergram No. 5389

Dispatched from Havana on 04.14.1962 at 10:00 and received on 04.15.1962 at 13:55

Came to the Decoding Department at 04.15.1962 at 17:00

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI<sup>45</sup>

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>46</sup>

- 1) Your cable no. 4047 must have missed our cable no. 124 [see Ciphergram 4864]. Based on more information we obtained [regarding the Escalante affair], one can conclude that there are no rifts between the members of the former PSP [Popular Socialist Party] and the members of the former “26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement.” Due to the [condemnation of] the methods adopted by Escalante, there was some danger that some members of the former leadership of the PSP may be suspected for having anti-Castro tendencies. The issue, however, boiled down to [assessing] the principles of the party life as well as the methods of work adopted by E. himself. Old communists from the current leadership think that E. had dogmatic tendencies. Their mistakes, [they are saying], were: [1]

they did not draw appropriate conclusions from his activities before they began to work on the organizational unification [PSP and “the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement”]; [2] their inability to combat internal conservatism; [3] and their underestimation of the actual role of the “26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement” in the revolutionary process and the qualities of the new generation of communists. At the same time, it seems that these issues have not met with an understanding of a certain part of the old party apparatus of the former PSP which would fully overlap with the former leadership.

- 2) The summary of the personnel changes [within the Cuban leadership]: the position of the old communists has weakened within the central leadership of the ORI (see our Claris 101). The reorganization of three provincial committees has already taken place. In two of the provinces, the positions of first secretaries were taken by the activists from the former PSP (but not [its] sympathizers – see our cable no. 124 [actually Ciphergram 4864]). There are two old activists from the former PSP ([Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez [Minister – President of] INRA [Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria de Cuba] and [Manuel] Luzardo [Minister of] Domestic Trade). Within the overall changes that have taken place until now, there are no signs of removing [old] communists; however, there is an overall trend of rejuvenating the party cadres in order to increase the work effectiveness. The process of personnel changes has not yet ended.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### **Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 28 May 1962**

Ciphergram No. 7922

Dispatched from Havana on 05.28.1962 at 20:30 and received at 05.29 at 06:25

Came to the Decoding Department at 05.29 at 09:30

To: [Director General Jerzy] MICHALOWSKI, Immediate, Very Urgent, Eyes Only

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>47</sup>

I had a talk with the USSR Ambassador [Sergey] Kudryavtsev today (at his place).

1. K.[udryavtsev] informed me that he was recalled [back to Moscow] to work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Cuban government had already granted an agreement to his successor [Aleksandr] Alekseyev. K. is leaving next Friday or Sunday and therefore he will not be able to pay farewell visits, but he said that he would pay a visit to Fidel [Castro] and [President Osvaldo] Dorticos [Torrado]. The new ambassador (who is currently in Moscow on an official visit) is to arrive on Friday along with an agricultural delegation which is headed by [Sharof] Rashidov (deputy member of the CPSU Presidium [and First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party]). Alekseyev has been here since 1959, initially as a press correspondent and subsequently as the employee of the embassy for the matters of national military defense. He was then a counselor for cultural affairs (within the internal system [of the Soviet] embassy this means a Third Councilor).

On the one hand, the sudden departure of K., and the selection of a new ambassador on the other, point to the fact that this change is not normal. At the same time, it is noteworthy that after the changes within the leadership of ORI [*Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas* took place] at the end of March, there were many Soviet measures which meant to show [Soviet] support for Castro's policy and strengthening of their economic aid.

2. K. informed me that he had a talk with the [Cuban] president regarding deliveries of coke, emphasizing the gravity of the situation in this area and its political significance. He [Kudryavtsev] insisted that the matters be taken care of with our involvement, that is, that 35 thousand tons of coal be delivered to Poland to be turned into 22 thousand tons of coke. K. notified me that he asked Moscow to make all efforts to help the Cuban side.
3. Overall, [although] K. emphasized his support for Fidel's policy, he expressed concern about the stagnation within the party organization and [possible] political repercussions connected with people's moods caused by food shortages. He assesses [that] US tactics [are] aimed at [creating] internal repercussions [that are brought about by] economic difficulties.

Received by: [...] <sup>48</sup>



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*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Foreign Ministry to Polish Embassy, Washington, 29 May 1962

Ciphergram No. 6543

Warsaw, 29 May 1962

URGENT

From: [Director General in the Foreign Ministry Przemysław] Ogrodziński<sup>49</sup>

To: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>50</sup> - WASHINGTON [D.C.]

- 1) [Foreign Minister Adam] Rapacki is going to make an official visit to Cuba. The communiqué will be announced sometime between 1 and 4 June.
- 2) Prior to the communiqué's announcement, and without informing about the visit, it is important that you (or [Marian] Dobrosielski<sup>51</sup>) meet and talk with either [President's Special Representative and Adviser on African, Asian, and Latin American Affairs, and Ambassador at Large Chester] Bowles or someone appropriate in the Department of State, for example, [Counselor and Chair of the Policy Planning Council Walt] Rostow, regarding Cuba. The conversation should be of an unofficial nature (you can ask your interlocutor for lunch) and it should be aimed at getting to know [your interlocutor's] views on the current attitude and intentions of the US towards Cuba. During the course of the conversation, while showing that the hitherto American policy has made it impossible to [maintain] normal relations between Cuba and the United States, as well as it has been hurting the position of the United States in Latin America, you can outright ask: "what exactly do you want from Cuba?" Of course, you need to understand that we are far from interested in heating up our discussion with the United States over Cuba at the moment.

Received by:

Comrade Rapacki

Comrade Winiewicz

Comrade Michalowski

Comrade Milnikiel

Comrade Krajewski

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 29 May 1962

Ciphergram No. 7980

Dispatched from Havana on 05.29.1962 at 12:30 and received at 05.29.1962 at 20:24

Came to the Decoding Department at 05.29.1962 at 23:00

To: [Director General Jerzy] MICHALOWSKI, URGENT, Eyes Only

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>52</sup>

Our [cable] 203.

- 1) Today's newspapers have published the information about the farewell visit of [Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Sergei Mikhailovich] Kudryavtsev with [President of Cuba Osvaldo] Dorticós [Torrado]. There is still no communiqué about the nomination of [Aleksandr] Alekseyev [for a new Soviet ambassador to Cuba].
- 2) The recall of K. coincides with the nomination of [Carlos] Olivares [Sanchez] to the position of the ambassador to Moscow. Although O. comes from the "26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement," he was closely connected with [Anibal] Escalante (who left for Moscow at the end of March of this year). There were allegedly suspicions here that the candidacy of O. will not be liked by the USSR. The most surprising is the selection of K. successor – this is rather unprecedented. Alekseyev as the [Soviet] embassy employee did not belong to the influential group and he always continued to maintain very close relations with [Anibal] Escalante. As of now, there are no commentaries regarding this issue. However, undoubtedly, there is dissonance. At the same time, one can see clear signs of strengthening economic aid for Cuba by the USSR (the

protocol of exchange of goods for 1962 has been seriously expanded; contracts for investment equipment; [Soviet] gifts in the area of medical equipment; and the gift of five fishing cutters [which] has not yet been published.

- 3) In connection with our cables 201 and 205, are we still keeping the dates of Rapacki's visit to Cuba? I am to see [Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa [García] either tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. Please send me your response regarding this matter (The new deputy foreign minister who replaced [Carlos] Olivares [Sanchez] is Professor Pelegrin Torras, an old communist activist.)

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droźniak), 1 June 1962

Ciphergram No. 8175

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 06.01.1962 at 18:30 and received on 06.02.1962 at 7:30

Came to the Decoding Department on 06.02.1962 at 7:30  
To: [Director General in the Foreign Ministry Przemysław] Ogrodziński,<sup>53</sup> URGENT  
From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>54</sup>

[This is a reply to] your cable no. 6543 [based on the information we received] from [Charles E. "Chip"] Bohlen/<sup>55</sup>

- 1) Cuba has been currently removed from the list of priorities of US foreign policy. The development of events in Cuba, [which have been taking place] since the end of March of this year, has been less concerning for them than the previous situation. They have definitely given up the US military intervention and other violent [armed] attacks on Cuba, [because] they would only contribute to Cuba's prestige. They are counting on the fact that many kinds of difficulties, especially the economic ones, will force Cuba into making further changes in their hitherto policies and will eventually lead to [Fidel] Castro's fall. In his [Bohlen's] opinion, [although] no fundamental change has taken place as far as the [US] attitude towards

Cuba [is concerned], there has been a change in [US] tactics [towards Cuba] instead. Cuba continues to be potentially a location which can at any time become a main point of interest [for the United States] (this assessment made by Bohlen has been reflected [in the following]: other talks [we have conducted on the issue of Cuba?]; the [American] press' attitude which has been publishing very little on the subject of Cuba for the past few weeks; and [the US] attempts to move Cuban refugees to different parts of the United States instead of concentrating all of them in Miami.

- 2) B.[ohlen] confirms the content of the talks between [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk and [Soviet Ambassador Anatoly] Dobrynin, which we reported in our cable no. 460. The Americans are assessing that the USSR is not currently in any hurry to resolve the issue of Berlin. When it comes to a next meeting [between the Americans and the Soviets], they will wait for a Soviet initiative. B.[ohlen] thinks that the issue of Berlin will continue to constitute the most important element in [US] relations with the USSR and once this issue is taken care of, then they could come to an agreement [with the Soviets] in many other areas.

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Received by: [...] <sup>56</sup>

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 13 June 1962

Ciphergram No. 8791

Dispatched from Havana on 06.13.1962 at 9:30 and received at 06.13.1962 at 17:00

Came to the Decoding Department at 06.13.1962 at 17:10  
To: [Deputy Foreign Minister Jozef] WINIEWICZ, Very Urgent, For Immediate Delivery  
From: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

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Prensa Latina is reporting that a decision has been made regarding equipping the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany] in atomic weapons. Report immediately how it is looking, because [this information] would change the whole concept of my statement today, as well as the talks regarding the communiqué and my visit.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 13 June 1962

Ciphergam No. 8822

Dispatched from Havana on 06.13.1962 at 22:20 and received at 06.14 at 04:53

Came to the Decoding Department at 06.14 at 10:00

To: [First Secretary of Polish United Workers' Party Wladyslaw] GOMULKA, Immediate, Eyes Only

From: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

[This report is based on] the meeting with the Secretariat of ORI [*Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas*].<sup>57</sup> [The following] were present: Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, [President Osvaldo] Dorticos [Torrado], Blas Roca, [and Emilio] Aragones [Navarro]. [Che] Guevara is out of town.

1. In the manner of warmhearted honesty, [Fidel] Castro complained about a certain [level of] cooling in our mutual relations. He thinks that we do not appreciate the specificity [of] their [situation]. He expressed his warmest wishes to strengthen [our] contacts. I thanked him for his honesty and said that indeed we also sensed their cool attitude towards us. I did my best to explain things (given that I had no concrete facts). I agreed that our relations should be strengthened so we can get to know each other better.
2. He broached the general issues of coordinating sugar trade and very extensive plans to expand the[ir] fishing industry. I said that I would look into the possibilities of offering our assistance, especially in the area of providing specialists.

3. He was interested in the details of our policy toward the church.
4. He talked about their agricultural policy: at the moment the most important thing is production, the pacification of rich peasants, they are carrying out collectivization progressively, but very carefully; state farms are buying out lands in exchange for old-age pensions. They are also sporadically organizing their cooperatives. I have presented briefly our own experience in this area.
5. [Questions like] "Can and should the party replace the state apparatus" were [clearly] the allusions to the most current topic of the Escalante affair<sup>58</sup> [which is on their minds]. I presented our experience, which confirmed Castro's position and that of a non-dogmatic faction of the former Communist Party.
6. While saying goodbye, I also reiterated that I hoped that the situation in Cuba would improve in the near future and that he [Fidel Castro] will be able to take advantage of your [Gomulka's] invitation to Poland.
7. We established that we would only have a short mention in the press [of our visit to Cuba]. After a few hours, Blas Roca (a former member of the Communist Party) arrived and presented the content of their communiqué to be included in the press. We will send the text via claris through the Polish Press Agency; here are our observations based on the knowledge we acquired here:
  - a. They are using our experience<sup>59</sup> as an example [in resolving] the conflict with the proponents of Escalante.
  - b. The pacification of the peasantry [is taking place in Cuba].
  - c. They are publicly emphasizing the rapprochement with our party as the most palatable [lit. "digestable"], especially in Latin America.

I did not think that it was necessary to introduce any corrections to their text, which was, after all, treated as "unilateral" information for the press. They are releasing it immediately. I think that we should also publish it extensively. I am sending my proposition via PAP [Polish Press Agency].

Received by: [...] <sup>60</sup>

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264,*

*Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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**Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 15 June 1962**

Ciphergram No. 8941

Dispatched from Havana on 06.15.1962 at 22:20 and received at 06.15 at 20:15

Came to the Decoding Department at 06.15 at 23:35

To: [Deputy Foreign Minister Jozef], WINIEWICZ, Urgent

From: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

In light of the party communique and a great response following an entire visit here in Cuba, we should encourage our press to give full weight to the visit. The [Cuban] response [we received] to the strengthening of the campaign of our visit, [especially] towards the end, will be really beneficial to us all over the world. We easily agreed on the communique. In my opinion, it is good. The German issue<sup>61</sup> [in the communique] has been clearly muffled due to their [Cuba's] relations with the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany]. Their support [for us regarding the German issue], which was after all declared on several occasions, will not brighten things up for us and it can only make things more difficult for them. We agreed that the communique will be published on Sunday morning.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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**Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 14 September 1962**

Ciphergram No. 13698

Dispatched from Havana on 09.14.1962 at 13:10 and received on 09.15.1962 at 15:12

Came to the Decoding Department at 09.15.1962 at 16:00

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI<sup>62</sup>

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>63</sup>I conducted a

conversation with [Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa [García] on 9 September.

1. I have generally informed him about the visits of [UN Secretary General] U Thant<sup>64</sup> and [Britain's Leader of the Labour Party Opposition Hugh Todd Naylor] Gaitskell,<sup>65</sup> and especially the aspects of the conversations pertaining to Cuba (see Your Cable No. 10835). It did not seem from our conversation that he had received this information from [Cuban Ambassador to Poland?] Perez. Roa informed me, within the context of our conversation regarding U Thant, that they were expecting his visit sometime in January [1963].
2. R. informed me that as for now he did not expect to attend the UN session. [He said that] he would only go if the process of the session required his presence. They are not expecting to bring up the Cuban issue at the session (if the events demand this, then they will bring up the matter at the [U.N.] Security Council). They are asking, however, that the delegations of friendly [socialist] nations bring up the issue of the threat to Cuba at the general debate by emphasizing that a path to solving the contentious issues should be resolved through bilateral negotiations between the United States and Cuba. They turned to all of the socialist countries regarding this matter. Their delegation has instructions to remain in close contact with the delegations of the socialist countries. They were informed that the United Arab Republic [Egypt] would broach the issue of adopting this solution during the general debate [at the U.N.]. Other countries of the Casablanca group<sup>66</sup> will also support this proposition. They have turned to countries of Latin America, [asking them] to bring up the issue of adhering to the principle of non-intervention.
3. R. expressed his view that the Soviet declaration [made on 11 September 1962]<sup>67</sup> removes, [at least] for now, the threat of a more serious military action against Cuba. It did not seem from our conversation that he had any more knowledge of the prospects of conducting [an] unofficial conference of foreign ministers of American nations.
4. [This part of my report has been compiled based on] my conversations with colleagues from the diplomatic corps (of socialist countries) whom I was able to see. These conversations point to the fact that the Cuban leadership possessed information that very serious preparations were in the making as far as a military action [against Cuba]. A series of Western diplomats were also to

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share the opinion of such a possibility. The Hungarian [ambassador, János Beck] is saying that that in his conversation with the charge d'affaires of the nunciature [the Vatican], [the interlocutor] very sharply condemned the adventurousness of the United States [regarding Cuba]. From the same sources it seems that the Cuban leadership thinks that, following the Soviet declaration, there is currently a possibility that a series of attempts by isolated and heavy marine landings, [which are] aimed at unleashing a series of internal hotspots of the armed struggle [could take place].

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 22 September 1962

Ciphergram No. 14090

Dispatched from Havana on 09.22.1962 at 14:00 and received on 09.23.1962 at 14:04

Came to the Decoding Department at 09.23.1962 at 17:40

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI,<sup>68</sup> EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>69</sup>

1. [This report has been compiled based on my] conversation with the USSR Ambassador [Aleksandr] Alekseyev:
  - a. A.[lekseyev] assesses that the Soviet declaration from the 11<sup>th</sup> of this month<sup>70</sup> removed the danger of a more serious [US] military action [against Cuba]. At the same time, he takes into account the possibility of the attempts of staging subversive landings, as well as the possibility of activities [carried out] by Cuban emigrant pirates against the ships. According to Alekseyev, the declaration was made because of the information [which was] presented [to them] by Cuba, indicating concrete facts that preparations were being made [to carry out] a serious military action against Cuba. Perhaps these facts were exaggerated. However, the basis for concern existed. [Alekseyev] also implied [intimated] that

this declaration was aimed at, among other things, strengthening the tendencies of [conducting] a sensible approach towards the Cuban problem which are present in the Kennedy administration.

- b. Alekseyev assesses the internal situation [in Cuba] with great optimism. He is rather minimizing the extent of internal difficulties. He is promising a serious increase in the Soviet economic aid and large deliveries of food, which are to achieve the last year's level of food supply. Not balancing the trade with the USSR is to achieve \$ 230 million USD, that is, over 30 million more than it was forecast.
2. Western diplomats generally take into account the possibility of a strengthened subversive action. They are expressing concern about the anti-Cuban history in the United States. They assess that the Cuban question received the level of significance [which is] equal to other problems that decide the future of world peace. [As far as the current state of affairs], the English [ambassador, Herbert Stanley Marchant] mainly sees the consequences of a flawed policy conducted by the United States [towards Cuba].
3. The reaction of [the Cuban] society to the Soviet declaration is being mainly expressed in organized assemblies and demonstrations. Even though the concern that a direct threat may have diminished, the level of anxiety of the Cuban society has entered into a permanent state which is living on a powder keg. The emigration tendencies continue to be on the rise (they are talking about [undertaking] administrative measures on how to stop the emigration wave). There is no significant change in the moods towards the USSR. One can still note signs regarding the reticence towards foreigners (who are usually perceived as Russians or Czechs); this attitude is especially caused by the difficulties in food shortages and thus far lack of direct impact on the market brought about by the economic aid. The activities of the PRC embassy have recently been very limited.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*





## Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 28 September 1962

Ciphergram No. 14427

Dispatched from Havana on 09.28.1962 at 19:00 and received at 09.29.1962 at 14:30

Came to the Decoding Department at 09.29.1962 at 16:30

To: [Director General Jerzy] MICHALOWSKI

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>71</sup>

[Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa [García] called me in today and informed me about the following:

1. [President Osvaldo] Dorticós [Torrado] will leave on Wednesday for the UN Session in order to make a statement during the general debate. R. will assist him. The pronouncement of Dorticós is expected for 8 October. The communiqué, which is to announce the participation of Dorticós in the [UN] Session, will be published on 1 October. D. wants to conduct talks in New York with the chairman of the delegation of the socialist countries. R. asked that we relay this information to Comrade [Foreign Minister Adam] Rapacki. They are predicting that meetings with some Afro-Asian and Latin American delegations will also take place. They are also predicting that a meeting with the chairman of the Yugoslav delegation will take place. While taking this opportunity, R. also remarked that their relations with Yugoslavia have improved. [Soviet official Leonid Ilyich] Brezhnev's trip [to Yugoslavia in late September and early October, 1962]<sup>72</sup> is making the whole process easier and they will further continue to improve their relations [with Yugoslavia]. (B. trip was covered in a special commentary in "Hoy" [major Cuban newspaper and the organ of the Communist Party of Cuba] which reminds one of the visit of [President] Dorticós in Yugoslavia last year on the occasion of the Belgrade Conference.<sup>73</sup> [The commentary also] points to the positive composition of the Yugoslav delegation "headed by President Tito" during the conference and its great participation in pushing through the resolution supporting, among other things, the rights of Cuba.
2. The departure of Dorticós is justified by the hitherto process of the general debate in which, thanks to [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko's pronouncement, the Cuban question has gained much attention. They are assessing that the proper understanding of the Cuban

question is deeper than last year. The pronouncement of the delegations of Latin American nations, with whom they maintained contacts, were taking into account defending the principle of non-intervention, something that corresponds with Cuba's wishes. As far as this aspect, they are positively assessing the pronouncements of Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, even though it was only Brazil which mentioned Cuba. Cuba did not make any special efforts, however, [to see] that their name be mentioned. They think that Bolivia's approach was good. They are now awaiting the statements of Mexico. There are serious chances that the United Arab Republic [Egypt] and the countries belonging to the Casablanca group will introduce a resolution, calling on the United States and Cuba to begin bilateral talks in order to solve their contentious issues. Cuba is supporting these tendencies and it will aspire to achieve wider support among Afro-Asian nations, especially among the participants of the Belgrade Conference.

3. The government is currently discussing the draft of the response to the resolution in the US Congress regarding Cuba. The declaration regarding this issue will be published on the 30<sup>th</sup> of this month.
4. As to my question regarding the overall situation, R. assessed that currently there was no danger of [US] military aggression against Cuba. (C.R. Rodriguez, with whom I had a lengthy talk today, assessed the situation in a similar manner. [I will send the report from this conversation] separately.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



## Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droźniak), 18 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15383

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.18.1962 at 15:00 and received on 10.19.1962 at 2:00

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.19.1962 at 2:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNICKI<sup>74</sup>

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŹNIAK<sup>75</sup>

Our [cable] 786.

[US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk focused on [discussing] the history of Soviet-American relations over the past years... They [the United States] are not going to cause bloodshed in Cuba. Undertaking a [military] invasion against Cuba, without an open act of aggression on the Cuban side, would mean that the United States could find itself isolated among its allies... When asked about the rumors regarding the possibility of the alleged mediation between the United States and Cuba [to be carried out by the Algerian revolutionary leader Ahmed] Ben Bella, he stated that it was not an option.<sup>76</sup> They will wait for a change in the Cuban government and for Cuba to break political and military ties with the USSR. He denied rumors that there was ever a connection made between Berlin and Cuba in his conversation with [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko.<sup>77</sup> Cuba cannot be bargained for either for Berlin or for the [military] bases in Turkey.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droznia), 18 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15384

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.18.1962 at 16:00 and received on 10.19.1962 at 2:00

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.19.1962 at 2:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL<sup>78</sup>

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>79</sup>

Our [cable] 786.

[This report has been compiled based on] the statements made by Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs [Edwin M.] Martin:

They [the Americans] are well-informed, especially about the military situation in Cuba. They [the Cubans] do not possess missiles which are able to deliver nuclear weapons. The [US] administration believes that the USSR does not want [to unleash] a [world] war over Cuba, or even begin such a war in Cuba. The USSR has been opposed to providing China with nuclear weapons for years [and therefore] all the more it will not provide Cuba with such weapons.

The military aid issued to Cuba is insignificant. The level of Cuban economy is twenty-five percent lower than prior to the period when [Fidel] Castro came to power. Cuba is currently much more dependent economically on the USSR than it was previously dependent on the United States. They are not expecting a quick collapse of [the] Castro [regime]. The situation in Cuba, in light of Castro's open declaration of Cuba's dependence on Moscow, is a big blow to communism in Latin America. The United States is going to continue to fully isolate Cuba, among other things, by exerting further pressure on the nations of Latin America. [The United States] is closely following the developments in Cuba.

Currently, they are excluding the possibility of a military invasion or a complete blockade of Cuba [because this] could be considered as an act of war by the USSR. A military action in Cuba could cause a military action in Berlin. They are not going to recognize a [Cuban] government-in-exile either. They are counting on an emergence of the opposition government in Cuba. If they recognized the [Cuban] government-in-exile, they would lose their rights to their [military] bases in Guantanamo. There are about two hundred Cuban immigration groups which are all different and at odds with one another. There are those among them who would like to start a war between the United States and the USSR.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droznia), 20 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15522

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.2[0].1962 at 13:00 and received on 10.21.1962 at 00:10

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.21.1962 at 00:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL,<sup>80</sup> EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>81</sup>

Our [cable] 786.

...

2. [This information has been compiled based on the statements of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs William R.] Tyler: The aim of the United States is to

avoid a total nuclear war. They are focusing on the production of missile defense weapons. They are foreseeing that in the near future all of the bombers will be fully eliminated. Presumably, China will constitute the gravest danger in the next ten years. They are getting ready to use tactical nuclear weapons in case of the conflicts in Asia. This will not be as dangerous as using such weapons in Europe. They are not planning a [military] invasion of Cuba, [because] this would require a much greater effort than last year.<sup>82</sup>

3. [This information has been compiled based on the statements of Ambassador at Large, Department of State, Llewellyn E.] Thompson:<sup>83</sup> [Joseph V.] Stalin was a cynic. [Soviet leader Nikita S.] Khrushchev is “a flexible believer in Marxism.” During the last year of Thompson’s stay in the Soviet Union [as ambassador, from July 1961-July 1962] the pace of change, which began since the death of Stalin [in 1953], has clearly accelerated. The much stronger [Soviet] support for Cuba can be dated to Khrushchev’s visit to Beijing.<sup>84</sup> The Cuban ambassador [stationed] in Moscow was much more interested in Beijing and wanted to be transferred there. It is easier for the USSR to provide military than economic aid to Cuba, because they possess a lot of outdated military equipment. When asked about Khrushchev’s opinion regarding Kennedy, he said: “Khrushchev envies Kennedy his youth. He realizes that there is not much time left for him to carry out the goals he set out for himself. He changed his opinion of Kennedy after their meeting in Vienna [in June 1961]. Kennedy made a strong impression on him; he treats him now as a serious politician and a partner.”

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### **Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droźniak), 23 October 1962**

Ciphergram No. 15622

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.23.1962 at 22:30 and received on 10.24.1962 at 7:50

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.24.1962 at 8:05

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL,<sup>85</sup>  
EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŹNIAK<sup>86</sup>

[This information has been compiled based on my conversation with Charles] Bartlett (a journalist who has befriended president [John F.] Kennedy):

- 1) Bartlett thinks that Kennedy was shocked by intelligence information, which reached the Republican senators already on the 14<sup>th</sup> of this month, that is, a week before they reached him. [Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko and [Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly] Dobrynin were to make assurances that Cuba received only surface-to-air missiles with a range of 30 miles. But, “the revolver was placed to America’s head.”
- 2) According to Bartlett, the climate of trust, which has been emerging between Kennedy and Khrushchev, was ruined just like the game played by the Japanese prior to the [attacks] on Pearl Harbor [on 7 December 1941]. The steps [to address the crisis, e.g., the “quarantine” of Cuba], which [President] Kennedy announced [on Monday, 22 October], will be implemented in the atmosphere of a great pressure [stemming] from the public opinion.
- 3) The kind of missile bases [which have been installed by the Soviets] on Cuba was a shock to the [US] administration, [especially] following the Soviet declarations which have been made repeatedly on numerous occasions. [Fidel] Castro received many more modern missiles than [the Soviet] allies in the Warsaw Pact.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### **Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 24 October 1962**

Ciphergram No. 15721

Dispatched from Havana on 10.24.1962 at 21:20

Received on 10.25.1962 at 13:04

Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.25.1962 at 16:30

To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI<sup>87</sup>, Urgent

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>88</sup>

Based on the conversations with:

- 1) The Soviet ambassador [Aleksandr Alekseyev] is optimistic.
  - a. When discussing his country's position, he emphasized that doors towards negotiations should not be closed. He sees a possibility of counteraction, among other places, in Berlin. He also sees opening some kind of a way out for the United States.
  - b. He thinks that Cuba's defensive capabilities are currently sufficient. There is no need for new deliveries.
  - c. He assumes that the Soviet ships, if they are forced to do so, will have to submit to inspection in order to continue. These inspections, however, will have a negative political effect for the United States (he states that this is only his personal opinion).
  - d. He personally thinks that the tensions will subside after the presidential [sic; mid-term Congressional] elections in the United States.
  - e. He is not hiding his dissatisfaction with the Sino-Indian developments.
- 2) The Brazilian ambassador [Luis Bastian Pinto] is concerned. He continues to point to the increase in tensions of the elections in the United States.
- 3) [The opinions of] various Cubans. The mobilization continues in a normal manner. There is no internal disorder.
- 4) My impressions. There's a relative run on the stores, but without any signs of panic and fears of the threat of military operations.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Paszkowski), 24 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15677

Dispatched from Moscow on 24.10.1962 at 16:00

Received on 24.10.1962 at 19:40

Came into the Deciphering Department on 24.10.1962 at 20:00

To: [Foreign Ministry Director General Maria] WIERNIA, URGENT, EYES ONLY

From: PASZKOWSKI

Based on Cieslak's conversations with the board members of *Pravda* (10.24 at noon):

1. When the initial information arrived regarding the heated consultations in Washington, the [Soviet] comrades believed that this was a typical pre-election bluff. Therefore, when Kennedy made the statement it was both a surprise and a wake-up call.
2. All of the interlocutors generally agree that even if the conflict were to take place based on individual encounters then one could isolate [localize] it. This subtext will be included in the materials prepared for publication in the press for tomorrow. They think that the Americans will not shoot, but instead "block the road" and impose arrests.
3. The Soviet ships were given orders to continue moving towards Cuba. It takes 2-3 days to get to Cuba and therefore tonight it will be the first time for the Soviet ships to "come in contact with Kennedy's orders carried out in practice."
4. They are receiving information from all over the country [Soviet Union] about the calm and disciplined attitudes of the Soviet people. They will not exacerbate the tensions more than necessary. *Pravda* intentionally emphasized Khrushchev's presence at the opera during the visit of the Romanian delegation.
5. They are expecting that the Chinese will exacerbate tensions. "They will triumph." The conflict in Cuba, however, will not have any serious consequences when it

comes to the moods of the more conservative part of the society or the party apparatus.

Received by the following comrades: [...] <sup>89</sup>

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 25 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15747

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.25.1962 at 17:50 and received on 10.25.1962 at 21:30

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.26.1962 at 00:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL <sup>90</sup>

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK <sup>91</sup>

There have been some signs of a certain calm in Washington [D.C.] today. However, there are various and numerous rumors, as well as the information [we have been getting], which are all hard to verify. One of our embassies <sup>92</sup> has been repeating [the following information] after the West German journalists: during the period of preparation for a ruckus [*awantura*], [US Attorney General] Robert Kennedy was allegedly in favor of an immediate invasion [of Cuba], while [Chief of Staff General Maxwell D.] Taylor was against it. The President [John F. Kennedy] chose to act by taking the middle ground. We do not know, however, whether his decision does not [constitute] a preliminary step towards the invasion [of Cuba], which could take place as a result of some kind of a drastic move made by the Soviet Union. The ambassador of Argentina does not believe in either the possibility of an invasion or even the fact that preparations are being made for such an invasion. [At the same time,] many people are pointing to the fact that the concentration of [US] military forces and [amphibious] landing equipment continue to be made against Cuba in various locations. There is a renewed rumor, [which comes] from the same source as the previous rumor, that an invasion [of Cuba] could take place, but this time such an invasion has allegedly been scheduled for next Monday.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312,*

*Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 26 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15809

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.26.1962 at 14:00 and received on 10.27.1962 at 8:30

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.27.1962 at 8:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL <sup>93</sup>

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK <sup>94</sup>

The following assessment of the United States' position can be made based on the conversations with [foreign] diplomats and some more respected journalists:

- 1) The operation of installing the [Soviet] missiles in Cuba was carried out in great hurry, without special adherence to secrecy, and perhaps even with the awareness that the missiles would be discovered relatively quickly. This [fact] has been interpreted [by the Americans] as [a possible] attempt by the USSR to test Kennedy's "will and readiness to fight." [Soviet leader Nikita S.] Khrushchev chose Cuba, because he considered Berlin to be too dangerous. It was also claimed here that Khrushchev, regardless of the abovementioned motive, intended to secure the additional bargaining advantage for the talks with [President] Kennedy at the end of November. In his decisions, Kennedy took a serious risk by counting on the fact that he could surprise the USSR and cause it to react nervously in other parts of the globe. [President Kennedy hoped that such Soviet actions could then] justify his future invasion of Cuba or cause the USSR to back down once faced with a prestigious [high-profile] confrontation. [However], the reaction of the USSR, which has been generally considered as a "responsible" one, thwarted these plans. The domestic situation of the United States, and the ongoing election campaign, were also a serious, although a secondary, factor in influencing [President] Kennedy's decision.
- 2) Despite the statement [made by US Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai] Stevenson in the UN Security Council (some of the journalists believe that by favorably



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talking about the Soviet reaction, he went further in his statement than the instructions allowed), there is an opinion that the Americans will not end the [naval] blockade until all of the missiles are disassembled in Cuba. In any case, they will not give up the blockade unless some other form of inspection is established. It is also claimed that Kennedy got so deeply invested in the issue that now he has no choice but to liquidate the base<sup>95</sup> in Cuba in any form and shape, so he can bomb them, including even [launching] an invasion.

- 3) There have been pressures exerted on Kennedy, especially from the Republicans (among others [Senator Everett McKinley] Dirksen), not to agree to a summit meeting on Cuba; there have also been pressures on the President from the far Right, demanding an immediate invasion [of Cuba]. [At the same time,] there have been other tendencies emerging among the intellectual circles, pacifist organizations, and partially among the youth, which oppose Kennedy's policy. However, the majority of [the American] society has shown its support for Kennedy's policy (the White House, among other institutions here, informed that it received about fifty thousand letters, favoring Kennedy's policy in the ratio of 22:1). The concentration of military forces and preparations for an invasion continue to take place in Florida. There is also an opinion that the stand of the USSR is impeding Kennedy's further adventurousness, as well as it is making him seek a way out through negotiations.

Received by: [...] <sup>96</sup>

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 26 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15815

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.26.1962 at 23:00 and received on 10.27.1962 at 7:25

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.27.1962 at 7:30

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL<sup>97</sup>

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>98</sup>

[This information has been compiled based on] a reliable source: yesterday at a confidential meeting with some of the leading journalists, [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk allegedly has said:

- 1) The latest statements of journalists, [claiming] that the relaxation of tensions of the overall political situation has allegedly taken place, do not correspond with reality. The situation continues to be serious.
- 2) The news and speculations in the press (including those of [the political commentator Walter] Lip[p]man[n] among others) that a possibility of reaching an agreement [between the United States and the Soviet Union] by means of simultaneously liquidating the bases in Cuba and, for example, in Turkey has allegedly surfaced, is not true. The issue of the liquidation of the bases on a foreign territory can be discussed later only within the framework of discussions on the question of the general disarmament.

Received by: [...] <sup>99</sup>

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Paszkowski), 27 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15890

Dispatched from Moscow on 27.10.1962 at 17:00

Received on 27.10.1962 at 18:45

Came into the Deciphering Department on 27.10.1962 at 22:50

To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

From: PASZKOWSKI

Supplement to our [cable] 536.

[First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vasili Vasilyevich] Kuznetsov assessed the [UN] resolution of Ghana and the United Arab Republic [Egypt] as kind of a band-aid, but one that nevertheless is significant. On the other hand, he considers the statement of the Afro-Asian nations as both good and

strong. He also thinks that the atmosphere in the UN does not favor the United States. The pressure from the neutral nations on the United States is strong. If the consultations do not bring any results, then [UN Secretary General] U Thant is prepared to move the issue regarding the [current] crisis to the General Assembly and to bring about a vote on the resolution [prepared] by the United Arab Republic. U Thant is convinced that many will vote in favor of the resolution, maybe even the majority. According to Kuznetsov, U Thant's intentions are bringing about some results. The tone of [US Ambassador to UN Adlai] Stevenson's [statements] has changed somewhat.<sup>100</sup> One should not exclude the possibility, however, that [President John F.] Kennedy could move towards making more provocations under the pressure of the most reactionary circles. The United States is looking for strong and convincing reasons that would allow it to directly carry out the invasion of Cuba. At this time, however, it is not that easy to find such reasons. At the same time, Kuznetsov emphasized that the situation continues to be dangerous and that under no circumstances can we relax.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 27 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15909

From Havana dispatched on 10.27.1962 at 18:00  
Received on 10.27 [28?].1962 at 13:35  
Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.27 [28?].1962 at 16:00  
To: KRAJEWSKI, Urgent, EYES ONLY  
From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>101</sup>

(27.10 at 22 GMT)

1. We only have some fragmentary information regarding Khrushchev's propositions (Cuba-Turkey). This would result in actual recognition of the change in the status quo of the deployment of strategic weapons. We don't have the Cuban reaction as of yet. There are signs of much confusion and anxiety. They are taking, quite

seriously, the possibility of the bombings of military facilities. Some of our colleagues from the socialist countries (I did not see [Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Aleksandr] Alekseyev) think so, too. They also think that the point of the Chinese proposition was to demand the guarantees of recognizing the actual status of Cuba in exchange for disassembling new military installations. The overall opinion, however, is that the decision [on how to solve the crisis] is currently beyond that of Cuba and therefore there is much anticipation as to the Cuban reaction related to this issue.

2. The significant development is today's communique about "unidentified" planes that entered the Cuban airspace but which were "chased out" by the Cuban air force. We do not have any details. Our information has not been verified about an alleged shooting down of a U-2 plane in a different region of Cuba.
3. The Hungarian ambassador [János Beck] is relaying the following based on his conversation with [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez on the 24<sup>th</sup> (after Fidel's speech) in which Rodriguez expressed the position of a possible acceptance of UN inspections and disassembling some of the military installations under the condition of obtaining a guarantee for Cuba provided by both the United States and the Soviet Union. Rodriguez also told the Hungarian ambassador that the Cuban ambassador in Beijing [Pino Santos] received a copy of the PRC's note to the USSR in which it was stated that not giving access to nuclear weapons to the allies was contrary to the spirit of [communist] internationalism.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droznia), 27 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15912

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.27.1962 at 20:50 and received on 10.28.1962 at 17:10  
Came to the Decoding Department on 10.28.1962 at 17:15  
To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL,<sup>102</sup>

EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>103</sup>

[This information has been compiled based on my] conversation with [an American journalist and syndicated columnist] J.[oseph] Alsop:

The opinion prevails in the White House, the Pentagon, and the CIA that the operation of installing the missile bases in Cuba was carried out in order to change the strategic balance of power to the advantage of the USSR before further steps (either by means of negotiations or an outright military attack) were taken in Berlin. They are not sure whether they [the leaders] in the Soviet Union realized that the missiles could be so quickly discovered and so thoroughly photographed. [President John F.] Kennedy has been prepared for the past several months to act on his own without prior consultations with his allies in case a more serious conflict [erupted]. They think that the current decision made by Kennedy does not leave any doubt in [the minds of the leaders in] the USSR that the United States is prepared to carry out the job by means of an armed engagement, including a nuclear one. Despite the pressures, Kennedy is determined to maintain a moderate attitude and he is determined not to undertake any actions that could clearly be provocative. He has to carry out a quick liquidation of the [missile] bases in Cuba, because he started this process publicly [openly] and he is prepared to do it by using various means.

In case the process of the expansion of the bases continues in Cuba, then the following options are taken into consideration: a total naval and air blockade; an ultimatum issued to Cuba, threatening to bomb the installations of these missiles; and an invasion. The latter possibility is, in his [Alsop's] opinion, least realistic.

[President Kennedy] will strive, more than ever, to overthrow [Fidel] Castro. Most of all, they [Americans] are counting on a coup d'état [in Cuba]. Kennedy does not even allow for the possibility of holding a bilateral summit meeting on Cuba. After the [missile] bases in Cuba are liquidated, he is prepared to regulate, among other things, the issue of eliminating the US [military] bases in Turkey and Italy. From the military point of view, these bases are useless to the United States. Similar bases in England are already in the process of being disassembled. The Soviet reaction up until this point has been assessed as one which is moderate [*łagodna*] and which allows for various possibilities [to reach a] peaceful solution. Kennedy also ensures, and will continue to ensure, that the current situation does not end up in a stalemate.

They do not understand the causes of China's attack on India,<sup>104</sup> but this development of events suits them very well.

In case India turns to them for help, they will consider such a request with sympathy, but they will take their time.

Received by the Political Bureau [Politburo], Czesak, Bordzilowski, Korczynski, Wicha, Moczar, Milnikiel, Krajewski, Siedlecki, Polish Embassy in New Delhi

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 28 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15943

Dispatched from Havana on 10.28.1962 at 10:00

Received on 10.29.1962 at 13:05

Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.29.1962 at 11:00

To: KRAJEWSKI, Urgent, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>105</sup>

(10.28 21 GMT)

1) The press published the full text of Khrushchev's letter from the 27<sup>th</sup>, as well as the summary of Kennedy's reply from the same day. U Thant's letter from the 26<sup>th</sup> and Castro's reply from the 27<sup>th</sup> [were also published]. We know the rest of the information only from the radio broadcasts from abroad. It seems that the solution that is emerging from the letters, as well as Soviet and American statements, would in essence mean a significant progress towards creating an international status of today's Cuba. Kennedy's readiness to give guarantees of not invading Cuba, and expressing the conviction about the readiness of other countries from the [Western] hemisphere for such a move and allowing for a principle of international understanding to permanently solve the Cuban problem, should, in principle, give the Cuban side a far reaching atonement. We do not have any commentaries thus far and the headlines in the press are very cautious. I think that Fidel will submit to UN inspections.

2) [My comments regarding] the text of today's communique by the Cuban government which was sent to the Polish Press Agency (PAP): "Out of five conditions posed by the Cubans the one which can significantly exacerbate the situation is the condition regarding the liquidation of the

[American] base in Guantanamo. However, the conditions posed by the Cubans were made after the decision of the USSR to withdraw the Soviet military installations. Cuban conditions may be calculated in order to show that Cuba participated in making the decision. This is all in addition to a very troublesome situation for Castro caused by Khrushchev's statement that the only caretaker of the new military installations is the USSR. The interpretation of the condition regarding Guantanamo can however boil down to the Cuban definition made until now, that is, that this is the only one which is recognized by international law. It is also worth mentioning that today's communique by Fidel announced that Cuba would open fire on military planes that violate Cuban air space.["]

3) According to unverified, but credible information, [Brazil's President João Goulart] is said to have had a telephone conversation with Castro on the 22<sup>nd</sup> soon after Kennedy's statement. [Goulart is to have] insisted that Cuba accept inspections and suggested that Castro have a full authority to decide the composition of the inspections. Castro is said to have decisively rejected even the thought of the inspection. Allegedly, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa is said to have come out with a request to the Brazilian government for Brazil to use its influence in order to solve the crisis.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### **Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 29 October 1962**

Ciphergram No. 15952

Dispatched from Moscow on 29.10.1962 at 18:00

Received on 29.10.1962 at 16:50

Came into the Deciphering Department on 29.10.1962 at 19:20

To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI, EYES ONLY

From: JASZCZUK<sup>106</sup>

Upon my return, I paid a visit to [Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai] Firyubin. Here are some important points:

He did not have much to add to the already published statements made by Khrushchev. He believes that they will serve as the basis to eliminate tensions and to protect Cuba

from [American] aggression. Based on [Soviet Ambassador to the US Anatoly] Dobrynin's information, it looks like Kennedy does not doubt Khrushchev's statements. When I mentioned that there were no clear guarantees of Cuba's security provided by Kennedy, Firyubin replied that in their [US-Soviet?] conversations that will take into consideration propositions that were put forth by F[idel] Castro.

When I asked about how the issue of eliminating the military bases in Turkey looked like, Firyubin answered that this problem has not left the daily agenda. He stressed that it was no accident that the issue of the military bases in Turkey was not mentioned in the statement made by Khrushchev on 28 October.

Carrying out this action takes some time and is connected with the issue of NATO-Warsaw Pact put forth by Kennedy. The issue of the Guantanamo Bay will surely constitute one of the points of detailed conversations. Firyubin is aware of difficulties connected with fully securing Cuba given the stormy moods in the Pentagon. Firyubin thinks that this fact, that is, that these events are not taking place after the elections, inhibits Kennedy's actions, but that after the elections the common sense will deepen within the US governing circles. As to the summit meeting, the USSR is not exerting any pressure in this direction, but there are those in the USSR who believe that talks at the highest levels are beneficial. The issue of a summit meeting is only a matter of time. The English, according to Firyubin, are feeling dissatisfied because they "were excluded from the game." Firyubin is fully convinced that the recent developments are in favor of the USSR and our countries and that the first goal (Kennedy's statement renouncing the US aggression against Cuba) has already been achieved. Firyubin thinks that the shooting down of the American U-2 plane by the Cubans should slow down the talks between [First Deputy Foreign Minister] Kuznetsov and [US Secretary of State Dean] Rusk.

Concerning the Sino-Indian border issue, he actually did not have much to say. He showed some concern. He thinks that the US does not want to get involved in the problem. Undoubtedly, SEATO is benefiting much from this event when it comes to spreading their propaganda. According to Firyubin's personal opinion, this conflict should be resolved by the parties involved. Firyubin promised that they he would keep us updated on the issue of Cuba.

Received by the following comrades: [...]<sup>107</sup>

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 29 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15998

Dispatched from Havana on 10.29.1962 at 16:30

Received on 10.30.1962 at 12:50

Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.30.1962 at 16:00

To: KRAJEWSKI, Urgent, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>108</sup>

1. The only direct and official reaction to the USSR's decision to withdraw the military installations is yesterday's speech by Raul Castro in Santiago. Overall, he outlines the USSR's position as calm and reasonable. He reminds that the oral commitment of the United States [not to invade Cuba] is not sufficient. At the same time, he states that the liquidation of the Guantanamo base must take place sooner than later, but through peaceful means.
2. Based on the information from various sources it would seem that Fidel is not pleased with how the decision to withdraw [the missiles] was made and the disclosure that the installations are exclusively the property of the USSR. One can sense much bitterness on the part of Cubans regarding these issues. It is noteworthy that the prestige of Fidel Castro could seriously suffer within the Latin American context. I do not exclude the fact that the "five conditions" (see our cable no. 437 point 3) were also Fidel Castro's reaction to the Soviet position.
3. My forecast as far as tomorrow's talks with U Thant: they will be rather difficult. There is said to be an especial envoy on the way sent by [Brazilian leader João] Goulart who is carrying a letter to Fidel.
4. The Yugoslav ambassador [Boško Vidaković] thinks that he was the one to relay a proposition from Tito to [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos of inviting U Thant and that this influenced Fidel's letter from the 27<sup>th</sup> which contained this invitation.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 30 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 15997

Dispatched from Moscow on 30.10.1962 at 15:00

Received on 30.10.1962 at 15:20

Came into the Deciphering Department on 30.10.1962 at 15:25

To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI, IMMEDIATELY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JASZCZUK<sup>109</sup>

From the visit at [First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers Alexei] Kosygin's:

1. [First Deputy Foreign Minister Vasili] Kuznetsov has not begun the talks yet. He was well received by the Americans, who are pleased with his arrival.
2. The situation of the past few days has been exceptionally tense. We were on the brink of war. The USSR had information about an imminent invasion of Cuba. Khrushchev's statement regarding the dismantling of the starting devices was made pretty much at the last minute. If the Americans went into Cuba and wiped it out, half of the Cuban population and many Americans, could perish in the process. A war would begin. This would not have been a nuclear war, because only a madman would dare drop an atomic bomb. The long distance between us and Cuba, [Kosygin said,] would pose a great obstacle. We received guarantees from Kennedy of not attacking Cuba. We are relying on this [as this is] the president's statement. If he were to break the promise, then all international norms would be trampled.
3. The blockade of Cuba continues, but the Soviet ships were already given instructions to leave the Cuban ports.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 30 October 1962



Ciphergram No. 16025

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.30.1962 at 14:00  
and received on 10.31.1962 at 04:00  
Came to the Decoding Department on 10.31.1962 at 05:00  
To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI  
From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>110</sup>

Yours 12930.

The police security around the embassy building has somewhat decreased, but it still continues although it is less visible. The building of the [Embassy's] consular section, the [Embassy's] economic cone, and the Consulate General in Chicago have not been protected by the police.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jelen), 30 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16053

Dispatched from Havana on 10.30.1962 at 15:00  
Received on 10.31.1962 at 13:35  
Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.31.1962 at 16:25  
To: KRAJEWSKI, EYES ONLY  
From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JELEN<sup>111</sup>  
Politburo  
Czesak<sup>112</sup>  
[?]  
Milnikiel

[Handwritten text:] Relay this [information], if possible, today, but not at night, to [Foreign] Minister [Adam] Rapacki and [Deputy Foreign Minister Marian] Naszkowski, 31 October

1. Based on the conversation with [Soviet Ambassador to Cuba Aleksandr] Alexeyev:
  - a. He confirms the fact that there is confusion within the [Cuban] leadership, as well as dissatisfaction with how the decision had been made about the

withdrawal of the military installations. One can sense that he [Alexeyev] is seriously depressed. During the talks [with the Cuban leadership], which he had conducted here at the highest levels, it was emphasized to him they [the Cubans] could not trust verbal declarations of Kennedy. The major concern of the [Cuban] leadership is the internal decrease of prestige for Fidel [Castro]. However, Alexeyev counts on the fact that Fidel will understand the situation.

- b. Fidel stubbornly continues to reject even the thought of inspections in Cuba. Alexeyev expresses hope, however, that some kind of a formula will be found [to solve this issue].
  - c. The "5 conditions" proposed by the Cuban side are, in the opinion of Alexeyev, a correct and official request for the evacuation of the [US naval base at] Guantanamo. This kind of a request had to be made and the timing was appropriate. Alexeyev understands that Castro is only making a formal request while realizing that fulfilling this request cannot take place at this time.
2. My observations: Fidel lost a good opportunity, which was proposed by [Brazilian President João] Goulart (see our 437 point 4), because at the same time the concept of having Swedish inspectors had been proposed. What is not good for the Cubans is the fact that General [Indar Jit] Rikhye, who is described by the Prensa Latina in New York as "a military adviser to the Secretary General for UN Military Forces in the Congo," is to accompany [the UN Secretary] U Thant on his announced visit to Cuba.
  3. They announced Fidel Castro's speech for 1 November.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 30 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16028

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.30.1962 at 22:00  
and received on 10.31.1962 at 4:50

Came to the Decoding Department on 10.31.1962 at 5:00

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKI<sup>113</sup>  
URGENT, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>114</sup>

(From an important American interlocutor.)

- 1) [The interlocutor] thinks that the unpublished exchange of letters between Kennedy and [Soviet leader Nikita S.] Khrushchev contains a far-reaching obligation on the part of Kennedy to liquidate the American [military] base from Turkey.
- 2) The [US] administration is not going to exploit the withdrawal of the [Soviet] missiles from Cuba for maximum propaganda purposes as a victory achieved from the position of strength. Kennedy is getting ready to make a statement at a press conference on November 1, [in which he is going to] warn against adopting such an attitude, [and instead] he is going to draw attention to the fact that reaching an agreement in the area of disarmament is now more urgent than ever. K. postponed the press conference until Thursday in order to have more time to assess the process of disassembling [the missile bases] in Cuba. The local disarmament agency [i.e., the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; ACDA] has recently revived its activity, among other things, through making contacts with the delegations of different countries associated with the United Nations in order to find out in what areas they could come to an understanding as quickly as possible. [The issues that have been given] primary attention [are as follows]: the ban on nuclear tests; the ban on nuclear weapons' proliferation; [issuing] a declaration or [signing] a treaty of non-aggression between NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and the Warsaw Pact; the elimination of some [military] bases; declaring both Africa and Latin America as non-nuclear zones. The [US] administration was happy to hear that [First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vasili Vasilyevich] Kuznetsov was appointed as the head of the delegation [to discuss the issue of] Cuba as a sign that the USSR is going to quickly resolve the Cuban Crisis.
- 3) He thinks that as long as there are no complications in implementing the agreement regarding Cuba, there is a real possibility for a summit meeting [to happen] relatively quickly and for a serious relaxation [of tensions]

in the international situation. They [the Americans] fear complications on the part of [Fidel] Castro ([such as his] hindrance of the work of the UN Commission, among other things, by demanding the removal of [the US Naval Base in] Guantanamo), as well as [other issues such as] the moves by China [on the international arena, including] a further exacerbation of the conflict with India, egging Castro on to oppose the reached agreement, and presenting the USSR position as a serious concession to the United States. All of these could prevent the development of the [positive] events [described above].

Received by: [...] <sup>115</sup>

By Dispatch to Moscow

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



## Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 31 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16071

Dispatched from Moscow on 31.10.1962 at 12:30

Received on 31.10.1962 at 19:28

Came into the Deciphering Department on 31.10.1962 at 21:50

To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI

From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JASZCZUK<sup>116</sup>

From the visit at [US Ambassador Foy D.] Kohler's (which lasted 50 minutes):

1. Cuba. The United States will not go into Cuba and it does not intend to topple Castro from outside of Cuba. He thinks that the [Cuban] nation will change its system from within, and that the United States will continue the blockade until they receive the guarantees of the full elimination of [Soviet military] bases. I pressed him on the issue of normalizing US-Cuba relations. He clearly dodged taking any position on the issue. Kohler stated that the United States is really surprised that the USSR thought that America would allow for the creation of the missile bases right under its nose and for the change

in the nuclear balance in the world. They continue to ask themselves this question and they don't seem to find the answer. I took up the issue of the so called "offensive nature" of the missile weapons and I also returned to the issue of unfriendly US policy towards Cuba [...]

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington, 31 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16075

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 10.31.1962 at 12:00 and received on 01.11.1962 at 0:30

Came to the Decoding Department on 01.11.1962 at 0:40

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKI<sup>117</sup>  
EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>118</sup>

/From A.[rthur] Schlesinger, [President John F.] Kennedy's adviser./

S., to a large degree, confirms the content of [our previous] cable 825.<sup>119</sup> In his opinion, the assessment of the [Soviet] installation of the missiles in Cuba as the attempt to strengthen the [world] position of the USSR before a possible confrontation over Berlin, ended up prevailing within the [US] administration. [Schlesinger said that] despite the criticisms made by the Republicans, claiming that [President] Kennedy should have exploited the opportunity [of the crisis] to topple [the regime of Fidel] Castro and that he should have called for a policy based on a position of strength, among other places in Berlin, President Kennedy is determined to seek peaceful solutions and those based on compromise. [The President] is most interested in concluding a treaty to ban nuclear tests. He is sympathetic to the idea of the projects of [creating] non-nuclear zones in Africa, and possibly in Latin America. [The President] characterized [Nikita S.] Khrushchev's unpublished letter as very personal and one that expressed [the Soviet leader's] concern over the possibility of a nuclear war to a much larger degree than in his published text. There was no mention in that letter of the [US military] bases in Turkey. [US Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs W.

Averell] Harriman was the first one to see that Khrushchev's intentions and behavior [exhibited during] the crisis aspired to [bring about] peaceful solutions. They [the Americans] think that right now the disassembling and transport of the missiles back to the USSR will take place very quickly. This is because, [they think,] the Soviet Union will not want to create a precedent [according to which] the international commissions control the "disarmament process." It [the Soviet Union] will make the effort for [such an international] commission to merely state facts.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 31 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16052

Dispatched from Havana on 10.31.1962 at 14:20

Received on 10.31.1962 at 12:12

Came into the Deciphering Department on 10.31.1962 at 16:25

To: KRAJEWSKI, URGENT, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>120</sup>

1. The whole [Cuban] propaganda action is carried out in a very rigid manner and is based on the arguments made by Fidel in his speech on 23 October (see our 424). [This propaganda] does not take into consideration the decisive events that followed afterwards and continues to press for the "5 points" proposed by Fidel on 28 October. I think that the main aim of such pressure is not to show [Cuba's] initial rigid position for negotiations with [UN General Secretary] U Thant, but it is the main reflection of the confusion which is taking place among the party apparatus and the [Cuban] leadership. The existence of such confusion is becoming more and more apparent in different conversations with the Cubans. It is very clear that they do not understand the international situation and one can sense among many of them the feeling of being abandoned by the USSR.
2. [Brazilian President João] Goulart's delegation arrived and talked through the night with [Cuban President

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Osvaldo Torrado] Dorticos. A letter from [Mexican President Adolfo] López Mateos has arrived – we don't know the content.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 31 October 1962

Ciphergram No. 16077

Dispatched from Havana on 10.31.1962 at 13:30

Received on 11.01.1962 at 6:50

Came into the Deciphering Department on 11.01.1962 at 7:00

To: KRAJEWSKI, URGENT, EYES ONLY

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEŃ<sup>121</sup>

1. According to unofficial information, the first conference with U Thant is said to have been difficult even though they have not yet discussed the issue of inspections. The Cuban side is said to have pressed the issue of the necessity to guarantee that the "5 points" proposed by Fidel Castro are taken into consideration. Cuba's hardline position is expected on the issue of inspections. [Cuba's Foreign Minister Raúl García] Roa is expected to leave for the U.N. Goulart's emissary [Gen. Albino Silva] left [Cuba] – as of now we still do not have the content of his conversations; he also met with U Thant.
2. The appointment of [Carlos] Lechuga as [Cuba's] permanent representative to the UN is generally understood as a tendency toward a more flexible position [of Cuba] in this [international] forum.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 1 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 16109

Dispatched from Moscow on 11.01.1962 at 19:00

Received on 11.01.1962 at 19:31

Came into the Deciphering Department on 11.01.1962 at 12:25

To: [Director General of the Foreign Ministry Maria] WIERNA

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JASZCZUK<sup>122</sup>

Based on the conversation with Deputy Director of United States Department in the Ministry of International Affairs [Sergey] Kudryavstev<sup>123</sup>:

Kudryavstev thinks that Kennedy's assurances not to invade Cuba is a main achievement. Now, the major issue is to have it encapsulated in some kind of an international document. As to my question of how Fidel sees the solution to the crisis, he responded that now we should see a major problem. Besides, he is not aware of anything else other than what has already been announced publicly regarding Fidel's opinion. This morning, [First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union Anastas] Mikoyan left for New York City and then onto Cuba in order to more broadly discuss current problems.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 1 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 16203

Dispatched from Moscow on 11.01.1962 at 19:00

Received on 11.01.1962 at 21:07

Came into the Deciphering Department on 11.01.1962 at 22:35

To: [Director General of the Foreign Ministry Maria] WIERNA, URGENT

From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JASZCZUK<sup>124</sup>

Based on the conversation between Paszkowski and Deputy Director of United States Department in the Ministry of International Affairs [Sergey] Kudryavstev<sup>125</sup>:

1. It was agreed upon between the USSR and the US that regardless of Cuba's maintaining the blockade, Soviet ships will be able to go into Cuba's seaports without any problems.
2. We need to wait a few days for the results of the talks regarding Cuba. It seems that the United States will not insist on the UN supervision of disassembling the rocket launchers and removing the missiles.
3. Kudryavstev positively assessed Fidel's 2 November speech.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



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### **Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 3 November 1962**

Ciphergram No. 16211

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 11.03.1962 at 11:40 and received on 11.04.1962 at 01:50

Came to the Decoding Department on 11.04.1962 at 01:55

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL<sup>126</sup>

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>127</sup>

[This information has been compiled based] on several different and important sources which are informing us about the following:

- 1) There is an opinion within the White House, the State Department, and the US delegation to the United Nations that the USSR is acting towards eliminating the Cuban [missile] crisis with the utmost honest intentions, and it is also showing a far-reaching will for cooperation.
- 2) The [US] administration is seriously taking into consideration replacing the UN inspections with those carried out by the International Red Cross in case [Fidel] Castro continues to show further resistance.
- 3) In case [Fidel] Castro continues to make things difficult, the [US] administration will not aspire to complicate

the situation. In case [Fidel] Castro does not allow for any inspections [in Cuba], they [the Americans] will give more thought to their own plan of naval and air inspections, so they can be definitely sure that the disassembling of the [missile] bases takes place.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



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### **Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Drozniak), 3 November 1962**

Ciphergram No. 16212

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 11.03.1962 at

16:00 and received on 04.11.1962 at 01:50

Came to the Decoding Department on 04.11.1962 at 01:55

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL<sup>128</sup> and [Juliusz] KATZ-SUCHY<sup>129</sup>

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŻNIAK<sup>130</sup>

/From the conversation between [Mieczysław] Rakowski<sup>131</sup> and [Deputy Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Walt] Rostow/.

R.[ostow] compared the initial stages of the armed conflict in Cuba to the [Japanese attacks on] Pearl Harbor [on 7 December 1941]. [He said that President] Kennedy was ready for war. The most pressing issue at the moment is a quick removal of the [Soviet] missiles from Cuba. The Americans are ready for serious disarmament talks and they are interested especially in reaching a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. They [the Americans] are not planning on giving them [nuclear weapons] to the [West] Germans. [Rostow said that] this state of affairs would be difficult to maintain in case other countries [also] obtained nuclear weapons.

By dispatch to Moscow

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]





## Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 8 November 1962

Secret

Of Special Significance

Making copies is prohibited

**Ciphergram No. 16483**

Dispatched from Havana on 11.08 at 21:00 and received at 11.09 at 12:49

Came to the Decoding Department on 11.09 at 16:20

Krajewski, EYES ONLY

From: Ambassador JELEN

Politburo

Czesak<sup>132</sup>

[??]

Siedlecki

Milnikiel

/8.11./

[This is based on the information from] the Soviet and Cuban sides: they are both restrained in providing information and the assessment regarding the course of the talks:

- a) Based on the statements made by the Soviet side (Bazikin – Director of the Latin America department in the International Department [and] former ambassador to Mexico; ambassador [to Cuba] Alexeyev, and councilor Belons) one can conclude the following: the talks are difficult, Fidel's position is hardline, his overall outlook on the issue and its implications is narrow-minded, and guided by prestige in some matters. Right now, they are taking a break from the talks, as they are awaiting instructions from Moscow. The talks are being excessively prolonged and this does not bode well, especially [when it comes to maintaining a uniform position] externally; one cannot foresee when they will end, perhaps by the end of the week. They are also going to discuss economic matters.
- b) From the Cuban side (based on conversations with various interlocutors, among others, [Foreign Minister Raul] Roa [Garcia] who is not partaking in the conversations at the party level and with C.R. Rodriguez who is taking part in the conversations in place of Blas Roca): a fundamental difference in views continues to persist, they are not providing any specifics regarding the current situation

on the issue of inspections. Roa is of the opinion that even the USSR's consent to carry out inspections at sea creates a negative precedent. Rodriguez assesses, however, that the [Cuban and Soviet] views are converging, but the situation is exacerbated by "the increased demands of the US," especially when it comes to the withdrawal of the [IL-28] bombers, something that the USSR does not consent to. Raul Castro confirms that the Cuban Anti-Air Forces has the orders not to shoot. He points out, however, that a situation may develop when they will have to shoot. The Americans are very careful at the borders at Guantanamo, and the internal counterrevolutionary forces are keeping quiet (even a Western diplomat points to the fact that no arrests are being made in times of the current crisis).

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



## Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 9 November 1962

Secret

Of Special Significance

Making copies is prohibited

**Ciphergram No. 16482**

Dispatched from Havana on 11.09.1962 and it was received at 11.09 at 13:15

Came to the Decoding Department at 11.09 at 13:20

TO: Krajewski

From: Ambassador JELEN

Politburo

Czesak<sup>133</sup>

[??]

Siedlecki

Here are some elements of the overall propaganda with regards to the current crisis:

- a) The public opinion is being mobilized around Fidel's 5 points; they have a world opinion behind them and the actions in Latin America, especially the sabotage in Venezuela.

- b) Those foreign statements, which approve of Soviet actions during the crisis, are being omitted in the press, but at the same time they are also avoiding to print those statements which would put the Soviet Union in negative light. They only printed a succinct summary of Kosygin's statement, emphasizing only the sentence of Soviet support and aid to Cuba; as far as [Soviet defense minister Rodion] Malinowski's statement, they only printed the part which condemns the aggressive moves of the US; both statements are wholly lacking in the assessment of the whole crisis. They have printed a large report according to AP and UPI of Khrushchev's statement at the Kremlin and the full text of a letter to Mikoyan. There is no mention of comrade Gomulka's article. As far as comrade [Polish Premier Josef] Cyrankiewicz's speech, they only briefly mentioned the part on the collapse of the colonial system. There is no mention of [Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos] Peter's interview for the MTI. As far as the information given by the Xinhua agency, they published only those parts of statements and declarations supporting the elements of [Castro's] 5 points.
- c) The celebration of 7 November [October Revolution] was much more extensive than in previous years and evidently exposed the aid of the USSR [to Cuba]. The speech of C.R. Rodriguez at the central academy did not broach the details of the crisis, but it contained a series of allusions to the divergences between the USSR and Cuba, including issues like principles in politics, condemning the weakness, the equality between both big and small countries, [and] peace attained under conditions of maintaining dignity.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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### **Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jelen), 12 November 1962**

Secret

Of Special Significance

Making copies is prohibited

**Ciphergram No. 16645**

Dispatched from Havana on 11.12.1962 at 24:00 and received

at 11.13 at 13:45

Came to the Decoding Department at 11.12 at 16:30

Krajewski, EYES ONLY

From: Ambassador JELEN

Politburo

[??]

Krajewski

This information is based on the conversation on with [Raul] Valdes Vivo who is the editor-in-chief of Hoy [*Today*] during the absence of [Blas] Roca. He is in constant contact with the party leadership, he comes from the old PSP [Popular Socialist Party] apparatus. Here's his view on the situation:

- 1) The missiles were installed at the Soviet initiative. They were quickly transported [to Cuba]. The installation took place without the camouflage; this was not understood by those who were in the know or the witnesses. During the preceding talks, they bilaterally considered all possibilities and the most far-reaching ramifications, as well as the variant of a possible withdrawal in exchange for an analogous idea of the US with taking into consideration the Turkey option. The variant which was adopted, when it came to the withdrawal, was perhaps the only one which was not considered bilaterally; it caused a surprise and future fears.
- 2) The prolonging of negotiations facilitates increased demands on the part of the US. The [Cuban] leadership believes that the withdrawal took place too suddenly. The IL-type of airplanes was the possession of Cuba and they could not be withdrawn only with the decision made by the USSR.
- 3) The most difficult issue is not just the inspection of Cuba. The principle could be adopted but on conditions that are not humiliating for Cuba – the formula for the inspection, its extent, its duration and composition (they could possibly accept a composition of Latin countries maintaining relations with Cuba or neutral nations). The crux of the problem is [to obtain] guarantees, including the guarantee given by the USSR, the latter requires the explanations and specifying the appropriate form. They are awaiting a reply to the memo delivered to [Anastas] Mikoyan. The point is also to insure the delivery of conventional weapons and the degree of Soviet involvement in case of a possible military action carried out by the countries of Latin America, [including] a direct attack carried out by the US

- 4) Fidel is embittered by the position of the PRC. The Warsaw Pact countries reacted immediately after 22 October while the PRC [reacted] only after 28 October when the USSR announced the disassembly [of the missiles]. After 22 October the Warsaw Pact announced the state of emergency for the armed forces; the PRC could have also shown [force] toward the offshore islands [i.e., Nationalist-controlled islands such as Matsu and Quemoy (Mazu and Jinmen)], but instead it exacerbated the situation [on the border] with India, something that does not help Cuba.
- 5) The anti-Soviet moods have both widened and deepened. Even though the old communist apparatus best understands the line of the USSR, it had to unconditionally support Fidel in order to strengthen unity and counter the anti-Soviet tendencies. Among the [Cuban party] leadership, it is Fidel who shows the biggest understanding for the Soviet position and for the school of thought of the old cadres.

/-/ Jelen

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droźniak), 16 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 16831

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 11.16.1962 at 10:00 and received on 11.16.1962 at 17:30

Came to the Decoding Department on 11.16.1962 at 17:40

To: [Foreign Ministry Director Eugeniusz] MILNIKIEL<sup>134</sup>

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŹNIAK<sup>135</sup>

/From [columnist] J.[oseph] Alsop/.

There is a belief within the [US] administration that [First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union Anastas] Mikoyan was not successful in convincing [Cuban leader Fidel] Castro as far as adopting a Soviet point of view. The [US] administration thinks that the USSR has lived up to all of the obligations, which [it] has taken upon itself. In case of complications on the part of [Fidel] Castro, they [the Americans] will consider the Cuban issue as a

problem concerning [President John F.] Kennedy and Castro. They are foreseeing a possibility of maintaining, and even expanding, the [naval] blockade; the continuation of their own aerial inspections; or entirely suspending their guarantees of not invading [Cuba] [...]

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).*]



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jelen), 16 November 1962

Secret

Of Special Significance

Making copies is prohibited

**Ciphergram No. 16889**

Dispatched from Havana on 11.16.1962 at 22:30 and received at 11.17 at 16:00

Came to the Decoding Department at 11.17 at 17:45

Krajewski

From: Ambassador JELEN

/-/ Michałowski

Politburo

[??]

Krajewski

/16.11./

1. [Anastas] Mikoyan, whose arrival was expected today, was however postponed. Now they are saying that he may come either on Saturday or Sunday.
2. The Soviet embassy is confirming that there are serious divergences. They are not providing any specifics. The tone of their statements, however, is rather pessimistic. They are expressing fears that the announcement of shooting down American planes, an announcement that was included in the letter to U Thant from November 15, could cause grave complications if it were carried out. They are also saying that besides the reconnaissance flights there are also provocative ones which are at low altitudes.
3. As far as who possesses the [IL-28] bombers, there are diverging opinions.

4. Some Cuban interlocutors who are close to the leadership think that the divergences are much more serious than they thought, but they are not giving any specific examples.
5. My impressions;
  - a. The Cuban side stiffened their position, but they have not yet closed the doors for carrying out inspections (the letter to U Thant rejects “one-sided inspection” of Cuba). The example of stiffening their position is also the postulate to include Puerto Rico and the area of the Panama Canal into the area of non-nuclear sphere (Brazilian proposition [to denuclearize Latin America]).
  - b. There are two opposing views as to the prospects of Latin America that emerged in the talks with Mikoyan: the second Havana declaration – the thesis of the conference of the 81 communist parties. The differences in views as far as these matters were rather deepened.
  - c. In case Cuba continues to maintain a stiff position, then from the Cuban point of view and its interests, Cuba is threatened by losing a historic chance of merging the US and USSR guarantees.
  - d. There are divergences within the Cuban leadership regarding all issues that had been considered thus far. They are expecting an internal discussion, if conditions allow, following the conclusion of negotiations.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



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**Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jelen), 21 November 1962**

Dispatched from Havana on 11.21.1962 at 2:00 and received at 11.21 at 13:45  
Came to the Decoding Department at 11.21 at 16:00  
To: Krajewski

From: Ambassador JELEN

A meeting between [Anastas] Mikoyan and the heads of diplomatic posts of socialist countries took place today. M[ikoyan] informed [us] about the results of “the work with Cuban comrades” so far.

1. A joint Cuban-Soviet draft was submitted to U Thant (its content is the same as in our report to [Deputy Foreign Minister Jozef] Winiewicz in our dispatch from the 15<sup>th</sup> [of November]) and is based on the exchange of letters between Khrushchev and Kennedy, as well as Fidel’s 5 points.
2. The withdrawal of the bombers [from Cuba, which is to take place] within the period of one month following the lifting of the “blockade,” is necessary in order to appease the Caribbean nations. The result will be the lifting of the blockade.
3. There is some progress towards obtaining the guarantee [for US non-invasion of Cuba in the future?]. The US aims to postpone the issue and this is why this will be the issue over which they will fight right now (M.[ikoyan] stated that there were different opinions on this issue within the US administration). This is related to the issues of inspection and American [reconnaissance] flights over Cuba.
4. Castro’s disclaimer regarding inspections that were proposed until now is well-founded. There is currently a new draft put forth by U Thant [which proposes that inspections should be carried out by] a group with a headquarters in New York which carries out inspections if needed in the Caribbean. The draft seems interesting.
5. Fidel’s warning about shooting down the planes was a correct one and it was made following consultations with Khrushchev. The effect until now [is] that the number of flights has significantly decreased. In two cases, they opened fire without hitting the targets. [Mikoyan] thinks that these were American planes that were sent in order to test the veracity of [Castro’s] warning.
6. [They assess] the role of U Thant [as] positive, the Cuban issue will be a test for him as a secretary general.
7. The Brazilian proposition of the non-nuclear zone is significantly flawed, as it foresees the denuclearization of an area which remains under the jurisdiction of Latin American nations, and it does not include the

denuclearization of US bases in Latin America.

8. He assesses the overall development of the Cuban issue as a success. The withdrawal of the newly introduced strategic weapons is to recognize the existence of Cuba as a socialist country and to give it guarantees. Cuba will also end up having enormous defensive means.
9. To the question of the Hungarian [ambassador, János Beck] regarding an internal confusion [within the Cuban leadership], M[ikoyan] replied that he was not surprised. The new [Cuban] party is still in the making and their cadres are still young. [He said] that in Russia the Treaty of Brest[-Litovsk] also caused a proportionally greater confusion. M[ikoyan] further gave the sense that the concept of “no war, no peace” emerged in Cuba.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 21 November 1962

Dispatched from Havana on 11.21.1962 at 19:00 and received at 11.22 at 12:55  
Came to the Decoding Department at 11.21 at 16:30  
To: Krajewski  
From: Ambassador JELEN

Here is the supplement to our dispatch no. 481

- a) [First Deputy Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers Anastas] Mikoyan did not mention the issue of Soviet-Cuban differences. He also did not mention the objectives of bringing the missiles to Cuba. He suggested, however, that a situation emerged in which one could compensate for the recognition of Cuba as a socialist country. Ipso facto, the Monroe Doctrine and the Rio Treaty had been struck. [Mikoyan] pointed out that the US will not give up on its anti-Cuban policy, and he emphasized within this context that the current balance of power [was] favorable to Cuba. He also added that although the United States may have much space to maneuver in the

Caribbean region, the situation is looking differently in other parts of the world.

- b) In a casual conversation, he mentioned his visit to Hungary in 1956; in this moment he turned to the Chinese [ambassador and said]: “at that time we were in constant consultations with the government of the PRC.”
- c) He made a remark regarding the Poles from the time of the [October?] [R]evolution and the leaders of the Polish Communist Party [KPP].<sup>136</sup> He emphasized his appreciation on several occasions to [the Polish leader Władysław] Gomułka.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### Telegram from Polish Embassy in Havana (Jeleń), 27 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 17355

Dispatched from Havana on 11.27.1962 at 19:00 and received at 11.28 at 12:05  
Came to the Decoding Department at 11.28 at 14:20  
To: [Aleksander] KRAJEWSKI<sup>137</sup>, Eyes Only  
From: [Ambassador Bolesław] JELEN<sup>138</sup>

In the conversation with [one of the Polish embassy employees] Czyżycki, Gallan – a Mexican journalist – relayed the following statement made by [Fidel?] Castro in the conversation with him on the 26<sup>th</sup> of this month (after the departure of [Anastas] Mikoyan):

1. The decision to install, and subsequently to withdraw, the [missile] bases, was not well thought out. Cuba would never have agreed to the proposition of their installation had it known that there was a possibility of their dismantling. Cuba agreed, and it was ready to bear consequences, because it believed that the point here was the strategic goals of the [communist] camp [as a whole]. Besides, the deciding [factor in their decision] was their trust they placed in the Soviet assessment of the



international balance of power.

2. If the installation of the [missile] bases resulted from ignoring the abilities of the opponent, something that had already taken place not for the first time in the Soviet [foreign] policy, for example in 1941,<sup>139</sup> then the [decision] to dismantle the missiles resulted from the exaggerated [assessment of the opponent's abilities].
3. It was a mistake to withdraw the missiles and the bombers separately, because it was like swallowing a bitter pill twice.
4. Castro is absolutely convinced about the honesty of the Soviet intentions during the crisis. However, it will take time to calm down the emotional [passionate] moods of the [Cuban] society.
5. Cuba does not put too much hope in the ongoing talks [taking place] in the UN. The principle [espoused] in the second Havana declaration should be intensively implemented in Latin America. However, this issue is related to the overall attitude of the USSR towards the policy of the communist parties of Latin American countries, which do not support the declaration. [The issue] is also related to the idea of [peaceful] coexistence under the specific [conditions] in Latin America.
6. The possibility of a renewed visit by [UN Secretary General] U Thant to Cuba is quite great.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Hawana 1962, 6/77 w-82 t-1264, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### **Minutes of Conversation with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, President of the INRA<sup>140</sup> 27 November 1962**

Secret

The conversation took place on 27 November and lasted over three hours from 9:00pm until 12:00 midnight. The position of CRR could be largely summarized as follows:

1. Cuba did not ask for the missiles. The decision of the Soviet government regarding the installation of missiles

and strategic weapons in Cuba was put before Cuba as an accomplished fact. Cuba's approval of these installations resulted from the conviction of the republic's authorities that the rocket launchers are a part of the global strategy plan of the socialist camp. Having expressed approval for the installation of the Soviet missiles, Cuba was aware of the enormous responsibility and the enormous risk, such as nuclear bombing of the island in case of a world conflict. However, the plans of the camp and the interests of the revolution took precedence.

2. Nobody from the Cuban leadership took into account any circumstances in which these weapons would be removed from Cuba. Therefore one of these two points applies: the mistake was either sending them [missiles] to Cuba, or the mistake was removing them. Most likely both decisions were flawed, but surely the latter one was.
3. The decision to remove [the missiles], formulated in Khrushchev's letter, was a total surprise. This message found Fidel Castro at breakfast on Sunday morning, 28 October. He initially did not want to believe it. Then suddenly, without communicating, but only with the co-workers who were at hand, he formulated a declaration about the five additional guarantees and immediately announced it.
4. The procedure adopted by the USSR is not to be tolerated and is not acceptable for a sovereign nation. The fact that the decision itself was not coordinated, as well as the consent for inspections without consultations with the Cuban government, has led to an open conflict between Moscow and Havana.
5. The USSR gave away a lot without getting anything in exchange. Retreating in the presence of imperialism is a flawed and futile policy. The guarantees, such as have been formulated by Kennedy, do not present any value and in fact do not guarantee anything. The announcement of the continuation of the policy of economic pressure and diversionary activities clearly attests to that. Even if one were to treat the decision to remove the missiles as saving peace, then giving away the bombers was absolutely unfounded.
6. During the secret part of the talks between Fidel and U Thant, the UN Secretary General stated in Havana that he forewarned the US president that in case of an assault on Cuba he would call a U.N. session, he would accuse the US of aggression and he would resign his post. After

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the missile pretext, U Thant reiterated his warning in case the US did not lift the blockade after the removal of the Soviet installations.

7. The Soviet concessions are thus one-sided and ineffective. This is the worst policy. The only correct one would be a response of force to force, and the USSR was capable of that. It [the USSR] did not do that because the fear of war is the main element of the policy in Europe and it leads to mistakes. But at the same time it was certain that the Americans were not ready to go all the way and risk a war. The version that [Soviet leader Nikita S.] Khrushchev decided to make concessions as a result of Fidel's sudden letter indicating that the Soviet missile bases would be bombed in a matter of hours is not true because Fidel [Castro]'s warning reached Khrushchev after the Soviet premier had already sent [US President John F.] Kennedy the letter expressing agreement to remove the missiles. An individual armed with a small caliber revolver who withdraws his weapon in the face of an enemy's bigger revolver cannot state that he saved the peace; for the threat remains. The only correct response would be to introduce yet a bigger gun to the discussion. Armed conflict would not take place because in fact this was not what the US intended. The rickety and weak position of the USSR made possible the success of the United States' imperialistic policy.
8. An invasion or some other type of US aggression against Cuba has not taken place not because the US is taking into account the armed response of the USSR, but because it would be an enormous and politically costly military operation. Cuba is splendidly armed; it has a superb army and the landing operations would have to cost [the US] 60,000 American soldiers. It would be a very long-lasting loss of face politically and a definitive decline in US prestige.
9. The essence of our differences lies in different understandings over the issue of coexistence with imperialism and over the nature of the main conflict of the era. It [reference unclear – *Trans.*] cannot rely on constant concessions. The movements for protecting the peace did not develop in Latin America because that is impossible under conditions where an armed encounter is the only solution to conflicts between countries or where the masses are left to colonial dependence on the US. The point here is not that the masses in this hemisphere do not know the horrors of war, but that they know the horrors of imperialism. From this point of view, one should recognize the current solution of the Caribbean conflict as a delay in the revolutionary process in Latin America and a strengthening of the most reactionary circles, above all in the US, as well as in other countries on the continent.
10. On that score, [First Deputy Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers Anastas] Mikoyan's talks in Havana did not lead to anything. After the first two meetings and the exchange of opinions on the history of the most recent days, and after Mikoyan's explanation of the Soviet stance, it was jointly decided not to focus on an analysis of the past as there was no hope for agreement. The entire matter should be seen on a somewhat broader plane, that is, a flawed one in relation to the general lack of any Soviet policy toward colonial countries and the colonial revolution. The examples of the Congo, Guinea, Algeria and now Cuba testify that the USSR does not possess a proper conception of its assistance to the anti-imperialist revolutionary movements. At one of the international conferences not too long ago, [Vyacheslav] Molotov as the minister of foreign affairs included Cuba in the national territory of the United States. The current draft of the protocol by Mikoyan, that is, the joint Soviet-Cuban proposal (currently in the possession of U Thant) is an example of the ignorance of Soviet officials in the MFA<sup>141</sup> with reference to the Caribbean zone. Among other things, he treated the countries of Central America as entirely subject to the US and he assumed the right of the US to make decisions on their behalf without taking into consideration even the formal sovereignty of these nations.
11. The ending of the exchange of opinions with Mikoyan over the analysis of past mistakes and the degree of correctness of Soviet policy does not mean that the matter will not be returned to at an appropriate time. The plenipotentiary status and the position of Mikoyan, however, did not render possible a fruitful exchange of opinions on this topic. In relation to this the Havana talks exclusively referred to the future, the joint tactic in the UN, the content of the joint proposals, etc. In substance, the goal of Cuba's policy is to impose possibly an immediate discussion of Fidel's five points, where the first four are not debatable, and the fifth is a motion to remove the base at Guantanamo; the point of this minimal program is to begin negotiations on the matter.
12. The fact that the Soviet press, along with the press of other socialist countries, did not publish the part of

Fidel's speech from 1 November in which he talked about the difference of opinions with the USSR made an unusually ill-fated impression on Cuba's leadership. This is a shameful policy of concealing the most serious matters from public opinion. It is hard for communists to criticize the Soviet leadership, but one cannot not do it if one wants to follow one's conscience and be in accord with history. The fact that the Polish press published this excerpt of Fidel's speech should be treated very positively. In this regard, one should not attach more importance to the distrust towards certain political aspects of the PUWP<sup>142</sup> which one can observe in some circles of the ORI<sup>143</sup> apparatus, mostly on the part of comrades who were recruited from the previous PSP<sup>144</sup>. These young cadres, of a low ideological level, live by the old formulas. Despite, for example, critical opinion of its films or too great of a retraction in the area of agriculture policy, Poland deserves respect and admiration. One should contrast the level of [Michał] Kalecki, [Oskar] Lange, and [Adam] Schaff with the low theoretical level in the Soviet leadership. The fact that it was precisely Mikoyan who distinguished himself in the field of certain theoretical generalizations attests emphatically to the theoretical level of the present leadership of the USSR. In relation to this one should emphasize the exceptionally low and primitive level of [Boris] Ponomarev's article.

13. The main question currently boils down to how far the USSR is inclined to move and engage itself in the defense of Cuba. Thus, there is not so much a lack of American guarantees as of Soviet guarantees. The Soviet position in this matter is not known and Cuba is inclined to think that it is difficult to count on a Soviet decision to join [*przystąpić*] a war in defense of the island. This problem will be raised by Cuba at an appropriate time and in an appropriate forum.
14. Cuba is currently confronting an enormous task. One has to repair the consequences of the mistakes of Soviet policy both on Cuba's territory and on the territory of Latin America, and even Africa. There were two questions facing the revolutionary forces and their allies:
  - a) Can the USSR give economic assistance to countries that are so far away?
  - b) Is it [the USSR] able to defend them militarily?
15. As far as the first question is concerned, after years of complete fiascos and the humiliation of the USSR due to

not fulfilling commercial contracts with Argentina, Brazil or Uruguay, Soviet assistance for Cuba is making and may make a full rehabilitation. In terms of the military, or rather war, it turned out that such assistance is not possible. This significantly weakens the revolutionary forces on this continent, because it is known that even if one comes to power following a peaceful path, let us say the party in Chile, a putsch from the right, from the military and oligarchic elements, is unavoidable. The incidents with Cuba showed that the party would then be defenseless. The only future lies exclusively in a very active Cuban policy. One has to respond to the aggressive policy of imperialism with a policy of an armed fight with imperialism. The example of the tumbling, and near abolition, of the Brazilian communist party of [Luís Carlos] Prestes testifies to where reformism leads. One should remember the report of [Finnish Communist Otto] Kuusinen at the VII Comintern Congress.

16. Thus, contrary to the rumors, the Second Havana Declaration is current and alive. It was badly understood. It does not signify the export of revolution but every possible assistance to existing and active revolutionary movements. The national bourgeoisie, not because Stalin said so at the XIX [CPSU] Congress but because it is rickety and afraid of socialist transformations, is not capable of and cannot lead revolutionary movements. Only the working class can lead the revolution.
17. Certain anti-Soviet moods undoubtedly have been born. Taking away weapons from Cuba had ill-fated psychological consequences and the view that Cuba is alone became very widespread. The consent of the Cuban government to the request by the Soviet authorities not to shoot down American aircraft that were inspecting the removal of the missile installations demoralized the Cuban army. Thus, currently the great work of restoring sympathy towards the USSR awaits the authorities of the republic. Obviously, the conduct of the Cuban press, which contains elements of acrimony or mockery directed at Mikoyan, does not contribute to the success of this action.
18. The articles of Victor Rico Galana, printed in the Mexican weekly, "Siempre", (the main article was delivered after a proper dispatch through the mediation of PPA<sup>145</sup> – L.U.) are, in principle and according to the main lines, in accord with the views of the Cuban leadership. One may remark on certain details, but in principle they are correct. Personally attacking Khrushchev can be taken

as unfortunate, even though one should not attach too much importance to it. One has to emphasize that Galan wrote his articles before contacting members of the Cuban leadership, and these are exactly the articles which enabled him to get access to Fidel and Dorticos (he has conducted an interview with the president which will appear on Thursday, 29 November in “Siempre”).

The conversation ended after three hours due to fatigue and the late hour. At the request of the interviewer, C.R.R. agreed to come back to it in a few days. At the same time he announced that he would deliver to his interviewer the text of the article which C.R. wrote in 1950 on the topic of the Leninist conception of coexistence –an article that is entirely topical. C.R.R. is a member of the national leadership of ORI, he participated, in the absence of Blas Roca, as the only member of the PSP in the talks with Mikoyan, and on 7 November this year he gave a speech at the October Academy.

Leopold Unger<sup>146</sup>

[Source: *Archivum Akt Nowych*, Warsaw, Poland. 237/XXII/1090, 1961-1963, karty 245. Translated by Małgorzata Gnoińska.]



## Telegram from Polish Embassy in Washington (Droźniak), 30 November 1962

Ciphergram No. 17488

Dispatched from Washington, D.C., on 11.30.1962 at 10:00 and received on 11.30.1962 at 21:50

Came to the Decoding Department on 11.30.1962 at 22:00

To: [Foreign Minister Adam] RAPACKI,<sup>147</sup> IMMEDIATELY, BUT NOT AT NIGHT

From: [Ambassador Edward] DROŹNIAK<sup>148</sup>

[This information has been compiled based on my conversation with Comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan, [First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union]:

- 1) [Secretary of State Dean] Rusk and [Ambassador at Large Llewellyn] Thompson, who did not talk, as well as [Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly] Dobrynin, participated in the conversation with President [John F. Kennedy]. The tone [of the conversation] was relaxed,

but very serious. The main topic was Cuba. They briefly broached the issue of Laos. He [Mikoyan] will have meetings (unofficial ones) with [Secretary] Rusk and [US Attorney General] Robert Kennedy. The President evaded giving a formal guarantee of [US] non-aggression as far as Cuba, referring to the [Soviet] failure to keep the promise [to allow] inspections in Cuba. Mikoyan [counter-] attacked by pointing out that Khrushchev fully carried out the substantial promises [he had previously made]. [Mikoyan said that] it was Cuba's sovereign right to consent or not to the inspections [on its territory]. [Fidel] Castro proposed that a multilateral inspection [could be carried out in Cuba and elsewhere]. [Mikoyan] outright asked whether K.[ennedy] was reneging on his promises. The President expressed his readiness to issue yet another personal declaration regarding the [US] non-aggression [towards Cuba]. [He said that such a declaration could be made], for example, at a press conference. Mikoyan insisted that [President Kennedy's declaration] be of a formal nature and under the auspices of the United Nations. The President stated that as long as he remained the president he would keep his personal promise of non-aggression [towards Cuba]. The issue of [obtaining] the guarantees [of not invading Cuba] will be the subject of future discussions in New York.

- 2) Besides, the president called for maintaining status quo and, while joking, asked that [the Soviet Union] does not make any revolutions in other countries. Mikoyan stated that revolutions are taking place, and will continue to take place, whether with or without the [assistance of the] Soviet Union. He gave the example of Cuba. The president also stated that he was in the midst of preparations for disassembling of [US military] bases, for example, in Turkey. They talked about the [U-2 reconnaissance] flights over Cuba. The president stated that such flights were only flying at high altitudes. But M.[ikoyan] said that such flights were no less piratical [rover] than those carried out at low altitudes.
- 3) M.[ikoyan said] that he was pleased with his visit to Cuba. Initially, he was received [by the Cuban leadership] with anxiety, because the American press stated that M.[ikoyan] would be pressing for [Cuba] to agree to inspections. Mikoyan's statements, [which were made] still prior to his departure from New York [and which concerned the Soviet support for Castro's five points, as well as the process of the talks [he held with the Cuban leadership], fully calmed Castro down. [Mikoyan said that the talks in Havana] were very interesting and

productive. [Mikoyan came to] a complete understanding with Castro and his farewell took place in a friendly manner. M.[ikoyan] assesses Cuba's economic situation as a very difficult one.

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Waszyngton 1962, 6/77 w-86 t-1312, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### **Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 18 December 1962**

Ciphergram No. 18243

Dispatched from Moscow on 12.18.1962 at 13:20  
Received on 12.18.1962 at 5:55  
Came into the Deciphering Department on 12.18.1962 at 9:40  
To: Zenon KLISZKO<sup>149</sup>  
From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JASZCZUK<sup>150</sup>

From [Minister of Defense Marian] Spychalski's visit to meet Khrushchev:

2. Cuba. The Soviet missiles that were installed on Cuba were ready for action. So, they were brought in, assembled, and disassembled in the period of two months. "As soon as we took the kulak out of our pockets," the Americans gave up their aggressive intentions towards Cuba. We did not plan on using the missiles. The point was to show them off and to show how quickly we could act. The Americans got surprised at how quickly the missiles were disassembled. After we received Kennedy's pledge [not to invade Cuba], we withdrew the missiles. We are not divulging everything we know about Cuba. Given the prospects of future relations with the US, we are holding our tongues.

...

4. The Cuban issue, as well as that of Laos, shows that the United States acknowledges that the Soviet Union is essential in solving world problems. After all, Cuba is in the region of the Monroe Doctrine, but the United States had to agree to our activity and we forced them to make a decision regarding Cuba...

*[Source: Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and*

*translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*



### **Telegram from Polish Embassy in Moscow (Jaszczuk), 25 December 1962**

Ciphergram No. 18512

Dispatched from Moscow on 12.25.1962 at 20:30  
Received on 12.26.1962 at 14:25  
Came into the Deciphering Department on 12.26.1962 at 15:30  
To: Zenon KLISZKO, Eyes only  
From: [Ambassador Boleslaw] JASZCZUK<sup>151</sup>

Based on the conversation with Yuri Andropov in the Central Committee on the 25<sup>th</sup>:

4. The Section for [Soviet relations] with the socialist countries in the International Department of the CC CPSU has recently encompassed Cuba.

...

5. Cuba. The Cuban comrades understand the Soviet moves following the explanations by [Anastas] Mikoyan. At the same time, they do not agree (without showing it externally) with the withdrawal of the missiles without asking them first. They are pointing to the issue of [American] guarantee. To be sure, everyone is aware of the fact that we cannot have complete guarantees from the Americans. However, we will not unleash a nuclear war in defense of Cuba. We need to help Cuba economically and politically; this is our responsibility. Andropov reiterated this by making the following statement: "Comrade Jaszczuk, we must help Cuba and we must help it a great deal." The party situation in Cuba is complicated. There are 10 thousand communists in the Revolutionary Workers' Party of Cuba for the total of 25 thousand. This is an organization which is patchy and loose. Besides the dedicated Marxists, there are those in the organization who do not agree with Marxism. They are all very honest people but they have no revolutionary experience. This is why there are possible deviations within the party. The Cubans reprinted the article from *Renmin Ribao* [People's Daily] entitled "The Proletarians of All Countries Unite!" Then, they explained themselves that, initially, they had received the first part of Khrushchev's speech to the session of the



Supreme Council. They fully agree with the international situation and the Cuban conflict. Having received the second part of Khrushchev's speech which contained a secret criticism of the position and conduct of the CCP, they thought it right, after they had printed it, to also publish the content of the Chinese article. As we can see, they are following a policy of balancing two sides.

[Source: *Szyfrogramy from Moskwa 1962, 6/77 w-83 t-1263. Polish Foreign Ministry Archive (AMSZ), Warsaw. Obtained by James G. Hershberg (George Washington University) and translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska (Troy University).]*

## Notes

1 Despite occasional grumbling about the Cubans, Warsaw continued to provide political, moral, and some material support—a pattern repeated during that stretch of the cold war in Poland's approach to the Vietnam War and its relations with the communist government of North Vietnam in Hanoi. See James Hershberg, *Marigold: The Lost Chance for Peace in Vietnam* (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Stanford University Press, 2012).

2 See Gomulka's 20 November 1963 comments, reported in a Hungarian record located and translated by Csaba Bekes, published in the collection of Hungarian documents published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

3 The exception is a Polish journalist's report of a 27 November 1962 conversation with senior Cuban communist Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, which was obtained by the National Security Archive for its October 2002 conference in Havana to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the missile crisis.

4 Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble"—Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy 1958-1964* (New York: Norton and Co., 1997), pp. 163-65.

5 Records in the Poland folder of the National Security Files at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston show that US officials tried vainly to convince the Poles to cancel Rapacki's visit to Cuba, arguing that it would inflame critics who would oppose improving economic relations with a communist country, regardless of claims that it deserved better treatment in view of domestic reforms. Comparable domestic political complications also plagued and ultimately derailed Kennedy administration efforts around this time to secure Congressional approval to remove trade barriers with Yugoslavia.

6 See Henry Raymont, "Poles Try, But Fail to Calm Castro," *Washington Post*, 9 September 1962.

7 On Mikoyan's visit, see esp. Sergo Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Woodrow Wilson Press/Stanford University Press, 2012), which includes a virtually complete Soviet record of Mikoyan's exchanges in Cuba and his cabled dialogue with Khrushchev back in Moscow.

8 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the Vice-Chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

9 Poland's Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

10 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-vhair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

11 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

12 On 5 May 1948, the foundation of the Organization of the American States (OAS) took place in Bogota, Colombia. Cuba was one of its founding members. On 22 January 1962, the OAS held the Eighth Meeting of Consultation of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Punta del Este, Uruguay. As the result, Cuba was effectively suspended from the OAS from January 22, 1962 until June 3, 2009.

13 Blas Roca (1908-1987), Cuba's leading communist theoretician and supporter of Fidel Castro.

14 Raul Roa Garcia (1907-1982) served in the Foreign Ministry of Cuba from 1959 to 1976; he was a lawyer and an intellectual.

15 A journalist and the Cuban ambassador to Mexico and then the United Nations in the early 1960s.

16 The reference here is to the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (commonly known as the Rio Treaty). Article 8 of the Rio Treaty states: "For the purposes of this Treaty, the measures on which the Organ of Consultation may agree will comprise one or more of the following: recall of chiefs of diplomatic missions; breaking of diplomatic relations; breaking of consular relations; partial or complete interruption of economic relations or of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and radiotelephonic or radiotelegraphic communications; and use of armed force." Source: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/decad061.asp#art8](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decad061.asp#art8).

17 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the Vice-Chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

18 Poland's Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

19 Aleksei I. Adzhubei (1924 – 1993), Soviet journalist (editor of the newspaper *Izvestia*) and the son-in-law of Nikita Khrushchev; a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; political insider, speechwriter, and advisor to Khrushchev.

20 Commonly used in reference to Finland's policies of not challenging the Soviet Union during the Cold War; the term is also used when referring to a country's policies of not challenging the policies of its greater neighbor (e.g. Cuba and the United States) while maintaining its national sovereignty.

21 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-vhair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

22 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

23 Article 32 of the OAS Charter states: The Organization of American States accomplishes its purposes by means of: a) The

Inter-American Conference; b) The Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs; c) The Council; d) The Pan American Union; e) The Specialized Conferences; and f) The Specialized Organizations. Source: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/decad062.asp#art32](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decad062.asp#art32).

24 Article 8 of the Rio Treaty states: "For the purposes of this Treaty, the measures on which the Organ of Consultation may agree will comprise one or more of the following: recall of chiefs of diplomatic missions; breaking of diplomatic relations; breaking of consular relations; partial or complete interruption of economic relations or of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and radiotelephonic or radiotelegraphic communications; and use of armed force."

25 Article 20 of the OAS Charter signed at Bogota Conference of American States, Charter of the Organization of American States; March 30-May 2, 1948, states: "All international disputes that may arise between American States shall be submitted to the peaceful procedures set forth in this Charter, before being referred to the Security Council of the United Nations." Source: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/decad062.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/decad062.asp).

26 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the Vice-Chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

27 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

28 The reference here should be to Resolution VI not Resolution IV, as it is Resolution VI – The Exclusion of the Present Government of Cuba from Participation in the Inter-American System – which was adopted at Punta del Este by majority vote of 14.

29 Points 3 and 4 of Resolution VI state, respectively: 3. That this incompatibility excludes the present Government of Cuba from participation in the inter-American system. 4. That the Council of the Organization of American States and the other organs and organizations the inter-American system adopt without delay the measures necessary to comply with this resolution. Source: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/intam17.asp#b4](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/intam17.asp#b4).

30 Resolution II, point 2-a, states: "The Council of the Organization shall select membership of the Special Consultative Committee on Security from a list of candidates presented by the governments, and shall define immediately terms of reference for the Committee with a view to achieving the full purpose of this resolution." Source: <http://www.oas.org/consejo/meetings%20OF%20consultation/actas/acta%208.pdf>.

31 Resolution II, point 1 and 2-c, respectively state: 1. To request the Council of the Organization of American States to maintain all necessary vigilance, for the purpose of warning against any acts of aggression, subversion, or other dangers to peace and security, or the preparation of such acts, resulting from the continued intervention of Sino-Soviet powers in this hemisphere, and to make recommendations to the governments of the member states with regard thereto. 2-c. The Special Consultative Committee on Security shall submit to the Council of the Organization, no later than May 1, 1962, an initial general report, with pertinent recommendations regarding measures which should be taken. Source: <http://www.oas.org/consejo/meetings%20OF%20consultation/actas/acta%208.pdf>.

32 Resolution VIII, point 2: To charge the Council of the Organization of American States. in accordance with the circumstances and with due consideration for the constitutional or legal limitations of each and every one of the member states, with studying the feasibility and desirability of extending the suspension of trade to other items, with special attention to items of strategic importance. Source: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/intam17.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/intam17.asp).

33 Poland's Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

34 Blas Roca (1908 – 1987), a leading theoretician of the Cuban Revolution and the leader of the former Popular Socialist Party.

35 Emilio Aragonés Navarro (1928 – 2007), one of the original members of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement; friends with Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

36 Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas was formed in July 1961 following the Cuban Revolution and the fall of the Fulgencio Batista regime. The ORI was comprised of the members of the revolutionary organization called the "26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement" of Fidel Castro, the Popular Socialist Party of Blas Roca, and the Revolutionary Directorate of March 13<sup>th</sup> of Faure Chomón Mediavilla. On March 26, 1962, the ORI was transformed into Partido Unido de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba (PURSC). In 1965, the PURSC was transformed into the Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) which exists to this day.

37 Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar (1901-1973) served as Cuba's president twice: 1940 – 1944 and 1952 – 1959.

38 Claris is an embassy/consular letter reporting on information included in the press.

39 "The 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement" – movement led by Fidel Castro that overthrew the regime of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba in 1959. After Castro's victory, the movement was integrated into the Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas (ORI) in 1961.

40 The Popular Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Popular*) was formed in 1925 by a group including Blas Roca, Anibal Escalante, Fabio Grobart, and Julion Antonio Mella. It was later merged into the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI), the precursor of the current Communist Party of Cuba.

41 The November 1960 Conference of the Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties was attended by delegations from 81 countries and took place in Moscow.

42 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

43 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

44 Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas was formed in July 1961 following the Cuban Revolution and the fall of the Fulgencio Batista regime. The ORI was comprised of the members of the revolutionary organization called the "26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement" of Fidel Castro, the Popular Socialist Party of Blas Roca, and the Revolutionary Directorate of March 13<sup>th</sup> of Faure Chomón Mediavilla. On March 26, 1962, the ORI was transformed into Partido Unido de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba (PURSC). In

1965, the PURSC was transformed into the Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) which exists to this day.

45 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

46 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

47 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

48 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Winiewicz, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki, Comrade Krajewski.

49 Przemysław Ogrodziński (1918 – 1980), Polish diplomat, Poland's head of mission to the International Commission for Control and Supervision in Vietnam, Poland's ambassador to India and Norway.

50 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

51 Marian Dobrosielski, professor of philosophy, a long-time employee of the Polish Foreign Service; he served as the ambassador to England (1969-1972); the head of the Polish delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1972-1981); and as Poland's deputy foreign minister (1978-1981).

52 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

53 Przemysław Ogrodziński (1918 – 1980), Polish diplomat, Poland's head of mission to the International Commission for Control and Supervision in Vietnam, Poland's ambassador to India and Norway.

54 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

55 Charles E. "Chip" Bohlen (1904 – 1974), US career diplomat; he served as the US ambassador to the Soviet Union (1953-1957), to the Philippines (1957 – 1959), and then to France (1962-1968).

56 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Winiewicz, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki, Comrade Milnikiel.

Deputy Prime Ministers: Comrade Wierblowski, Comrade Kasman, Comrade Gede, Comrade Trampczynski, Comrade Wicha, Comrade Bordzilowski, Comrade Moczar, Comrade Szlachcic. Point One to Comrade [Aleksander] Krajewski.

57 This political group was formed in July 1961. The group consolidated the 26 July Movement of Fidel Castro, the Socialist Party of Blas Roca, and the Revolutionary Directorate of March 13 of Faure Chomon. The ORI was dissolved on March 26, 1962 when it was replaced by the Partido Unido de la Revolucion (PURSC) de Cuba. Given that ORI was dissolved in March 1962, it is curious

why Poland's authorities continued to refer to the Cuban leadership as ORI and not PURSC. On October 3, 1965, PURSC was replaced by El Partido Comunista de Cuba (PCC) – the Communist Party of Cuba.

58 In early 1962, Fidel Castro openly denounced Anibal Escalante – First Secretary of the Communist Party.

59 Reference here is most likely to the 1956 events in Poland, known as the Polish October, in which the Polish United Workers' Party went through a crisis (brought about by poor economic conditions in Poland, Khrushchev's Secret Speech, destalinization, etc.), which resulted in the reinstatement of a moderate Władysław Gomułka as first Secretary and a compromise between the proponents of Stalinism and those wanting more political and economic liberalization.

60 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Winiewicz, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki.

61 The reference here is to Poland's post-WWII western borders along the Oder-Neisse line which were not de jure recognized by the Federal Republic of Germany.

62 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

63 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

64 U Thant visited Poland in September 1962.

65 Gaitskell visited Poland in August 1962.

66 The Casablanca group was founded in 1961 and included Algeria, Egypt, Ghana and Morocco. The group, which represented more radical and socialist attitudes combined with the idea of Pan-Africanism, was eventually dissolved and merged into the organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

67 Reference here to the Soviet Declaration that the US attack on Cuba will lead to nuclear war.

68 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

69 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

70 Reference here to the Soviet declaration that the US attack on Cuba would lead to nuclear war.

71 Poland's Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

72 Brezhnev met with President Josip Tito of Yugoslavia and became an honorary citizen of Belgrade.

73 Reference here to the conference of Afro-Asian nations held in Belgrade in 1961, a conference which led to the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War.

74 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

75 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

76 [Ben Bella had just visited Washington, where he met with President Kennedy, and had gone on to Havana—ed.]

77 [Gromyko, who was in the United States to attend the UN General Assembly session in New York, had come to Washington on October 18 to meet with President Kennedy and Secretary of State Rusk—ed.]

78 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

79 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

80 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

81 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's Ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

82 The reference here is to the failed Bay of Pigs invasion launched in April 1961 and carried out by CIA-trained Cuban exiles.

83 Llewellyn E. "Tommy" Thompson (1904 – 1972), John F. Kennedy's Adviser for Soviet Affairs and former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union; he served as ambassador to the Soviet Union twice: 1957 – 1962 and 1967 – 1969.

84 The reference here is to Khrushchev's visit to Beijing in October 1959 (following his successful visit to the United States in September 1959 during which he met President Dwight D. Eisenhower), the last visit which the Soviet leader paid to China and the last visit with Chinese leader Mao Zedong.

85 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

86 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

87 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the Vice-Chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland's ambassador to Brazil.

88 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

89 Gomulka, Cyrankiewicz, Gierek, Jedrychowski, Kliszko, Loga-Sowinski, Ochab, Rapacki, Spychalski, Zambrowski, Zawadzki, Jarosinski, Strzelecki, Starewicz, Wicha, Moczar, Korczynski, Naszkowski, Wierna, Michalowski, Birecki, Katz-Suchy, Siedlecki, Milnikiel, Krajewski.

90 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

91 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's Ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

92 It is not clear which communist embassy the Polish Ambassador is referring to here.

93 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

94 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

95 It is not clear whether the reference here is to the United States Naval Station at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, which the United States began to lease, starting in 1903 during the Spanish-American War, and continued to keep even after Fidel Castro came to power.

Most likely, the reference here is to the Soviet missiles installed in Cuba.

96 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Wicha, Comrade Bodzilowski, Comrade Korczynski, Comrade Naszkowski, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki, Comrade Katz-Suchy, Comrade Milnikiel.

97 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

98 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's Ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

99 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Wicha, Comrade Bodzilowski, Comrade Korczynski, Comrade Naszkowski, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki, Comrade Katz-Suchy, Comrade Milnikiel.

100 Reference here to Adlai Stevenson's famous presentation on October 25, 1962 at the United Nations Security Council during which he challenged the Soviet representative Valerian Zorin to admit that the Soviets had installed missiles on Cuba. When Zorin refused to say whether there were Soviet missiles on Cuba, Stevenson said: "I am prepared to wait for my answer until hell freezes over," after which he presented photographs taken by U-2 planes which proved the presence of these missiles in Cuba.

101 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

102 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).

103 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

104 Reference here is to the Sino-Indian border clashes when the Chinese forces launched an offensive across the McMahon Line and in Ladakh, a region of Jammu and Kashmir, the northernmost state of India, on 20 October 1962.

105 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

106 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland's Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

107 Gomulka, Cyrankiewicz, Gierek, Jedrychowski, Kliszko, Loga-Sowinski, Ochab, Rapacki, Spychalski, Zambrowski, Zawadzki, Jarosinski, Strzelecki, Czesak, Naszkowski, Wierna, Michalowski, Birecki, Katz-Suchy, Milnikiel, Krajewski

108 Poland's ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

109 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland's ambassador to the Soviet Union from 2 December 1959 to 25 September 1963.

110 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland's ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).

111 Poland's Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).

112 Józef Czesak, the head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party.

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- 113 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).
- 114 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 115 Comrade Gomulka, Comrade Cyrankiewicz, Comrade Gierek, Comrade Jedrychowski, Comrade Kliszko, Comrade Loga-Sowinski, Comrade Ochab, Comrade Rapacki, Comrade Spychalski, Comrade Zambrowski, Comrade Zawadzki, Comrade Jarosinski, Comrade Strzelecki, Comrade Czesak, Comrade Bodzilowski, Comrade Korczynski, Comrade Naszkowski, Comrade Wierna, Comrade Michalowski, Comrade Birecki, Comrade Katz-Suchy, Comrade Milnikiel.
- 116 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland’s ambassador to the Soviet Union from 2 December 1959 to 25 September 1963.
- 117 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).
- 118 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 119 The reference here is to Cable No. 16028 (printed above) from the Polish embassy in Washington, D.C., to Warsaw, dated 30 October 1962 based on a conversation with “an important American interlocutor.”
- 120 Poland’s Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).
- 121 Poland’s ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).
- 122 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland’s ambassador to the Soviet Union from December 2, 1959 to September 25, 1963.
- 123 Former Soviet ambassador to Cuba. 1960-62.
- 124 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland’s Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 2 December 1959 to 25 September 1963.
- 125 Former Soviet ambassador to Cuba, 1960-62.
- 126 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).
- 127 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 128 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).
- 129 Julisz Katz-Suchy (1912 – 1971), former Polish ambassador to the United Nations and ambassador to India (1957-1962).
- 130 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 131 Mieczyslaw Rakowski (1926 – 2008), Editor-in-Chief of *Polityka* weekly.
- 132 Józef Czesak, the head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party.
- 133 Józef Czesak, the head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party.
- 134 Eugeniusz Milnikiel (1905 -1969), former Polish ambassador to Great Britain (1953 -1956).
- 135 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s Ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 136 This party was established in 1918, but it was dissolved the Comintern in 1938 as part of Stalin’s Great Purges.
- 137 Official in the Polish Foreign Ministry. In 1950-1951, he served as the vice-chair of the Administrative and Budgetary Committee of the UN General Assembly. In 1965-1970, he served as Poland’s ambassador to Brazil.
- 138 Poland’s ambassador to Cuba (1961-1965).
- 139 The reference here is to the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 known as the “Operation Barbarossa,” which followed after Stalin signed the Treaty of Non-Aggression (commonly known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact) on 23 August 1939.
- 140 INRA (Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria) – NIAR (the National Institute of Agrarian Reform).
- 141 Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 142 PZPR (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza), the PUWP (the Polish United Workers’ Party).
- 143 ORI (Organizaciones Revolucionarias Integradas), the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations.
- 144 PSP (Partido Socialista Popular), the Popular Socialist Party.
- 145 PAP (Polska Agencja Prasowa) – PPA (the Polish Press Agency).
- 146 Leopold Unger (1922 -2011) was a Polish journalist, columnist and essayist who left Poland in 1969, permanently settling in Brussels, Belgium.
- 147 Adam Rapacki (1909 -1970), served as Poland’s foreign minister between 1956 and 1968.
- 148 Edward Drożniak (1902 – 1966), Poland’s ambassador to the United States (1961-1966).
- 149 Polish leader Gomulka’s right-hand man.
- 150 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland’s Ambassador to the Soviet Union from December 2, 1959 to 25 September 1963.
- 151 Boleslaw Jaszczuk, Poland’s Ambassador to the Soviet Union from December 2, 1959 to September 25, 1963.



## Polish-Soviet Exchanges on Cuba, 1963-1965

**I**n the following excerpts, drawn from Polish archival records translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska, Polish communist leader Władysław Gomułka and Soviet leaders discussed various issues related to Cuba during their meetings. Cuban sugar was discussed during a conversation between Gomułka and Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow in April 1964, in particular the subject of Soviet purchases of the commodity and aid to Havana to increase production. Interestingly, the Pole seems far more skeptical than the Soviet about Cuba's capacity to meet promised sales figures. A year earlier, Khrushchev had written Gomułka regarding a shift in the prices they were going to pay Havana for sugar, to recognize a rise on global markets. The May 1963 letter is included here. Both documents make clear that buying Cuban sugar, thereby replacing the missing American buyer that had vanished due to the US economic embargo, constituted an ideological obligation, to support a threatened fraternal country, rather than merely an economic or trade matter.

Excerpts from two summits in 1965, after Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964, deal with other issues—most visibly the Sino-Soviet split, especially against the background of the escalation in Vietnam. In April in Warsaw, the new general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), Leonid I. Brezhnev, and Soviet prime minister Alexei N. Kosygin—two of the leaders of the group that had toppled Khrushchev—referred to the recent visit to Moscow of Cuban defense minister Raúl Castro, and both were pleased to note a recent precipitous decline in Sino-Cuban relations.<sup>1</sup> And that October, at a Belarussian forest retreat, Brezhnev happily cited the further isolation of the Chinese—to the point that, in this zero-sum contest for support within the communist world, Fidel Castro's trust in Moscow had so greatly improved that even his unpleasant memories of Soviet-Cuban discord during the missile crisis exactly three years earlier had receded.<sup>2</sup> As events would show, that assessment of mutual trust was somewhat premature.—J.H.



### Note of Polish-Soviet Talks in Moscow on 13-15 April 1964

Secret of Special Significance

Participants from the Polish side: Comrade(s) Władysław

Gomułka, Józef Cyrankiewicz, Zenon Kliszko, Stefan Jędrychowski, Adam Rapacki, Edmund Pszczółkowski, Roman Fidelski, Marian Dmochowski, Henryk Różański, Manfred Lachs and Tadeusz Findziński

Participants from the Soviet side: Comrades N. K. Khrushchev, A.N. Kosygin, A. I. Mikoyan, N. V. Podgorny, J. V. Andropov, M.A. Lesechko, P. F. Lomako, A.A. Gromyko, A B. Aristov, M.R. Kuzhmin, N.P. Fiurbin, and B. P. Miroshnichenko

[Excerpts regarding Cuba]

...

Gomułka: How much sugar is Cuba going to provide?<sup>3</sup>

Khrushchev: The agreement amounts to 10 million tons annually.

Gomułka: Our people didn't believe it.

Khrushchev: I am not going to lie. I am not a Turk.

Jędrychowski: This is impossible.

Khrushchev: Don't say these things. Cuba possesses ideal conditions for sugar production. They want to have a monopoly [in this area]. Last year, [they sent] 2, 600 thousand [i.e., 2.6 million] tons of sugar. They are going to increase it gradually every year and by 1968 they will have provided 10 million [tons of sugar].

Gomułka: With my hand on my heart: I don't believe it.

Khrushchev: I trust Fidel's estimates. He came to us recently [in January 1964] as a totally different person. He was [like] the Flying Dutchman before.<sup>4</sup> He was even like that on 1 May, but now I was pleasantly surprised. He thinks practically and [sees] that his own people are being subjective. Some of our comrades also share your attitude, but I am of a different opinion. We proposed to him [Fidel] that we would increase the mechanization of sugarcane planting and harvesting. We designed a combine-harvester which works well.

Gomułka: [Ernesto Che] Guevara said that mechanization [of agriculture] does not always work under Cuban conditions. They ran out of workers and they were late with their harvest that was [to constitute sugar deliveries] to Chile.

Khrushchev: This is because they only had two such combine-harvesters for a trial period, but they will receive 500 [such machines from us] next year. The only thing, though, is that they need to be tested for one season and the Cubans do not want to wait. They are asking us to produce more such combine-harvesters according to the same model. They

are also saying that they would not lodge any complaints towards us in the future if these machines don't work properly. [Sugarcane] is such a plant that easily submits to mechanization. Our machines are not complicated at all – [they are] planters. We even have machines that can plant forests. They have been technically tested fifteen years ago back in the Urals. Castro asked for such machines. We will continue to mechanize their agriculture. What we have left now is [to mechanize their] transport and sugar refineries. The production ability of their sugar refineries is higher. However, there has been a decrease in the production of sugar. Until 1970, we will produce on our own 9 million tons of sugar for our own needs. Besides, we will receive sugar from Castro. He forced us to agree to accept yet 10 million tons at 6 cents per English pound. It is more expensive and we are going to incur losses, [but all of this is to] help Castro [See below, Khrushchev's letter to Gomułka regarding Soviet assistance to Cuba.]

Gomułka: Will you export that sugar?

Khrushchev: We cannot because we should not compete with Castro. If we decide to export that sugar, we will do so in our traditional markets. However, we will not go on the market as Castro's competitors. Sugar will cost us more than our own production, but the price will be more beneficial to the people. The several millions [that we will lose on] sugar are aimed at aiding the world revolution. He [Fidel] asked us to give him a permanent price, [but], these are temporary prices. [Fidel], however, counts on the fact that he will be able to maintain the prices at this level.

Gomułka: Other countries are developing their [sugar] production. Latin America is building [sugar] refineries, as is France, and so on.

Khrushchev: To be sure, we signed an agreement [with Cuba], but we will also develop our own production because, as the saying goes, you can count on God, but it is better to count on yourself. Castro told us that if we did not agree to these prices, then he did not know how he could show up back in Cuba.

Gomułka: I don't think that there is much danger of him providing you with the 10 million [tons of sugar which he promised].

Khrushchev: I believe that he will, because sugarcane is the kind of plant which easily submits to mechanization. The [Cuban] workers will make very good wages and they will cherish their professions.

Gomułka: But, the production of sugar in Cuba has been going down for the past three years now.

Khrushchev: You should not believe in what they are writing. This information is only for you. They are decreasing the numbers on purpose. The floods have not destroyed anything. Castro told me this himself. This year, they have carried out

their obligations towards us very well. And, after all, this was the hardest year. Castro is buying ready[-to-use] production from America and Japan. The Cuban issue is the issue of sugar. I counted on our Kuban.<sup>5</sup> I thought that it was going to provide us with sugar.

Gomułka: When it comes to sugar, there is never enough of it.

Khrushchev: We have 25 sugar refineries. We get a lot of sugar [from them]. I would do things differently. I would build [refineries] in Siberia. And I would leave the Kuban lands for growing wheat. We get 300-400 quintals of sugar. Even if we were to get between 200 to 150 of Siberian sugar, then we would not have to transport it. Kuban is a wheat country. There isn't a better region to grow wheat than Kuban. Maybe we will change machines in the sugar refineries in Kuban...

...

[Source: Andrzej Paczkowski, ed. *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego PRL-ZSRR, 1956-1970* (London: Aneks Publishers, 1998), pp. 182, 203-204. Translated by Margaret K. Gnoińska.]



### Letter from Nikita Khrushchev to Władysław Gomułka regarding Sugar Prices, 16 May 1963

6 May 1963

[Translation from Russian]<sup>6</sup>

Dear Comrade Gomułka!

In connection with a drastic change [in prices] of the sugar world market, the Soviet government examined the prices of unrefined sugar purchased from the Cuban Republic.

At the end of 1960, the Soviet Union, while buying Cuban sugar, agreed to Cuban proposals to purchase sugar from Cuba [at] 4 US cents per one English pound, which amounts to 75 rubles and 37 kopek per one ton of sugar. At that time, sugar prices were less, that is, about 5 rubles per one ton.

Recently, [however], the prices of sugar on the world market have greatly soared and are currently significantly higher than the price which we are paying the Cuban side for sugar deliveries. And so, for example, in January 1963, the average price of sugar on the world market, according to our foreign trade organizations, amounted to 107 rubles per ton, in February [it was] 102 rubles, and in the second half of April [it] went up to 157 rubles.

We realize that [this change in] price is of a temporary nature. However, we must take into account the situation that

had emerged on the world market. We must also take into account our trade relations with the Cuban Republic, especially since our country is not only an importer of sugar, but it also acts as an exporter in the internal [communist] market, while exploiting favorable situations in some cases.

The Cuban side has not broached the issue of revising the prices of sugar provided by Cuba and continues to adhere to the agreement which we made.

However, in order to maintain and to develop fraternal relations between Cuba and our nations, the Soviet Union made a decision to increase the price of the Cuban sugar in 1963 by about 40 rubles, establishing the price at 120 rubles per ton. In case the world prices go down, this price will be appropriately readjusted. We consider it imperative to inform you about this decision [made by] the Soviet government.

Respectfully,

N. Khrushchev

[signature]

First Secretary of CC CPSU

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

[Source: Andrzej Paczkowski, ed. *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego PRL-ZSRR, 1956-1970* (London: Aneks Publishers, 1998), pp.169-170. Translation by Margaret K. Gnoinska.]



### **Note of Polish-Soviet Talks in Warsaw on 5 April 1965**

Participants from the Polish side:

Comrade(s) Władysław Gomułka, Józef Cyrankiewicz, Zenon Kliszko, Stefan Jędrzychowski, Adam Rapacki, Marian Spychalski, Bolesław Jaszczuk, W. Wicha, M. Naszkowski, Edmund Pszczółkowski, and other experts and advisers.

Participants from the Soviet side: Leonid Brezhnev, A. Kosygin, Y. Andropov, N. Krilov, T. Kisielov, W. Drozdenko, A. Aristov

[Excerpts regarding Cuba]

...

Brezhnev: Raul Castro came to visit [recently]; he hunted for two days. We have very good relations. Their leadership, including Fidel [Castro], [seem to] have better understood

[what] the Chinese [are about]. They feel offended by them; especially after [Chairman] Mao [Zedong] refused to receive [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara during his visit to China [in February 1965]. Raul explained that Fidel's statement was not directed at us, but against the Chinese. They are concerned about a possible withdrawal of our troops from Cuba. He assesses our moves in Vietnam as correct ones. He approves of them, because, as they say, by defending Vietnam we are also defending the whole world and our camp. They insist that I visit Cuba, but I have many other planned activities. Besides, in connection with the events in the [Far] East one should not spread oneself [too] thin. They understand that...

...

Kosygin: China is becoming more isolated, for example, they have already lost Cuba and therefore their hope of creating some kind of a base in Latin America has been shattered. They have done this in a very brutal manner...Castro advised us to strengthen our influence in Asia...

...

[Source: Andrzej Paczkowski, ed. *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego PRL-ZSRR, 1956-1970* (London: Aneks Publishers, 1998), pp. 267, 277-278. Translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska.]



### **Note of Soviet-Polish Talks in Białowieża Forest (Belarus) on 29 – 30 October 1965**

The following participated on the Polish side:

- Władysław Gomułka, First Secretary of the CC [Central Committee] PUWP [Polish United Workers' Party]
- Józef Cyrankiewicz, member of the Politburo CC PUWP, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the PPR [Polish People's Republic]
- Zenon Kliszko, member of the Politburo and Secretary of CC PUWP
- Stefan Jędrzychowski, member of the Politburo CC PUWP, Chairman of the Planning Commission at the Council of Ministers of PPR

The following participated on the Soviet side:

- L.[eonid] I[llich] Brezhnev, First Secretary of the CC CPSU
- K. T. Mazurov, member of the Presidium of the CC CPSU, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of

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Ministers of the USSR

- Y. V. Andropov, Secretary of the CC CPSU
- V. N. Novikov, member of the CC CPSU, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR

[...]

Brezhnev: And now, we can't even help the Poles, the Germans, and Cuba (they are asking for an additional delivery of 100 thousand tons).<sup>7</sup> Cubans belong to people who are expansive. They would want everything all at once. We explained to them: why do you need to reconstruct 140 factories? We told them: do half, that is, 70 plants and then construct the second half. I wrote to Fidel (Castro) regarding this issue. [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez [Chairman of the National Agricultural Reform Institute in Cuba] immediately came to see us. They have not understood our intentions well and they were concerned. But, we have explained to them how many people, how much technology, and how much it would all cost. We advised them to build key plants whose reconstruction would increase their production by 80% and the remainder would be reconstructed in the second place [later]. We managed to convince them, they calmed down, and they thanked us. And now we need to give them 100 thousand tons for this reconstruction. Therefore, such unforeseen matters have emerged...

[...]

Gomułka: ...Had we received from you potassium salts, we could give up on purchasing them from capitalist nations, and then we could immediately send soda ash to you.

Mazurov: But, we only have one factory. This [potassium salts] is a very scarce commodity.

Jedrychowski: But, you are exporting it to Czechoslovakia, Hungary and to Cuba.

Mazurov: [Yes, we do, but in] very little amounts and only because Cuba can't purchase this commodity from anywhere else.

Gomułka: It is not nice to talk about a fraternal country, but the Czechs are using more fertilizers than we are. You, comrade Brezhnev, don't want to agree with what I am saying in order to treat us equally. The fact, however, is that the Czechs are richer...

[...]

Brezhnev: The Romanians, Czechs, Bulgars, Germans, Vietnamese (four times), and then a Korean delegation, visited us [this year]. Ayub Khan, Shastri, and four times Cubans (Raul [Castro], [Ernesto Che] Guevara and [Osvaldo Torrado] Dorticos)...[also visited us]...They all wanted to get to know the new leadership, but not only that. Some of them discussed their relations with others, e.g. Iran, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan...

[...]

Brezhnev: I have talked about the process that is taking place in the world. Therefore, if this [process] is not a total isolation of the Chinese, then it is totally clear that they are dogmatists, brawlers, and provocateurs. Right now, in Fidel's feelings towards us, and his trust towards us even the Caribbean Crisis has disappeared [lit. drowned]...Therefore, the process of isolating China continues, including that of their position, their theory, and their policy. They are aiding in this process with their own policies, for example, towards Vietnam, Indonesia, Pakistan...

[...]

Brezhnev: The last thing [I would like to discuss] is the issue of the international conference of the communist movement and the possibility of convening such a conference. Now, we have no possibility to talk about the dates of the conference, but we should not give up on the idea. Neither regional nor bilateral meetings can serve as a substitute for an international forum. But, we must continue bilateral, trilateral, or multilateral conferences. In this year, the CPSU followed exactly such a line. We have invited them to take a rest and we proposed an exchange of opinions. Party delegations came to visit us, we conduct exchanges of experiences, etc., at a significantly wider extent than before. During this time, there were regional—Italian and French meetings—these are large and influential parties, but they also have their conflicts. It is not a bad thing that there was a conference of communist European parties in Belgium. There is to be another one this winter.

It is also good that there was a conference of communist parties of Latin America in Havana, and it was even better that they all went to China to listen to the heavenly Marxist and came back spitting in all directions. [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez simply was afraid to return to Cuba, he was simply afraid that Fidel would not believe him. And indeed, Fidel sent [Ernesto Che] Guevara and everything fell into place.

Rodriguez feared that they [the Chinese] would murder him. Of course, you know the story of the visit.

In a word, if we were to analyze this whole chain of events then we could easily say that the process of isolating China continues and so does [our further] understanding of their rowdiness, differentiation of Marxism from Trotskyism, etc.

[...]

Gomułka: Raul Castro visited us in March. I extensively argued that China would not go for such an agreement.<sup>8</sup> [I said to them]: ask the Chinese whether they would go for making such an agreement to help Cuba. No, they would not, [I said]. They would not go for it in Vietnam either.

Brezhnev: Yes, this is a very acute and interesting problem...

[Source: Andrzej Paczkowski, ed. *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego PRL-ZSRR, 1956-1970* (London: Aneks Publishers, 1998), pp. 300; 316 – 317; 319-320; 332; 340; 345; 352; also in *AAN, KC PZPR XIA/83 pp. 195-274*; translated by Margaret K. Gnoinska.]

## Notes

1 On Raul Castro's early 1965 trip to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, see translated Polish, Bulgarian, and

Czechoslovak documents published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*. On the downturn in relations between Havana and Beijing in late 1964 and early 1965, see Yinghong Cheng, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959-1966," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9:3 (Summer 2007): 78-114.

2 On Soviet-Cuban tensions during the period through 1968, see James Blight and Philip Brenner, *Sad and Luminous Days: Cuba's Struggle with the Superpowers after the Missile Crisis* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

3 Fidel Castro unexpectedly came to Moscow in mid-January 1964 and extended the [Soviet-Cuban] agreement regarding sugar deliveries.

4 A legendary ghost ship that can never make port, doomed to sail the oceans forever. It probably originates from 17th-century nautical folklore.

5 Kuban is a geographic region of Southern Russia on the Black Sea between the Don Steppe, Volga Delta, and the Caucasus.

6 This letter has been translated from Russian into Polish. This translation is from Polish into English.

7 It is not clear from the context what 100 thousand tons Brezhnev is referring to here. It could be either cotton, nitrogenous fertilizers, or metals for metallurgical industry.

8 Referring to the lack of agreement and coordination of military aid for North Vietnam between the Soviet Union and China.



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# Gomulka on the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Danger of War

**E**d. note: On 19 November 1962, with the memory of the Cuban Missile Crisis still fresh (and Kremlin emissary Anastas Mikoyan still negotiating its outcome with Fidel Castro), Polish communist leader Władysław Gomułka conversed with David Astor, the long-time editor<sup>1</sup> of the London newspaper The Observer. Much of the conversation concerned efforts for nuclear disarmament (and China's evident race to acquire the atom bomb), but the talk also touched on the recent US-Soviet showdown over Cuba. In this excerpt—taken from a Russian-language record found by Vladislav M. Zubok in the former Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) archives in Moscow<sup>2</sup>—the General Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party, who had come to power amid a surge of nationalism in six years earlier, reflected on the meaning of the recent crisis for the danger of nuclear war. Not surprisingly, as a loyal Warsaw Pact ally, Gomułka praised Nikita Khrushchev for making the “main contribution” to preserving peace and denied the Soviet leader had been “scared” or “forced to retreat” under pressure.<sup>3</sup> Yet, observing that the world was but “one careless step, one careless action [from] the abyss of war,” Gomułka also commended US President John F. Kennedy for his sensible and moderate actions, restraining those military commanders eager to use America's military advantage to destroy the Soviet Union. Ultimately, while cautioning that cold war tensions could still erupt into violent clashes elsewhere in the world (e.g., Berlin), he optimistically and, it turned out, prophetically observed that the frightening recent brush with disaster could prompt leaders of both superpowers to move toward détente.—J.H.



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## Memorandum of Conversation between Polish leader Władysław Gomułka and British journalist David Astor, 19 November 1962 (excerpt)

Top secret  
Copy No. 1

Record of conversation  
of comrade Władysław Gomułka with the editor of the

newspaper “[The] Observer” Mr. David Astor  
19 November 1962

[the conversation begins with the two discussing nuclear disarmament—trans.]

Gomułka: [...] What is the situation today? Recently we witnessed the stand-off between forces of two powers, between two positions in connection with the events around Cuba. The danger of war, when it is talked about for a long time, when it lasts for a long time, becomes psychologically absorbed in the people's consciousness [*soznanie*] so that they no longer fully appreciate it. Like bacteria in a body get used to certain conditions and resist them, so people, too, get used to the danger of war, when it is talked about for a long time, and no longer react to it. Recently, this danger of war, which had not been clearly defined, became reality, a question of today, a question of the hour, it became an immediate threat, which the entire world faced. One careless step, one careless action could have pushed the world over into the abyss of war. The stand-off of the USA and the USSR made everyone feel the sharpness, the extent of this danger. And there were certain forces in the USA, who wanted to take matters to that, who consider that they have a military advantage over the Soviet Union and that they can destroy it. Fortunately, [US President John F.] Kennedy did not represent these forces.

Kennedy did not want a war. If it happened that the position of the President of the United States was occupied by a person who represented the military forces, then one cannot know what could be happening in our world today. (A[stor]. agrees.)

The main contribution to saving peace was made by the Soviet Union, was made personally by [Nikita] Khrushchev as the leader of government and of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I do not want to give an appraisal of the Cuban crisis itself. I only say one thing, that those voices in the West [who say] that the Soviet Union yielded under the pressure of the United States, before the danger of war, that [the Soviet Union] was forced to retreat, that it got scared – are not based on anything. They have no basis.

A[stor]. adds that these views are also dangerous; Kennedy himself and a number of people in the USA government do not believe that the Soviet Union retreated in Cuba as a result of a threat.

G[omulka]. The Soviet Union provided demonstrative evidence that it seeks the solution of international problems by means of compromises. For other than by means of mutual concessions, these problems cannot be solved. The last stand-off between the forces of the USA and the Soviet Union made everyone understand that war is not something far-away, something that one should not now be apprehensive about. By contrast, it showed that the war can be unleashed at any time. Today a clash like this occurred around Cuba; tomorrow there may be clashes in other parts of the world, for example, in Germany, in West Berlin, which is a time-bomb, placed under peace in Europe.

A[stor] fully agrees to this.

G[omulka] continues. The new thing that appeared in connection with the stand-off of forces around Cuba is that in the minds of leaders of many countries, in the minds of the

people responsible for the fate of the world, there ripened a conviction that one must necessarily look for a way towards détente, towards the resolution of ripe international problems. If this is so, if one can move forward détente everywhere in the world, this will be a positive side of the Cuban crisis. [...]

[Source: *Russian State Archive of Contemporary History (RGANI)*, Moscow. Obtained by Vladislav M. Zubok. Translated by Sergey Radchenko.]

### Notes

- 1 Astor edited *The Observer* from 1948 to 1975.
- 2 The document was marked "Top Secret," so presumably the conversation was off-the-record.
- 3 Gomułka had met with Khrushchev in Moscow two weeks earlier, on 4 November, in one of a series of bilateral meetings the Soviet leader had with Warsaw Pact party chiefs. The record of that conversation has not surfaced (either from Russian or Polish archives), but for other documents on Polish policy toward the crisis, including translated cables from Warsaw's ambassadors in Moscow, Washington, and Havana, see elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

# Romania and the Cuban Missile Crisis: Soviet Nuclear Warheads for Romania?

Documents obtained, translated, and introduced by Petre Opris

In recent years, historical research in the Romanian archives has revealed several new aspects regarding the potential endowment of the Romanian Army with Soviet nuclear missiles and the Cuban crisis in the fall of 1962. Thus, at the conference of Defense Ministers of the Warsaw Pact states (Prague, 30 January – 1 February 1962), Marshal Andrei Grechko informed Romanian General Leontin Sălăjan that “[he] intends to propose to the Soviet Government to agree to the delivering of *missiles’ equipped with atomic warheads* to the Warsaw Pact countries (Gheorghiu-Dej’ underlining with a red pencil).”<sup>1</sup> The Romanian Minister of Armed Forces said in his report of 6 February 1962 that Marshal Grechko envisaged the warheads of nuclear missiles requested by Romanian authorities would reach Romania beginning in 1963.<sup>2</sup>

The Romanian authorities had purchased 12 R-11 Soviet missile systems (“SCUD-A” in NATO code) in 1961 to equip the 32<sup>nd</sup> Tactical-Operative Missile Brigade (established in Tecuci, in 1961) and the 37<sup>th</sup> Tactical-Operative Missile Brigade (established in Ineu, in 1962). At the same time, one R-11 system was purchased for training purposes in Ploiești at the Missiles Training Center. It could launch an 8 K 11 missile, which had had a maximum firing range of 170 km and a warhead with different types of loading: explosive (950 kg), nuclear (50 kilotons) or chemical (950 kg).<sup>3</sup>

In order to equip the army with 2 K-6 “Luna” or “FROG” tactical missile systems, the Romanian authorities had established 113, 115 and 180 Tactical Missile Battalions in 1962 (the first and the second one based in Ploiești, and the third one in Craiova) and had bought six 2 P-16 launcher systems and two types of missiles for them: 3 R 9 “Luna 1” and 3 R 9 “Luna 2” (“FROG-3”). Both missiles had a firing range of up to 44 km and one warhead with an explosive or training load (450 kg).<sup>4</sup>

Fortunately for Romania, the intention of the Supreme Commander of the Unified Armed Forces the Warsaw Pact never materialized, the nuclear warheads of missiles purchased by the Romanian authorities since 1961 remaining permanently in the USSR until the end of the Cold War. One possible cause which led Marshal Andrei Grechko to abandon his idea may be related with the failure of the Soviet authorities in the fall of 1962, when the crisis erupted over Soviet nuclear missiles deployed to Cuba.

From another new document found in Bucharest it is possible to see that the proposal to move the Soviet nuclear warheads to Romania beginning in 1963 was not mentioned at

all by Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow on 23 October 1962—the day after US President John F. Kennedy announced the discovery of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba—during his meeting with a Romanian delegation headed by Romanian Communist Party (RCP) General Secretary Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Prime Minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer. They had been returning by plane to Romania after their visits to Indonesia, India, and Burma over the prior two weeks and their stop in Moscow (for twenty hours) on 23 October had as a nominal reason a discussion with Khrushchev about the results which the Romanian delegation obtained during the three visits. But the Cuban crisis changed the planned agenda and Gheorghiu-Dej and Maurer were very surprised by the events. They had learned from the press about the Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba and during the luncheon on 23 October Khrushchev told them that the USSR Council of Ministers had already approved some measures to counter possible actions of the United States against the USSR, Cuba, and the member states of the Warsaw Pact.

After the returning at home, Foreign Minister Corneliu Mănescu prepared a secret report on discussions that Romanian delegation had had with their Soviet counterparts in Moscow. This document was completed on 30 October, and sent to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, who circulated the report which would then be read by all members of the RCP Politburo.

In another original Romanian document, sent by the Minister of Armed Forces to Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej on 6 November 1962, General Leontin Sălăjan mentioned several military measures which had been adopted by the Soviets and imposed on the member states of the Warsaw Pact, as a result of the Soviet nuclear missile crisis in Cuba, thus:

Speaking about the international situation, [Marshal Grechko] described it as the sharpest post-World War II situation, showing that the danger of the outbreak of war has not passed yet.

For it, we must always be ready and he asked for reports to Defense Ministers to continue the actions for maintaining and improving the troop readiness.

[Marshal Grechko] said that it is necessary to keep the troops in No. 2 combat capability, namely all major units of the first echelon must be ready in barracks, with fully effective strength, fully fitted and 100% equipped with the combat technique and vehicles.

The signal units necessary to conduct major units from the first echelon must be completed 100%.

The aviation would remain ready for action to the base aerodromes; the number of combat aircraft in service must double it.

The radar system must operate in continuous research. It would ensure continuous operation of links.

It must strengthen the security for the military objectives and it must guard strategic objectives which have not been guarded until now.

It must take urgent action to repair the combat technique (airplanes, tanks, cars etc.) and the repair techniques that would be able to ensure a perfect shape for combat.

The border divisions must have proper ammunition and fuels as planned in such situations for being ready to give a proper response to the aggressor. It must ensure the viability of access roads in the districts of concentration.<sup>5</sup>

Those measures were mentioned by Marshal Andrei Grechko at a meeting to assess the combat preparedness of the armed forces of the states of the Warsaw Pact (Moscow, 29-30 October 1962).

It is interesting to note that in mid-October 1962, Marshal Grechko visited Romania for several days (together with General Pavel I. Batova, Marshal of Aviation N.S. Skripko, Rear Admiral Seraphim E. Ciursin, Generals A. S. Kharitonov and A. Babadjanian) to assist the Warsaw Pact maneuvers that were held on the Danube River, the Romanian seaside of the Black Sea, and in Bulgaria (16-18 October 1962).<sup>6</sup> Although he could have informed the Romanian Minister of Armed Forces about the operation “Anadyr,” which was ongoing, the Supreme Commander of the Warsaw Pact Unified Armed Forces made no gesture in this direction, and General Sălăjan was also surprised as Gheorghiu-Dej and Maurer were by Kennedy’s revelation on October 22 of the existence of Soviet missiles in Cuba.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, it appears that Romanian authorities didn’t know anything about the existence of the Soviet operation “Anadyr” (i.e., the secret Soviet deployment of nuclear missiles to Cuba) until US President John F. Kennedy revealed it to the world on 22 October 1962. A new argument is the statement of Khrushchev, who told Nicolae Ceausescu on the occasion of receiving an official invitation from Gheorghiu-Dej to visit Romania (Moscow, 8 June 1963). Khrushchev was somewhat apologetic about his failure to inform Gheorghiu-Dej in advance, but explained that few knew the secret even in Moscow, and defended his decision to deploy the missiles as necessary “to frighten America” and thereby protect Cuba from being lost to the socialist camp.<sup>8</sup>

According to some reports, however, Bucharest found Khrushchev’s conduct in the Cuban case less than compelling or reassuring. Former US official Raymond L. Garthoff has revealed that following the crisis, in the fall of 1963, Romania’s foreign minister secretly informed US Secretary of State Dean Rusk that Bucharest had not approved of Khrushchev’s deployment to Cuba, would remain neutral in any East-West conflict triggered by such an aggressive Soviet step, and asked, consequently, that Washington refrain from targeting Romania for retaliation. According to Garthoff, it was clear that the missile crisis was the “precipitating event” in Romania’s decision to distance itself from the Warsaw Pact, a development that only became evident publicly in the ensuing years as Bucharest—under both Gheorghiu-Dej and (his successor after Dej’s death in 1965) Ceausescu—refused to back Moscow in the Sino-Soviet split and in other major foreign policy controversies.<sup>9</sup>

No supporting Romanian documentation on this crucial step has yet been located, but it is clear that Bucharest’s reaction to the Cuban Missile Crisis, and relations with Fidel Castro’s Cuba during these turbulent years in the Cold War and the fragmenting communist world, represent important and potentially fruitful subjects for researchers to tackle in the coming years.



## DOCUMENTS

### Report on Romanian Government Delegation Visit to Moscow and Soviet- Romanian Talks, 23 October 1962

30 October 1962.

The report submitted by Foreign Minister Corneliu Mănescu to the members of the Politburo of the RWP CC, regarding the discussions of the members of a Romanian government delegations and several members of the CPSU and Soviet state’s leaders (Moscow, October 23, 1962).<sup>10</sup>

[Manuscript records:]

16 b USSR

(P.B. plenary)

G[heorghe Gheorghiu-]D[ej]

N[icolae] C[eașescu]

C[hivu] S[toica]

I[on Gheorghe] M[aurer]

E[mil] B[odnăraș]

G[heorghe] A[postol]  
A[lexandru] D[răghici]  
A[lexandru] M[oghioros]  
P[etre] B[orilă]

Comrade GHEORGHE GHEORGHIU-DEJ

- Sole copy.  
- I propose to send [the record] to the members of the Politburo.

October 30, 1962  
ss. Corneliu Mănescu

*Affairs Department of the RWP CC*  
Top Secret  
No. 1522 / S 16 XI 1962

*Politburo Archive of the RWP CC*  
Nr. 1493 / 16.11.1962

## REPORT

of the discussions of the government delegation of the PRR with the CPSU and Soviet state's leaders on 23 October 1962

In the honor of the government delegation of the PRR who had visited Indonesia, India and Burma and had stopped in Moscow for about 20 hours, during his travel to the country, comrade N. S. Khrushchev offered a meal at Kremlin in the afternoon of October 23, that was attended by [the following] comrades: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, Corneliu Mănescu, Nicolae Guină [the Romanian Ambassador in USSR], Ștefan Voicu, A[ndrei] Păcuraru, Tudose V[asilii] from the Romanian side and L.I. Brezhnev, Frol Kozlov, [Alexei] Kosygin, A. Mikoyan, [M.A.] Suslov, E. Grishin, Vasilii V. Kuznetsov (first deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR), Medvedev – Deputy Chief of External Relations Department of the CPSU CC – and Molochikov – Director of Protocol in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. Even from the beginning, the RWP and Romanian state's leaders and the CPSU leaders bound a friendly discussion.

After the moment when comrade N.S. Khrushchev was interested about how our comrades had traveled, by the manner Sukarno welcomed them, he asked if they already had been informed about the latest decisions of the Soviet government (referring if the comrades Brezhnev, Kozlov and Kosygin, who had met the delegation at the airport, informed the Romanian comrades). As comrade Kozlov said that they

had talked very little, only during the time when they had traveled in the car from the airport to the residence, comrade N. S. Khrushchev began to narrate the problem to which it refers. Thus, he mentioned that during the same day (October 23) he had signed a decision of the Council of Ministers for postponing the demobilization of the old quotas from the missiles, air defense and submarine units.

It also sets the performance of some military maneuvers on the border with Turkey and Iran, and in the GDR [German Democratic Republic; East Germany], where will be sent several additional divisions. Marshal Grechko, the supreme commander of allied military forces of the countries from the Warsaw Pact, was tasked to discuss with the representatives of the armed forces of these countries to give currently special attention to the raising preparedness of troops in similar units (missiles, air defense, and submarine). From the Soviet government commission, V. V. Kuznetsov – Deputy Foreign Minister of USSR – summoned the ambassadors of all the socialist countries on the same day (October 23) and informed them of these decisions.

In this way – comrade N. S. Khrushchev emphasized – what Americans resolved within several days (comrade Brezhnev added that they had worked even one Sunday), “we have done in one single night”. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!]*

In fact, it is also normal to be so because [John F.] Kennedy has no authority, due to general conditions in which a president of state is elected in the capitalist world and because that person does not differ by special qualities. [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant!]* Do they want the blockade?

He had been an ordinary journalist, who had written chain stories, and then [he was] member of Congress, but this doesn't mean anything because it is known that in the US a member of Congress may simply be the one that pays more. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!]*

Finally, of course, he was elected president by a series of machinations. So he didn't come to power because of intense work, made to earn the trust of the people, while enjoying authority. Only in socialist countries leaders are elected based on merit and proven quality of service. [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant!]*

After that, comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej briefly presented the visit of the governmental delegation of the PRR in Indonesia, India and Burma, dwelling more on the impressions that our delegation had left from these countries. Stressing particularly the very bad impression of the delegation that was created by the struggling of the people from the countries that they had visited with miserable conditions, *the impressions made in connection with certain leaders of these countries*, comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej showed that, after the visit, our delegation's belief is *that Sukarno enjoys more authority in Indonesia and he has a more focused ori-*



entation to the socialist countries. Subandrio's attitude – the Minister of Foreign Affairs, is more withdrawn and it seems that the most times he has a reactionary position, similar to [Gen. Abdul Haris] Nasution's position. Ne Win, highlighted by comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, seems to be quite shrewd and far-sighted in international affairs. [Indian Premier Jawaharlal] Nehru seems more resigned in a number of problems.

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev showed that the opinions and conclusions reached by the Romanian comrades are the same as those reached by the Soviet comrades, after the visits of comrade N. S. Khrushchev, comrade [Anastas] Mikoyan, and other companions in these countries and currently.

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev insisted more on the attitude of Nehru and the Sino-Indian problem. In this context, comrade [Khrushchev] generally mentioned that *Nehru had oscillated between the line of imperialist countries, neutrality and the socialist countries. Lately, [being] under the influence of the ruling party, of the reactionary forces, Nehru seems to be closer to the line of imperialist countries. The position he occupies in the last time, toward the issue of border conflict with China, is downright reactionary. The Chinese side (the Soviet ambassador in China was informed directly by Zhou En-Lai about this) recently proposed the withdrawal of Chinese and Indian troops at 20 km, on each side of the border. Also under the pressure of the reactionary forces, the Indian side rejected this proposal on the grounds that the border should remain the McMahon line.* [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!]*

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev said that this is not fair because the McMahon line was established by the British in 1912, when India was an English colony and, of course, the British had every incentive to take as much Chinese territory as possible. Therefore, based on proposals of the Chinese side, now would be normal to start bilateral negotiations. [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant]*

The point of view of the Soviet side was communicated to the P.R. of China on 8 October and India on 20 October (through a confidential discussion of the Soviet ambassador in India with J. Nehru). Basically, Nehru considered that the USSR's opinion is good, but in fact he didn't give any practical response that could show the decision that will be taken by him. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!]*

But most troubling is the fact that the General Secretary of the C[ommunist] P[arty] of India [E.M.S. Namboodiripad] was in a wrong position this time, supporting the view of J. Nehru. This is dangerous because it can lead to divisions among the party. He has taken measures in order to know the opinion of CPSU, including the opinion of General Secretary of the C[ommunist] P[arty] of India.

After this brief presentation, comrade N. S. Khrushchev toasted to the Romanian-Soviet friendship and mentioned that the relations between the two parties, between the two countries are very good, very close.

After comrade Gheorghiu-Dej had similarly toasted, we followed the Soviet comrades' proposal and left together to the Grand Theatre (the show "Boris Gudunov") where the discussions have continued during the breaks. Comrade N. S. Khrushchev informed our delegation on issues related to the Soviet relations with Indonesia, the situation in Yemen, Cuba, the USSR-US negotiations on the issue of banning nuclear experiments [tests], the disarmament debates etc.

Regarding the Soviet relations with Indonesia, comrade N. S. Khrushchev said that during the conflict between Indonesia and the Netherlands, conflict generated by the intention to free the ex-Portuguese colonies' territories from Indonesia, Sukarno took the initiative and sent Subandrio to Moscow for asking a military aid – submarines, aircraft and commanders for these things. Starting from the idea that the Soviet carriers can do a good attempt to destroy Dutch aircraft in case of an air attack of the Dutch aviation, the Soviet comrades accepted the help requested, at the same time saying the argument mentioned to Subandrio as well. Yet it seems that he sent all to the Americans. [Manuscript comment:] *V[ery] i[mportant] assessments*

On this occasion, comrade N. S. Khrushchev mentioned that *he doesn't have any guarantee that Sukarno had known about this.* The fact is that, in order not to reach a further decline of US prestige (in case of military clashes [with the USSR], the USA must provide military aid to the Netherlands, which can look like a war of the USA against the colonies and neutral countries in the eyes of world public opinion) *these have influenced the Netherlands to accept negotiation. On the other hand, to prevent excessive growth of the prestige of the USSR in Indonesia, reactionary circles of the world have convinced Sukarno probably not pay much attention to the aid received from the USSR and to reduce the number of Soviet soldiers who are in Indonesia. The fact is that this trend is observed by Sukarno.* However, the discussion revealed that now the Soviets intend to do something in the way of aiding Indonesia.

Further on, comrade N. S. Khrushchev showed that it creates an interesting situation currently in Yemen. The things – he said – happened as follows: the former head of the Royal guard, Colonel A. Salall, man with progressive views, addressed to the Soviet comrades for requesting military aid. In principle, the Soviet comrades agreed to the military aid, but it couldn't directly be done because it hadn't been a free way [from the USSR] to Yemen. But here intervened [Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel] Nasser, who was interested in supporting the achievement of the coup in Yemen. Under these circumstances, an agreement

was established and the USSR provided to Nasser Soviet bomber aircraft, flown by Soviet crews. These aircraft were operated in Yemen under the flag of U[nited] A[rab] R[epublic, i.e., Egypt]. It didn't tell anything about this to the Yemeni Prime Minister, but he likely realized what it is about because, when the bombers had arrived, he saw that they had the flag of UAR, but were flown by Soviets. Nasser certainly won a lot from this action. This – comrade N. S. Khrushchev mentioned – did not interfere too much because even though Nasser doesn't go on the line of building socialism, all the Arabs will come sometime to socialism as it is understood by the Marxist-Leninist. [Manuscript comment:] V[ery] i[mportant] inf[ormation]

Nasser represents an intermediate step, which will be removed in time. At present, principle is that it has succeeded to achieve a victory in the Middle Eastern world, which means a new curtailment of the forces of imperialism. [Manuscript comment:] V[ery] i[mportant] assessment

Regarding the issue of Cuba, comrade N. S. Khrushchev emphasized that even here it being obtained was a positive thing. In this “has contributed” President J. Kennedy, who in one of his recent speeches reminded the danger posed by the Soviet missiles installed in Cuba for a number of US cities (it seems that Kennedy has even nominated, adds comrade Mikoyan), Canada and Latin America. [Manuscript comment:] the same Ken[n]edy without authority ... at[tention!]

These statements will awaken a little the consciousness of the American public opinion, which so far has been dormant thinking that Russia is still far away and, in case of a new war, the US will remain unharmed, creating conditions similar to those of previous wars, when the Americans were enriched because of the war. [Manuscript comment:] At[tention] to these assessments

This is particularly important that, for the first time, the leaders of imperialism come and show to people the danger that awaits him; this shows the weakness of imperialism, which began openly to show the fear. [Manuscript comment:] Faced [with this declaration] with Ken[n]edy and Khrushchev's declarations and the comments as well that have occurred in connection with all about these – and you [should] dra[w] objective concl[usions]

Referring to the Berlin issue, comrade N. S. Khrushchev said that this issue has no longer the acute character which it once had. Currently it has more importance in terms of moral factor. The creating of “The Wall” in Berlin closed the door through which to slip weights in the GDR and other socialist countries. Currently there is a substantial change in the mood of the population of the GDR. So, for example, if a little time before the German doctors were using the term “Sir”, addressing to the Soviet people in GDR, recently they have begun using the term “Comrade”. A new spirit prevails even among the working

class. Previously, some workers came and put conditions on the payroll of enterprises employing, threatening to go the other side [in West Berlin]. Such situations are not repeated today. [Manuscript comment:] at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]

On tests with nuclear weapons the issue of a ban [on testing] began to take shape with the prospects of reaching an agreement with the Americans. Regarding the terrestrial [nuclear] tests, in the atmosphere and in the cosmos, there are already common views. [Manuscript comment:] v[ery] i[mportant]

A problem remained questionable: the underground [nuclear] tests. But even here there have appeared new items. British scientists have recently proposed to solve the main proceedings problem by installing an automatic control stations, without people. The Soviet Union is inclined to accept this proposal, especially because in early November will be the last experiment by [the] internal program. [Manuscript comment:] at[tention!] V[ery] i[mportant]

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev said that the tests made so far have given not only data on existing weapons, but also on the new weapons to be equipped with the Soviet armed forces in the coming years. Series of experiments conducted under a nuclear test were performed only in the atmosphere, as the costs of underground experiments are enormous. Comrade N. S. Khrushchev stated that there is the possibility of signing an agreement with the US Nuclear-Test-ban issue, but the Cuba's issue currently prevents achieving this. Perhaps later it will be reach the mentioned agreement. [Manuscript comment:] at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]

With regard to the general and total disarmament, the Soviet comrades have adopted a somewhat new position, which seems to interest the Americans (as reported by A. A. Gromyko at the current session of the UN): the first stage of acceptance preserves part of the means of transport of nuclear weapons. Initially, the USSR proposed the destruction of all these means. [Manuscript comment:] v[ery] i[mportant] at[tention!] Concessions are made

Americans said that the new Soviet position is interesting and deserves to be studied. [Manuscript comment:] v[ery] i[mportant] at[tention!] to feedback

At the same time – emphasized comrade N. S. Khrushchev – we believe that this problem will continue to be discussed for a long time because the US practically rejects disarmament. As the prestige and authority of the US continues to decline, the only force that this country can still rely on is the military. [Manuscript comment:] And then? What do the Chinese say?

Another issue in brief referred to by comrade N. S. Khrushchev was about the end of crop year in the USSR. Comrade said that it got a good crop this year, but it hadn't obtained the planned amount of grain. Until now, it entered 3.354 billion pounds of grain into a centralized state fund and expects this figure to rise,

whereas in some regions it is still harvesting the corn. If it will also get about 170-180 million pounds, it will reach the amount of grain produced in 1958, namely the highest amount [of grain crop] obtained in the USSR. The livestock sector also have good results, but not as good as expected. [Manuscript comment:] *Agr[iculture]*

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev stressed *among others* that the experience of this year shows that the reorganization of agriculture's management proved to be a welcome step, which gives good results.

*The Soviet industry* – comrade N. S. Khrushchev stated – *work well*, in the third quarter it produced more steel than the US. So thus it is obvious that the US can be matched in the production of the main industrial products. [Manuscript comment:] *Ind[ustry]*

Of course – comrade N. S. Khrushchev mentioned – it is necessary to bear in mind that the US is not currently working at full production capacity. In the third quarter of this year, the steel industry only used 52% of production capacity. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]*

But this is nothing other than a sign of the superiority of the socialist system. [Manuscript comment:] *Yes*

In the same time, comrade N. S. Khrushchev stressed that the Soviet industry still has great possibilities. For using them, it will require some improvements in the system of organization of the party work in industry. [Manuscript comment:] *what org[anizational improvements?]*

When there is only one regional party organ that deals with problems of industry and agriculture issues, inevitably one of the two sectors suffers. *Lately, more attention was given to agriculture, but industry still has the lead role and it will have it in the future as well.* [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]*

Therefore, it was concluded that in each region should have two party committees: one to deal with industry issues and another one to deal with agriculture issues. In this respect, it developed a material that was sent to the party organizations for discussion (the material was also sent for information to the RWP CC and on this occasion comrade Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, being asked if he received it, he confirmed the receiving) and it will be submitted to the Central Committee on 19 November [1962], during the plenary session of the CPSU CC.

Another issue presented by comrade N. S. Khrushchev was about the USSR relations with the GDR. Firstly, comrade [Khrushchev] started with simple information from our delegation about the visit which comrade Walter Ulbricht is going to do in the USSR on 31 October. He visited [Moscow] for an economic delegation of the GDR, led by himself, to be received

for consultation by the Soviet comrades, starting from 24 October. [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant]*

Comrade N. S. Khrushchev showed that they couldn't receive in this day and answered that they are busy (he has hinted that he considered the presence of our delegation in Moscow). Referring to the economic situation of the GDR, comrade N. S. Khrushchev said that the GDR achieved a fair proportion between the labor productivity growth and the wage growth, for the first time in this year. Until this year, the wages grew faster than the labor productivity, [situation] which gave no possibility for the socialist accumulation to be achieved. The state plans were drawn up so that deficits were foreseen from the beginning. [Manuscript comment:] *v[ery] i[mportant]*

The practice of comrades from GDR was also wrong. Once they develop such plans, they came for consultation in the Soviet Union. In fact – comrade N. S. Khrushchev stressed – it was the form in which it demanded economic aids. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]*

Lately, however, the Soviet comrades showed to the comrades from the GDR that it creates an abnormal situation; the Soviet people fought against Germany, they defeated and helped the German people for establishing the bases of socialist construction, but the Soviet people's standard of living was lower than the GDR people's standard of living. In addition, all the Soviet people must give economic aid to the German people. [Manuscript comment:] *at[tention!] v[ery] i[mportant]*. From here we can learn *v[ery] imp[ortant]* lessons 1. When you stan[d on] the position of the hand reached for s[uch] aid, you are not enjoying the prestige; 2. You should keep in mind the realities, to rely firstly on them – you house well, to stay on their feet[.] Each socialist country must stand on its own feet.

Note that, while comrade NS Khrushchev was recounting this discussion that he had had with a comrades from the GDR, comrade Frol Kozlov intervened and said, addressing comrade N. S. Khrushchev: “yes, I remember that you seriously criticized them in that moment”.

[Source: A.N.I.C., fond C.C. al P.C.R. – Cancelarie, dosar 39/1962, f. 118-127. Gavriil Preda, Petre Opris, România în Organizația Tratatului de la Varșovia. Documente (1954-1968), vol. II, Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, București, 2009, p. 91-98; translated by Petre Opris.]



Report on Conversation with Yugoslav Leader Josef Broz Tito re Cuba, November 1962

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Bucharest [22 December 1962]

The report of Academician Ștefan S. Nicolau referring to the visit carried out to Yugoslavia by a delegation of the National High Assembly (12-22 November 1962)

Participants: Ștefan S. Nicolau, Nicolae Armencoiu, Petre Blajovici, Ștefan Boboș, Geo Bogza, Teodor Marinescu, Nicolae Petre, Zoe Rigani, Stoian Stanciu, Gheorghe Timariu, Ștefan Tripsa, Viorel Uibaru.

During the meeting with Iosip Broz Tito, Ștefan S. Nicolau learned the opinion of the Yugoslav leader regarding the crisis of the Soviet missiles from Cuba and the war between India and China: “Tito said «the war danger is very high. It could start from nothing, from a weapon fire or a challenge. The fight for peace is hard also because it is believed that only the weak want peace. The wise step of the Soviet Union, of comrade Khrushchev that made for solving the Cuban problem was interpreted as a weakness. This kind of interpreting is done by mean, irresponsible people, who never experienced war in their country. We hope we will succeed in saving peace. The Chinese-Indian conflict is a sad situation». Then, Tito continued: «We have to do something about this too. It is winter and the fights still continue. The problem is extremely delicate. India has 400 million inhabitants and China 650 million. In India the reaction is very powerful, and the progressive forces, who want to go with the socialist way, regardless of which socialist way, and we must keep them away from the reaction. To me – said Tito – India is the key to this area of the world (Asia). We must not lose it. Many people do not see this constellation; nobody should be humiliated; they need to sit down and solve the problems. I don’t believe anything can be grown in the Himalayas – no corn, no grape vine. If they consider the old friendship between India and China, the strategy is gone, the border must be adjusted. If we want to build socialism and we want to abolish the borders, the gravity of the issues loses its intensity».

On the observation made during the conversation, meaning that the imperialist circles get in the middle of the Chinese-Indian conflict, Tito said that the imperialist circles will continue to do so unless the other party (meaning China) won’t take any measures, its lack of action being the trigger. «We have enough problems – said Tito – and for solving them we need wisdom and patience»”.

[Source: C.H.N.A., the Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Chancellery Collection, file 55/1962, pp. 108-123; translated by Petre Opris.]



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### Report on Talk between Nicolae Ceaușescu and Nikita Khrushchev, Moscow, 8 June 1963 (excerpt)

Ceaușescu was sent in the USSR by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej to arrange a meeting between Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nikita Khrushchev.

During the meeting, Nikita Khrushchev said to Nicolae Ceaușescu:

“By sending missiles to Cuba, we ourselves put our head in a bind. I know comrade Gheorghiu-Dej was upset that I had not informed about sending missiles to Cuba. And he has been rightly upset. When I will meet him, I will explain. Last year I met him personally to tell. Gomulka, Zhivkov, Novotný, Ulbricht knew. I told to Ulbricht’s ear.

Comrade [Gheorghe Gheorghiu-]Dej didn’t know, but I think he will understand me. I didn’t want to inform him through Ambassadors. Here, not even the whole general staff didn’t know. Only the Presidium knew. I went to the adventure. The Chinese didn’t know that we have missiles in Cuba. China thinks the US will absorb Cuba. Do you know when I got the idea of sending missiles to Cuba? When I returned from Romania [18-25 June 1962—P.O.]. I thought well and I realized that the socialist camp will lose Cuba. I sent missiles there to frighten America. The presence of Soviet strategic missiles in Cuba would have been a danger of destruction to American cities.”

[Source: C.H.N.A., the Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Foreign Relations Department Collection, file 17U/1963, p. 46; translated by Petre Opris.]



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### Record of Romanian Workers Party Politburo Discussion, 26 June 1963, re Nikita Khrushchev Visit to Romania

Bucharest [30 June 1963]

Shorthand record of the meeting of the Political Bureau of C.C. of R.W.P. (26 June 1963), after the visit of Nikita Khrushchev in Romania (24-25 June 1963)



*Comrade Leontin Sălăjan*: Why it bothers him that issue raised by the Chinese, who said that primarily each one should rely on themselves [?]

*Comrade Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej*: He [Khrushchev – *our note*] only confirmed that the people of that country are building socialism and we do not know what it is based on.

*Comrade Leontin Sălăjan*: Of course here, with Cuba, I think that he never forgot that he had said to Comrade [Gheorghe] Gheorghiu[-Dej].

*Comrade Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej*: He forgot. I asked myself “why did he forget?” He didn’t talk with me, he didn’t ask my opinion, but just so, I only was informed by him that he sent missiles to Cuba. I am glad that you understood and you were not itching for a drubbing to tell [your views to him], because first you have offended him, is a bad sign for him, it wasn’t a simple problem or secondary.

*Comrade Leontin Sălăjan*: Such a problem should be discussed; by himself he said that we were close to war.

*Comrade Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej*: First of all, the way in which [Khrushchev] presented the problem about Cuba doesn’t stand to logic. He said at one point that it was an adventure on their part, that we couldn’t know if it will generate or not generate a war, then, during the exposure time, expressing his opinion to the end, he wanted to show us how many times they had met and discussed this problem on the Presidium, to indicate that they seriously treated these things and eventually they had to send those missiles for defending Cuba and that were strictly necessary to defend Cuba.

[Source: C.H.N.A., the Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Chancellery Collection, file 34/1963, pp. 10-11; translated by Petre Opris.]

## Notes

1 Central Historical National Archives, *Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Politic-Administrative Collection* (abbreviated in Romania as A.N.I.C., *fond C.C. al P.C.R. – Secția Administrativ-Politică*, for Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, *fond Comitetul Central al Partidului Comunist Român – Secția Administrativ-Politică*), file 2/1962, 11. (This source will hereafter be referred to as CHNA, *CC of RCP – Politic-Administrative Collection*.)

2 Report of General Leontin Sălăjan, Minister of Armed

Forces, Romania, on the Defense Ministers’ meeting of the member states of the Warsaw Pact (Prague, January 30 – February 1, 1962), 6 February 1962, Central Historical National Archives, Bucharest, Central Committee of Romanian Communist Party – Political-Administrative Section Collection, file 2/1962, pp. 1-13; translation by Petre Opris. For the full text, see the CWIHP Digital Archive.

3 Adrian Stroe, Gheorghe Băjenaru, *Artileria română în date și imagini [The Romanian Artillery in Data and Pictures]*, (Bucharest: Editura Centrului Tehnic-Editorial al Armatei, 2010), p. 113.

4 In 1967 the Romanian authorities also established three battalions of tactical missiles – at Lugoj, Oradea and Corbu (Constanța county) – and they bought six 2 K-6 systems, equipped with missiles 3 R 10 “LUNA” (“FROG”) – which had a maximum range of 30 km.

The twelve 2 K-6 “LUNA” missile systems, purchased in 1962 and 1967, were replaced in 1982 with the tactical missile systems 9 K-52 “LUNA M”. *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 141-142.

5 CHNA, *CC of RCP – Politic-Administrative Collection*, file 3/1962, 4-5.

6 For details, see Petre Opris, *Warsaw Pact Military Exercises during the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962: The Romanian Point of View*, on *Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact*, [http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll\\_cuba\\_romania.htm](http://www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_cuba_romania.htm) (2006); Petre Opris, *România în Organizația Tratatului de la Varșovia. Documente (1955-1991) [Romania within the Warsaw Treaty Organization (1955-1991)]*, (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 2008), pp. 114; 139-141; 295-296; Gavril Preda, Petre Opris, *România în Organizația Tratatului de la Varșovia. Documente (1954-1968) [Romania within the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Documents (1954-1968)]*, second tome, (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2009), pp. 48-50, 59-86.

7 After the official start of Cuban crisis, General Sălăjan received at least one report from the Intelligence Directorate of the Romanian General Staff on the situation in the Caribbean Sea, but this was based only by the Western broadcast radio news.

8 CHNA, *CC of RCP – Foreign Relations Department Collection*, file 17U/1963, 46.

9 See Raymond L. Garthoff, “When and Why Romania Distanced Itself from the Warsaw Pact,” *CWIHP Bulletin*, no. 5 (Spring 1995), p. 111

10 The second document was stamped and registered at the Affairs Directorate of the RWP CC and the Politburo Archive of the RWP CC. The underlining and manuscript comments were written by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej with colored pencils (red, blue, green, and brown). We have used italic characters to emphasize these details.



# Bulgaria and the Cuban Missile Crisis:

## Documents from the Sofia Archives

Obtained and introduced by Jordan Baev

According to Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs, the Soviet leader thought for the first time of deploying missiles in Cuba during his one week visit to Bulgaria. Walking around the Bulgarian state residence *Euxinograd* at the Black Sea coast near Varna in mid-May 1962, Khrushchev looked at the sea line toward the Turkish border reconsidering the newly available intelligence information that the US Jupiter missiles sites in Turkey had become operational at the end of April. He was furious that US missiles were deployed so close to the Soviet border and associated his concern for the fate of "fraternal" Cuba with his broader desire to challenge the US by deploying Soviet nuclear missiles close to its territory.

Actually, the thought of deploying Soviet missiles to Cuba seems to have first crossed Khrushchev's mind in late April 1962 while he was on vacation at his Black Sea residence in the Crimea. However, most probably that idea took shape while he was in Bulgaria between 14-20 May. A special paragraph at the joint Soviet-Bulgarian declaration at the end of Khrushchev's visit announced "the fervent decisiveness to lend full support to the glorious Cuban nation." The question for deployment of Soviet missiles to Cuba was put on the CPSU CC's Presidium agenda a day after Nikita Khrushchev's return from Sofia at a session on 21 May. Three days later, on 24 May Marshal Rodion Malinovski, Soviet minister of defense, and Marshal Matvei Zacharov, Chief of General Staff, gave Khrushchev a top secret handwritten proposal to organize a military operation code-named "Anadyr" which would station the 43<sup>rd</sup> missile division to Cuba.

The Bulgarian leadership was not informed in advance about the Kremlin's decision to deploy Soviet missiles to Cuba. In his memoirs Khrushchev testified: "While in Bulgaria, I couldn't even share these thoughts with [Bulgarian leader Todor] Zhivkov, because I hadn't discussed them with my own comrades."<sup>1</sup> Zhivkov confirmed in his own 1997 memoirs that there were no any bilateral or multilateral (within the Warsaw Pact) consultations on the issue. Nor was there direct consultation between Moscow and Sofia at the height of the Cuban Missile crisis in October 1962. The Bulgarian leadership just followed the official information from the available open sources, collected at the Foreign Ministry and "Foreign Policy & International Relations" department of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party (CC BCP).<sup>2</sup> Obviously, a few directives on raising the combat readiness of the Joint Armed Forces and on intensification of military intelligence activity against Turkey and Greece were received

from the Warsaw Pact Allied Forces Command. In its public declaration of 23 October 1962 the Bulgarian Government announced that an order has been issued to raise the combat readiness of its Armed Forces.<sup>3</sup> Similar actions were taken as well by other Warsaw Pact allies.

According to later testimony by Bulgarian Ambassador to Moscow Luben Gerasimov, on Sunday evening, 28 October 1962, he was in the Kremlin watching a performance of Bulgarian National Theater "Ivan Vazov" together with Nikita Khrushchev, when the Soviet leader was urgently informed that the US government accepted the last Soviet proposal to resolve the Cuban crisis. After a "deep sigh of relief" Khrushchev turned to the Bulgarian ambassador with only one word: *Nakonéc!* (At last!)<sup>4</sup> Bulgarian Communist leader Zhivkov had a chance to meet Khrushchev personally during his confidential visit to Moscow on 2-3 November 1962. However, the key issue discussed between the two leaders was the sudden decision to oust Bulgarian Prime Minister Anton Yugov and replace him with Zhivkov. A day after returning from Moscow a CC BCP plenary session approved Zhivkov's proposal for excluding Yugov from CC BCP membership and expelling former Bulgarian dictator Valko Chervenkov from the Communist party. Those decisions were confirmed by the 8<sup>th</sup> BCP Congress (5-14 November 1962). Thus, in less than seven years (April 1956-November 1962) Zhivkov had defeated consecutively all his former political rivals and finally established his monarchy, which continued until his own removal from power in November 1989.

At the 8<sup>th</sup> BCP Congress in mid-November 1962 the Cuban missile crisis was a crucial point in the statements of the most of the 66 foreign delegations. During the congress by initiative of the Cuban representative Blas Roca, the delegates from sixteen Latin American countries carried out a secret consultative meeting to discuss the post-crisis situation in the region.<sup>5</sup> Soon after the crisis resolution the Bulgarian-Cuban political, economic, and cultural relations received a new impetus and a more dynamic development.

In Bulgaria, the Cuban missile crisis was closely related to the state of nuclear proliferation in the Balkans, particularly with the eventual removal of US *Jupiter* missiles in Turkey. As many diplomatic and intelligence documents showed, in the following months, the Bulgarian and Soviet leadership observed very carefully each sign for replacement of *Jupiters* with more modern Polaris nuclear weapons. However, one of the side effects of the Cuban crisis for Bulgaria was the visible

improvement and development of its relations with the US and other major Western powers in the mid-1960s.

This collection of Bulgarian documents on the Cuban missile crisis below was selected from four major state archives. Most of the documents were found at the former BCP CC records, stored after 1993 at the Central State Archive [*Tsentralen Darzhaven Arhiv* – TsDA] in Sofia. The second main source was the Diplomatic Archive [*Diplomaticheski Arhiv* – DA] of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Several documents were taken from the Bulgarian military records, which were subsumed under the Ministry of Defense to the Central State Archives in 1999 under the name State Military History Archive [*Darzhaven Voennoistoricheski Arhiv* – DVIA], located in the city of Veliko Tarnovo. The fourth source was the Archive of the Ministry of the Interior [*Arhiv na Ministerstvoto na Vatreshnite Raboti* – AMVR], in particular, the State Security records, which are currently in a process of relocation to a repository newly established in 2010, the Archive of the Committee for Disclosing the Documents and Announcing Affiliation of Bulgarian Citizens to the State Security and the Intelligence Services of the Bulgarian National Armed Forces (AKRDOPBGDSRSBNA).

## DOCUMENTS

### **Note from Cuban Ambassador to Bulgaria, Salvador Garcia Aguero, to Bulgarian Foreign Minister, 2 September 1962**

Sofia, 2 September 1962

Comrade Minister,

I have the honor to send Your Excellency a copy of a recently received declaration, prepared by the Prime Minister of my country, Commandante Fidel Castro, with regard to recent libels and threats against Cuba by the US government.

The content of this declaration absolves me from the need to provide a detailed description and comments, which are not necessary for Your Excellency, since you are aware of the maneuvers of the aggressive North American imperialists.

I am sending the media and other authorities copies of the same declaration.

I take this opportunity to pay once again my deep respect to you.

Salvador Garcia Aguero  
Ambassador

[Source: *Diplomatic Archive (DA)*, Sofia, *Opis 19*, a.e. 924, p. 3; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



### **Message from the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry to the Cuban Embassy in Sofia, 24 October 1962**

#### VERBAL NOTE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs pays respect to the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba in Sofia and in response to Note 219 from 31 August 1962 has the honor to announce that competent Bulgarian authorities have included the Republic of Cuba as a socialist country in the plan for 1963.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes this opportunity to assure once again the Embassy of the Republic of Cuba of their respect.

Sofia, 24.10.1962 [24 October 1962]

[Source: *DA*, *Opis 19*, a.e. 921, p. 35; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



### **Chief of Staff, Bulgarian Navy, Order re Naval Combat Readiness, 24 October 1962**

#### Secret

Only 1 copy

O R D E R

OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE NAVY

24 October 1962

Nr. C 3198

Varna

#### Ref. Preparation to raise combat readiness in the formations and units of the Navy

With regard to the Declaration issued by the Bulgarian government dated 23 October<sup>6</sup> and instructions from the General Staff – MoD [Ministry of Defense], in addition to all other planned activities to increase mobilization readiness in the Navy, the Navy Commander

ORDERS:

1. To check force recruitment, ammunitions, fuel and lubricants, food provisions and other necessary supplies with regard to the requirements for combat readiness and preparation for combat tasks.
2. To pay special attention to efficient ship repairs and where possible to finish repairing ahead of schedule without compromising quality.
3. Duties shall continue in the Navy staff, formations and units.
4. For the effective command of the Navy and the staffs in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> BrOVR [naval bases or coastal defense brigades], to nominate people for operational groups, to identify secret documents, equipment and transport ready to deploy within one hour.
5. To terminate the authorization of military personnel to go on leave, and not to call upon those who are already on leave.
6. To appoint officers and enlisted personnel on permanent duty in storages and workshops in the Navy.
7. To increase the number of duty forces in TKA [torpedo boat] units armed with torpedoes - readiness within 30 minutes, and a duty helicopter with mounted machine-gun and readiness within 40 minutes.
8. To check communication devices to ensure command of forces in KPKP [command posts].
9. To prepare SNO [aids to navigation] and to be ready to enter into special working regime.
10. To mount DShK machine-guns on KATSh [minesweeper] and stations "Rome-K" in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Brigade OVR [naval base or coastal defense brigades] on those ships specified in the plan.
11. To check the state, readiness for deployment and completion of tasks of coast radio-location stations "Mis", stations "Rome-B" and torch parties in accordance with the plans.
12. To check the state of portable devices (torpedo barge, floating workshop, automobile transport, auto cranes), to prepare them for use in the Navy.
13. To raise alertness, guard and camouflage of coast areas in the naval formations.
14. The Navy staff shall work out a plan with activities to enhance visual and radio-technical surveillance and be ready to use them when an additional order is issued.
15. By 27<sup>th</sup> this month, to check the magnetic state and to demagnetize all ships, subject to demagnetization by 5 November this year.
16. By 25<sup>th</sup> of this month, the commander of 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade shall organize every two days during the dark part of the day surveillance with SKR-1 [frigate] of the territorial waters from cape Emine to cape Kaliakra in order to

reinforce the security in the sea garden and to make the operational regime more efficient in the zone of operation of the Navy. When surveillance with SKR [frigate] is not possible, it shall be performed with a PRM [small antisubmarine hunter] in the area Kaliakra-Galata.

17. Starting from 26<sup>th</sup> of this month, the commander of 12<sup>th</sup> Brigade OVR shall organize every two days at night, surveillance with a PRG [antisubmarine hunter] of the territorial waters between the parallels of cape Emona – Sinemoretz in order to reinforce the security in the sea garden and to make the operational regime more efficient in the zone of operation of the Navy.
18. The commander of OPLEV [ASW helicopter squadron] shall organize surveillance of the territorial waters with a helicopter during daytime as follows:
  - south of cape Emine to Ahtopol on 26, 28, 30 October 1962, 1 November 1962, etc.
  - north of cape Emine to cape Shabla on 27, 29, 31 October 1962, 2 November 1962, etc. in order to improve surveillance over the sea border.
19. Results from the helicopter and ship surveillance shall be reported to the naval staff not later than 4 hours after their return in the base (airport).

This order is in force until superseded by another order.

Chief of Staff Bulgarian Navy  
Capt /N/ [signed] [Vasil] Yanakiev<sup>7</sup>

Printed in seven copies

*[Source: DVIA, Fond 1027, Opis 12, a.e. 10, p. 40-42;  
translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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### **Chief of Staff, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bulgarian Army, Order re Raising Army Air Defense Combat Readiness, 29 October 1962**

Top Secret  
Copy Nr. 1

O R D E R  
OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF 2<sup>ND</sup> BULGARIAN ARMY  
29.10.1962 [29 October 1962] PLOVDIV

Ref. Raising the combat readiness of air defense in the army

With regard to order N 00190/25.10.1962 [25 October 1962] aiming to raise air defense combat readiness in the army, the Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> army  
ORDERS:

1. The air defense command post of the army, the air defense posts in the formations, anti-aircraft regiments and divisions shall organize and maintain continuous combat duty.

The air defense command post shall maintain continuous contacts with the command post of 2<sup>nd</sup> anti-aircraft brigade.

2. One combat ready battery shall be formed in each anti-aircraft division in the formations and in 32<sup>nd</sup> anti-aircraft regiment, and they will be deployed in the vicinity of the barracks and will stay on combat duty.
3. Stations P-10 from air defense of the army and 32<sup>nd</sup> anti-aircraft regiment shall be deployed close to the garrison and shall be ready to act by additional order.
4. The army commander shall give permission to the anti-aircraft batteries to open fire after permission is granted by the General Staff.
5. All important information from the Instruction for fire interaction between air defense and air force and air defense in the troops shall be provided to the commanders of anti-aircraft units.
6. Each anti-aircraft battery shall be supplied with 0.5 set of shells.

CHIEF OF STAFF OF 2<sup>ND</sup> BULGARIAN ARMY

Colonel /sign/ Alexiev

Printed in 6 copies

*[Source: DVIA, Fond 317, Opis 4, a.e. 1, p. 249; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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**Bulgarian Legation, Washington, to  
Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, 27 October  
1962**

Strictly Confidential! By courier  
Legation of the  
People's Republic of Bulgaria  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington DC  
Outgoing Nr. C 561/29.X.62

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
CABINET OF THE MINISTER  
SOFIA

As we have already informed the Ministry with a cable, with regard to the extremely tense international situation and a direct threat of an imminent war, we have destroyed all confidential reports, memos, instructions, work plans and accounts, as well as correspondence, in order to prevent the enemy from getting hold of them. We have kept only the materials concerning the code, the Embassy annual work plan and the last quarterly plan, which are of confidential nature but due to their small volume, are easy to destroy if the need arises. All destroyed materials were included in a list with incoming and outgoing reference numbers.

With regard to the Cuban crisis and the high chance for provocations and attacks against legation facilities, employees and their families, we have strengthened the security of the room where the coded materials and other secret correspondence are kept. For this purpose, we have appointed three guards on over-night duty after working hours - two in the room with secret materials and one in the adjacent room - who will be able to give a timely warning of any imminent threat. All flammable materials have been thrown away from the offices and the basement, and all fire protection facilities [have been] checked.

The employees and their families were summoned and instructed what precautions to take in order to increase their level of alertness and to prevent provocations like kidnapping, attacks, beating, etc.

I should mention that during these days of extreme tension and anxiety, a sense of duty and the self-confidence [on behalf] of all employees in the Legation, in the Commercial and Military missions is required. We are proceeding with all special measures to strengthen security and to raise the alertness and readiness of employees and their families.

27 October 1962  
Washington

*[Source: DA, Opis 18-P, a.e. 128; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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**Bulgarian Embassy, Havana (Hubenov), to  
Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, 12 November  
1962**

Confidential!  
Havana, 12 November 1962  
XIII – 0 - 12  
70714  
Embajada de la Republica  
Popular de Bulgaria  
La Habana

Nr. 634

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
SOFIA

By the order of Ambassador K[onstantin] Michev, on 28  
October 1962 the confidential archives of the Embassy were  
destroyed by burning.  
Attached are two protocols and a list of the demolished  
materials.

Deputy Chief of Mission /signed/ Hubenov

*[Source: DA, Opis 18-P, a.e. 630; translated by Greta  
Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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**Bulgarian Minister of Internal Affairs to  
Deputy Minister of Defense, Information  
Report on Military Actions in West  
Germany during Cuban Missile Crisis,**

**14 December 1962 (excerpt)**

MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS\_

Personal. Top Secret!

TO COMRADE GENERAL SEMERDZHIEV<sup>8</sup>  
INFORMATION  
N 433

[...]

5. During the Cuban crisis, all northern and north-western  
ports in the Federal Republic of Germany were subject to  
NATO command and combat readiness. There were intensive  
transportation activities and stockpiling of large quantities of  
ammunitions, especially in the area of Lübeck, where military  
supply troops were deployed. English military troops were  
transported over the Channel to reinforce the garrisons in  
the FRG. There was intensive movement of supply troops  
from the ports to the inner regions of the country, tanks and  
artillery – mainly anti-aircraft.

Wealthy West German families were hoarding stocks of  
food and were getting ready for evacuation to Switzerland,  
Spain and other places. Due to the strong and effective pro-  
paganda, a large part of the population justified the aggressive  
acts of the Americans, who averted Soviet actions not only in  
the western hemisphere, but also in Berlin.

MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS  
/sign/ Gen. Diko Dikov

14.XII.1962  
Sofia  
Nr. 1558/NS - 3 copies

*[Source: AMVR, Fond 1, Opis 10, a.e. 80, p. 216-219;  
translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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**Bulgarian UN Representative Milko  
Tarabanov, Report to Bulgarian  
Communist Party Politburo on  
Disarmament Negotiations, 27 December  
1962**

TO THE POLITBURO  
OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

INFORMATION  
on the work of the Committee of the 18 States on  
Disarmament<sup>9</sup>  
26 November – 20 December 1962

Upon termination of their work at the beginning  
of September this year, the Committee of the 18 on  
Disarmament had not come to an agreement on any disput-



able issues, except on the coordination of the future program on measures, planned for the first stage of disarmament in the Soviet and in the American projects, as well as on the first four articles of the future agreement regarding common responsibilities of countries, including a number of contradictory formulations placed in brackets and presented to the USSR and the US respectively.

With regard to cessation of nuclear tests, the Western nuclear states have put forward two new draft agreements – one for cessation of all tests with on-site control regarding underground tests, and the other – for cessation of nuclear tests in the atmosphere, under water and in outer space without on-site inspections. Thus, the Americans confessed that no control and verification was necessary to stop the tests in these three categories. No agreement was reached because the Western countries insisted on compulsory verification after the cessation of underground tests. The question of cessation of nuclear tests became a primary issue in the debates on disarmament at the 17<sup>th</sup> United Nations session.

Even before the interruption of the work of the Conference of the 18 with regard to the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, the Western countries insisted that the Committee convene on 12 November, right after the end of the discussion on UN disarmament. Their aim was to create the impression among non-committed countries that they were willing to achieve an agreement with the USSR on some urgent questions regarding disarmament as soon as possible.

Western countries had in mind not only the public opinion in neutral countries but also the reaction to every interruption of the negotiations in their own countries, which was extremely sharp. The public reaction in Great Britain and Canada is indicative in this respect. They came to the conclusion that continuing the negotiations on disarmament does not imply any particular risk for their opposition to disarmament to be entirely disclosed, taking into account their methods of procrastination by inquiring “explanations,” asking questions with regard to verification, [submitting] requests for founding technical commissions and working groups for investigating some issues related to the Soviet proposals.

The socialist countries, [which are] members of the Committee of the 18 [e.g., the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania—ed.], were also ready to resume the talks right after their return from the discussion on disarmament in the United Nations. On the one hand, they were willing to meet the requirements of neutral countries for achieving consensus on cessation of nuclear tests, and, on the other hand - to elaborate on the new Soviet proposals, raised at the 17<sup>th</sup> session with regard to liquidating the means of procuring nuclear weapons, namely: proposals made by Soviet Foreign minister [Andrei] Gromyko at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> UN session concerning the storage

of a restricted number of missiles by the US and USSR until the second disarmament stage. These proposals, made in order to respond to the opinions and fears of Western delegations expressed during the Geneva talks, were echoed at the 17<sup>th</sup> UN session among neutral and even among some Western countries.

The willingness of countries to stay in contact immediately after the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile—ed.] crisis contributed to the quick resumption of work in the Committee for disarmament.

The main issues to be discussed in the general debates after the resumption of work on 26 November in the Committee of 18 were suspension of nuclear tests, on which the UN General Assembly voted a special resolution, as well as the question of removing the means for procurement of nuclear weapons with regard to the latest Soviet proposals.

Neutral countries highlighted their eagerness to achieve an agreement on nuclear tests by the end of the year. A series of proposals were made in order to create an opportunity for bringing views closer. These proposals, although with different nuances, offered possibilities for on-site control and verification and thus came closer to the US view. This was a kind of diversion from the main topics in the Memorandum of the 8.<sup>10</sup> These proposals could be characterized as follows:

1. Establishing a temporary commission of scientists and experts to control the implementation of a temporary cessation of underground nuclear tests;
2. On-site control in dubious situations by the decision of the temporary commission;
3. Determining a certain number (a quota) of inspections which nuclear states are obliged to allow on their territories.

During the last session of the Committee of the 18, India demonstrated considerable uncertainty and stepped back from their earlier statements on cessation of nuclear tests and disarmament as a whole. The Indian representative defended the idea of a certain “quota of invitations” which nuclear states should be obliged to extend in case dubious tremors are registered on their territory. On the other hand, in the very beginning when the question of the need for prioritizing the elimination of the nuclear threat was put forward, the Indian representative reacted in a strange way stating that conventional weapons shall not be neglected either since they could also be a serious threat to peace. There is no doubt that the position of the Indian delegate was provoked by the border dispute between the People’s Republic of China and India with the hope that the latter will be supported by Western countries against eventual further aggravation of the conflict with the People’s Republic of China.

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Generally speaking, during this session all neutral countries expressed their reserved attitude towards the positions of socialist countries. They tried to create an atmosphere for negotiations on nuclear tests between the Soviet Union and the US even beyond the memorandum framework. However, under the pressure of socialist delegations in the course of debates, as well as with regard to the talks we had with these delegations, they prepared a general declaration saying that the measures they suggest are neither interpretation, nor explanation of the Memorandum of the 8. This declaration considerably deprived Western countries of the opportunity to create the impression that the Soviet Union does not accept the Memorandum of the 8 and facilitated the position of the socialist countries on nuclear tests.

Although the Soviet proposal, made officially at the end of the session, for utilizing automatic seismic stations (so-called “black boxes”) to determine the nature of some suspicious seismic phenomena was received with some reservations by Western delegations, it introduced a new element in the negotiations for cessation of nuclear tests. A number of neutral countries emphasized that it opens new opportunities to solve the problem with nuclear tests suspension.

The position of Sweden was typical for the position of the neutrals. All the time, Sweden was trying to support the US in their attempts to impose their position on compulsory on-site inspections, even in the presence of automatic seismic stations. Relevant to this context is the report by Swedish scientists, submitted by the Swedish delegation, which contains conclusions on the impossibility to identify [automatically/remotely—ed.] all underground phenomena.

Despite the seemingly constructive tone of the declarations of the American delegation at the start of the session, later statements aimed at creating the impression among the neutrals that the United States has superior nuclear power. This became particularly obvious in the speech of the American delegate in the Committee of the 18 on 14 December, on the opening day of NATO's session. In his speech, he summarized the US positions on disarmament underlying that they would never agree to such kind of disarmament which would pose a threat to the existence of their military political alliances. In unofficial statements during a lunch, attended only by Czechoslovakian and Bulgarian delegations of all other socialist countries, the US delegate tried to create the impression among the present neutral representatives that the US was in fact the only nuclear power. When asked what that meant and wasn't the Soviet Union a nuclear state, the American delegate replied that the Cuban crisis had proved that the United States was the only nuclear country. This statement was immediately mitigated by another American delegate who explained that they mean the only real nuclear country without underestimating the entire

military power of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp. In this context, the US representative severely criticized US allies who should not have strived to become independent nuclear powers since they lacked resources and capabilities, and they did not need their own nuclear power. This entire activity of the US delegation on disarmament coincided with the US-led campaign against the English nuclear weapon “Skybolt” and against France's nuclear armament.

Neutral states expressed their concerns that the Americans would continue underground tests after 1 January 1963 in order to prove that they are not committed to this date. With respect to nuclear tests, the leader of the US delegation mentioned in a private conversation that in case the US and the Soviet Union reached an agreement, they hoped to convince France to join the agreement. They believed that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries would succeed in convincing the People's Republic of China not to undertake, or not to proceed with nuclear tests.

Information provided by the Italian delegation shows that the Americans intended after the resumption of talks to make new proposals on cessation of nuclear tests, most likely in mid-February.

Considerably less time was allocated to the agreement on total disarmament.

Although in his first statement the US delegate [Arthur H. Dean] characterized the new Soviet proposal concerning missile weapons as interesting, deserving attention and opening opportunities for negotiations, in his speech on the general principles of disarmament on 14 December the US representative rejected these suggestions. The United States, however, did not succeed in making neutral countries or their allies accept their negative attitude concerning the Soviet proposals.

The behavior of Great Britain is typical. According to information from the Indian delegate, when Dean<sup>11</sup> delivered his speech to reject the Soviet proposal, the British delegate had a printed copy of his speech for the same session in which he made clear that they were ready to negotiate on the new Soviet proposals. Taking into account the decisive American position, he had to abandon the printed text and [had to] speak extemporaneously, not to differ from the US delegate's statement. The British representative stated that the US position surprised and even disappointed Great Britain. Later, the chief British delegate and his deputy made clear in their statements that they differed from the US positions and assumed a more constructive attitude towards the issue of automatic stations for nuclear tests control, as well as on the proposal for keeping a strict number of missiles on the territories of the USSR and the US until the end of the second phase.

Typical for the differences between the US and other Western countries is Canada's position on tests. Almost every

time delegations meet informally, it is said even as a joke that Canada is a non-committed country.

As far as Italy is concerned, the Italian delegation always supports the Americans unconditionally, but the Italian representative cannot help emphasizing that the Italian government is openly trying to stop nuclear tests and that it is for serious discussions on the Soviet proposals. When speaking in the lobby, the Italian participants are considerably more inclined to mutually acceptable decisions than in their official declarations in the Committee.

Regardless of some differences on some disarmament issues and particularly on some Soviet proposals, US allies usually succeed in imposing their attitude during the Committee sessions.

Debates and talks in the Committee give reasons to believe that the chances for reaching an agreement on cessation of nuclear tests in the near future are not very big. The attitudes in some influential circles in the US, which have been reflected in private conversations with US representatives, concerning the possibilities of closing American bases under the pretext that they have become redundant with the new US strategic capabilities, give some reason to expect more productive negotiations on disarmament.

During the Caribbean crisis, the topic of finding appropriate ways and time for closing some foreign military bases in the near future was discussed repeatedly in the US media and in the statements of politicians. A similar attitude was present in private talks at the Geneva Conference. For example, a member of the American delegation and representative of the so-called "Agency for armaments and disarmament control in the US" [Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; ACDA—ed.], by the name of Mark, made it clear that they did not exclude the possibility of closing some of their bases which from [a] military and strategic perspective were considered redundant. However, this would not happen under the pressure of the USSR or neutral countries, but only when the US reckoned this as necessary and possible.

Prospects exist as well for more productive discussions of some parallel and partial measures in disarmament in order to minimize risks from an accidental war through declaring maneuvers, establishing fast direct links between the leaders of great powers, as well as between them and the UN General Secretary; the issue of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and more specifically for establishing non-nuclear zones in some areas in the world, especially in regions where the US believe that this could be favorable and would not pose any difficulties to them, such as the case with South America, Africa, the Balkans, etc.

In this situation, it could be expected that at the next session of the Committee of the 18 the United States would try to divert negotiations on disarmament towards some of the

above-mentioned events. In this context, Western countries will find support among most of the neutrals. A number of statements, made by neutral delegations, show that neutral states are looking for a way out in the negotiations on total disarmament through reaching an agreement on some partial issues.

Sofia, 27 December 1962

(Signed)

Milko Tarabanov<sup>12</sup>

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 91, a.e. 927, pp. 26-36; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



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**Ivan Budinov, Minister of Foreign Trade,  
Report to Todor Zhivkov, Chairman of the  
Council of Ministers, Report on Granting a  
Credit to Cuba, December 1962**

Top Secret

Copy Nr. ....

TO

THE CHAIRMAN OF

THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

COMRADE TODOR ZHIVKOV

R E P O R T

From IVAN BUDINOV

Minister of foreign trade

REF. Granting a credit to the Republic of Cuba<sup>13</sup>

COMRADE PRIME MINISTER,

According to the special export plan for 1963, our country is supposed to export to the Republic of Cuba special equipment at the amount of 5 million currency leva. Preliminary studies and talks held with representatives of the Revolutionary armed forces of the Republic of Cuba show that the Republic of Cuba is in demand of a number of nomenclatures of special equipment that we could provide from our current production or from supplies available in the Bulgarian National Army, a large part of which are not in use anymore. The Republic of Cuba, however, has requested that our country supply part of the special equipment on credit due to economic difficulties in the country. Such credits have been offered by the USSR and the CSSR [Czechoslovak Socialist Republic].

Taking into consideration the difficulties in Cuba, its request for import of special equipment from our country, as well as our capabilities, I believe it would be correct and reasonable to grant a credit to the Republic of Cuba at the amount of up to one-third of the total cost of the special export, which will be negotiated in 1963, with loan repayment term of five years. The credit amount will include all special equipment from the availability of the Ministry of National Defense, planned for export to the Republic of Cuba, amounting at 800 000 currency leva and the rest from new production.

In 1962, 30 000 Mauser rifles were provided through the Republic of Cuba as a grant to the revolutionary movements in Latin America. We received wholehearted gratitude and requests for future deliveries. With regard to this, I reckon that we could deliver from the supplies of the Ministry of National Defense free of charge up to 5 000 Mauser rifles, up to 10 000 Mannlicher rifles with 8 mm cartridges up to 10 million pieces, and 30 000 hand grenades type F-1, which will be delivered in support of the revolutionary movements in Latin America through the Republic of Cuba. The above-mentioned equipment is not in use in the Ministry of National Defense and currently there are no opportunities for sale.

I suggest that the Council of Ministers approve the following DECISION:

The Council of Ministers authorizes the government delegation of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, which is to hold negotiations with the government delegation of the Republic of Cuba, with regard to the exchange of goods in 1963:

1. To grant upon request a credit to the Republic of Cuba at the amount of up to 1 500 000 currency leva to pay for part of the special export of the People's Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Cuba in 1963 for a 5-year repayment term.
2. To render free of charge, as support to the revolutionary movements in Latin America through the Republic of Cuba, the following equipment: up to 5 000 Mauser rifles, up to 10 000 Mannlicher rifles with 8 mm cartridges up to 10 million pieces, and up to 30 000 hand grenades type F-1.

The implementation of the decision is assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Trade.

Sofia, December 1962

MINISTER: /signed/

[Source: TsDA, Fond 1-B, Opis 64, a.e. 303, p. 2-3; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



### **Bulgarian Legation, Washington (Shterev), Cable to Foreign Ministry, 21 January 1963**

=Top Secret!

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Department in 48 hours

INCOMING CABLE Nr. 650

21 January 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From: Washington

Written on 18 January at 11.00 am

During the lunch with the Greek Charge d'Affaires, Counselor Kalougeras, I learned that at the NATO session in December it had been decided to grant military assistance to Greece for 1963, amounting to 23 million dollars.

During the NATO session, Turkey once again put forward the question of accelerating its accession as an auxiliary member to the Common Market [i.e., the European Economic Community, or EEC—ed.]. However, the western countries were not in a hurry since the bad economic situation in Turkey would be a heavy burden for the Common Market.

I was astonished by the fact that Kalougeras was continuously asking me about details on our relations with the United States – financial, cultural, etc. It seems as if Greece is once again concerned about our relationships with the US.

[Ambassador] SHTEREV<sup>14</sup>

Deciphered on 22 January 1963

[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 10, p. 12; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



### **Bulgarian Consulate, Istanbul (Karadimov), Cable to Foreign Ministry, 28 January 1963**

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INCOMING CABLE N 938

28 January 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From: Istanbul

Written on 28 January 1963 at 5.00 pm

Ref. Your cable N 694

In addition to my cable from a few days ago regarding *Jupiter* missiles, located on Turkish territory, I would like to add the following: according to the Istanbul newspapers, on 24 January the Turkish Foreign minister confirmed in front of *Milliyet* newspaper that the *Jupiter* missiles on Turkish territory had been dismantled. They will be replaced by *Polaris* missiles, which will float in the Mediterranean and will be under the command of Sixth US Fleet. Today, Istanbul newspapers published statements from foreign media agencies according to which Turkey and Italy are not going to be at a disadvantage after the removal of *Jupiter* missiles since NATO will obtain access to *Polaris* missiles and they will be deployed in the Mediterranean this year. Generally, the comments are short. We have no precise information whether NATO is engaged in this matter, when the dismantling of *Jupiter* missiles will start, etc. We are going to observe and inform you in due time.

[General Consul] KARADIMOV<sup>15</sup>

Deciphered on 29 January 1963

*[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 59, p. 34; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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**Bulgarian Legation, Washington (Shterev),  
Cable to Foreign Ministry, 12 February  
1963**

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INCOMING CABLE Nr. 1522

12 February 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From: Washington

Written on 12 February at 12.00 pm

According to information by the journalist Paul Scott<sup>16</sup>, the government of the United States intended to send a squadron of B47 jet bombers in Turkey, immediately after the disassembly of the bases, housing the *Jupiter* missiles.

Thus the US government would demonstrate before the world its military presence in Turkey.

[Ambassador] SHTEREV

Deciphered on 13 February 1963

*[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 10, p. 37; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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**Bulgarian Legation, Washington (Shterev),  
Cable to Foreign Ministry, 15 February  
1963**

Top Secret!

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INCOMING CABLE Nr. 1686

15 February 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From: Washington

Written on 13 February at 1.00 pm

US Deputy Secretary of Defense [Roswell] Gilpatric has stated that US would send three *POLARIS* submarines on April 11,<sup>th</sup> to replace the missile bases in Turkey and Italy. These submarines are intended to be under the control of the NATO Commander-in-Chief and to be assigned operationally to the Sixth US fleet. The submarines will be based in the port of Rota in Spain.

[Ambassador] SHTEREV

Deciphered on 16 February 1963

*[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 10, p. 38; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*





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**Bulgarian Embassy, Athens (Minchev),  
Cable to Foreign Ministry, 17 March 1963**

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INCOMING CABLE Nr. 2996  
17 March 1963  
To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
From: Athens  
Written on 16 March 1963 at 5.00 pm

Today's newspapers present brief information on the NATO meeting that was held in Athens yesterday. In his introductory remarks, the Chief of the Greek General Staff General Pipilis stated that the purpose of the meeting was to further strengthen the relations and cooperation between the Greek and Turkish armed forces. The Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General [Cevdet] Sunay, the Commander of NATO Staff in Izmir, General Brown, and the Chief of Staff of South European forces, General Seyds, also expressed their positions on the same issue.

All the speakers demonstrated their solidarity on the topics discussed: further strengthening of defense in the sensitive region around Greece and Turkey; new NATO common goals regarding defense in the Balkan region, which needs special attention and support since the two Balkan countries were poor and were not in a position to meet the requirements of a wide allied defense; conducting summer military exercises.

[Ambassador] MINCHEV<sup>17</sup>

Deciphered on 17 March 1963

[Source: DA, *Opis 5s, a.e. 26, p. 142*; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



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**Bulgarian Embassy, Athens (Atanasov),  
Cable to Foreign Ministry, 6 June 1963**

Top Secret!

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INCOMING CABLE Nr. 6153  
6 June 1963  
To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
From: Athens  
Written on 6 June 1963 at 12.00 pm

The afternoon government newspaper *Apogevmatini* published on 5<sup>th</sup> this month a special report by its Paris correspondent that NATO command was informed that Soviet nuclear submarines with missiles had entered the Mediterranean in response to the presence of three US submarines with missiles *Polaris* in this region. According to this information, the armed forces of the Soviet Union and its allies were quickly procuring most modern weapons, especially Bulgaria, which has modernized its troops systematically with Soviet assault weapons. NATO received information that during the last two months the Bulgarian army had conducted a series of maneuvers close to the Greek and Turkish borders. The maneuvers included exercises aiming at achieving full combat readiness.

According to newspaper *Katimerini*, a NATO declaration states that in the upcoming months the fast adoption of NATO forward strategy in Greece will start, according to which Greek divisions will be deployed in a new pattern at a short distance along the borders. This strategy aims at the preparation for attacks from 50 divisions, used by the Soviet Union. The most dangerous were the divisions located in Romania and Bulgaria. According to NATO command, possible attacks against Greece could come from the north along the rivers Mesta, Struma and Arda. The defense of Greece and particularly of Thrace was estimated as vitally important, and NATO would not leave a single inch of Greek land [unprotected].

ATANASOV

Deciphered on 7 June 1963

[Source: DA, *Opis 5s, a.e. 26, p. 214*; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



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**Bulgarian Foreign Ministry (Angelov),  
Cable to Bulgarian Embassy, Ankara, 23  
June 1963**

Top Secret

To be preserved in

1 handwritten copy only

OUTGOING CABLE Nr. 5190

From: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

To: Ankara

According to information from [Bulgarian Ambassador Radenko] Grigorov from London, the Turkish Ambassador has told him that US submarines visit the Turkish waters, thus constituting a more powerful defensive nuclear weapon and that Turkey had agreed for the creation of NATO fleet, equipped with *Polaris* missiles. According to the Ambassador, there was a Soviet submarine in the Mediterranean Sea.

[Deputy Foreign Minister] ANGELOV<sup>18</sup>

23 June 1963

Ciphered and delivered

on 24 June 1963

*[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 56, p. 115; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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### **Ministry of Internal Affairs, Information Report, 5 July 1963**

Personal, Top Secret

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Information No. 300

NATO Military Intelligence Services had developed instructions concerning the work of their agents in the Warsaw Pact countries. The latter had to keep under observation the activity of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative and Military Committees, the possible carrying out of joint military training and maneuvers, to find out and examine the Army command network, AA Defense, communications, etc.

In 1962 the NATO member-states' Defense Attaches, working in our country, had received definite instructions to gather information about Soviet arms deliveries, eventual missile sites and nuclear weapons storage, military exercises, and Armed Forces battle readiness.

Special attention was paid to visual observation. The American Attaches coordinated the activity of all NATO Defense Attaches.

In the period 19-30 January 1963, nine meetings for exchange of information had been carried out.

During the Cuban crisis of 1962, the US Defense Attaché Col. Cleary brought the instructions from the Istanbul Intelligence Center for carrying out active spy activities. Under his guidance interaction and coordination with the Defense Attaches from France, Greece, Turkey and other NATO countries took place. Some diplomats were included as well. Military bases, movement of the military units and roads were kept under observation night and day.

In October 1962 Col. Cleary informed his French and Greek colleagues Paul Murat and Loumakis that in the actual situation it was difficult for the US diplomats to travel inside the country; that's why he relied entirely on the collaboration with them for receiving new intelligence information. He had asked his colleagues in Bucharest to report on troops' movement through the Danube River as well. When Col. Cleary said to the former Turkish Defense Attaché Oljai that he would pay him for the obtained information, Oljai responded that they were representatives of one same Alliance, and he would deliver the requested information voluntarily. The Greek Defense Attaché informed that he heard about several missile sites in Bulgaria.

Joint intelligence activities were evaluated highly by the US Plenipotentiary minister, [Eugenie] Anderson, who sent information to Washington, thanking NATO member-states Defense Attaches.

During the visual observation, one of the most commonly used tricks was the usage of Russian language. The French Defense Attaché even introduced himself as a Russian. The agents made photos of the barracks and the military equipment. Some of them used special intelligence equipment. Part of the information [they] gained showed that the Defense Attaches used an agents' network for gathering of intelligence information which could be obtained with no other means. The regular visits to the legations were also used for gathering of information and for arranging secret meetings with some agents.

The official press was used as an additional information source, too.

The capitalist Intelligence Services possessed the following more specific data about our Army:

They had found out that our Armed Forces were organized under the scheme of the Soviet one and were completely mechanized. They knew that there were different Staffs of the different Armed Forces structures: the Land Forces, the Air Forces and the Navy, and they had defined the exact location of many military formations and units. Some of the secret designations of the military units were known, too. The

Intelligence Services had quite detailed data for several military warehouses and exact data for the technical equipment in use. Common information about the new AA Defense and Air Forces structures was available and more concrete information about the military airports and some missile bases.

Second and Third State Security Directorates had taken measures against the subversive activities of the capitalist Intelligence Services. But no Military Attaché was denounced for working with agents. The weak points of Bulgarian counter-activities were briefly noted.

5 July 1963

THE SECRETARIAT [of Ministry of Internal Affairs]

[Source: AMVR, Fond 1, Opis 10, a.e. 83, pp. 96-107; translated in summary by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



### **Bulgarian Consulate, Istanbul (Karadimov), Cable to Foreign Ministry, 5 August 1963**

Top Secret!

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INCOMING CABLE Nr. 8411

5 August 1963

To: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From: Istanbul

Written on 4 August 1963 at 12.00 pm

From the consulate, I received the following information regarding the latest visit of the Chief of the Greek General Staff to Turkey and the talks held.

The two parties exchanged their considerations over the proposal to sign an agreement for non-aggression between the Warsaw Pact member-countries and NATO.

The Greek delegation stated that they were not prepared to accept *Polaris* submarines in Greek territorial waters and suggested that Turkey deploy these submarines, which will be used for the protection of Turkey and Greece, in Turkish waters. The Turkish side stated that they could only accept these submarines, in case that they were used for the defense of Turkey.

[General Consul] KARADIMOV

Deciphered on 5 August 1963

[Source: DA, Opis 5s, a.e. 59, p. 214; translated by Greta Keremidchieva, edited by Jordan Baev.]

### **Notes**

1 Nikita Khrushchev, *Memoirs*, Vol. 3, *Statesman*, (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 324-326.

2 The Cuban Missile Crisis folder at the Diplomatic Archive in Sofia contains a collection of information from UPI, Reuters, Agence France Press (AFP), the Soviet agency TASS, and the Bulgarian agency BTA – DA, Sofia, Documentacija, IV/39/1/X-1962.

3 *Vanshna politika na NRB* [Bulgarian Foreign Policy], Vol. 1, 1944-1962 (Sofia: Nauka I izkustvo, 1963), 613-615.

4 Cited in: Mitev, Trendafil, “Karaibskata politicheska kriza 1962 godina,” *Voennoistoricheski sbornik*, Sofia, 1999, No. 6, 86.

5 *TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 769, 2-3.

6 Declaration of Bulgarian Government on the situation at the Caribbean Sea – published in *Rabotnichesko Delo* daily, No. 297, 24 October 1962.

7 Admiral Vasil Yanakiev was Commander of Bulgarian Navy from March 1972 until May 1990.

8 Col.-Gen. Atanas Semerdzhiev, Chief of General Staff and First Deputy Minister of Defense (1962-1989), Minister of Internal Affairs (1989-1990), Vice President of Bulgaria (1990-1992).

9 Eighteen Nations Committee on Disarmament – established by UN in December 1961 in Geneva. Met regularly until September 1969. Its predecessor was Ten Nations Committee on Disarmament (1960), which was formed by five representatives from NATO countries and five representatives from Warsaw Pact countries.

10 Not further identified—ed.

11 Most likely Arthur H. Dean, head of the US delegation to the 18 nation disarmament committee in Geneva, rather than Sir Patrick Dean, UK representative at United Nations—ed.

12 Ambassador Milko Tarabanov was a Bulgarian representative to the United Nations in New York with a rank of Deputy Foreign Minister (1962-1970). In the 1940s-1950s he was chief of diplomatic missions in Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Turkey.

13 The proposal was approved with a special top secret decision by CC BCP Politburo of 13 December 1962 signed by Todor Zhivkov and other Politburo members.

14 Kiril Shterev was Charge d’Affaires in US (1962-1963), and Ambassador to Canada (1967-1971), Iran (1973-1979), and Great Britain (1980-1987).

15 Dimo Karadimov – General Consul in Istanbul, Turkey (1962-1966).

16 Paul Scott Mowrer - worked for *Chicago Daily News* and *New York Post*, a Pulitzer Prize Winner.

17 Nikolai Minchev – Ambassador to Greece (1962-1967) and Yugoslavia (1972-1974), Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1974-1979).

18 Lubomir Angelov – Ambassador to Yugoslavia (1953-1956), Charge d’Affaires to Great Britain (1957-1958), Deputy Foreign Minister (1958-1966).

# Documents on Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 1960-1975: New Evidence from the Sofia Archives

Documents obtained and introduced by Jordan Baev

The first ever contacts between Bulgarian and Cuban Communist leaders had been established via Moscow within the network of the Communist International (Comintern), Red Labor International (Profintern), Red Peasant International (Krestintern), and Communist Youth International (CIM). In 1935 - 1936 the Secretary General of Comintern Georgi Dimitrov had several talks with the representatives of the Communist Party of Cuba Francisco (Blas Roca) Calderio (alias *Bueno*) and Severo Aguirre, who were elected in the Executive Committees respectively of Comintern and CIM.<sup>1</sup> However, the political contacts between the two parties for most of the decade-and-a-half after World War II were scarce and rather fragmentary.

The armed struggle against the Batista regime in Cuba and the name of its leader Fidel Castro appeared in the world news of Bulgarian media only in 1958. On 3 January 1959 the official party daily *Rabotnichesko delo* published an editorial about the victory of the "Cuban national democratic revolution." The *Information Bulletin* of the "Foreign Policy & International Relations" Department of the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee (CC BCP), which was published "for internal use only," informed its readers on Blas Roca's appeals for full support for Fidel Castro's "provisional revolutionary government."<sup>2</sup> The first political contacts and bilateral correspondence in 1959 - 1960 were accomplished initially between the youth and student organizations of the two countries.<sup>3</sup>

On its way back from Argentina and Mexico in late May - early June 1960 a Bulgarian governmental delegation visited Cuba and had talks with Raul Castro, Ernesto "Che" Guevara and other Cuban officials. At the end of June the proposals for the establishment of diplomatic, commercial, and cultural relations and Bulgaria's rendering of economic and technical aid to Cuba were coordinated between the two governments' representatives. At the Fifteenth UN General Assembly session in September 1960 in New York the first personal meeting between Todor Zhivkov and Fidel Castro was organized. Years later Zhivkov related that their improvised unofficial meeting happened on 27 September 1960 in a small room at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem, where Castro also more famously met Nikita Khrushchev.<sup>4</sup> On 8 October 1960, the Bulgarian minister of foreign trade Luchezar Avramov and Ernesto "Che" Guevara signed in Havana a bilateral commercial agreement. The same day an official communiqué

announced the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Cuba.

At its peak, soon after the Cuban missile crisis, the Bulgarian-Cuban relationship attained more significance focusing on Sofia's economic, technical, and military aid for the Castro government. The first group of Bulgarian agricultural experts was prepared to be sent to Cuba in October 1962. In the next fifteen years more than 4300 Bulgarian technical and agricultural experts worked in Cuba, while in 1962-63 only about 130 Cuban students and technicians arrived in Bulgaria to continue their education and training.<sup>5</sup> In May 1965 a joint intergovernmental committee for economic, scientific and technical cooperation started its work. In January 1964, the Bulgarian minister of defense Gen. Dobri Djurov visited Cuba for the first time, and Raul Castro returned the visit the following March.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, similar to the other East European countries, the Bulgarian leadership watched closely the propaganda campaign of the Cuban leaders of the "Cuban guerilla warfare example" as a unique way of social transformation for Third World nations. Several reports and surveys, sent to Sofia from the Bulgarian embassy in Havana in 1964-68, emphasized specific Cuban views and secret attempts to promote the continental revolution in Latin America. Additional political tension emerged from the categorical insistence of the Cuban representatives to organize the 9<sup>th</sup> world youth and student festival in Havana, thus opposing the Soviet effort to organize the festival in Sofia. The Cubans even accused the leadership of the world leftist youth federation (WFDY) of "opportunism" and continued to demand participation only of the "revolutionary organizations" who accepted the armed struggle as a political imperative. The analysis of the archival documentation indicates that Bulgarian leaders tried carefully and consistently to overcome the divergences and rivalry between both organizations and even to develop further cooperation.<sup>7</sup>

On 5 October 1967 the CC BCP Politburo approved a resolution and measures for increasing and strengthening of Bulgarian-Cuban relations. However, the envisaged first visit of Todor Zhivkov to Cuba in the beginning of 1968 was postponed mainly because of the sharp anti-Soviet critique Fidel Castro made in a secret speech to a Cuban Communist Party plenary session in January 1968. The change of the official Cuban position toward closer relations with Moscow after the Warsaw Pact military invasion in Czechoslovakia

in August 1968 made possible to renew the preparation for Zhivkov's visit to Cuba, which was subject of special discussion at the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry in March 1969. Todor Zhivkov's official visit in June 1970 – the first ever visit of an East European leader to Cuba – played a significant role not only for the development of the bilateral relations, but also gave an impetus for the improvement of Soviet-Cuban relations in the near future. The first visit of a Soviet leader (Leonid Brezhnev) to Cuba was carried out in late January–early February 1974.

The talks between Zhivkov and Castro in June 1970 and December 1975 in Cuba and in May 1972 in Bulgaria were held in extremely friendly, informal and frank atmosphere, even without following the customary diplomatic protocol. The next talks between the two leaders in Sofia in March 1976<sup>8</sup> and in Havana in April 1979 confirmed the existing quite informal and confidential nature of their relations. They were indicative in general for the bilateral political relations between Bulgaria and Cuba in the 1970s-1980s, which influenced the development of economic, cultural and public contacts between the two nations as well.<sup>9</sup> The same could be said even for the secret contacts and collaboration between the intelligence and Security services of the two countries. During the visit of the director of Cuban State Security service Manuel Piñeiro to Bulgaria in November 1968 an exchange of Intelligence information and operational equipment was agreed. In 1976 and 1978 the first bilateral long term agreements were signed for intelligence and security cooperation, which were extended during the visit of the Cuban minister of Internal Affairs Ramiro Valdés to Sofia at the end of December 1982.<sup>10</sup>

Cuban-East European relations suffered drastic changes after the “velvet revolutions” of 1989. Soon after the “palace coup” on 10 November 1989 in Bulgaria the bilateral ties with Cuba, which were established on a purely ideological base, deteriorated visibly. Several new Bulgarian periodicals published in the beginning of 1990 for the first time criticized the Castro regime,<sup>11</sup> while the Bulgarian delegation at the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva together with the delegations of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia voted in favor of an anti-Havana resolution. This episode led to a sharp emotional critique by Fidel Castro towards his former allies in a public speech on 7 March 1990.<sup>12</sup> However, in the next months the Cuban leaders had to realize the new realities and the irreversible political process in Bulgaria and other East-Central European countries. Soon after the victory of the anti-Communist opposition Union of Democratic Forces in the parliamentary elections in October 1991 in Bulgaria and the election of the first non-Communist president Dr. Zheliu Zhelev in February 1992 the Cuban leaders confirmed

with official messages the intention of their government “to activate and stabilize the traditional friendly contacts between the two nations.”

## **CC BCP Politburo Resolution Re: Establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba, June 1960**

CC BCP Politburo Resolution No. 136/30 June 1960

Re: Establishment of diplomatic relations with Republic of Cuba

[...]

VIII. Regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Comrade Todor Zhivkov reports.

1. Gives one's consent to establish diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cuba and to announce the latter in the press after coordinating it with the Cuban government.
2. The Foreign Affairs commission at Politburo should work out concrete measures

regarding the establishment and expansion of political, economic and cultural relations between our country and the Republic of Cuba.

3. Raul Castro should be invited to visit our country.

[...]

To

The Prime Minister

Comrade Anton Jugov<sup>13</sup>

Report

By Georgi Kumbiliev – minister of foreign trade

Re: the establishment of trade relations with Cuba.

Comrade Prime Minister,

For some time now Cuba has been showing an interest in signing a trade agreement with our country.



The USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and others among the socialist countries have already signed trade agreements with Cuba. This year the USSR is going to buy 425 000 tons of sugar, and in the next four years – a million tons a year. The USSR has granted a 100 000 000 dollar loan to Cuba at a 2.5% interest rate. Czechoslovakia and some other socialist countries have already come to an agreement on the construction of different enterprises in Cuba.

A Cuban economic delegation led by [Antonio Núñez] Jiménez, the director of the National Institute for Agricultural Reform, is at present in the Soviet Union. The delegation is negotiating and it has already been declared that it has signed an agreement for the supply of petrol and petrol products from the USSR. It has also signed a joint communiqué on the trade-economic relations etc. The same delegation will also visit other countries from the socialist bloc – Poland, the GDR and others, where it will also negotiate. Cuba is interested in being emancipated from its economic dependence on the USA. Hence it is necessary to ensure the export of sugar on the one hand and the import of petrol and petrol products, agricultural machines and others, e.g. goods with which it has so far traded with the USA.

Since the ideas of the Cuban revolution and the socialist community are close, the USSR and other socialist countries view the development of trade and economic relations with Cuba as a support for the Cuban revolution. For the time being Jiménez's delegation is not expected to come to Bulgaria. We consider it appropriate to invite the delegation to visit our country after signing the trade agreement.

Preliminary research has shown that we could export to Cuba some of our goods.

With a view to the development of trade relations with Cuba, it is necessary to sign a trade agreement with Cuba, under which our country could eventually ascertain preferential treatment in terms of either duty tariffs or on the foreign trade regime.

Under these circumstances the question about our import from Cuba arises, which is practically harder to solve. If the delegation comes to our country it will by all means want us to buy certain amounts of sugar from Cuba, in return for which we would export our goods. Yet we do not import sugar for satisfying our own needs. The preliminary research made by the Ministry of Foreign Trade regarding the opportunities for importing raw Cuban sugar and after processing it in our plants re-exporting it, showed that it is not economically profitable due to the high freight and processing costs and other [factors]. It would be more profitable if the sugar, after being processed were left for the internal market, while the Foreign Trade Ministry would export the respective quantity of our sugar. One way or other, we must be ready to buy

some sugar; the latter is very important for Cuba's economy, especially taking into account the great quantities of residual substances of sugar.

I suggest that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs entrusts the Bulgarian ambassador in Warsaw to invite the Cuban delegation to visit our country as well. It should be explicitly declared that if the delegation has the authority to do it, we are ready to sign a trade agreement and to buy certain quantities of sugar, exporting our goods in return.

Depending on the answer, we will announce the negotiation delegation members and a draft version of the delegates.

Regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Comrade Todor Zhivkov reports.

1. Gives one's consent to establish diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cuba and to announce the latter in the press after coordinating it with the Cuban government.
2. The Foreign Affairs commission at Politburo should work out concrete measures regarding the establishment and expansion of political, economic and cultural relations between our country and the Republic of Cuba.
3. Raul Castro should be invited to visit our country.

[new document]

#### REPORT

Of the Governmental delegation visiting Argentina and Cuba

[...]

From Mexico we left for Cuba. While we were still in Argentina, when asking for visas, we told Cuba's ambassador that our delegation would like to make a goodwill visit to Cuba and to discuss our state relationships. The ambassador told us that we were expected guests who were absolutely confirmed when we arrived in Cuba. The delegation was met at the airport by the Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs and important people from the protocol department. At the first meeting, the deputy-minister Chevari explicitly declared that Cuba wanted to establish regular diplomatic and cultural relations with the People's Republic of Bulgaria. Later on, we only specified the details in the further meetings that we had. Finally, the text for a joint message was coordinated. After being approved by the competent organs in the two countries, the message would be published simultaneously in Havana and Sofia. The date of publication will be agreed upon by

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the two countries' representatives to the United Nations in New York.

[...]

The greatest interest was directed towards the trade relationships. The interest was so great, that the question concerning the signing of a trade agreement was posed by the Cuban delegation at the first meeting. They informed us that they had already signed agreements with the USSR and Czechoslovakia. Cuba was receiving a long-term credit amounting to 20 million dollars from Czechoslovakia under the credit agreement. While we were there, a Czech trade delegation for signing a trade agreement arrived.

We did not only meet with important people from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and economic Institutions, but with important people from the government as well. During the whole time we were there, Fidel Castro was busy somewhere outside Havana (we saw him the last evening at a performance of some visiting Chinese artists at the theater). [Antonio Núñez] Jiménez was in Moscow at that time. That is why we met Ernesto Guevara, head of the National Bank and Raul Castro, Minister of Armed Forces, with whom we had long talks. They informed us about the development of the revolution and about the internal and foreign situation the country was in now. The situation in the country during Batista's time made the revolution necessary. All people's forces were united in a huge front in the beginning of the revolution. Yet they went into the revolution without a clear ideology. The strongest movement was "July 26<sup>th</sup>". The peasants were the revolution's major force. The working class was weak, small in number. After Batista's overthrow, the fight between the revolutionary forces began. For some, the aim was already achieved after overthrowing the dictator. Hence they had to stop [fighting]. Others gave their consent on a restricted agricultural reform. There were also disputes on the size of the land that should remain private property after the agricultural reform was carried out. The situation of the people necessitated radical changes. For a great part of the progressive forces it was clear that they should keep on going; if they stopped that would put an end to the revolution. It was also clear that there was no alternative. The ideas of the revolution had to be clarified. The rightist wing started to disintegrate [under pressure from internal struggles]. Thus 1959 was a period of intense disputes and we could say that the power struggle was ongoing. It is in this struggle that the ideas of the revolution were clarified. Perhaps, it is exactly this clarity of the ideas together with the economic difficulties that explain the revolutionary government's orientation towards the socialist countries.

During that time Cuba also had difficulties and threats from the imperialists, and more specifically from America, which also helped to overcome some illusions. Raul Castro told us - it wasn't easy for you as well, but your neighbor was a big friendly country like the Soviet Union, while our neighbor was a powerful unfriendly imperialist country. For quite some time fallacious opinions were imposed on the Cuban people - for instance, that the geographical situation of Cuba was such that it should necessarily go together with the USA, that Cuba will fail without the USA, that is, as the Cuban leaders said, a geographical fatalism that was implanted. One of the most serious complaints at all meetings was the lack of specialists. As we already mentioned, the revolution's major support were the peasants and they were almost totally illiterate. 80% of the soldiers of rural origin in the army were illiterate. The old intelligentsia - specialists and tutors at the universities and schools - are brought up in a pro-American spirit. The Soviet comrades in Havana told us [of] an acute clash [of opinions] between the old and the young in the intelligentsia circles. The support was for the young. Young people between 20 and 25 years old are entrusted with the most responsible state and economic work. A program has been worked out to raise the people's general educational and cultural level. However, this program is only an attempt, as the leaders themselves admit.

Earlier the trade union leaders were in the imperialist slave's hands. It has been admitted that after seizing power they made a mistake by keeping these leaders for some time. People from the army were sent but they were inexperienced. Now measures are being taken to mend matters. The new leadership has already established contact with the World Federation of Trade Unions.

The most serious changes have taken place in villages. Now about two thirds of the land is in the hands of the state. Part of the land was acquired as a result of confiscation of [property owned by] American companies, while the other part was [acquired] through the agricultural reform. Cooperative farms are being formed on that land which should better be called state agricultural industries. There are about 600 cooperative farms in the country now. They intend to make them 1000 by the end of the year, with which about 40% of the land will be cooperated. The cooperative farmers are the ex-agricultural workers in the plantations. As cooperative farmers they get a fixed salary from INRA (Institute for agricultural reform) during the whole year. INRA also employs the administration. The cooperative farmers form a consultative body. INRA also supplies the basic tools of the cooperative farms; it helps them in the construction of houses for the peasants, in the construction of agricultural, social and cultural buildings. The major issue is how to distribute income. Now only 20% of the net profit earned is allotted among the cooperative farmers, each family

having an equal share. Only the head of the family is considered to be a cooperative farmer. The family members get wages for the time they work. The villages are now spread in a few cottages made of mud and leaves, which makes the work with the peasants difficult, and hinders the cultural development of the village. The funds, which are raised by INRA, are being used for building homes for the peasants in central sites, thus a [greater] concentration [of population] in larger towns and villages will be achieved. We visited one of the cooperative farms and some of the newly-built houses. We talked to the workers. What impresses [us] is the peasant's great joy, their devotion to the revolutionary government and their readiness to defend it.

As far as the country's industrialization is concerned, a general plan has been worked out, which marks only the major points. It suggests that metallurgy be developed on the basis of the mineral resources discovered so far – chrome, iron, nickel etc. The Americans have done research, but the whole documentation is in their hands. It is necessary to continue the research. The food industry should also be developed. Cuba's economy is still very much dependent on the USA. For example, two thirds of the petroleum comes from the USA, while only one third from the USSR. If one day the USA happens to refuse the supply of petroleum, Cuba's whole life will die, since the whole transport is based on petroleum, electrical energy is produced by a petroleum electric station etc. The sale of Cuba's goods, above all sugar, followed by coffee and tobacco is another question of vital importance. Thus the interest towards the trade issues is justified. The threats that if Cuba is detached from the USA it will fail have been refuted by the facts. For instance, the revolutionary government found 60 million pesos (one peso equals a dollar) foreign currency. What had been accumulated during the war was squandered by Batista's camarilla. Now the country's foreign currency is about 200 million pesos that comes to show that the country's economy is developing better than it was at the time when Cuba was bound up with the USA. The country is living in revolutionary conditions and the young people are particularly active. But this has not disturbed the normal pace of life.

USA's provocations against Cuba have not ceased but they have decreased considerably. This does not mean that the USA has put up with the loss of Cuba. Moreover Cuba's authority with the Latin-American countries is great. However the Cuban leaders exclude USA's direct intervention. They consider the latter to be prepared by the neighboring Latin-American countries above all the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Guatemala. They have collected many facts indicative of that. Yet the Cuban people rely a lot on the Latin-American countries' peoples, on their hatred toward the USA and love for Cuba. The reactionary forces are

also trying to infiltrate the revolutionary segments [of society] and to perform their contra revolutionary acts from there.

#### IN CONCLUSION WE SUGGEST:

The text of a joint message for establishing diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cuba should be endorsed as soon as possible, and, after being coordinated, should be published simultaneously in Havana and Sofia.

1. The text of a cultural convention should be prepared and our representative in the UN should be authorized to sign it in New York.
2. To quickly take up the question about the commercial relations, taking into consideration the necessity to help the Cuban revolutionary government.
3. To take up the question about signing a convention for scientific and technical cooperation, on the basis of which we could offer technical help to the revolutionary government of Cuba.
4. To invite one of the leaders of Cuba to our country. With view to that the Bulgarian Embassy in Prague should be entrusted with Raul Castro's invitation, if he happens to go to Prague, which is due by the end of the month. The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggested this invitation.

Sofia, 16 June 1960

Members of the delegation:

Ekaterina Avramova, Chairman of the State Committee for friendship and cultural cooperation with foreign countries  
Lubomir Angelov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 4203;  
translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova, edited by  
Jordan Baev.]*



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**Information on VIII Congress of National Socialist party of Cuba, 29 October 1960**

Top secret!  
FOR POLITBURO OF CC OF BCP

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## SUPPLEMENT

To the information about the VIII congress of the People's Socialist Party (PSP)  
of Cuba

During the congress Politburo of the CC of PSP received the delegates of the parties from the socialist countries. The occasion for this meeting was presented by our delegation, which posed a number of questions in written form to Comrade Blas Roca.<sup>14</sup>

In answer to our questions, Comrade Blas Roca told us that Fidel Castro was fully aware that the prospect of the Cuban revolution was socialism. However, they do not speak in public about this. The party had contacts with Fidel Castro before the landing was made. During all the time of the guerrilla struggle, members of the party have worked in the Castro headquarters and in other high-ranking posts. The attitude of Fidel Castro to the party constantly evolves and improves. The party criticized itself that it mobilized late in order to assist the movement of Fidel Castro. Practically, it was only at that congress that a fully positive assessment was given to the attack of the barracks. Initially Castro had certain doubts in the sincerity of the party. Those suspicions were used by the enemies of the revolution who exerted pressure on Castro and wanted to turn the "July 26<sup>th</sup>" movement into an anticommunist one. The party showed Fidel Castro that it has no intention to oust him and now he is convinced that without the support of the party the revolution cannot develop. Now Fidel Castro thinks that steps should be taken for creating a united party in Cuba but it is premature to proceed to practical implementation of this task. Such is the position of the People's Socialist party, as well.

All big measures of the government should be coordinated in advance with the leadership of the party. This refers to the agrarian reform, the nationalization, and the position of the government at the conference in San Jose and others. There are communists in the government as well. But nobody speaks about this.

The relations with Yugoslavia developed in a very interesting way. For tactical considerations, diplomatic relations were restored first with Yugoslavia. After its arrival in Cuba, the mission of Yugoslavia displayed intense activity, and made a big fuss. They acted as the most loyal and good friends of the Cuban revolution. However, when they openly and directly posed to them the question of selling weapons to Cuba, the Yugoslavs practically refused on the grounds that they were conducting important negotiations with the Americans and, in order not to get into trouble, they could give them weapons only in principle. In answer to this the Cubans declared: We saw what friends of the Cuban revolution

you are. Ernesto Guevara was on a visit in Yugoslavia. After his return he reported that no socialism was being built in Yugoslavia. It looks like that this opinion is shared by other leaders of the government. Through its party body the party conducted a big campaign against Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavs protested sharply before Castro and then before the Central Committee. Both answered them that the press was free to write whatever it wanted. However, the Central Committee made an assessment. They admitted that the comparison with Franco was wrong and gave orders for Yugoslavia not to be attacked so severely.

Fidel Castro received the delegates of the socialist countries together with the delegates of the French and the Italian Communist parties. The conversation with him continued the whole night - from 11 pm till 6 am.

The meeting with Fidel Castro made a great impression on us. The conversation was very sincere. He spoke and reasoned like a Marxist, like a man who appreciates very highly the Soviet assistance. He felt extremely grateful to the Soviet Union for this assistance. He explained to us the tactics of the Cuban government - to secure against every strike of the North-American imperialist the delivery of a methodical counterstrike. The question is not that we nationalize enterprises for 80, 100 and more million dollars, he said, but that a small country dares to reply with a counter-strike, to every strike of the "Northern Colossus." Namely because of this they have not nationalized at once all American enterprises, as well as big enterprises of Cuban capitalists. He said that in relation to this they should have a great deal of reserves about counter-strikes.

Focusing on the issue about the guerrilla movement, Fidel Castro told us that according to him, if the communists had started that movement, neither the Americans nor Batista would have let it exist and grow. At one time, he said, "there were only 12 of us left - one half under my command and the other half under the command of my brother Raul." Both Batista and the Americans thought that it referred to a few intellectuals, idealists and utopians who will grow desperate quickly and will give up the struggle. Later, when they [became aware of its extent], it was late - the movement had grown and consolidated.

Castro is well acquainted with problems of agriculture and speaks very competently about them.

Our impression is that the Cuban revolution is in strong hands and that there is no danger of what happened in Iraq.<sup>15</sup>

The party renders full support to the government and does its best not to allow any misunderstandings. The same is the attitude to the functionaries of the "July 26<sup>th</sup>" movement with whom it strives to establish closer and friendlier relations. The party maintains a low profile - there are no

red banners at rallies and meetings and representatives of the party do not deliver speeches. Everything is conducted under the sign of national unity and Fidel Castro is promoted as a leader of the country and the people.

Only the Politburo had been informed about the meeting in Bucharest.<sup>16</sup> Everywhere in the country the Chinese delegation was received very warmly. At the ceremony on the occasion of the closing of the congress it was suggested that a Chinese delegate deliver a speech on behalf of all socialist countries. After objections by the representatives of the other socialist countries, the Politburo acceded to our suggestion, to have the GDR representative speak on our behalf and the Chinese delegate spoke only as a representative of China.

As it was already noted, now the army in Cuba is a completely new. The main body consists of former guerrillas. This constitutes both the strength and the weakness of this army. These are completely loyal and well-trained soldiers. However, a significant number of them, who come from villages, have the wrong attitude towards military discipline. A great majority of them, commanders of lower or higher rank, are not willing to study military science and display big complacency.

Together with consolidating the army, the party and the government keep to a course of quick expansion and consolidation of the working class and rural militia, which, at the suggestion of the party, is joined by communists, workers and peasants. The militia - these are the armed squads of the people. (Police exists separately.) They add up to the army. The party and the government rely very much on the militia, not only in the struggle against the enemies, the counter-revolution and the intervention forces, but also in the consolidation and the strengthening of the army and in training future commanders who can serve as an example to the military commanders.

29.10.1960. [29 October 1960]

SOFIA

R. Avramov

K. Tellalov<sup>17</sup>

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Bulgaria, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 354; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



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**Bulgarian Embassy, Havana (Michev),  
Information re: Reorganization of the  
Cuban Government, 4 March 1961**

Confidential, by courier!

EMBAJADA DE LA REPUBLICA

Havana, 4 March 1961

POPULAR DE BULGARIA

LA HABANA

INFORMATION

About: The new reorganization in the Council of Ministers of the Cuban revolutionary government implemented on 23 February 1961.

Recently, one of the most characteristic political events was the reorganization of the Council of Ministers - the foundation of a Ministry of Industry, of the Central Planning Committee, of the Ministries of Foreign and Domestic trade and the resolutions adopted with regard to that and some other issues.  
[...]

The goal of the reorganization is to catch up with and organizationally to integrate the deep economic, political and social transformations and to quickly push forward the development of Cuba on [a] socialist path, even though nobody talks directly about this socialist agenda.

The reorganization is considered very important. With it begins a vast and comprehensive reconstruction of the backward economy of Cuba and [in this way] its independence will be guaranteed. Everywhere, it has been emphasized that this is done with the generous assistance of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries.

1. The first important resolution of the Council of Ministers and of the Chairmanship of the republic on 23 February 1961 is the foundation of the Central planning committee (*Junta central de planificacion*). Because of its great significance, the Chairman is the Prime Minister, Fidel Castro himself, and deputy chairman is Raul Castro. The latter will be the chairman of the executive bureau of the committee, which will consist of three people, and practically he will be dealing with the planning.

[ ... ]

2. Another important resolution is the foundation of the Ministry of Industry, which will be led by Ernesto Guevara and which is assigned the task to play an important and historical role in the industrialization of Cuba.

[ ... ]

In relation to the plan for the industrialization Ernesto Guevara explained that for 5 years 1 billion pesos will be invested in the industry, from which 600 million [will be] for the shipment of whole plants, machines, and equipment from



the socialist countries, and for that purpose Cuba receives a credit of about 600 million pesos from the USSR and the other socialist countries. Guevara underscored the huge scale on which the industrialization will develop, as well as the enormous [amount of] aid which will be received from the socialist countries. He raised the slogan: "Building of factories for factories." "A year of the industrialization" is prepared. Up to now there was 1959 - "A year of the revolution", 1960 - "A year of the agrarian reform" and 1961 - "A year of education."

3. Another resolution is the foundation of the Ministry of Foreign Trade. It includes the hitherto existing Bank for foreign trade. As up to now it will be responsible for the whole import and export, which are mainly with the socialist countries (above 60%).

4. The newly created Ministry of Domestic Trade will rule the state trade enterprises, will take care of supplies, and will control the prices and the commercial sector, which at the moment makes up the greater part of trade.

5. The law for the length of service and the social insurance for the working class was also important.

The task of diversification and increase of the agricultural production is set together with the issue concerning industrialization.

During a conversation with ministers and other political functionaries, they talked with enormous enthusiasm that the latest reorganization begins at a new stage in the development of the Cuban revolution and a new Cuba is being built, which until recently was under the political and economic oppression of the USA, who took everything cheaply, did not develop either industry, or agriculture, but imported in Cuba goods produced from Cuban raw materials at high prices.

Everybody speaks confidently about the great prospects, which these resolutions open for Cuba.

In all those conversations with the Ministers, while talking about the great enthusiasm of the people for the implementation of these plans, it was emphasized that they are in store for a great struggle for the elimination of the domestic counter-revolution and against intervention against Cuba, organized by the USA.

Thus, the enthusiasm about the construction is associated with a constant readiness for action in defense of Cuba against the intervention, organized by the Americans.

AMBASSADOR: K. Michev<sup>18</sup>

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Bulgaria, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 580; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



## **Politburo CC BCP Resolution re: Invitation to Fidel Castro to visit Bulgaria,**

2 June 1961

RESOLUTION "A" No. 127 OF POLITBURO OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY FROM 2 JUNE 1961<sup>19</sup>

TO Comrade Anton Yugov, Prime Minister of PR of Bulgaria

Comrade Yugov,

Our Ambassador in Havana has talked to Cuba's Minister of Foreign Affairs [Raul] Roa, who told him that, if the circumstances allow it, Fidel Castro will visit Moscow this year in order to receive the international Lenin award "For strengthening the peace among the peoples" for 1960 which has been conferred on him. If the visit takes place, he intends to visit the other socialist countries as well. Comrade [Konstantin] Michev suggests that Fidel Castro be officially invited to visit our country.

I consider our ambassador's suggestion adequate and suggest that Fidel Castro be officially invited on behalf of Bulgaria's Prime Minister to visit our country at a convenient time for him, in case his visit to the USSR takes place.

MINISTER  
/K. Lukanov<sup>20</sup>/

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 4477; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



## **Information and correspondence with Cuba re: Visit to Bulgaria of Cuban Children (including Fidel Castro's child), August-September 1961**

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
17 August 1961

TO CC BCP  
“Foreign Policy and  
International Relations”  
Department

Our Ambassador in Havana reports, that Fidel Castro’s child  
will come to Bulgaria with the group of Cuban children.

The Ambassador has been informed that Fidel Castro  
personally insisted not to be given publicity for this visit.  
Deputy Foreign Minister:

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
22 August 1961  
TO CC BCP  
“Foreign Policy and  
International Relations”  
Department

From our embassy in Havana [a] report that the group  
of Cuban children, in which Fidel Castro’s son has been  
included, departs from Havana on 21 August. Initially the  
group will visit Moscow and Beijing, and it will arrive in Sofia  
through Bucharest. The group will travel with a common  
passport issued for Pedro Diaz, Luis Sanchez, Fidel Castro  
Diaz, Buenventura Rodriguez, and Rolando Soto.  
Deputy Foreign Minister:

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
  
27 September 1961  
TO CC BCP  
“Foreign Policy and  
International Relations”  
Department

From our embassy in Moscow [a] report that the group with  
Cuban children is currently in China. Later on the group  
will visit North Korea and Vietnam, and will return again to  
Moscow.

Deputy Foreign Minister:

Note

From 16 to 22 November 1961 a group of Cuban children  
(pioneers) visited our country. On 21 November they had a  
meeting with comrade T. Zhivkov.

23 November 1961

Deputy Head of “Foreign Policy and  
International Relations” CC BCP Department  
/K. Tellalov/

No. 3748122 August 1961

TO: the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Comrade Lukanov,  
According to an instruction by Comrade [Mitko] Grigorov,<sup>21</sup>  
please inform our ambassador in Cuba, comrade Michev, that  
he could invite comrade [Anibal] Escalante to visit Bulgaria  
when it will be possible for him.

Head of “Foreign Policy and  
International Relations” CC BCP Department  
/Dimo Dichev/

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Bulgaria, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 580;  
translation by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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**Top Secret BCP Politburo Resolution on  
Arms Delivery to Cuba,**

2 December 1961

**Top secret**

Copy No...

DECISION “B” No 15  
**of CC BCP Politburo**  
**2.12.1961**

To: First Secretary of CC BCP

Comrade Todor Zhivkov

REPORT  
of GEORGI KUMBILIEV

Minister of Foreign Trade

Re: Granting to the Republic of Cuba German model  
weapons and credit free of charge.

COMRADE ZHIVKOV,

On 22 November, this year, comrade Manuel Lopez, a  
representative of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the  
Republic of Cuba visited our country and made additional

clarifications on the following requests, put forward to us by the Cuban party:

1. The requested 50,000 Mauser carbines—German model, 7.92 caliber are not for their needs but for the needs of the revolutionary movements in the Latin American countries. He stated that Cuba relies on our help for the execution of this undertaking and the required quantity of carbines should be granted free of charge at a Cuban port.

2. Taking into consideration the country's enormous defense expenses and serious financial difficulties, comrade Lopes demanded that the loan be extended for a 5-year period in exchange for our purchase of special equipment.<sup>22</sup> He clarified that there was a mistake made in their initial request for "deferred payment until 1963." He also informed us that the loan request does not refer to our signed contract from this September for the export of special equipment for 1962.

The Cuban request for Mauser carbines can be satisfied for up to 35,000, whose value amounts to about \$400,000 USD. They can be delivered from the 50,000 Mauser carbines that have been disposed by the Ministry of National Defense and were granted to the Ministry of Foreign Commerce for export in 1962 to the underdeveloped socialist countries.

As of 1 October of this year, a signed contract for the export of special equipment to the People's Republic of Cuba exists amounting to \$7,130,000 USD. As a result of the initial agreement with the Cubans, it is expected that an additional quantity of special equipment will be bought, valued at approximately \$2,000,000 USD. The credit shall represent about \$1,500,000 USD, from the stipulated amount —on condition of a 2/3 credit for a 5 year term, starting from 1 January 1963.

Keeping in mind the above-mentioned,

#### I PROPOSE:

1. 35,000 Mauser carbines free of charge from the surplus ones disposed of by the Ministry of National Defense and submitted for export to the Ministry of Foreign Commerce to be delivered to the Republic of Cuba.

2. To permit the government delegation to extend a loan amounting to \$1,500,000 USD for a 5-year term, starting on 1 January 1963 during the negotiations for the signing of a protocol for the export of special equipment to the Republic of Cuba in 1962.

I ask for your instructions.

MINISTER:  
/G. Kumbiliev/

2.12.1961

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 64, a.e. 291; translated by Vanja Petkova, edited by Dr. Rositza Ishpekova.]



#### Bulgarian Defense Minister, Note to Zhivkov re Invitation to Raul Castro to visit Bulgaria, 1 June 1962

DECISION "A" No. 151 of the CC BCP POLITBURO

1 June 1962

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Agree

T. Zhivkov

To Comrade Todor Zhivkov --

First Secretary CC BCP

#### MEMORANDUM

From the Minister of National Defense

Col.-Gen. Dobri Djurov

Re: Invitation to Raul Castro to visit Bulgaria on 9 September 1962

COMRADE ZHIVKOV,

In order to assure further strengthening and broadening of the relations between the nations and the Armed Forces of PR of Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba, I request approval on behalf of the leadership of the Ministry of Defense and on my personal behalf to invite comrade Raul Castro to visit the People's Republic of Bulgaria for the National Holiday on 9 September 1962.

MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE:  
COLONEL-GENERAL DJUROV

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 4800; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



**Decision to send a group of Bulgarian experts to Cuba (n.d., apparently late September/early October 1962)**

TO THE SECRETARIATE OF THE CENTRAL  
COMMITTEE OF  
THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY  
SOFIA

MEMORANDUM

From Ivan Prumov - Minister of Agriculture  
and Ivan Abadzhiev - First Secretary of the Central  
Committee of  
Dimitrov Communist Youth Union (DCYU)

REGARDING sending agriculture specialists to Republic of  
Cuba.

In March this year a secretary of the CC of DCYU took part in the work of the First Congress of the Union of the Young Cuban communists. In conversation with him, the President of the Union of the Young Cuban communists Joel Iglesias suggested that a group of about 50-100 young specialists in agriculture be sent to Cuba. The hosts would pay for the stay of our specialists in Cuba and we would pay the expenses for their travel.

With a letter 2107/22.09.1962 [22 September 1962] the Foreign Ministry advised us that Comrade Konstantin Michev, ambassador of People's Republic of Bulgaria [to Cuba], confirmed those talks. Comrade Michev had a meeting with [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez, the Minister of Agriculture of Cuba, and with the Soviet specialists Comrades Titov and Ustinov. It was decided that Bulgaria would send 15-25 specialists in vegetable-growing, 15-20 agronomists, 15-20 young technicians, 15-20 gardeners with more experience, 3 agronomists in vegetation protection, 2-3 engineers in mechanization of agriculture. The offer is for the specialists to go there for one year. They will live under the same conditions as the young Soviet specialists. They will live and work in a State Agrarian Cooperative (SAC) where they will receive lodging and food. Besides, for meeting other personal needs, they (the agronomists with university degree) will receive 120-150 pesos. They ask the specialists to leave [for Cuba] as soon as possible. A ship with the young Soviet specialists will leave in the end of October from Odessa.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Committee of DCYU discussed the offer and they consider sending Bulgarian agricultural specialists to Cuba expedient.

In connection with this we propose to the Secretariat of the CC of BCP to

DECIDE:

It assigns to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Committee of DCYU the task to send to Cuba for one year for rendering assistance in the development of agriculture 76 young specialists in agriculture.

( ... ]

The necessary sum of 68,000 leva for travelling expenses to be provided by the Ministry of Finance.

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 4939; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



**Resolutions by Bulgarian CP organizations in Havana, 18 October 1962**

PROTOCOL

Today 18.10.1962 [18 October 1962] the annual survey-election meeting of the party organization at the embassy and the trade representation of P R Bulgaria in Havana was held. [ ... ]

The following agenda was voted unanimously.

1. Survey report and financial account of the primary party organization.
2. Election of committees according to the resolution and the motions.
3. Election of a new bureau.

On the first item of the agenda the floor was given to the party secretary comrade [ANTON] MECHKUEV.

After the delivery of the report and the financial account by comrade Mechkuev there were the following statements:

Comrade MICHEV:

[ ... ]

We all know about the activities of the organization. The report gives a lucid picture about the activities of the organization, the office and the employees. The assessment in the report that the activities are big and extensive and the role of the organization has increased is correct. The year under review was strenuous, as it was last year. Each of us was assigned a lot of tasks and responsibilities. We have been working in an atmosphere of constant threat of aggression and we fulfilled our duties for the development of our multifaceted relations and for rendering assistance to Cuba. On the tasks of expanding our relations, we strove maximally to publicize the activities of our people, government and party, as well as the declarations of the Soviet government. If we

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review the way the communists and the specialists worked, we will see that the conclusion in the report is correct.  
[ ... ]

HUBENOV:

[ ... ]

Comrade Michev ignored the opinion of the collective body and found himself a captive of dogmatism. He substituted the specific scientific analysis of the processes and the phenomena in Cuba with ready, prepared schemes. The most eloquent example is the case with his information about the foundation of the United Revolutionary Organizations. In his information he claimed that this was the United Party of the Socialist Revolution. Comrade Nikolchev and the other comrades objected to the claim that it is a party, rather than a union of [movements and parties]: the "July 26<sup>th</sup>" movement, the People's Socialist Party and the Revolutionary Directory "March 1.<sup>st</sup>" He did not accept this opinion, this truth. In a memorandum from 21 October 1961 he wrote: "The united revolutionary organizations, i.e. the United Party of the Socialist Revolution."

[ ... ]

In this way he wanted to submit the real process to the existing dogmatic schemes. This could mislead the Party and the Government if they accepted his information as true.

Another fact about not knowing the situation, which if posed for discussion in the collective body, could have been avoided, was the invitation of comrade Fidel Castro to Bulgaria by the Prime Minister comrade Anton Yugov. How was it done so that an invitation came about for a visit, is a secret to us until this day. To me, sending such an invitation, which happened at the recommendation of the ambassador, is a proof for his not knowing the situation.

Was it possible for Fidel Castro to go to Bulgaria? Absolutely not!

Remember what was the situation after the Playa Giron [Bay of Pigs]. Constant threats of direct aggression. The countries from Latin America broke diplomatic relations with Cuba. Proclaiming of the socialist character of the revolution threw the American imperialists into panic. The envoy of Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson, went about the countries in Latin America in order to exert pressure on the marionette governments. He was preparing the conference of the Organization of American States (OAS) whose most important goal was the expulsion of Cuba from this organization. The counter-revolution was raging. An attempt was made for the upsetting of the campaign for liquidation of illiteracy. The teachers were intimidated with the hanging of the young [volunteer] teacher Manuel Ascunce Domenech [in November 1961]. The newspapers constantly published schematic maps of the

camps abroad, where the counter-revolutionary elements were trained. The revolutionary government was taking prompt measures for rearming the army. Under the Revolutionary government there were so many problems with food supplies and provisions, a result of the big drought, and all sorts of complicated and pressing problems. In such an atmosphere could the leader of the revolution, who during those months delivered speeches incessantly at rallies in the country, mobilize the people and prepare them for a life-and-death struggle against possible direct aggression?

Long before that, Fidel Castro declared that until he consolidated the victory of the revolution, he would not go out of the boundaries of the country.

It would barely be necessary to quote other facts in order to prove the absurdity that Fidel would leave Cuba and would go on a visit, at that first to Bulgaria of all socialist countries. If Fidel goes on a visit, it will be first to the Soviet Union, a good opportunity to be decorated with the Lenin award.

[ ... ]

I am inclined to think that the sending of such an invitation is a question of courtesy but from the letter of the ambassador from 2 October it is obvious that it was not a question of courtesy. He concludes his letter with the following sentence: "We will advise you in due time about the date of this visit."

[ ... ]

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 977; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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## **Bulgarian Government decision for a long-term credit to Cuba, 9 April 1963**

PROTOCOL "A" No. 90 OF THE CC BCP POLITBURO MEETING

Of 9 April 1963

ISSUES OF THE AGENDA:

[ ... ]

VI. About issuing a long term credit to the Republic of Cuba.

RESOLUTIONS:

VI. Politburo agrees on the annual credit for foodstuffs for the Year 1962 amounting to 1, 5 million dollars to be arranged as a long term twelve years credit at 2% interest,



counting from the year 1967.

[ ... ]

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 5102; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



### **CC BCP Politburo Secret Resolution re: Arms supply to Cuba, 13 August 1963**

TO: Gen. Ivan Mihailov, Member of Politburo  
Comrade Ivan Budinov, Minister of Foreign Trade  
Gen. Dobri Djurov, Minister of Defense

RESOLUTION "B" No 9  
OF POLITBURO OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY FROM 13  
AUGUST 1963

QUESTIONS ON THE AGENDA: regarding the  
negotiations for signing a protocol with the Republic of  
Cuba for the export of special equipment in 1964.

#### **DECISIONS:**

1. Gives one's consent to form a governmental delegation to negotiate with Cuba's governmental delegation and sign a protocol for the supply of special property in 1964 in Cuba.
2. Gives one's consent to grant the Republic of Cuba a credit amounting to 6 million clearing dollars, including 2 million from production and 4 million from the cash at hand of the Ministry of Defense, for a ten-year period, which is to be redeemed at regular annual installments at a 2% interest as of 1965.

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 64, a.e. 314; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



### **Information of the Bulgarian Embassy in Havana re: The situation in Cuba in 1963, January 1964**

#### **INFORMATION**

#### **On the political, economic and cultural development of the Republic of Cuba in 1963**

The Republic of Cuba, the first socialist country in [Latin] America, passed the fifth year of its existence in a more favorable international situation and in a more difficult economic situation.

The general détente exerted an influence on the Cuban people's life and struggle for the building of socialism. Having survived the Caribbean crisis, which showed the great strength of the Soviet Union, and of the whole socialist community, the Cuban people, united around its revolutionary government, continued more confidently along the path it had chosen.

#### **I. Political situation in the country**

1963 was a difficult year for the Cuban people. It was the year of the revolutionary government's and Cuban peoples' new efforts to further strengthen the economic development of the country, to overcome the new aggressions and economic difficulties, caused by the imperialists. After the end of the Caribbean crisis, the USA promised not to attack Cuba, yet its aggressive acts and provocations did not stop. In spite of the general alleviation of [the tension in] the international situation, they continued to transfer Intelligence Service agents and contra revolutionaries, to import arms in the country and thus to sustain tensions in Cuba. The USA undertook new measures for economic repression against Cuba and exerted influence on the capitalist countries to tighten the economic embargo.

In addition, we have to mention the serious internal economic difficulties that play a significant role in the country's deteriorating economic state.

The fierce Chinese propaganda against the Soviet Union and the international communist and worker's movement, which intensified extremely after the Caribbean crisis, exerted a negative influence on the country's political life.

[...]

#### **II. The Cuban International Situation**

After the Caribbean crisis, Cuba's international situation improved significantly. The USA was forced to promise, before the USSR and the whole world, not to attack Cuba. The USSR and the socialist countries backed up the Cuban revolution, ready to perform their international duty to

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defend, at any rate, the Cuban peoples' revolutionary achievements against the imperialists' aggression. These circumstances strengthened the Republic of Cuba's international position and increased its authority amongst the Latin American and other countries. It contributed to a lot of non-aligned nations' and some capitalist countries' improvement of their relations with Cuba by activating their political, economic and cultural relations with it.

We must note that the Cuban government leaders and Fidel Castro, above all, are especially sensitive toward the USA and are constantly dealing with it and its policy in their speeches. They do this more [often] than necessary, even at the expense of the more vital to the revolution questions and the construction of socialism. These circumstances have an impact on the attempts to normalize the relations between the two countries and to apply the principles of settling controversial issues among different countries by peaceful means. At the basis of this behavior is the Cuban leaders' will to emphasize their unyielding attitude towards the American imperialists and their attempt to assert themselves as the most ardent defenders of the peoples of Latin America, Africa, and even Asia.

A positive fact is that recently there have been certain signs of improvement of the situation in this respect, especially after Fidel Castro's second visit to Moscow, but it is still early to draw conclusions.

As a result of the Cuban government's policy and the USSR's and other socialist countries' fraternal help, the "walls" built by American imperialism around Cuba have been demolished.

[...]

What were the relations between Cuba, on the one hand, and the USSR and other socialist countries, on the other?

As in the preceding years, so in the year that has just ended, the USSR thoroughly backed the Cuban people's attempts to build a socialist society in the country and their heroic struggle against the American imperialists' aggressive acts.

The USSR would not allow the life of the country to be interrupted due to the lack of petrol, it would not allow Cuba's economic development to be at risk because of the canceling of the sugar quota by the USA. It helped Cuba to strengthen its defense. In October 1962 it stopped the campaign to overrun the country. The USSR paid great attention to and cared for the internal difficulties Cuba was experiencing when transforming its life, economy, and state organization. It helped with the training of personnel, and the education of the army. Thousands of young people went to the Soviet Union to study in its plants, collective farms, and

universities. A great part of them came back in 1963 and were sent to work at different sites in the country.

This comprehensive assistance, which was self-evident in all spheres of life, shattered all attempts of the slanderous propaganda to create distrust and discord in the immediate aftermath of the Caribbean crisis, when the conditions were most favorable [for such propaganda]. Quite a lot of people were hoping that this discord will intensify, but they experienced a great disappointment when Fidel Castro went to Moscow in April 1963. The disappointment was still greater when, seven months later, in January 1964, he went to the Soviet Union again. Fidel Castro's double visit to the Soviet Union made the Cuban people extremely happy. It demonstrated the strong and indestructible friendship between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

[...]

We must note that during both visits a lot of political, economic and other issues were discussed; joint declarations of the two countries on the countries' attitudes towards the international situation and to issues concerning Cuba were signed. These are valuable political and state documents on the further activities of the two countries. These are documents with which the USSR has added to Cuba's international prestige as a country and Fidel Castro's personal authority as a state leader. Of considerable importance to the Cuban people is the signed long-term economic agreement for the sale of sugar to the Soviet Union that places the economic relations between the two countries on a new basis and marks a new stage in the economic cooperation between the two. This agreement will from now on exert a great political impact on the Latin American peoples and the other countries, economically dependent on imperialists.

Similar relations of fraternal solidarity are being established between Cuba and the other socialist countries. The latter saw the great economic difficulties that Cuba was faced with and offered economic and scientific help as far as they could afford it. In the current accounts of their balance sheets the result was positive balances. Because of its internal and external difficulties, Cuba was not able to make up for them. In spite of their own economic difficulties, the socialist countries helped Cuba in accordance with the fraternal relations and international solidarity that existed among them.

When the natural disaster, the cyclone "Flora," befell Cuba, the socialist countries were the first to offer not only symbolic, but effective help so that the damage incurred is promptly made up for.

[...]

It is necessary to concentrate on some of the most typical points in the revolutionary government of Cuba's foreign policy which distinguish Cuba's foreign policy from that of the other socialist countries. The most important among them is the revolutionary government's special attitude to the Moscow agreement for a partial ban on the nuclear weapons experiments, to the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Latin America, to the revolutionary struggle of the Latin American peoples, to the ideological differences between the international communist movement and the Chinese Communist Party etc.

Under the pretext of preserving the unity of the communist parties, Cuba's leaders undertook a centralist position in the ideological dispute between the CPSU and the other communist and workers' parties, on the one hand, and the Chinese CP, on the other. They created favorable conditions for Chinese propaganda. The United Party of the Socialist Revolution kept silent on the differences that had arisen. It published the letters between the CPSU and the ChCP without expressing a clear and definite opinion on them, without acquainting its party members and the people with its stand on this important question of the revolutionary struggle. The party members and the people were given the "freedom" to orient themselves alone.

The role of the Chinese embassy in Havana in this respect was very pernicious. It took advantage of the favorable conditions that were created in order to carry out the basest anti-Soviet campaign. The "Xinhua" [Chinese state news] agency bulletin which had been published in 25 000 copies till then, was spreading mean slanders against the USSR, the CPSU and against comrade Khrushchev personally. Thus an attempt was made at creating a public opinion against the Soviet Union, the latter having helped the Cuban revolution generously and gratuitously. The same bulletin also distorted the statements of important comrades from the fraternal countries, caused disputes on definite issues with the aim of blurring the working class's political ideas.

The Cuban leaders find the "theoretical" works of some Chinese theoreticians especially appealing and they rely on them in their practice. This refers above all to the so-called building of socialism on their own; to the ways the working class should seize power etc.

Quite interesting is Cuba's attitude to the Moscow agreement on a partial ban of the nuclear weapons experiments. On the very next day after the agreement had been signed in Moscow Fidel Castro declared in his speech that the agreement on stopping the nuclear weapons experiments is "a vic-

tory of the world conscience of peace, a victory of the Soviet Union's policy."

[...]

But after all that it was difficult to explain the situation in which the Cuban government found itself after the delay on their part to join the agreement, and later with its refusal to sign it.

[...]

It would have been more appropriate if the Cuban government had signed the agreement and together with it had made its objections and notes on the US aggressive policy. This would have corresponded to both Fidel Castro's stand on the agreement in the beginning and to the Cuban people's desires.

It didn't do that and practically doubted the correctness of the Soviet Union's and other socialist countries' peaceful mutual coexistence policy.

In terms of its foreign policy Cuba has a special understanding and attitude toward the Latin American countries and their revolutionary struggle. It takes for granted the existence of a revolutionary situation in all Latin American countries and the necessity of revolutionary actions. The Cuban leaders declare all Latin American communist parties, not adopting their line of behavior old, defeatist, unable to undertake a revolutionary struggle and seek other social forces to lead the struggle. Similar was their attitude to the Costa Rica, Honduras, Ecuador and Peru parties, inflicting considerable harm on their revolutionary struggle.

We must note that their actions coincide with those of the Chinese Communist Party in that respect.

Why is it so?

Because there is a non-Marxist view common among the Cuban leaders that a revolutionary situation in a country can always be created if there exists a group of brave people to become partisans /guerrillas/ and lead the people to a revolutionary struggle.

Moreover, another widespread view among them is that Cuba is entitled to lead the revolutionary struggle in Latin America and that is why they abruptly interfere with the other parties' deeds. There is also a tendency to lead the anti-imperialist struggle not only in [South] America but on other continents as well. So when we talk of Cuba's "own line of behavior," we have to take into consideration these peculiarities of its foreign policy.

In spite of all this we must note that there is a tendency to eliminate mistakes [and] to clarify the party's line and foreign

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policy to the [other] socialist countries. This was particularly evident after Fidel Castro's second visit to the Soviet Union.

[...]

#### IV. Political, economic and cultural relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cuba

##### Political relations

The relations between the two countries in the preceding period were constantly developing, expanding and strengthening.

In the first place, our political relations with Cuba developed under the conditions created after the Caribbean crisis. Our country, together with the other Warsaw Pact countries showed complete solidarity and support for the Cuban revolution. Some vague points in the events that took place during the crisis were gradually clarified, in spite of the propaganda of the Chinese Embassy here. The cold attitude towards the Soviet Union during the Caribbean crisis, due to the withdrawal of the missiles, was felt towards our country and our specialists here as well. But we must admit that this situation did not continue for long. Life proved the correctness of the way the crisis was resolved and the nuclear war avoided; and what was very important for Cuba – the salvation of the Cuban revolution. More and more people were becoming convinced that the socialist countries of the Warsaw Pact had defended Cuba and helped avoid the immediate threat for Cuba. The idea that Cuba's economic problems had to be addressed was coming to the fore.

Our Party, government and people did not miss a single opportunity to express their solidarity, help and support for the Cuban revolution. The solidarity and help was realized in different ways. First, we should mention our government's support for Cuba against the aggressive North American imperialist acts in front of the international organizations, the UN above all. We should also mention the manifested solidarity with the Cuban revolution in our country; the contribution of the press and radio in this respect, the delegations which were exchanged. And finally, we should mention the scientific and technical help and the help offered when the cyclone struck the eastern part of the country.

Mentioning these solidarity acts [in support of] the Cuban people and revolution, we should emphasize the positive role played by some of these [acts of solidarity] in bringing the two countries closer and in strengthening and improving the relations between them.

In the second place, we should mention the significant role played by the exchange of delegations in improving the

political relations between the two countries. The exchange of delegations on different levels is extremely important. During this year, unlike the preceding ones, our top-level delegations came here.

[...]

We should also mention here that the Soviet Union and our country were the only ones to send a youth specialist brigade to help the Cuban agriculture. This visit was important not only for the technical support for the Cuban agriculture but for the solidarity expressed by our Youth communist organization /Comsomol/ to the Cuban Union of young communists. A lot of friendship activities took place and the young people came to know each other better in their work activities. This is the only relationship of this kind between the two youth organizations, not taking into consideration the [cooperation with the] Soviet Union. The role of the youth brigade is extremely positive. These relations between the two youth communist organizations should, in one way or other, continue in the future.

[...]

##### 2. Economic relations

The economic relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and Cuba improved a lot. The trade for 1963 amounted to 20,640,000 dollars in the two countries. Our country undertook the design and equipment of 12 Cuban industrial enterprises. Over 230 Bulgarian specialists helped the socialist construction in Cuba with their knowledge and experience. Bulgaria is second after the Soviet Union in the number of specialists sent to Cuba. The current year laid out the basis of a close scientific and technical cooperation, which, from now [on], will develop on a larger scale. Undoubtedly, this is a significant success, a result of the Embassy's and Commercial Representative's efforts to improve the economic relations between the two countries.

In spite of all that was mentioned above, the economic cooperation between the countries did not reach the [desired] level [based on] the opportunities [for cooperation] that existed between the two fraternal countries. Both the trade and the scientific and technical help to Cuba could be greater, could be realized on a larger scale.

[...]

The drawbacks of our practical economic cooperation with Cuba became most evident during the trade negotiations for 1964. We happened to be in a situation in which

we couldn't gather goods to pay the 110,000 tons of sugar supplies, although we received them at an old price; our active balance of trade, the repayment of our debt and other receivables were taken into consideration. Our country was obliged to assume additional duties to supply Cuba with other valuable goods, which it was short of in satisfying its own needs.

[...]

### 3. Cultural cooperation

As was already mentioned in the report in November and in different information and reports, the existing cooperation regarding the cultural agreement was not satisfactory. The main reason for that was that there were no budget funds in Cuba to cover the plan for applying the cultural agreement between Bulgaria and Cuba, signed in May 1963 in Bulgaria. Quite a lot of its good and useful initiatives simply remained hanging in the air.

[...]

1<sup>st</sup> Copy – CC BCP

2<sup>nd</sup> Copy – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

3<sup>rd</sup> Copy – to the Archive

*[Source, TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 51, a.e. 6; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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## **Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo Resolution on a visit of Cuban State delegation to Bulgaria, 6 February 1964**

RESOLUTION "A" No 31  
OF POLITBURO OF CC BCP 6.02.1964. [6 February 1964]

In view of the further widening and expansion of the all-embracing relations and links between People's Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba, it is considered expedient to:

1. The Central Committee of the Party and the Council of Ministers to invite on an official visit in our country a party-governmental delegation of the fraternal Republic of Cuba.
2. An exhibition of the People's Republic of Bulgaria on the development of our economics and culture to be organized

in Havana in 1964 .

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 5380; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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## **Foreign Ministry Report on Bulgarian-Cuban cultural relations, 25 February 1964**

FOREIGN MINISTRY  
SECOND DEPARTMENT  
Top secret!

Sofia, 25.02.1964. [25 February 1964]

To the Central Committee of BCP

Department "Foreign policy and international relations"

Copy: To the Committee for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries

In relation to the motion of CFCRFC and our embassy for opening a cultural center in Havana, the Foreign Ministry is of the opinion that for the time being we should not take steps to open such [a center] in Cuba.

The conclusions, that there are suitable conditions in Cuba and more open and purposeful propaganda activities are required, are correct. However, establishing a cultural center [alone] could not [help] achieve our goal in this respect.

[ ... ]

The general political situation in Cuba now and the country's attitude towards Bulgaria allow our country to develop better propaganda and cultural activities through our embassy in Havana, without opening a cultural center, [but rather] by implementing various forms of work in this direction.

It will be right if next year the issue of the possible opening of a cultural center in Cuba is examined more thoroughly and decided then.

DEPUTY MINISTER: G[ero] Grozev

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 51, a.e. 298; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*





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**Bulgarian Embassy, Havana (Kulbov),  
Information Re: The Latin American  
Communist Parties' Conference, 8  
February 1965 (enclosed with Bulgarian  
Embassy to Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, 3  
March 1965)**

No. 241

Embajada de la Republica

Popular de Bulgaria – La Habana

Havana, 3 March 1965

TO: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Second Department  
CC BCP, Department "Foreign Policy & International  
Relations"

We are sending you attached an Information re: The Latin  
American Communist Parties' Conference

Ambassador: Atanas Kulbov<sup>23</sup>

Information

Re: The Latin American Communist Parties' Conference

The conference of the Latin American communist parties was called upon the initiative of Uruguay's and Argentine's communist parties. The proposal to convene was made in July last year, when many representatives of these parties took part in the celebrations on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the attack against the Moncada barracks in Cuba.

The conference was held in Havana in the period 22 - 29 November last year under strict secrecy and with the participation of representatives of all the communist parties of the countries in Latin America, except that of Santo Domingo, whose representative was unable to take part for health reasons.

The whole Secretariat of the National leadership of the Cuban Communist Party was present - Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Osvaldo Dortikós, Blas Roca, Ernesto Che Guevara and Emilio Aragones. Comrade Carlos Rafael Rodriguez also took part in the conference.

There were two major issues on the agenda: the struggle against imperialism in different Latin American countries, sharing the revolutionary experience of the communist parties in these countries and the further expansion of the struggle for liberation in Latin America, on the one hand, and the unity and solidarity of the international workers' and communist movement, the danger of it being split up in factions and the measures necessary to preserve and consolidate its unity, on the other.

Detailed discussions and extensive speeches were made at the conference. Some of the delegates were not well prepared. The Brazilian delegation did not meet the high standards.

The Cuban Communist Party was exposed to severe criticism because of its attempt to impose its own revolutionary experience on some countries, without asking for these [countries'] parties' consent. They were criticized mainly for the fact that they had sent people to organize armed struggle not informing the respective parties of this and therefore doing them harm. They had established and maintained close contacts with organizations outside the communist parties.

For its part, the Cuban delegation criticized certain Latin American parties for the fact that they considered the opportunity to take the political power by peaceful means, a matter debated at the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU as a dogma; thus they had neglected and discarded all other means to achieve this political goal. This criticism was directed towards the Brazilian Communist Party above all, since it had not taken all measures to prepare an armed struggle within the country and had therefore found itself in a critical situation during last year's coup d'état.

Similar, though not absolutely the same comments were made by the representatives of Guatemala's and Venezuela's delegations.

Almost all delegates were unanimous on the second issue of the unity and solidarity of the international workers' and communist movement, the danger of it being split up as a result of the harmful impact of the activities of China's party leaders. The Cuban delegation did not comment on this matter; it suggested that a phrase be added to the final resolution on the activities [of the Chinese party leaders] saying "... whatever their source might be..."

The conference's resolutions have been published in a communiqué. These are based on the Declaration of the Communist and Workers' Parties' Conferences of 1957 and 1960.

To implement the resolution on putting an end to the open debates, a delegation was appointed to inform CPSU and the ChCP of the conference's work and resolutions; this delegation had to ask for stopping both the open discussions on debatable issues as well as the support provided to the organizations sowing discord. The same delegation was in charge of calling off the general meeting of the Communist and Workers' parties, scheduled for 15 December.

The delegate selected from the Cuban Communist Party was Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. According to the available information, this delegation was highly appreciated in the Soviet Union. The attitude towards it in China was just the opposite - it faced an attitude of reservation and formality, which is

indicative of China's party's leaders' apparent dissatisfaction with the conference's work and resolutions.

Representatives of other parties will pay a visit to the other socialist countries to inform of the conference's work.

The following exchange of views on the conference's work and results shows that its decisions are defined as positive. The Conference is viewed as an initial attempt to put the struggle against imperialism on a broader and more organized base using the experience of each party without interfering in its internal affairs. It is stated that the Latin American Revolution is a common deal, and has to be developed having in mind the concrete circumstances in each country. It is also confirmed that the Communist parties are the leading force of this Revolution.

The representatives of different delegations shared with us their satisfaction of the Cuban Party's hospitality during the Conference.

Havana, 8 February 1965

First Secretary, Bulgarian Embassy:  
/A. Hubenov/

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 51, File 400; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



[Note: For the translated minutes of the Bulgarian record of conversation between Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov and Cuban Defense Minister Raúl Castro in Sofia on 26 March 1965, see the report elsewhere in this issue of the *CWHP Bulletin* on R. Castro's visit to Central and Eastern Europe in early 1965.]



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**Politburo CC BCP Resolution re:  
Expanding Relations between the  
Bulgarian and the Cuban Communist parties,  
11 February 1966**

TO POLITBURO OF CC OF BCP  
MEMORANDUM

ABOUT: The expansion of the relations between the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Cuban Communist

Party

In recent years the relations between Bulgaria and Cuba – economic and cultural – expanded and intensified and the prospect is [for them] to become broader. However, the relations between our parties are unsatisfactory.

Proceeding from the resolution of Politburo for bolstering of the relations with the fraternal countries, we consider that on our behalf we have to display an initiative for the expansion and consolidation of the relations between our two parties. Our ambassador in Havana made a suggestion in this spirit, as well. On behalf of Cuba, Raul Castro demonstrated willingness for such an expansion during his visit to Bulgaria last year. And once again now, during the meeting of Comrade Elena Gavrilova with Osmany Cienfuegos - a member of CC and Chairman of the Committee for international issues of CC of Cuban CP, which took place in January this year in Havana.

The department considers expedient to suggest to the CC of CCP for 1966 to:

1. Exchange delegations led by a member of Politburo or a secretary of CC for exchange of experience in the sphere of party construction and agriculture.
2. Exchange one or two teachers from the party schools.
3. Exchange journalists from "New Times" and "Party Life" magazines with "Socialist Cuba" magazine.

[ ... ]

11.02.1966. [11 February 1966]

Head of department "Foreign Policy and International Relations" of CC of BCP: D[imo] Dichev

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 6164; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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**Politburo CC BCP Resolution re: expanding  
relations between the Bulgarian  
Communist Party and the Cuban  
Communist Party, 21 February 1966**

TO CC BCP POLITBURO

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MEMORANDUM

RE: Expanding the relations between the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Cuban Communist Party

In recent years the economic and cultural relations between Bulgaria and Cuba have expanded and intensified and the perspective is for them to expand even more. Yet the relations between our parties are unsatisfactory.

Taking into account Politburo's decision for strengthening the relations with the fraternal parties, we think we should take the initiative for expanding and strengthening the relations between our two parties. In the same lines, a suggestion was made by our Ambassador in Havana. A readiness for such an expansion was demonstrated by Raul Castro during his visit last year in our country as well as by Osmani Sienfuegos, member of the Central Committee and Head of its Foreign Affairs commission, during his meeting with Elena Gavrilova<sup>24</sup> in January this year in Havana.

The department considers that it is reasonable to propose to the CC of the CCP the following measures for 1966:

1. To exchange delegations, lead by a Politburo member or a CC Secretary to share experience in the sphere of the Party construction and agriculture.
2. To exchange one or two lecturers between our Party schools.
3. To exchange journalists between the "Novo Vreme" / New Time/ and "Partien Zhivot" /Party Life/ magazines with the "Socialist Cuba" magazine.
4. The "Rabotnichesko delo" newspaper, the "Novo Vreme" and "Partien Zhivot" magazines to establish relations and work out a plan for the exchange of articles with the "Granma" newspaper and "Socialist Cuba" magazine.

11 February 1966

Head of the "Foreign Policy and International Relations" department:  
Dimo Dichev

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 6164; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova, edited by Jordan Baev.]



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**Bulgarian Embassy, Havana, Report on the State of the Cuban Communist Party, 31 March 1966**

Information  
on the State of the Cuban Communist Party  
Havana, 31 March, 1966<sup>25</sup>

Cuba was the first Latin American country to free itself of the imperialist yoke and take up the road of socialism. The Cuban Revolution proved the irrelevance of the so called geographically determined fatalism that had been impressed upon the minds of the people for years; this dogma preached that the Socialist Revolution could never be brought to a victorious end in Latin America, because of its proximity to the USA. Apart from that, Cuba proved to be an example to follow by the masses of people in Latin America, and [it] accelerated the revolutionary processes there.

In 1964, the embassy sent a report on the progress of the Cuban Revolution, the driving forces of this revolution, and the stages and phases the Party has gone through. Hence, we shall only mention these issues in the current Information.

[...]

With the struggle against imperialism and the necessity to keep the revolutionary awareness of people, the Cuban party's policy has assumed a dynamic nature.

Yet together with the correct stance on certain issues regarding the building of socialism, there are some trends in the Cuban Communist Party's policy that cannot be neglected and overlooked, and cause our concern.

To explain these trends, certain aspects of the Cuban Revolution must be taken into consideration.

The revolution was carried out without the party's leadership [participating] in the armed struggle and in taking power. The leaders of the revolution are patriots, revolutionaries, loyal sons to the people, yet their ideology is based on Jose Marti's views, [on Simon] Bolivar's example, [as well as] on [the example] of the other outstanding functionaries of the past, who had dedicated their lives to the liberation of Latin America.

Marti viewed Latin America as something consolidated and quite different from Europe and North America. In its evaluation of his personality, the Cuban Revolution regarded him as the apostle and savior of this separate, consolidated

Third World. Bolivar and his army had liberated a number of Latin American countries from the dominion of Spain. Marti's and Bolivar's political views have strongly impacted and imbued their spirit into Fidel Castro's revolutionary ideas. The Cuban leaders have often claimed that Cuba will feel completely free, when all the peoples of Latin America are liberated. Following Bolivar's and Marti's ideas, Cuba considers taking up the struggle for the liberation of Latin America as its calling. There are certain messiah-like qualities, typical of the present Cuban leaders, which have been inherited from Bolivar and Marti.

[...]

A Marxist outlook is still taking shape among the Cuban leaders. A large part of the present communist party's leadership, including members of the CC, adopted bourgeois views just a few years ago. Of course, for the last 7 years after the victory of the Cuban Revolution, many of them, including Fidel Castro, have become acquainted with the Marxist and Leninist outlook and have adopted its postulates. However, the latter turned out a rather difficult process and has not been completed yet.

The ideological development of the relatively younger leaders of the Cuban Revolution has impacted the policies adopted by the Cuban Party. The Cuban leadership is ambitious enough to keep looking for new roads to follow and new theories to develop, and continue the building of the Party. This is a good ambition. However this is not all there is to be said. The Cuban comrades' conviction is that the "old" European revolutions have contributed all they could have, and that the new further development of the revolutionary theory and practice will be provided by the Cuban Revolution. The negative developments, [caused] by the Cuban Party's policy, stem from - the strong desire of the Cuban Party's comrades to rule the Third World and influence the development of the world revolutionary movement, by trying hard to make the Cuban revolutionary experience the guiding light and the major, even the only, objective law to determine the transition to socialism in Latin America.

What are the latest developments of the Cuban Communist Party's policy?

The new moment characterizing Cuba's policy is the deepening of the conflict with China. As it is well known, Fidel Castro has exposed the Chinese policy towards Cuba to severe criticism in his latest speeches. In his last speech of 19 March his criticism was directed towards Mao Zedong personally for China's lagging behind under Mao's regime.

[...]

The truth is that, in its argument with the Chinese leaders, the Cuban party has not adopted the international communist movement's stance, since they share essentially common views on certain issues.

Why did Fidel Castro then start the argument with China?

One can assume several reasons for this to happen:

First, the preparation and holding of the Tricontinental Conference has aggravated the contradictions between the two countries, since there was a clash of ambitions to rule the Third World.

The expanding influence of the Chinese policy in Latin America was already threatening the Cuban Party's aspirations for hegemony in this part of the world.

The Chinese propaganda made great effort to discredit the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Latin America and undermine their prestige. The Cuban Party, out of its own considerations, did not oppose in any way China's anti-Soviet policy. However it has become quite apparent that China's influence prevents Castro from achieving his political aims, and, therefore, he wants to restrict this influence and eliminate it.

Second, after the political gaffes and failure of China's policy and the dead-end the Chinese leaders have found themselves in, the Cuban party thinks it is high time that it made a statement on China's policy. This statement was necessary to make a clear distinction between Cuba and China, especially in Latin America.

Third, the Chinese made serious mistakes in Cuba. Not only did they flood the country with a wealth of propaganda materials, manipulating public opinion in their well-known consistent and insolent manner; they even made an attempt to manipulate officers from the Cuban army and use them as their weapon, employing various means to achieve this end: sending them presents, granting them foreign currency, etc. There was an impending danger of a conspiracy against the Cuban leadership and an attempt to take power on the part of a pro-China military core.

There is an obvious reason to arrive at the conclusion that Cuba has been arguing from its own standpoint and has adopted its own policy in treating the issues of the international communist movement; one reason is that the heated argument between Cuba and China is not backed up by support for the Soviet Union, denying China's libeling and mudslinging against the latter while emphasizing their role and significance in our modern age.

There is a major issue that remains unsettled relating to the discord between China and Cuba. A number of Latin American countries have set up pro-China factions. Under

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the present circumstances, the Cuban Party must take a stance on these factions. This, however, is a difficult task for the party, since it has maintained its relations with the pro-China factions so far, it has relied on their support and will most probably want to win their support. It is difficult to forecast how these relations will develop further.

The Cuban leaders' ambitions to assume the leading role in the world revolutionary process determine their attitude of overlooking and underestimating the Soviet Union's role and that of the CPSU.

[...]

As a matter of fact, the Cuban leaders have demonstrated their independent and non-aligned policy in a strange manner. Fidel Castro is regularly stating that nobody has taught the Cuban revolutionaries how to seize the political power; the party will therefore not let anyone tell them what course the revolution should take.

At the meeting of the Latin American delegations during the Tricontinental Conference Fidel Castro stated he was against the "ideological nationalism and secedism (a term condemning the support for and solidarity with the CPSU and the international communist movement); he also declared that no influence on Latin America was to be allowed, no matter where it came from.

The Cuban leaders have often stated their not being committed to satellitism.

No matter how hard we try to account for these statements on the nature of the Cuban Revolution, one cannot but realize that they essentially attack the Soviet Union and the communist parties. They are aimed at causing a disruption between the Latin American Revolution and the international communist movement.

These claims on the part of the Cuban leadership to be leading an independent and specific policy in the international communist movement can be detected in the theories developed recently.

The available data reveals that the French /Regis/ Debray, well-known for his theories of the nature of the Cuban revolution, has started a book that will provide the grounds to justify the political stance, adopted by the Cuban leaders concerning the Marxist ideology. After publishing his article in the "La Casa de las Americas" and "Bohemia", Havana University has published his book called: "Castroism - the Great March of Latin America." We have already informed you of his viewpoint that Castroism is the new Leninism of our modern age, and that the European type of Leninism is outdated. The book elaborates on these ideas further. The author maintains that "Castroism is Leninism recovered and

adapted to the needs of a continent Lenin had known nothing about... Castroism is nothing else than a renewal of Marxism and Leninism on the basis of the specific Latin American political environment and the historical development of each country. That is why Castroism will never be absolutely the same as Leninism."

In the same book the author writes about /Leonel/ Brizola as "the greatest revolutionary leader in Brazil."

The question that naturally arises is whether Debray is committed in any way to the Cuban leaders. Do they share his views? Cuba is a country where even a single word cannot be uttered publicly unless it has been approved by Fidel Castro; it is therefore impossible that such an article might be published without Castro's consent. It is highly unlikely that Debray published his articles without receiving any response by anyone since the Cuban leaders disagree with him. Fidel Castro himself has spent a lot of time with Debray. During his stay in Cuba he has been offered the accommodation and attention of a high and honoured guest. Of course one cannot claim, formally speaking, that the Cuban Communist Party has adopted Debray's views. We wouldn't devote so much of our time and attention to analyzing these views if they hadn't impacted the action and measures taken by the Cuban Party.

Thus the fears, relating to Cuba's firm insistence that the Tricontinental Conference be held in Havana, are reinforced. The Embassy has been sending a number of bulletins on Cuba's sending people to certain Latin American countries to do training and organize a guerrilla movement, disregarding the attitude of the brotherly parties. The Che Guevara case is being considered of mythological importance, an example to follow by every Cuban and Latin American. The propaganda, carried out in the military divisions to take part in the struggle against imperialism in any country, has intensified. Even the particular country, appropriate for certain cadres, has been specified. The information that the Latin American guerrilla groups include Cubans has been confirmed as well. There is a setback to the period before the Havana Conference of the communist parties. The Cuban press has not published even a single word about the resolutions of this conference, which laid the basis for the regulation of the relations between the Latin American communist parties. The Cuban leaders keep building up their relations with the Latin American communist parties depending on whether the latter have adopted Cuba's policy. The difference is in the fact that action is to be taken on behalf of and via the committees of the Tricontinental and Latin American organizations.

One of the major aims of the Cuban leaders is to carry out a revolution in Latin America. Despite the importance of economic matters, the latter are not the focus of attention and not as much effort is made to solve them, as [is devoted



to] the Latin American revolution. The issues, concerning the guerrilla activities and their simultaneous beginning in as many countries as possible, are considered the task of prime importance. Fidel Castro had interesting talks on these matters with Asdrubal Dominguez, member of the leadership of the Dominican Communist Party. Castro elaborated on his thesis that the establishment of a guerrilla movement in the Dominican Republic was to be immediately carried out, since there were American troops deployed on its territory. Dominguez replied that should the party, at that moment, call for an organized armed struggle and set up guerrilla units, then the consequences might be the following:

First, this would bring about a break-up of the united Democratic front;

Second, the party would isolate itself from the masses of people;

Third, such action would expose the communists to the risk of being wiped out.

Moreover the armed struggle in Santo Domingo is carried out mostly in the towns and this struggle is, therefore, closely dependent upon the traditions and experience of the workers' movement. Sending groups of people in the mountains would not solve any of the problems of the Dominican Revolution at this stage.

Dominguez explained that the revolution's major task was to consolidate the activities of all progressive forces in the country to achieve their common goal, and to organize the people neither hastily, nor too slowly. The Party should decide upon the appropriate time to call for armed struggle to take the political power. Fidel Castro did not approve of Dominguez's position.

The Cuban leaders were acting impatiently, neglecting the specific situation when taking revolutionary action, which was not the Cuban style. The Cuban leaders' attitude towards the Colombian Party at the Tricontinental Conference was not friendly, although the party had already organized an armed struggle; it however disagrees with the Cuban leaders' methods of guidance.

In brief, what are the arguments in favor of the fact that it was high time the peoples of all Latin American countries took up armed struggle as the only means to achieve their political aim?

1. The example the Cuban revolution gave, was the major argument. A large part of Fidel Castro's introductory speeches at the meetings of the Latin American

delegations was devoted to the experience of the Cuban Revolution and, in particular, to the fact that a couple of people could start the armed struggle and achieve victory. The very fact that these countries are highly exploited by and dependent upon imperialism, and that the present situation does not provide for a peaceful action, expressing the people's will, suffices to consider that the objective conditions to start an armed struggle and take the political power are present. The starting of an armed struggle does not presuppose other factors, which will develop in the course of the revolution. The main task was to find an armed group to start the struggle.

This action and development of the revolution may be metaphorically compared to the following: the people's struggle is the bigger engine, whereas the guerrilla movement is the smaller one. The only way to trigger off the big engine was to start the small one. That was the road Latin America was to follow.

2. The second argument is to be found in imperialism's global strategy.

The revolution's global strategy must counteract the imperialist one. It is necessary that a simultaneous armed struggle be organized in all countries of the continent. There may be a need for exporting the revolution. Raul Castro's position in this respect is interesting. Major events are expected to take place in Latin America, he said. Soon similar events are likely to happen in Venezuela as well. The USA will never let Venezuela slip out of their control and will therefore deploy armed troops there. A heated struggle will follow. Such a situation is likely to be created not only in Venezuela, but in a number of other Latin American countries as well. We must never forget the potential might of a giant that is still sleeping, namely Brazil. And when imperialism deploys its armed forces throughout the continent, we will then be able to fight it and destroy it.

Such a strategy to provoke imperialism to deploy its troops and occupy a number of Latin American countries, so that the anti-imperialist struggle might be set off and imperialism may be eventually wiped out, is difficult to understand.

The issue of triggering off the armed struggle has many aspects. One of these is that Cuban policy turns Cuba into the potential target for direct military action on the part of imperialism. And the Cuban leaders are well aware of this impending danger. Not only do they realize this danger, the most responsible among these leaders feel Cuba is doomed to be the target of military intervention; they claim that Cuba

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realizes what its undertaking is and assumes the risks of its present policy.

[...]

The Cuban Party's policy, despite the fact that it's claimed to be revolutionary in nature (it is constantly being stated that the Cubans are ready to fight imperialism everywhere), actually hinders the revolutionary process and the establishment of powerful united fronts in the countries of Latin America, underestimates the role of the communist parties, and encourages terrorism in these countries.

The Latin American communist parties, or least most of them, are being blamed for the lack of a pro-active attitude as well as for being too theoretically-minded, unwilling to start a revolution. This criticism may be relevant for some leaders. Yet this does not give the Cuban leaders the right to organize a guerrilla movement in the countries of Latin America, disregarding the respective communist parties' opinion, and to establish close contacts with anti-party adventurous elements, willing to start an armed struggle without any delay.

[...]

We are not against an armed struggle. On the contrary, we will always support such a struggle, in case it is relevant and appropriate in the context of a country's particular revolutionary situation. However, we cannot adopt the view that armed struggle is the only means of struggle, and that the action taken by the guerrilla forces must start simultaneously in all Latin American countries, irrespective of the specific situation in each country. This assumption gives rise to a schematic and formalistic attitude, which results from the desire to turn the Cuban revolution into an example to follow and an objective law of the revolution in general. Even less acceptable is the policy adopted by the Cuban leaders to organize the armed struggle abroad, disregarding the communist parties' stance. The latter results in substituting the socialist revolution's objective laws with petty bourgeois views of the revolutionary process.

[...]

The positive developments in the Cuban Party and country are determined by the assistance and cooperation of the socialist countries. Specialists and experts from the socialist countries work in all industries of the national economy. They share their positive experience and help Cuba in its development. The contacts with these experts and their work contribute to bringing closer both the parties and the countries.

It might prove advisable that COMECON, the Soviet Union and some other socialist countries discuss the problems

of providing assistance to Cuba and outlining the prospects of its economic development. The efforts to improve the economic situation in Cuba and the results of these efforts, may play a significant role in re-directing Cuba's policy.

The contacts between the Cuban Communist Party and these of the other Latin American countries, are of prime importance. Fidel Castro has made self-criticism several times before representatives of these parties; he claims that he has not been informed on separate issues and has, therefore, made wrong judgments and statements. The Latin American parties can best discuss Latin America's problems in depth, as well as the problems of the revolutionary movements in this part of the world.

Of course the other brotherly parties and the communist parties of the socialist countries must help the Cuban Party. Underestimating the existing differences between the Cuban Party and the international communist movement results in their deepening. It is necessary that the contacts and meetings with the Cuban comrades be more frequent, as well as the exchange visits of delegations. Our Party is considered an authority in Cuba, and its efforts, coordinated with the efforts on the part of the CPSU, can be of great help.

Reality remains the most significant factor. The Cuban comrades' ambitions and infatuation collide with reality; it is reality that will help them overcome these problems. Cuba is a small country and its economic resources are limited for its leaders to become leaders on a world scale.

It is obvious that whatever measures are decided upon to provide assistance to Cuba's party, it would take a long time to implement them. We cannot maintain that correcting certain wrong views will be an easy task. The Cuban comrades need more time to arrive at the right conclusions. The time, when information of this kind will be directed at analyzing Cuba's positive experience, will hopefully come.

Havana

31 March 1966

Counselor /Bulgarian Embassy/:

S. Cohen

[Source: TsDA, Fond 1B, Opis 81, Unprocessed Collection, 1967-1990; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; edited by Jordan Baev.]



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**CC BCP Secretariat Secret Resolution  
re: Training Cuban security officers in  
Bulgaria, 8 June 1966**

RESOLUTION "B" No 8  
OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CENTRAL  
COMMITTEE OF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST  
PARTY FROM 8 JUNE 1966

*The CC BCP Secretariat approves the proposal that Comrade [Cuban intelligence chief Manuel] Piñero visit our country. We can accept 30 people for training only on counterintelligence work. We have no conditions to train people on sabotage.<sup>26</sup>*

Top Secret

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE CC BCP COMRADE  
LUCHEZAR AVRAMOV<sup>27</sup>

Comrade Avramov,

At a meeting with Comandante Sergio Del Valle – Politburo member of the Cuban Communist Party, captain Osmani Sienfuegos – head of the Foreign Affairs Commission at the CC of the CCP and Secretary General of the Tricontinental Committee and Comandante Manuel Piñero – member of the CC of the CCP and head of the State Security service, before my departure from Havana on 21 May there was a demand for accepting 30 Cuban comrades for training in sabotage and contra revolutionary activity. They consider the training period to be about a year and the training itself should be at our expense. They expect to receive an answer in principle not later than 5 or 6 June this year. They can send Comandante Piñero to our country to coordinate the details.

I answered I would report the issue to the respective people and they would be informed about the result.

I would like to ask you for your instructions.

4 June 1966  
Sofia

[Gen. Angel Solakov, Chairman of the State Security Committee]

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 64, a.e. 352; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; edited by Jordan Baev.]*



### **Information on Latin America and Cuba: delivery of weapons to Cuba and Latin America, 2 November 1966**

To comrade Ivan Bashev  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Sofia

Comrade Bashev,

Please, send the following coded telegram to the embassy in Berlin:

“Get in touch with CC of the German Unified Socialist Party (SED) and inform them about the following:

In November this year a Cuban delegation led by Comandante Pedro Luis Rodriguez visited our country. On behalf of the Cuban leaders, the delegation posed the issue [to] Bulgaria to supply Cuba with arms, medicines, transport and communication equipment, which [was] to be employed for assistance of the national-liberation movements in Latin America, Asia and Africa. According to the delegation, the Cuban leaders made or will make the same request to other European socialist countries as well. The Cuban party and state leaders are going to send the aid to those regions and countries, where according to him there was a revolutionary situation, and to those powers and groups, including the ones not affiliated with the communist parties, which read correctly this situation.

On behalf of the CC of the BCP the delegation received an answer that BCP has assisted and will continue to assist the national-liberation movements, but under the following conditions:

1. The assistance should be required directly from the leaders of the communist party in the respective country, through Cuba or any other socialist country.
2. The assistance rendered to the national-liberation movements in those countries should be coordinated among the socialist countries.

We have sent such information to the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary.”

Head of department “Foreign policy and international relations” to CC of BCP: D. Dichev

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 51, a.e. 592; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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## Letter from Bulgarian Embassy, Havana, 26 January 1967

Secret!

To the ambassador of PRB in Cuba

COMRADE ATANAS KULBOV

MEMORANDUM

From Petar Marinkov, Third secretary at the Embassy of PR  
Bulgaria in Cuba.

Comrade Ambassador,

Last week, at my request, I met twice comrade Lazaro Mora, Secretary for the international relations of the National Committee of the Union of the Young Communists. At the first meeting we talked on topics connected with the conducting the Ninth World Youth Festival, and at the second - about the implementation of the treaty between our two youth organizations.

I requested the first meeting, so that he could explain to me in more detail the formulation of Jaime Crombet in his report at the Third Plenum of the National Leadership of the Union of the Young Communists about Cuba's not taking part in the meeting of the Organization Committee of the festival, called for at the end of this month in Vienna, and [to remind him] that the issue about the participation of Cuba in the festival should be discussed. In relation to this the counselor at the Polish embassy in Havana, comrade Curus, has informed our counselor, comrade Cohen, that the editor of the Polish youth newspaper, who was in Cuba on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the revolution, has accidentally attended the first meeting of the plenum, and during the closed-door meeting a resolution was adopted by voting to the effect that Cuba should not participate in the festival and [should] possibly organize a counter-festival.

I also visited the man in charge for the work with the Soviet Comsomol in Cuba, comrade Shlyapnikov, who was accompanying the Soviet youth delegation led by the Secretary of the Soviet Comsomol CC Torsuev that also took part in the work of the plenum. He said that outside the official treatment of this issue in the report of Crombet, he did not know anything about the closed-door meeting of the plenum, but he knew the position of Cuba about the festival, which was discussed with the Soviet youth delegation after its implementation.

During my meeting with comrade Mora I told him that I could not attend the first meeting of the plenum, where the issue about the festival was posed. I asked him to explain to me what exactly was their position and whether there was a change in it after the visit of our youth delegation led by comrade Georgi Atanassov in October last year. He answered that that issue was indeed posed at the plenum but a resolution was adopted not to participate in the organization committee. And the issue about the participation in the festival was to be resolved by the CC of the Party. He informed me that such a decision was already adopted. Its sense was that in case that a resolution was adopted the festival to be conducted in Europe, in Sofia, Cuba would not take part in it.

Elucidating the reasons which had provoked those Cuban resolutions on that issue, comrade Mora told me that the meeting of the organization committee would be only a facade and even a farce, because an already adopted resolution where the festival will be held would be sanctioned at it. Long ago WFDY stopped to be an independent international organization and the powerful countries, the ones that give the money, dictate its course, and [in this case] it is the USSR. Everything up to now shows that the USSR and the other socialist countries are against hosting the festival in Cuba and for the last time they got convinced in this during the recently concluded visit of the delegation of the Soviet Comsomol led by comrade Torsuev. In brackets I would like to note that at its departure no representative of the National leadership of the Union of the young communists was sent and only at noon did comrade Mora apologize on the phone that he could not go to the airport because he overslept.

Further comrade Mora told me that they would send a letter to the organization committee, in which they would state their position. He added that one of the reasons not to participate in this meeting is that they did not want to enter into bitter discussions with the delegations because by no means would they like to spoil their relations with some youth unions. He told me that Cuba wanted to conduct a festival of the young revolutionaries, who immediately after it would be ready to take to arms and to go to fight where the conditions require it. Once again they suggested the festival to be conducted in Vietnam and if this could not be carried out, that the only other place, where the festival should be conducted, given the current situation, was Cuba. And also, that this is the personal wish of Fidel Castro who is the only Prime Minister who made a public statement for Cuba to be the host of the festival.

I wanted to know whether the Cubans had some other intentions about the festival but Mora refused to say more about this issue and underlined that what was said up to now was their position. Obviously, however, they have not given

up their attempts to act in this direction and this is the only explanation about the fact that a resolution was adopted for Jaime Crombet to go to Sofia in order to participate in the meeting of the persons in charge of the Cuban scholarship-supported students in the socialist countries, in which the Minister of Education would take part and also one of the closest men to Fidel Castro - Jose Llanusa, who only a few months ago delivered a long speech at the plenum of the Cuban students who study in the socialist countries. Hardly during this short period had such big changes happened in the life of those students to require the trip of the Minister of Education and first secretary of the National Committee of the Union of the Young Communists. In his conversation with comrade Georgi Atanassov he announced that he would visit Bulgaria at the time of the congress of our Comsomol. There are reasons to suggest that at this meeting they will elucidate the Cuban position about the festival and WFDY in general and they will give instructions for exploring the opinion about this issue of the Latin American, the Asian, and the African students who study in the socialist countries with a view to provoke disagreement with the resolution of the organizing committee for the carrying out of the festival and to support the position of Cuba.

At my second meeting with comrade Mora we revised the fulfillment of the agreement between DCYU and the Union of the Young Communists. For more lucidity I am going to present his opinion about the fulfillment of the separate clauses in the agreement.

[ ... ]

THIRD LEGATION SECRETARY:

/P. Marinkov<sup>28</sup>/

Havana

26 January 1967

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1053, Opis 9, a.e. 48; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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**Memorandum from Bulgarian Communist Youth Union to BCP Politburo re: Competing Cuban and Bulgarian Candidacies to Host the IX World Youth Festival in 1967<sup>29</sup>**

CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE DIMITROV COMMUNIST YOUTH UNION

TO POLITBURO OF CC OF BCP  
SOFIA

**MEMORANDUM**

From GEORGI ATANASSOV<sup>30</sup> - First Secretary of the  
Central Committee  
of DCYU

ABOUT: Some issues of the preparation of the Ninth World  
Festival of Youth and Students

Comrades,

After the Ninth World Festival has been postponed twice because of the well-known events in Algeria and Ghana, on 26-27 January this year [1967], a meeting of the International Organizing Committee (IOC) is summoned again in Vienna. At that meeting the presented nominations for a host of the festival will be discussed and a resolution will be made about the time and the place for its carrying out. As members of IOC we are also preparing to send a delegation of ours.

What is the situation at the moment, immediately before the meeting of IOC?

As it is well known, the candidates for hosts of the festival are two countries - Bulgaria and Cuba.

The talks and the consultations up to date show that the overwhelming majority of the organizations - members of IOC made statements in favor of our nomination. From 42 organizations - members of IOC - up to now about 23 organizations have supported our nomination. These are: the youth unions from the brotherly socialist countries - USSR, Poland, GDR, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, a number of organizations from Africa - Sudan, Senegal, Guinea, UAR, from Latin America - Argentina, Brazil, Chile, from Asia - India, Lebanon, Iraq and the organizations from France, Australia, Canada and Cyprus.

Six or seven organizations support the nomination of Cuba - Guatemala, Venezuela, Congo (Brazzaville), Japan, Indonesia, in one or other form the youth unions of Finland and Italy give their preference to the nomination of Cuba.

Approximately the same number of organizations has not defined their position yet or has not announced it.

Besides, it is expected that delegations of China and Ghana will not take part in the meeting of the IOC (because of the events there) and USA (they have not taken their place in IOC at all).

At such a configuration of the powers, the talks and the consultations between the different youth organizations are conducted at the moment.



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We want to note that recently the Cuban comrades display immense activity, sending delegations to the different continents, manipulating youth leaders and are extremely anxious to stand up for their nomination.

They unambiguously emphasize that a resolution of the IOC in favor of another nomination will be interpreted by them not only as an attitude to the Union of the young communists, but also as a lack of understanding of the needs of the revolution and the situation in Cuba.

The basic arguments of the Cuban comrades in favor of their nomination are the following:

After all festivals up to now have been held in Europe, it is only proper for the Ninth Festival to be in a country in Asia, Africa, or Latin America.

Therefore, the festival must be staged in the country that needs the most international-support and solidarity. Such a country is Vietnam. However, as the Vietnamese comrades are not able to receive it, it is only fair for the festival to be conducted in Cuba, which is undergoing difficulties because of the embargo.

This festival should be a powerful stimulus in the struggle of the young people from Asia, Africa and Latin America and a challenge to the American imperialism. This will reflect to a great extent the spirit of the resolutions of the Tricontinental Conference.

Guided by the stated motives, the Cuban comrades declare that they are ready to: accept any suggestions of IOC about the character and the structure of the festival, to grant to IOC the right to issue visas to the participants, to give one million dollars in optional currency for maintenance of the festival, and to take on a significant part of the transportation expenses.

For many years Dimitrov's Comsomol (Young Communist League) and the Union of the young communists of Cuba have kept very good contacts. We are constantly making efforts for their further development. An expression of this was the recent visit of our delegation in Cuba and the friendly meetings and talks which we conducted.

Now the nominations of our two brotherly organizations as hosts of the festival will be discussed. Provided how fervently the Cuban comrades stand up for their nomination and [given] the fact that the majority prevails in favor of Sofia, it is not impossible for our nomination to be interpreted as opposing theirs, and for this to have an unfavorable effect on the relations between our youth unions. For example, their representatives made statements that on the issue of the location of the festival they "will have to start an argument with the Bulgarian comrades." Moreover, as far as behind this explicit position stands the communist party of Cuba, as well,

it is not impossible for this to affect the relations between our countries. The considerations of the majority of the youth organizations, including the most influential ones from Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, and Chile), about the rejection of the Cuban nomination have a principle basis.

This was emphasized at the meeting conducted in November 1966 in Moscow of the first secretaries of the Central Committees of the Soviet Union of the Communist Youth (SUCY) and DCYU, as well. At that meeting comrade Georgi Atanassov, after presenting the contents of the talks which he had with the Cuban comrades, he expressed the idea of withdrawing our nomination if this proves expedient. However, comrade S. P. Pavlov confirmed once again their position that the festival must not be carried out in Cuba and that they support firmly the nomination of Bulgaria. He declared unambiguously that such is the position of Politburo of CC of Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), as well.

The considerations for this are based on disagreement with the common political concepts from which the Cuban comrades proceed in the international youth movement. This includes the Cuban understanding about the resolutions of the Tricontinental Conference as a basis for the activities of the international youth organizations, their attempts at organizational differentiating of the youth powers from Latin America under their leadership, their wrong approach to the problems of the revolution and the forms of the struggle against imperialism and so on.

On the other hand, there are definite difficulties regarding the complexity of the political situation in Cuba. There is a real danger for it to limit the possibilities for a full display of the festival slogans for solidarity, peace, and friendship. A possible festival in Cuba unquestionably would become an expression of the solidarity with the struggle of the peoples of Cuba and Vietnam, but the other problems of the world democratic youth movement and particularly those of the African youth would remain in the background. The experience up to now does not give [us] ground to believe in the declarations of our Cuban comrades that the IOC will have the full opportunity to define the contents and the character of the festival.

There are technical difficulties referring to the remoteness, transport, financing and others, which inevitably will limit the representative character of the festival in Cuba and on their behalf will turn into political ones.

What is our opinion about what should be done in this situation?

Sharing the above considerations, the Central Committee of Dimitrov's Communist Youth Union thinks that there should not be a festival in Cuba.

In order to avoid possible aggravation of our relations with the Union of the young communists of Cuba, from the viewpoint of the interests of our country, perhaps it is expedient to find a third nomination for conducting the festival. In this respect a while ago a number of researches were made which did not give a positive result.

That is why we think that we have to stand up for our nomination, launched, moreover, not because of accidental and opportunistic considerations, which we are going to present at the meeting of the IOC.

[ ... ]

In our view, the Ninth festival, with its appeal and mobilizing power over the youth masses all over the world, based on the ideals for solidarity, peace, and friendship, must be a powerful, large-scale political demonstration of the activity and the unity of the world democratic youth.

Together with this, we are for a festival open to all powers that want to participate in it, a festival that gives a full opportunity for broad discussions and numerous meetings of different youth powers.

Therefore, from political point of view we are willing to ensure full success of the festival.

Besides, all material, cultural, geographic and other prerequisites needed for such a successful festival are available in our country.

There is a certain danger - due to the insistence of the Cuban comrades and to the fact that some youth unions support them - at the forthcoming meeting of the IOC for the decision in favor of our nomination not to be adopted unanimously and for some unions to make a statement that they do not support such a festival. It is not impossible [that] a resolution without an explicit majority [would] encourage the centrifugal forces in the youth movement and give grounds to the Cuban youth leaders to intensify the criticism and the attacks against the World Federation of the Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the International Students Union (ISU). Of course, we do not assume the possibility that the Union of the young communists in Cuba would sever its relations with the WFDY.

This depends to a large extent on the position of the youth organizations from Africa. In order to secure their support for our nomination, two days ago the representative of SUCY in WFDY suggested to us to consider whether it is not expedient to send a delegation of ours to Africa. In our view, such

a step on our behalf is unjustified. The other brotherly youth unions could do this. At the same time however, we consider it necessary for the Foreign Ministry, through the embassies of PRB in Algeria, Mali, Tanzania, Guinea, Sudan and Morocco, to explain to the leaders of the youth organizations in these countries our motives for the carrying out of the festival in Sofia.

On its behalf our delegation at the meeting of the IOC must do everything necessary and possible to preserve our good relations with the Union of the young communists in Cuba.

If there is no prospect for an explicit majority in favor of our nomination, it could be expedient to try to postpone the meeting of the International Organizing Committee as [a measure of] last resort. In our opinion only such a majority can influence the Cuban youth leaders.

We think that our nomination does not contradict the nomination of Cuba. We regard it as we do any other one, as an opportunity. We could welcome other nominations, which will present an opportunity for a better choice. We showed that this is so with our positive attitude to the previous two resolutions of the IOC about Algeria and Ghana. And now we are also ready, if the international youth movement decides that it will be more expedient for the festival to be conducted in another country, not to protest and to participate in such a festival.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF DCYU  
SECRETARY: G. ATANASSOV

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 6526; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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### **Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo meeting Re: Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 5 October 1967**

TO the CC BCP Politburo

#### **INFORMATION**

by G[ero] Grozev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Re: Proposed measures for strengthening of the Bulgarian – Cuban Relations

[...]

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Although the other socialist countries' experience in building socialism is not denied publicly, this experience has recently not been given due attention and Cuba's own development has been consistently focused on.

The Cuban government has propagated the thesis that material stimuli and benefits of the workers will result in the re-establishment of capitalism and the weakening of the workers' sense for international revolutionary action. Such an approach will inevitably result in actual wage leveling, which will, in its turn, seriously affect production.

Yet another postulate has proved to be confusing: the one that Cuba has been establishing socialism and communism simultaneously, adding that the latter cannot be built without abolishing imperialism completely.

[...]

It is well known that the Cuban government has adopted a strange stance on the issues of party and state construction and organization in Cuba; similar positions relate to the international communist movement and its development in the contemporary international situation. The higher posts of the Cuban Communist Party have been taken by the proponents of the "July 26<sup>th</sup>" Movement. 70% of the Central Committee's staff are military officials. Out of the 8 member of Politburo, 6 are military officials; there is not a single member of the ex-People's Socialist Party elected to this central governing body.

For quite some time the Cuban Communist Party has made no official statements on the discord within the international communist movement. Up to the end of 1965 Fidel Castro openly opposed the Chinese leaders, for there was a conflict of interests between the Chinese and Cuban ambitions about playing a central political part in Latin America. Cuba's criticism of the Chinese government was based totally on its own positions and interests. The Chinese leaders' ideology and policies have not been condemned yet. Even though we cannot maintain, that the Cubans have actually adopted China's policies, they have adopted the same positions on certain issues, such as peaceful co-existence, material benefits and building up socialism.

A large part of the Cuban leaders' views of the world revolutionary movement's strategy and tactics, in general, and Latin America's, in particular, are contradictory to Marxism-Leninism's basic postulates and principles. Presuming the false postulate that the conditions for starting a revolution in almost all Latin American countries have ripened, the

Cuban leaders have adopted a policy of interference in Latin America's communist parties and their internal affairs.

Cuba's interference in Venezuela's communist party, providing assistance to Douglas Bravo's faction, an ex-member of Politburo who was expelled from the Communist Party. On the part of Cuba's leaders, Venezuela's Communist Party was libeled and was referred to as "rightist," "opportunistic," and "treacherous."

An act of brutal interference in Colombia's communist party by Cuba's leaders was the setting up of a guerilla movement separated from its communist party.

Such a mistaken policy was approved of at the recently held conference of the Organization for Latin American Solidarity.

The relations between the Cuban communist party and the European communist parties have grown colder for the last few years. No Cuban delegation attended the German Unified Socialist Party's congress.

Cuba's leadership does not share the views of the USSR and the other socialist countries of the peaceful co-existence policy that these countries have been conducting. Cuba refused to sign the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty; Cuba does not approve of establishing diplomatic and trade relations with the capitalist Latin American countries, pointing out that such relations support local oligarchies and hold the revolutionary process back. In this respect the resolution of OLAS (Organization for Latin American Solidarity) was adopted.

The Cuban leaders have been conducting an isolationist policy towards certain liberal and democratic parties and their functionaries in the other Latin American countries, thus isolating themselves from their natural allies and friends on the continent.

The Cuban leaders have manifested the adopted policy of actively assisting Latin America's revolutionary movement, thus facilitating the reactionary regime's activity aimed at enhancing terrorism and establishing the so called "American forces" to act against Cuba both in Latin America and the USA.

Despite all mistakes made, there is a general conviction that the core of Cuba's leadership consists of frank functionaries committed to their people's cause, unaware of their mistaken views and sincerely believing that they have adopted the right policy in the interest of the revolutionary process.



Political, economic and cultural relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Cuba were established after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

Our government has been assisting Cuba actively and it has defended Cuba against the offence of the US imperialism.

Apart from the economic and cultural agreements at the government level, agreements for cooperation between public and political organizations and creative unions were concluded; these agreements play an important part in our getting to know each other and establishing closer relations. Useful and fruitful contacts were established between our Comsomol,<sup>31</sup> the Bulgarian Union for Sports and the corresponding Cuban organizations. An important step towards expanding the economic, scientific and technological cooperation between Cuba and Bulgaria was the setting up of an inter-governmental commission for economic, scientific and technological cooperation.

The trade between the two countries has marked an increase by 38,633,000 USD in 1966 from 500,000 USD in 1960. The basic shares of our exports to Cuba are machines and technological equipment - about 45%, and food - about 40%. Our major import item from Cuba is sugar and molasses. Trade for the current year is expected to go beyond 50 mln. USD with a positive balance of trade for Bulgaria.

[...]

The People's Republic of Bulgaria has extended Cuba five loans amounting to a total of 15,800 000 USD, 9,300,000 of which are supplies of special equipment.

About 200 Bulgarian specialists are now working in Cuba, a Comsomol brigade of 100 people, mainly agricultural workers. 39 Bulgarian musicians are also working in Cuba at present. All these specialists' work has been highly appreciated by a number of high-level Cuban leaders, including Castro.

[...]

The development of the trade relations between the two countries has been beneficial and fruitful to both countries so far. Cuba turned out to be an interesting market for the articles of Bulgaria's machine-building industry, the tractors "Bolgar" in particular and other items, and at the same time Cuba proved to be an experimental basis for testing our products in tropical climate. There are the necessary conditions to supply Cuba with complex properties. The benefits and political importance of the cultural contacts are beyond any doubt. There arises the question what policy towards Cuba is to be adopted in the future, since the Cuban leaders have been conducting policies quite different from those of the [other] socialist countries. We consider that expanding and intensifying our cooperation in terms of party and political relations, cultural exchange, and public and creative organizations, is

the appropriate policy. Tolerant, calm and frank talks with the Cuban comrades on all levels so as to persuade them to give up the present harmful policies are necessary.

It is considered appropriate that the relations in the field of science and technology, as well as the economic relations be further developed. Such a policy will stimulate building socialism in Cuba, and will contribute to socialist Cuba's increasing role as a suit to follow by the other Latin American countries.

On the other hand, a deepening of the economic relations between Cuba and the socialist countries, and thus the higher dependence of Cuba's economy upon the socialist countries' [economies], will make the Cuban leaders refrain from making "weird" statements.

The following measures are considered appropriate to this effect:

I. In the sphere of political relations.

1. Ministries, agencies, institutions, public organizations and artistic unions must follow a policy of expanding and strengthening the relations and cooperation with the respective Cuban bodies and authorities.
2. A Party and State delegation is to visit Cuba, headed by comrade Todor Zhivkov at the beginning of 1968. During the visit of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Fidel Castro's visit to Bulgaria is to be agreed upon and arranged.
3. A Party delegation, headed by a member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party is to visit Cuba this autumn, or at the beginning of 1968 to get acquainted with the organizational and ideological work of the Cuban Communist Party. A delegation headed by a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party is to be invited to visit Bulgaria in 1968 to get acquainted with the organizational and ideological work of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

The Higher Party School is to establish relations with the revolutionary education schools in Cuba, and invite a delegation to visit Bulgaria, so that it may share our Higher Party School's experience, as well as our experience in the field of education and enlightenment in general.

4. The department of "Foreign Policy and International Relations" at the Central Committee of the Bulgarian

Communist Party is to regularly provide an exchange of information and statements on different issues of mutual interest to both countries.

[...]

5. A proposal made to Cuba to have military attaches exchanged between the two countries.

## II. In the sphere of economic relations.

1. The State Commission on Planning and Forecasting and the Ministry of Foreign Trade are to submit proposals about additional events on expanding the import and export product range to and from Cuba, so that the trade balance may be evened. These suggestions are to be submitted to the Commission of Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation at the Council of Ministers by 1 December 1967. The focus of our attention must be an increase in our exports of machines and plants.

[...]

Sofia, 22 September 1967,  
Gero Grozev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 6879; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



### Report to BCP Politburo on Preparations for Todor Zhivkov's Proposed Visit to Cuba, 7 December 1967

TO CC BCP POLITBURO

In accordance with the Politburo resolution No. 1278, Protocol No. 379 of 5 October 1967, it was coordinated with the Cuban leadership that our party-governmental delegation will visit Cuba at the end of January and the beginning of February next year [1968]. I propose that the delegation has to be composed of the following comrades:

TODOR ZHIVKOV- First Secretary of the CC BCP, and Prime Minister of the PR of Bulgaria - Head of the delegation;

BORIS VELCHEV- Member of CC BCP Politburo and Secretary of CC BCP;

PEKO TAKOV - Alternate Member of CC BCP Politburo, Member of the Board of the Council of Ministers, and Minister of Trade, Chairman of the Bulgarian part of the Joint Bulgarian-Cuban committee for economic and scientific-technical cooperation;

Colonel-General SLAVCHO TRANSKI - Member of CC BCP, and Deputy Minister of National Defense;

KONSTANTIN TELLALOV- Alternate Member of CC BCP, Head of "Foreign Policy and International Relations" CC BCP Department;

GERO GROZEV- Alternate Member of CC BCP, and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs;

DOBRI ALEXIEV- Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade;

STEFAN PETROV- Alternate Member of CC BCP, Bulgarian Ambassador to Republic of Cuba;

MLADEN ISAEV-A writer, Honored Art Worker, and a Hero of Socialist Labor.

A number of experts and technical assistants will be included in the delegation .

Sofia, 7 December 1967  
Ivan Bashev<sup>32</sup>  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 6, a.e. 6979; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



### Information from Bulgarian Ambassador in Havana Stefan Petrov<sup>33</sup> to Bulgarian Leader Todor Zhivkov on the Domestic and Foreign Policy of Cuba, 15 August 1968\*

#### INFORMATION

#### RE: CUBA'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY

In our opinion the materials sent by our embassy provide a realistic picture of Cuba's internal situation and its international status; they realistically describe Cuba's domestic and foreign policies on the most topical contemporary issues.

Upon analyzing Cuba's leaders' policies, and seeking the reasons behind their approach towards solving various



problems, the following considerations must be taken into account:

First, for the last three or four years the Cuban government has conceived its own views and conceptions about the most essential problems of modern life, which are incompatible with Marxism-Leninism.

These views and conceptions diverge from our party's views and assessments.

Second, the Cuban Communist Party is basically a newly established party, set up along the principles of uniting the "July 26<sup>th</sup>" movement, the old communist party and the "13<sup>th</sup> March directorate." The "July 26<sup>th</sup>" movement has managed to gradually usurp all key party and government positions; it has managed to impose the global revolutionary process as a concept and its own model of building socialism on the present leadership of the Cuban Communist Party.

The present leadership of the Cuban Communist Party has actually taken over power. In the past, prior to the Cuban revolution, all members of the present leadership used to be revolutionaries with not well-established ideological views; many of them were anti-communists, or at least had adopted views, quite different from the communist ideology. These were mostly intelligentsia, participants in the students' movement, and followers of Marti's ideology, that had mixed views and conceptions. All this impacted the party's policy, which, though referred to as communist, is not a well-established communist party yet.

Step-by-step, within the 1962 to 1968 period, after the January plenary session, Castro managed to do away with the old communist party and establish, at his own discretion, a new one in its place.

Sectarian mistakes and blunders on the part of Escalante and other party leaders, who failed to get properly oriented, motivated Castro. Mistakes were made both during the revolutionary struggle and after it.

Third, without taking into account certain traits of Castro's personality, it will be difficult to analyze Cuba's domestic and foreign policy. It is Castro that has been shaping it so far.

In his activity Fidel Castro is an idealist, and, in many cases, an adventurer. He would like to establish a new social order, ignoring socialism's basic laws, and the CPSU's experience, and seeking an independent "peculiar" manner of solving both international and domestic problems.

Despite the fact that he calls himself a Marxist-Leninist, he is unable to make a Marxist analysis of all facts and events. His leadership obsession and self-confidence and self-conceit-edness, [as well as] the over-estimation of his own strengths

and merits, prevent him from being able to study the others; such features of his character determine the adventures he is likely to get involved in, especially under more complicated circumstances.

Castro's development as a revolutionary reveals his close relations with the intelligentsia, the students' movement, and his distance from the working class. His petty bourgeois background has strongly affected his personality.

The revolution's triumph and his leadership are the factors that enhance his negative features: narcissism, adventurism, and obsession with being the leader; therefore he tends to consider himself the leader of all Latin American peoples, along with being Cuba's leader. Being unable to carry out a Marxist analysis of the actual circumstances that pre-determined the successful end of Cuba's revolution, he readily generalizes his revolutionary experience, considering it as mandatory for Latin America in general; hence the mistakes he makes.

[...]

Fourth, Castro's anti-Soviet attitudes. He cannot appreciate the USSR's part in the winning of Cuban independence. He can neither understand, nor appreciate the USSR's part in the world revolutionary process. He has adopted a similar stance towards both American imperialism and the Soviet bloc.

Castro's attitude towards the Soviet Union is cold and distanced, often even hostile. For quite some time now the Cuban leaders have adopted a policy of denying and undermining the CPSU and the USSR's role and significance. The process of distancing from the USSR has become more significant.

Such a policy is hazardous, and therefore surprises are likely to take place.

Fifth, the manifestations of nationalism among Cuba's leaders. Although they are constantly talking about internationalism, their actions are essentially nationalistic.

All these circumstances affect our relations with Cuba, and set up obstacles to the further progress of political relations.

#### Notes on certain aspects of Cuba's foreign policy and its attitude towards the international communist movement

For the last five or six months there has been no visible change in Cuba's foreign policy.

[...]

1. The different opinions relate to almost all basic issues of

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the communist movement.

A) On the international communist movement issues.

For the last two years the Cuban conceptions about their “own” way of development and the international communist movement have been clearly shaped. Within a short period of time the gap between Cuba and the international communist movement has seriously widened, affecting a number of core present-day issues; this gap actually set a new trend in their relations and was a result of the peculiarities of the Cuban revolution.

These trends are the following:

- Cuba claims to have a leadership role in guiding the world revolutionary process;
- Cuba wants to enforce its own policies and conceptions upon Latin America’s communist parties, employing [various means] from exporting [its own] revolution to supporting factions within [other communist] parties;
- Cuba underestimates and denies the CPSU’s role;
- it declares that the international communist movement’s methods and strategy are outdated and useless;
- it is an opponent of the socialist countries’ policies, especially in moments of acute collisions in the international arena;

These trends have become the basic points in the policy adopted by the Cuban leaders. The attempts made to apply these views in real life have resulted in economic difficulties and have hindered relations between Cuba and the brotherly parties.

These trends determined certain activity of Cuba’s leaders.

The OLAS conference of July 1967 did not yield the expected results. It actually turned out to be a failure. The conference’s bodies have been dissolved. The conference granted to Cuba the position of secretary general of the elected commission at OLAS. However no person has yet been appointed. OLAS’s commission has neither been set up, nor has it convened. The only practical result has been the growing tension between Cuba’s leaders and the brotherly parties.

Guevara’s death was a terrible blow to Cuba’s policy. Until his group’s defeat, Cuba tried to stimulate revolution on the continent; it actually organized about 40 small guerilla groups within different Latin American countries. Yet all these attempts failed. Other failures followed in 1967: Regis Debray, the famous proponent of the Cuban conceptions, was captured by the enemy and was forced to disclose many things.

Three Cubans were captured as they were trying to unload a group of guerillas along Venezuela’s coast.

A group of Cuban comrades died in Bolivia.

Douglas Bravo made efforts to split the party, and these were attempts to make the party give in. On the other hand, there were unscrupulous/ruthless attacks coming from Cuba. All these attacks against the party—organized by people outside Cuba and people within Cuba completely failed. These attempts proved to be futile. His guerilla group’s action showed no development or success.

The Guevara plan, according to which a powerful guerilla base was to be established in Bolivia, and serve as a point from which military and armed groups were to be sent to all countries on the continent, proved to be a complete failure as well. Guevara’s name is related to Cuba’s most mass-scale attempt to implement its policy on the continent. Yet Guevara’s death proved the futility and wrong course of the Cuban Communist Party’s policy.

For quite a long time the Cuban comrades have not tried to conceal the growing gap [between them and the leaders of other] communist parties. On the contrary—they have been emphasizing [the deteriorating relations with] these parties and point to that as the ground for carrying out certain activities.

They refused to send a delegation to the German Unified Socialist Party’s congress, justifying their decision by stating, that they had conflicting stances on definite issues of our contemporary development, and that they were therefore unwilling to cause problems to Cuba’s relations with the socialist countries. Cienfuegos maintained that the communist parties turn their congresses into tribunals of the international communist movement; these forums are used as places from which attacks against Cuba’s ideological conceptions are triggered (the Bulgarian Communist Party’s ninth congress was provided as an example in this respect; another example was the visit of [Mario] Monge [Molina], until recently First Secretary of the Bolivian Communist Party, to Cuba in January 1967; he was informed of Castro’s disapproval of the ninth congress of the Bolivian Communist Party, and the fact that Jesus Faria has been given the floor, for he attacked Cuba’s leaders). Cuba’s unwillingness to spark such a debate gave rise to its leaders’ decision not to send any delegations to such congresses in the future.

The Cuban leadership makes no effort to seek ways of overcoming its ideological differences with the international communist movement. On the contrary, Castro has made it clear, that Cuba has taken its own road of development, and that it is determined to follow it, despite all risks that it might be exposed to.

Top-level Soviet comrades, such as Gromyko, Masherev, Rashidov, and others have visited Cuba; during their talks

Cuba's leaders have manifested their unwillingness to have a frank discussion and to seek by Cuba the appropriate ways to overcome the differences. That attitude was demonstrated by Cuba during the talks with Kosygin. For months on end, the Cuban comrades have been putting off answering comrade Andropov's request to visit, thus actually canceling it.

There have been cases of representatives of the other fraternal parties, secretaries of the Central Committees of the Mexican, Columbian or Venezuelan parties, coming to Cuba to have talks on debatable issues; Castro would keep them waiting for 10 or 15 days in Havana and finally would not have any meetings with them.

[...]

There follows a brief account of the ideological differences between the Cuban leadership and the international communist movement:

- on the nature of the major antagonism of the contemporary age. Cuba is of the opinion that it is the antagonism between imperialism and the national liberation movements rather than between socialism and capitalism;
- the world can be divided into two types of countries: poor and rich, irrespective of their social order;
- on the nature of peaceful co-existence. The latter is considered by Cuba's leaders as a conciliation with imperialism; therefore they favor the idea of having "the first, second, third...many Vietnams..."
- the driving forces of Latin America's revolution. The role of political parties is rejected. Debray's theory is essentially aimed at establishing the petty bourgeoisie's leading part in the revolutionary process. Hence the practical conclusion arrived at: the revolution is viewed as the fruitful result of a couple of convinced people's courage and bravery rather than the logical result of class struggle;
- The USSR's and the socialist countries' experience in building socialism is denied; thus the USSR is underestimated and undermined.
- Lenin's theory can not be further developed;
- The international communist movement's significance is refuted, for its strategy and means of struggle are considered outdated.

B) Here are some facts that attest to these differences. Cuba is known to have taken part in the Budapest Conference of the fraternal parties; however its press gave no releases on this conference. Yet the Cuban CP CC's bulletin published all of the telegrams revealing the conference's weaknesses, as well as the comments

of the western press. Materials on the statements made by Romania's delegation were published. Upon the conference's closure, there was a special edition of the same bulletin, which published all of the Romanian delegation's materials and documents, [as well as] the conference's resolutions and comments in favor of the behavior of the Romanian delegation.

For the last several years Cuba's policy has increasingly distanced [itself] from the international communist movement, and has even openly opposed it at times.

[...]

Cuba's leaders are not choosy in selecting their friends – among them are pro-China, Trotsky's proponents, bourgeois revolutionaries, anti-communists, etc. What matters only is that these friends support Cuba and make official statements in favor of the Cuban Revolution; they must openly state that the latter provides the correct solutions to all contemporary problems, the revolution and the building of a new society; they must maintain that the communist movement has been experiencing a deep crisis and is outdated and has no significance and thus is unable to guide and govern the struggle; a new theory and [new] ideological weapons are necessary.

Cuba's leaders consider themselves the modern Leninists and they are determined to struggle to attract parties and communists to their cause. They hope that our parties, including the CPSU, will undergo ideological changes.

[...]

Cuba's leaders are looking forward to establishing new contacts with the fraternal parties, and will therefore be working actively in the places, where success may be anticipated. Its relations with [North] Korea, [North] Vietnam, a specific attitude to the German Democratic Republic, and Romania, show Cuba's orientation towards smaller countries, and countries situated in strategically important spots. Cuba's policy is targeted at setting up such a political bloc, comprising of smaller socialist countries and of those that tend to distance themselves from the standard ideological postulates.

There is evidence that shows that such a policy is adopted to distract our attention from the USSR, and this bloc is established to oppose the USSR; thus Cuba wants to show that it is getting along well with all other countries, except the USSR.

C) Cuba's relations with the communist parties in Latin America.

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It is well known that the Cuban leaders have undertaken a mass-scale attack against Latin America's communist parties during the preparation of the OLAS conference. Since then, the attacks in the press or in the leaders' speeches are not so frequent. Yet their relations and attitudes have not changed much. Whenever Venezuela is talked about, a remark is always made about the Venezuelan communist party. The relations with Guatemala's Labor Party and the Dominican Communist Party have become complicated to some extent.

On its relations with Guatemala's labor party. We recently informed you that under pressure from Cuba, a group of guerrilla chiefs, under the leadership of Cesar Montez, opposed the party, denouncing its leaders as unreliable, and as accomplices to the opposition in committing much wrongdoing; they have set up a commandment for a unified political and military command of the guerrilla groups. Venezuela's example was followed. Then the groups united with Ion Sosa's squad, when Sosa was elected first officer-commander, and Montez—second officer-commander. These attacks against the party brought about a crisis in their relations with the Cuban leaders.

On its relations with the Dominican communist party. The Kaamaño case undermined relations of mutual trust. After unity was reached within the party, and they adopted a common program for action with democratic Dominican leaders and leftist organizations, the Cuban leaders organized Kaamaño's transfer to Cuba, against the party's will; he was then trained to act independently with Cuba's help, thus following the manner of the operation [carried out] in Bolivia.

Fabio Vazquez's efforts were aimed at imposing Cuba's policy on Colombia's revolutionary movement; his guerrillas are now painstakingly trying to separate Marulanda from the party and make him follow Fabio Vazquez's behavior or actions.

Cuba keeps training Latin American military groups, so that they may be transferred to their respective countries. We have information about the training of groups from Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. The latter are members of the pro-China group in Nicaragua.

These facts are indicative of the fact that there has been no significant change in Cuba's policy, nor in the political means [by which it attempts] to implement its strategy in Latin America, although it has become less influential.

Latin America's communist parties share a negative attitude towards Cuba. The criticism of certain communist parties about their lagging far behind the events, the lack of an active leadership and the outdated methods used is based on facts. However, denying these parties' role in the struggle, Cuba's brutal intervention in their internal affairs and stimulating adventurism, has nothing to do with the brotherly

concern about their position and attempts to assist them in their work.

Therefore, as a result of the pressure they have been exposed to by Cuba, and their objective development, these parties face the necessity of having to reconsider their ideology and make a serious analysis, on the one hand, and having to restructure their work, on the other; they will therefore be able to strengthen their avant-garde role and increase their active participation in the revolutionary struggle.

At present Latin America's communist parties face two major threats:

There is a threat of being pressed by Cuba to adopt its adventurous policies; this course may be brought to pass by the younger generation of the parties, or by a separate member of the party leadership; another factor that may provoke adopting such a political course may be the guerrilla groups that have been established within the countries, despite the disapproval of the communist party.

This threat is more than probable. Many communist parties such as Venezuela's, Guatemala's, Honduras's, Nicaragua's have actually been affected by such a policy. After the conference of OLAS and Guevara's death, parties have been strengthened and are likely to resist such adventurism. However, should Cuba's leaders keep organizing guerrilla squads in the countries of Latin America and [keep] attacking the communist parties there, then more problems will arise, and these countries may yield to the pressure they are subject to. Hence the danger and threat of undertaking adventurous actions and thus weakening the parties' unity and the revolutionary movement.

Another threat is their underestimating the changing environment on the continent. Unless the party leaders respond to these changes adequately, showing their activity, flexibility and skill in uniting and consolidating the democratic and revolutionary forces, the problems within the parties are likely to be aggravated. An example of this is the situation in some of the parties in the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Brazil, and some others. There is a tendency towards a renewal that unfortunately is beyond the party leaders' control; this renewal does not always comply with the party norms. It is often accompanied by extremism both in terms of action and ideas.

#### 1. On the Cuban leaders' attitude to the USSR

Even with the new Soviet Ambassador to Havana, [Alexander Alexeyevich] Soldatov, taking office, the situation has not changed much. The Cuban CP's [January 1968] plenary session struck a terrible blow at relations between Cuba and the

USSR. Insinuations about the USSR's exerting pressure on Cuba have been maintained in a hidden form. Insinuations about the USSR's exerting pressure on Cuba can still be assumed.

Some Cuban leaders still argue that Cuba does not conduct an anti-Soviet policy, and that the present situation is transitional and a result of a micro-faction's action. However that is not so. There is evidence that the distancing from the Soviet Union is becoming a well-considered policy of the Cuban leaders.

At a recent meeting between the new Soviet ambassador to Havana and Fidel Castro, the latter maintained that the Soviet Union is unwilling to help Cuba and that is has adopted an incorrect policy towards Cuba. He [Castro] was very distanced and did not show any willingness to seek ways to improve contacts and normalize relations. There was no press release about this meeting.

The lack of tribute paid to the USSR's role and the disgracing of the Soviet Union has lasted for years. This negative attitude was enhanced with the Caribbean crisis.

Tension has artificially been built up along the following lines:

a) The strategy and tactics of Latin America. The Cuban leaders insist that the parties adopt their [Cuban] assessments, methods and forms of struggle. According to the Cuban perspective, the Cuban Revolution will be exposed to the risk of being invaded by imperialism, unless the revolution is triumphant on the whole continent. Even when there are no prospects for a successful end to the armed struggle, the latter still deprives the USA of its opportunities to attack and invade Cuba.

The policy of intensifying the trade relations and economic cooperation between the Latin American countries and the socialist countries is considered a blow behind Cuba's back. This policy totally contradicts Cuba's policy in Latin America. We have been blamed not only for helping people that kill the partisans, but for the regimes that are boycotting Cuba as well.

b) Cuba opposes the policy of peaceful co-existence, considering it a form of reconciliation with imperialism.

The draft of the Treaty on Nuclear Arms Proliferation, that was tabled for discussion before the UN, was yet another reason for Cuba to attack the Soviet Union's policy and consider it analogous with the USA's.

c) It must be noted that recently there has been a marked difference in Cuba's attitude towards the European socialist countries and the USSR.

Cuba keeps maintaining that it is much easier to achieve understanding with the smaller socialist countries; that we

have many things in common, and that our experience might well be the guiding light for Cuba building socialism.

Or as Castro pointed out in his speech of 30<sup>th</sup> May, the countries that are exposed to the danger of imperialism, such as Cuba and the German Democratic Republic, have to work in close cooperation.

[...]

### III. On our work in Cuba and the further development of our relations.

The development of relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union will determine Cuba's future relations with the socialist countries. Moreover, these relations will determine the future policy adopted by Cuba's leaders.

The problems in the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union arose during the Caribbean crisis. It is a well-known fact that Cuba has not yet come to terms with the missiles being moved from its territory; therefore the Caribbean crisis brought about the distrust of Cuba's leaders towards the Soviet Union. The negative attitudes were supposed to fade away and be overcome with time.

In 1964 Fidel Castro visited the Soviet Union for a second time. The documents signed gave rise to confidence that problems resulting from the Caribbean crisis were being overcome.

At the end of 1964 the conference of the Latin American communist parties was held; this conference was positively regarded as an important step forward to further improving the relations between the CCP and the communist parties of the other countries on the continent.

[...]

### On the further development of our relations in the present situation

All circumstances, outlined so far, will obviously determine the further development of our relations.

As we have already pointed out, Cuba's leaders have manifested a positive attitude towards our country and party. They are looking forward to Todor Zhivkov's visit. The Cuban leaders take an interest in this visit. This visit will strengthen its authority and prestige both within the country and abroad. Our party is popular in Cuba. Georgi Dimitrov's name is well known.

Another factor that determines Cuba's positive attitude is the high-quality work of our specialists there.

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 378-B, Opis 1, a.e. 1079; translated by Assistant Professor Kalina Bratanova; edited by*



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*Jordan Baev.]*



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**BCP Politburo Member Boris Velchev,  
Report to Boris N. Ponomarev, Secretary,  
Central Committee, Communist Party of  
the Soviet Union (CPSU), re: Relations  
with Latin America, n.d. [March 1970]<sup>35</sup>**

To: the Secretary of the Central Committee of  
the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Comrade Ponomarev, B. N.

Moscow

Dear comrade Ponomarev,

Recently the Politburo of CC of the BCP discussed the report of the delegation of our party, which in the end of 1969 visited Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil and adopted resolution for activating of the economic, political and cultural relations of PR Bulgaria with the countries from Latin America.

We would like to share with you some considerations of Politburo of BCP CC about the situation in Latin America and about the attitude of the brotherly socialist countries to this continent.

It is well known that the USA is making big efforts to keep and consolidate its dominance in Latin America, which they have turned into a raw-material appendage to their economics, in a sphere of utilization of capital, and a source of immense profits, generally in their strategic rear.

However, the policy of the USA and the local reactionary regimes meets bigger and bigger resistance on behalf of the peoples of Latin America. They are fighting for true sovereignty, for economic independence and social liberation, which [Nelson A.] Rockefeller, too, was forced to admit after his tour in Latin America.<sup>36</sup> The struggles of the working class, the peasants and the students are growing. They are more and more characterized by mass participation, organized character and political purposefulness. The social basis of the anti-imperialist struggle is broadening and new layers and forces join it - including certain circles from the army and the Catholic Church, and in separate cases, from the ruling circles. The communist parties, with all their weaknesses and faults, as the most staunch and organized revolutionary powers, are aspiring more and more consciously to extend their influence among the working class, they are looking for

contacts and common grounds with other democratic and patriotic powers, they are fighting for the building of broad anti-imperialistic, anti-oligarchic and anti-dictators' fronts.

There is no doubt that the upsurge of the struggle for liberation of the peoples of Latin America against the imperialism, the latifundists and the big capitalists, the growth of the anti-American feelings and the flow of new social powers in the anti-imperialistic movement, the increase of the influence of the communist parties, create favorable conditions for further development of the process for liberation of the countries of Latin America from the economic and political dominance of the USA and the local oligarchy. Obviously, this process will develop more successfully the more numerous positions and the greater influence the socialist countries gain in different spheres of life in Latin America.

However, the facts show that the penetration and the influence of the socialist countries are falling behind the development of the progressive tendencies in this region of the world. The economic, political, and cultural relations with the countries of Latin America are limited and do not meet the constantly increasing opportunities.

In our view, the most essential weakness is that the socialist countries do not implement common and coordinated policy in relation to Latin America, in order to concentrate their efforts where there are most favorable conditions, to be used most fully. This refers particularly to the implementing of collective construction works, complete deliveries, granting of credits for technologies, industrial cooperation, long-term binding of some sectors of the economic activities on the basis of partial division of labor among the brotherly socialist countries (in the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) or bilaterally) and the interested countries in Latin America.

The communist parties, the trade unions, the youth, the women's and the other public and state organizations and institutes from the socialist countries do not coordinate sufficiently their efforts in Latin America.

From all this we arrive at the conclusion that the fraternal socialist countries should discuss coordinated actions for ensuring a constantly increasing participation and influence in the economics, the politics and the culture of the Latin-American countries depending on the interest which they present for us and for the common struggle against imperialism, to develop and to implement a common strategy and tactics in relation to Latin America so that these countries and their peoples can gradually be won as our friends.

Naturally, the center of the coordinated efforts of the socialist countries should be the Soviet Union. Above all, its

decisive advance can very soon be felt in the economic, political and cultural life of Latin America. All the rest of the brotherly socialist countries could cooperate, each of them giving its contribution in conformity with its national interests and its international obligations.

Obviously, the change of the attitude of the socialist countries to Latin America should not be measured with the attaining at all costs of a big relative share in the economic relations with the separate countries. At the moment it is not realistic to consider the task of ousting economically the USA from this continent. But the opportunities with which the brotherly socialist countries, and first of all the USSR, dispose of, are such that even at relatively no big share in the economic sphere, the coordination and the increase of our participation in all spheres of life in Latin America inevitably will yield the results that we wish. On one hand, the USA will feel that the time of its monopoly in that continent is ending, and, on the other hand, the patriotic and the progressive powers will have a powerful stimulus and support in their struggle against imperialism, the monopolies and the oligarchy in the respective countries.

In this respect we can give as an example the Peruvian case. From the talks of the delegation with some Peruvian Ministers it can be seen that they are looking for the cooperation of socialist countries because they understand that only this cooperation can be lucrative for them and [can] aid their policy for wringing themselves out of the paws of imperialism and for independent development of the country. The Peruvian leaders feel best that if the new regime is not aided by the socialist countries, then the American imperialists quickly will find a way to submit Peru to their will.

The economic difficulties and the strife for the weakening the dependence on the USA force the Latin-American bourgeoisie to seek cooperation with the countries from Europe and Asia, including the socialist countries. By expanding our economic relations we can cooperate in intensifying of the nationalistic and anti-imperialistic feelings on the continent, to win new allies in the struggle against imperialism.

Comrades Rodney Arismendi, Hilberto Vieira, Jorge del Prado, Orestes Ghioldi, and other representatives of fraternal parties and progressive forces there make more and more explicit statements about the necessity of expanding our all-embracing relations and cooperation with the countries of Latin America.<sup>37</sup> Comrade Luis Corvalan<sup>38</sup> declared before the delegation that indeed there was a danger of direct or indirect American intervention in order to prevent a possible victory of the left wing forces in Chile. But, he also emphasized that it would not happen so easy because the imperialists realized that there was a socialist community, that the Soviet

Union existed in the world, as well as a powerful communist and working-class movement.

With small exceptions, the communist parties in Latin America stand on correct Marxist-Leninist positions, the working-class movement is organized and the revolutionary process is at a higher stage of development. We can be convinced that the common efforts of the socialist countries inevitably will render good results.

On account of all this we suggest that a high level meeting among the brotherly parties of countries members of COMECON be summoned, at which the possibilities for coordinating and implementing our policy and [strengthening] our comprehensive relations with the countries of Latin America will be discussed. If you think that it is necessary, we are willing to go to Moscow in order to inform the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in more detail, to exchange thoughts and after that this issue could be posed before the other parties from the brotherly socialist countries.

I seize the opportunity to convey to you our heart-felt greetings and best wishes.

BORIS VELCHEV

Member of Politburo and Secretary of the CC BCP

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 35, a.e. 1458; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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**Reports re Bulgarian leader Todor Zhivkov's visit to Cuba, July-August 1970, at BCP Politburo Session, 4 August 1970 (including excerpts from Zhivkov-Fidel Castro memorandum of conversation, 30 July 1970)**

PROTOCOL "A" No. 468  
OF THE MEETING OF POLITBURO OF CC OF BCP  
ON 4 AUGUST 1970

**ISSUES ON THE AGENDA:**

1. About the visit of our party-governmental delegation in the Republic of Cuba.

**RESOLUTIONS:**

I. The information of comrade Boris Velchev about the visit of the party-governmental delegation led by comrade Todor

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Zhivkov in the Republic of Cuba from 25 July till 1 August this year is accepted. The activities of the delegation and the results of the conducted talks and negotiations are approved and highly valued.

2. Comrade Todor Zhivkov is assigned the following: to give a talk on the Bulgarian radio and television about the visit of our party-governmental delegation in Cuba; to talk with comrade Leonid Brezhnev and to inform him personally about our impressions, conclusions and assessments about the situation in the Republic of Cuba, and also about some pressing issues of the cooperation of the countries members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance with Cuba.

3. The leaders of the fraternal parties in the socialist countries, besides the Socialist Republic of Romania, [are] to be informed about the visit of our party-governmental delegation in Republic of Cuba.

4. The "Foreign policy and international relations" Department of the CC of the BCP and the Foreign Ministry, coordinated with the respective ministries, institutes and departments, [are] to develop and put forward for approval in Politburo an overall program for consolidation and expansion of the relations and the cooperation of our country with the Republic of Cuba in the economic, political, and cultural spheres.

5. To take immediate measures for the consolidation of the diplomatic and the trade representation of PRB in Havana with personnel that is capable of solving the issues connected with the further expansion of the economic, the political, and the cultural relations and cooperation of our country with the Republic of Cuba. First of all the ambassador of PRB Diko Dikov<sup>39</sup> and the commercial representative Fidan Avramov will be replaced by suitable people.

[ ... ]

#### NOTES

From the statements [made] during the meeting of Politburo about the information regarding the visit of our party-governmental delegation in the Republic of Cuba

#### TODOR ZHIVKOV:

We can consider as unanimous the positive assessment about

the work of the delegation and about the results of its visit to Cuba.

The motion for drafting a special resolution in relation to the visit of the delegation and the further expansion of the relations and the cooperation of our country with the Republic of Cuba is correct. Next we have to consider what the contents of this resolution will be and what actions it will encompass.

Obviously, we have to make a reassessment of lot of things, a political reassessment, first of all. Where do our mistakes and delusions in relation to Cuba come from?

- From underestimating the main, the most essential [fact] about Cuba, namely, that the leaders there, including Castro, do not stand on consistent Marxist-Leninist positions, those of scientific socialism, and that we were not sufficiently aware of this circumstance in developing our approach to Cuba.

[ ... ]

- About the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. We have to convince the Cuban comrades to begin to coordinate their prospective plans with the plans of the member countries of COMECON gradually, so that the cooperation and the aid for Cuba will become more expedient and more effective.

About the ration system. COMECON has to spare a few milliards in order to eliminate this system. This situation cannot be tolerated any more. This is a crime for which one day history will condemn us.

- [According to] our impressions, assessments and conclusions, it is appropriate to inform the leaders of the fraternal parties in the socialist countries, with the exception of Romania, [about the findings of our visit].

Notwithstanding the talks with comrade Brezhnev, possibly with comrade Kosygin, it will be expedient to prepare written information and to send it to the leaders of the brotherly parties in the socialist countries.

- About our representations in Cuba. Comrade Diko Dikov is not acquainted with the situation there. At the meeting that we had in the embassy he informed us at great length, but he could not reveal the true picture. It is necessary that he be immediately replaced and given another assignment.

[ ... ]

#### PEKO TAKOV

- The situation in Cuba is complicated and the difficulties there are great. However, it is most important that there they strive decisively to construct a new socialist society.

[ ... ]

That is why their hesitation and obscure concepts on a number of basic issues of the revolution and of the construction of socialism are not a coincidence. For example, let's take the money issue. Castro declared that he was convinced that money was not necessary and they could do without it. In this respect he even makes attempts to quote Marx (what he wrote about the Gothic Program). However, on the following day he told us about the production of their state factory for shoes. He boasted that their shoes were very cheap. However, they sell them three times more expensively and in this way they collect revenue from the population and effect accumulation. In other words, practically, he admits the need for money and its role (and the population there has a lot of money).

Like the other Cuban leaders, Castro thinks that covering money with goods in general is impossible and that this problem can be resolved only with rations, [and only] partially at that.

In this respect, too, the Cuban friends need assistance in order to gradually adopt the scientific understanding of this matter and to convince themselves that this can be done gradually by the creation of industrial and commodity funds and by the development of the industrial powers and the construction of modern socialist economics.

[ ... ]

What else can I note? These are very honest people (for example, the price of sugar. I ask Castro why we have to receive Cuban sugar at a lower price than the Soviet Union. And he answers - because Bulgaria is not a rich country to pay a higher price.) However, these comrades are sensitive and, therefore, we have to work very carefully and sincerely and to apply a special approach. However, it turned out that we were not working in this way. Let's take for example the issue with our specialists in Cuba. Each receives 150 dollars monthly. Let it be 100-120, but why 150? The same applies to payment of the leaves of these people and their families. And this is a big colony.

About our aid and the Soviet aid for Cuba and the developing countries. The aid is enormous but it is scattered in dozens of countries and in a lot of cases it turns into consumers' aid, without playing the role of a factor for the development of the productive forces of these countries and [without] being a constructive factor in their economies. In many cases the effect of this aid is diminished and sometimes it is even lost. In this respect it is necessary to resort to concentration, to a better gradation of the needs and the objects, to assess where to concentrate the efforts at a certain time, in order to attain the maximum economic and political effect from our aid.

[ ... ]

Top secret!

INFORMATION

About the visit of our party-governmental delegation in Cuba from 25 July to 1 August 1970 disclosed at a meeting of Politburo in August 4th  
this year by comrade Boris Velchev

Comrades,

In order to assess correctly the results from the visit of our delegation in Cuba we should be reminded at what moment it took place.

We can definitely say that we visited Cuba at a favorable moment. Lately, a positive process is taking place there. It is expressed in the aspirations of the Cuban party and state leaders on a number of basic issues of the development of Cuba and its international activities to be founded upon Marxist-Leninist principles and to cooperate more closely with the Soviet Union and the other brotherly socialist countries.

What precisely do I have in mind?

From the research conducted before the departure of the delegation the following was ascertained:

1. The main problem for the Cuban leaders now is not the implementation of revolution in Latin America but the development of the economics of Cuba and the solving of the tasks of the socialist construction.
  2. The Cuban leaders adopt a course of rapprochement and all-embracing cooperation with the USSR and the other brotherly socialist countries in which it seems they see one of the main prerequisites for the success of socialism in Cuba.
  3. The leaders more and more definitely make statements for unity of the socialist community and of the international communist movement, while supporting the claim that this should happen on a bilateral basis. There is still a reservation towards the documents [presented] at the meeting in Moscow and towards the importance and the role of our common organizations, for example COMECON.
  4. They take more and more realistic positions on the issues of the struggle against imperialism and so on.
- At the same time it must be emphasized that the good state of Bulgarian-Cuban relations and the special attitude of Cuba towards Bulgaria, manifested on numerous occasions, along with Cuba's willingness to cooperate with our country, [created] favorable circumstances for our visit.

[ ... ]

In this chain of ideas I would like to say that we displayed willingness to understand their positions, and while composing the Communiqué, we agreed to drop some passages and to transform others in order to [make the text] more acceptable for them.

Thus, for example, we agreed not to mention anywhere the CPSU and the Soviet Union. Their motive was that the world was well aware of the relations of Cuba and Bulgaria with the USSR and that it referred to bilateral relations and it was not necessary to speak about a third party.

Also they made it clear that they will not cede.

Everyone understands that if on this and on some other issues we had not displayed the necessary flexibility, it could have only harmed our efforts to attain the major goal, which we sought after.

We agreed not to mention the communist parties of Latin America, but as it is said in the Communiqué the Marxist-Leninist ideas and the communists.

Something else, [we agreed] not to speak about the international meeting of the communist parties, since they were not actual participants in it. But in the Communiqué were included passages that both parties would fight for the unity of the world socialist system and of the international movement, as well as for intensifying the anti-imperialistic struggle.

Practically they consented to record the essence of the resolution of the UN Security Council for the Middle East, but they did not agree that such a resolution should be mentioned, since they had not voted for it.

What was the second peculiarity of our tactics?

They were convinced that we had a sincere wish to cooperate with them and to assist them. They thanked us for the aid, which we had rendered them up to now. From our behavior and from the offers we made them, they saw that we have come with an open heart. During the talks comrade T. Zhivkov gave them an opportunity to get a better sense of our intentions.

[ ... ]

And something very important - comrade Todor Zhivkov posed the question for assistance on a broader basis. He recommended to the Cuban comrades to think about partial or complete participation and membership of Cuba in COMECON.

The third peculiarity of our tactics was in an appropriate form to show better than ever that Bulgaria was a partner,

from which they could benefit. This happened with the statement comrade Todor Zhivkov made at the meeting with Politburo and also during his talks with comrade Castro about the issues, which we were solving, about our experience now and in the past, and about the prospects for our country.

I would only like to note that they were strongly surprised when comrade T. Zhivkov spoke about the tasks ensuing from the resolutions of the September Plenum of the CC BCP. It was obvious that they had not seen the problems of the scientific and technical progress in such a way. We had the impression that the words of comrade Todor Zhivkov sounded to them as if in an unknown language. Comrade Fidel Castro displayed keen interest and a few times asked how and when we had discovered all this and whether it was the same in the other socialist countries. He took detailed notes. The other comrades did the same.

We could not implement fully this scheme in our tactics - not to argue with them and not to moralize, but to tell them more about our experience (how we overcame the difficulties, how we resolved the problems, and so on) - because the time was not enough. And obviously, it was necessary to talk with them more about some other very important problems of the construction of socialism.

Such are the specifics, which first of all, comrade T. Zhivkov suggested. And in these circumstances, we could not but attain good results.

[ ... ]

Top secret!

#### PROTOCOL

about the talk between the delegation of CC of BCP and Politburo of the Cuban Socialist Party, which took place on 30 July 1970

From the Bulgarian delegation, comrades Todor Zhivkov, Boris Velchev, and Peko Takov took part at the meeting

From the Cuban side the meeting attended comrades Fidel Castro, Osvaldo Dorticos, Raul Castro, Sergio del Valle, Ramiro Valdez, and Armando Hart.

FIDEL CASTRO: Our meeting has no agenda.

TODOR ZHIVKOV: In Bulgaria they say- a meeting without a speaker.



BORIS VELCHEV: There is an agenda. This is the Bulgarian-Cuban friendship.

FIDEL CASTRO: The question is that there are no big problems between us.

TODOR ZHIVKOV: So it seems to us, too.

FIDEL CASTRO: This saves us time. There are big problems but we are small countries and they do not fall in our radius of action.

TODOR ZHIVKOV: It is the small pebbles that overturn the cart.

OSVALDO DORTICOS: Maybe comrade Zhivkov would like to take the floor before the talks begin.

FIDEL CASTRO: We are interested in your plans during the next five year period. You told me about the trade, the trusts, and the agrarian industrial complexes. Comrade Zhivkov is more informed than we are. We are isolated and we know less. We are interested in everything about Bulgaria, about what we talked about and the prospects of COMECON. About COMECON we know only about the issues, which are affecting us directly. For example, we know that the GDR will stop producing busses, that Poland will stop producing airplanes, and so on. We hear about COMECON when we meet difficulties with the import of some goods. We do not hear about COMECON anything that could favor us. When we tried to coordinate the issue about sugar at the political level, we came to an agreement, but after that things did not go well. The administrative apparatus hinders the implementations of the resolutions of the political leadership.

However, we have to say that we are not complaining of anything in our relations with Bulgaria. We only want comrade Todor Zhivkov to act as our representative where it is necessary and to represent a friendly voice for us. However, this is already a reality and I want something which I know is true, since comrade Zhivkov is already a friend of ours in COMECON.

As comrade Zhivkov said, the coordination of our efforts is difficult and there are problems. What he said about the trusts is very important. Bulgaria and Cuba are small countries and they have not many natural resources. That is why, as comrade Zhivkov said, you are supporters of coordination and cooperation. The numbers, which comrade Zhivkov announced about the role of the foreign trade in the formation of the national revenue of Bulgaria, are very interesting. The same refers to us, as well. The other thing, which interests

us, is the foundation of trust among the socialist countries. I told comrade Zhivkov that we are ready for bilateral cooperation. This is attainable at the moment. There are small problems, which can be resolved at the annual meetings of the Committee for economic and scientific-technical cooperation.

I would like to emphasize our goal and willingness to attain maximum cooperation with Bulgaria. Nevertheless, we are improving our relations with the Soviet Union, with which our connections have been developing very well recently, and we would like to develop our relations with Bulgaria. Generally, our relations with the USSR and the other socialist countries are developing very well. We have good will in this respect. The admiration of our people for the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Bulgarian people was expressed these days in various ways.

We would like to make our relations closer and to exchange experience. This does not require many expenses and we benefit more from such cooperation. Of course, it is not what motivates us. In the end, the benefit will be for the cause of socialism. I proceed from the real state of affairs. We do not wish to resolve our problems by creating difficulties for others, since all socialist countries have their own problems. Bulgaria has no natural resources and you should work a lot in order to overcome these difficulties. We would like to cooperate on issues of mutual interest.

[ ... ]

Comrade TODOR ZHIVKOV focused on the problems of COMECON. He gave an assessment that COMECON played a big role for the development of the socialist countries. He concentrated on the role of COMECON for the victory of socialism in Bulgaria. After that comrade Zhivkov spoke about the new tasks, which confronted us. He told us about some difficulties and problems of COMECON. In this connection Fidel Castro expressed the position that it would be better if there were common economics for all socialist countries and he asked where the crack, which Cuba could squeeze in COMECON through, was.

Comrade Zhivkov answered that Cuba could cooperate with the countries from COMECON. For example, he pointed out that Cuba could participate in the building of a big metallurgic enterprise in the Soviet Union, in the plant for caustic soda in Bulgaria and in the development of the manganese ore in Bulgaria. He expressed the idea that with the efforts of all socialist countries a common enterprise for exploitation of nickel ore, and so on could be built in Cuba .

[ ... ]

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[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 35, a.e. 1575; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



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## Memorandum Re: Bulgarian-Cuban relations, 15 December 1970

### MEMORANDUM

About: putting forward a draft resolution in Politburo about the all-embracing relations between People's Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba

The visit of our party-governmental delegation, led by comrade Todor Zhivkov in Cuba in July 1970, marked a new and higher stage in the development of the all-embracing relations between Bulgaria and Cuba. The delegation determined that the positive process of rapprochement with the USSR and the socialist community, which was being observed in recent years, continued to develop and to intensify. [ ... ] The main problem of the Cuban leaders is the economic development of Cuba, along with resolving the issues [related to] building socialism in the country.  
[ ... ]

The economic development of the Republic of Cuba after the revolution in 1959 marks constant advance. The socialist sector strengthened its basic position in the economy of the country and the collective state property became leading in almost all branches in the national economy.  
[ ... ]

However, the unresolved problems are many. The difficulties are still big and they additionally complicate the severe conditions in Cuba, resulting mostly from the highly underdeveloped economics, the economic embargo, the provocations, the diversions and the sabotages of the North American imperialists. The problem with supplying the population [with goods] is not resolved and there is no close prospect for abolishing rationing [in Cuba]. The problem with housing is acute; there is a lack of qualified personnel and so on.

Resolving Cuba's problems is impeded first of all by the circumstance that the leaders still have not fully mastered Marxism-Leninism, and because of this they make a lot of mistakes:

- They do not do everything necessary to prominently display the role of the party [in order to] resolve all problems of development.
- They have not completed the construction of all bodies

of the dictatorship of the proletariat and more precisely, of the local bodies of state power.

- A real scientific planning is lacking.
- The role of the economic factors is seriously belittled - there is no distinct position in relation to the material interest.
- There are still reservations towards the documents from the Moscow meeting and towards the significance and the role of organizations, such as COMECON.

Despite these weaknesses, it should be acknowledged that the Cuban leaders have walked quite a long revolutionary road, they are loyal to the cause of the revolution, and they are staunch opponents of imperialism. They enjoy the confidence of the people and have set to build a socialist society with great energy, and strive to develop comprehensive cooperation with our countries.

The bilateral Bulgarian-Cuban relations are developing successfully. The economic and the scientific-technical cooperation mark a constant advance. Cuba occupies fifth place in the foreign trade exchange of PRB with the socialist countries. The Cuban leaders especially appreciate the work of the Bulgarian specialists and the assistance, which our country renders in the training of personnel for the different sectors of the people's economics. During the last years the relations along the party and the state line also expanded. The relations between the public organizations of the two countries expanded, as well. The relations and the cooperation along the culture line are constantly developing, too.

However, the opportunities for the further expansion and intensification of our bilateral relations at the current success [level] are not fully utilized, [a fact] which was determined by the party-governmental delegation, led by comrade Todor Zhivkov.

One of the reasons about this is that the information about the situation in Cuba was incomplete and one-sided. The Cuban reality was assessed purely from our [own] position. It was approached from our viewpoint and experience for the construction of a socialist society and the specific peculiarities of the conditions in Cuba were almost not taken into account. The positive things, which were done there, were not assessed sufficiently. An important factor was neglected, namely that the adoption of Marxism-Leninism is a continuous and difficult process, which requires time, and a more special approach and substantial assistance on behalf of each of the brotherly parties of the socialist countries is required.

Nevertheless, the economic relations of PRB with Republic of Cuba expanded considerably in the past few years and the commodity circulation for the period 1966-1970 is expected to amount to about 240 million dollars against 136 million dollars during the last five-year period, the [level that was]

attained is not sufficient in comparison with the true capacities. Besides, a lot of mistakes have been made and are being made on behalf of our economic units and enterprises, while fulfilling their obligations towards Cuba with respect to the mutual commodity circulation. The agreed upon deadlines are not observed in the shipment of commodities and in [the completion of] comprehensive projects, a great deal of our products are sent with lower quality indices than the negotiated ones, the spare parts for the machines which we have sold are not delivered on time and so on. All this creates difficulties for the Cuban comrades and there is a danger that our country may lose the positions already won on the Cuban market, especially for agricultural machines.

A particularly important problem in the economic relations between Bulgaria and Cuba is that we still have not come to an agreement with the Cuban party on its request for the continuation and observation of the clause, agreed upon with the signing of the long-term trade treaty between PR Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba for 1965-1970, for veto of export and re-export of sugar from Bulgaria. Our interpretation of that clause has exerted and will exert restricting influence on the development of the relations between Bulgaria and Cuba.

The contacts at the government level are unsatisfactory. Not enough initiative is exhibited for establishing lasting relations between the Bulgarian and the Cuban ministries and departments and for the quicker drawing in of Cuba in the coordination of the positions of the socialist countries in the international organizations.

Weaknesses are also encountered in the implementation of cultural relations. Sometimes in the musical and artistic exchange, the respective institutions are guided mainly by commercial interest and thus create difficulties for the normal development of the cultural relations between the two countries.

All this requires a radical turning point in our relations with Cuba. It is our international duty to assist the consolidation of the first socialist country in America with all possible means, which has a historical significance mostly for the development of the revolutionary process in Latin America.

In the future, the relations between our country and Cuba should be built and bolstered on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism and on mutual respect and trust as well. Our goal should be to turn them into an example of relations between two fraternal socialist countries, making efforts for further expansion and intensification of the political, economic and cultural relations with the Republic of Cuba, for its full incorporation in the socialist community.

With a view of attaining this goal and implementing the assessments and conclusions of the delegation unanimously approved by Politburo, the "Foreign policy and international relations" Department of CC of BCP and the Foreign Ministry suggests to Politburo to approve the enacted measures for the expansion of the all-embracing relations between PR Bulgaria and Republic of Cuba. The measures are prepared in accord with the motions and the recommendations of the ministries, the departments, the institutions, and the organizations concerned with the expansion and the intensification of the relations between the two countries.

15 December 1970

Head of department "Foreign policy and international relations" of CC of BCP: K. Tellalov

Foreign Minister: Ivan Bashev

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 35, a.e. 1927; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]



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### **Report on Fidel Castro's visit to Bulgaria, May 1972, and Bulgarian-Cuban relations**

Top secret!

#### **INFORMATION**

About the visit of the Cuban party-governmental delegation led by comrade Fidel Castro in Bulgaria

A Cuban party-governmental delegation led by comrade F. Castro was on a visit in our country in the period 17-26 May 1972. It returned the visit of our party-governmental delegation led by comrade T. Zhivkov that visited Cuba in July 1970.

The Politburo and personally comrade Zhivkov attached great importance to that first visit of a delegation of such a high rank led by comrade F. Castro.

The visit took place in a very favorable atmosphere, on one hand, because of the positive process which has been taking place in Cuba in the recent years, and because of the aspiration of the Cuban party and state leaders more and more definitely to stand on Marxist-Leninist positions and to cooperate more closely with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, and, on the other hand, because of the existing

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sympathies and the established good relations between the two countries, and especially because of the friendly relations between comrade T. Zhivkov and comrade F. Castro.

Our main goal was to reinforce and to quicken this positive process, which is taking place in Cuba now. That is why we took to the imminent task very seriously and responsibly. What made us do that?

First of all, the situation in Cuba, which Politburo and especially comrade T. Zhivkov know very well. Since comrade T. Zhivkov's visit to Cuba the positive process continues but the problems remain the same. The tempos of the economic development on the main indices and in the basic branches are very low- about 2-3% growth. And it seems that there is no real planning. It is said that it would be done but it is carried out slowly and it is not felt like something very important in the construction of socialism. Similar things can be pointed out about the leading role of the party, about the bodies of the proletarian dictatorship, about the material interest and others.

Before the visit of the delegation, we got hold of the information that some leading comrades in Cuba were hoping that we would exert influence on comrade F. Castro and that the visit would turn into a lesson to show him the positive experience of PR Bulgaria in the construction of socialism. Some Cubans who have been to Bulgaria told our specialists in Cuba – “show comrade F. Castro how you built socialism, we want such socialism in our country as well.”

In view of all this we set the following particular tasks:

1. The Cuban comrades and especially comrade F. Castro [were] to be introduced to the methods of ruling the party and the state, to the role and the place of the party in the social system and, first of all, in the sphere of economics, and to the role of planning in the overall life of the country.

2. The leading role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the international communist and working-class movement [was] to be strengthened and reservations in this respect [were] to be overcome.

3. Our economic and scientific-technical cooperation to be improved and made more effective.

In defining the ways and the means for attaining the goals and the tasks which we have set before us we proceeded from the following additional considerations as well:

1. Not to insult their self-confidence and national dignity, to take into consideration comrade F. Castro's character and not to leave the impression that we are edifying them.

2. To let them understand that we acknowledge their big merits, their heroic deed, to let them feel our warmth, respect,

and love personally towards comrade F. Castro as a leader of the Cuban revolution.

3. With the correct approach, to create an atmosphere of full confidence and brotherhood.

Proceeding from the presented considerations, the particular sites for the visit were carefully chosen. The program for the negotiations itself and the work of the two delegations was personally developed by comrade T. Zhivkov.

#### How did the visit of the Cuban delegation led by comrade F. Castro begin and go off?

On the very first day after the reception – 17 May, by request of comrade F. Castro, outside the approved program, there was a visit to the exhibition of new food products.

After the presentation in the exhibition, an animated discussion among the Cuban comrades, with the participation of comrade T. Zhivkov and especially comrade F. Castro, took place. Despite our efforts to explain to him that the commodities are available and are sold in the shops, he [comrade F. Castro] continued to ask who was distributing the candies, for example. We explained to him that from the industry, the commodities were directed to the network of shops and were available and sold to the people. The Cuban comrades displayed a great interest [in knowing] how much sugar and sugar products cost. It felt as if they wanted to clarify how much we gained from their sugar and [to find out] if its price was realistic. We gave them very thorough explanations. After that they apologized and said that they had no intention to discuss the price of sugar but they had asked simply for their own information. It was obvious that they came with some prejudices, and also that the mechanism of price-formation in a trade without rations was not clear for them. On the way back to the residence comrade Castro was interested in the structure of our export for the Soviet Union and the import and asked a lot of questions. It was evident that he would display a great interest, at that, on a broad range of issues, which was good.

Those were the feelings and the mood when the work of the two delegations began. At the meeting between the two delegations, at suggestion made by comrade F. Castro, comrade T. Zhivkov was the first to speak. An agreement was reached that the issues of the international situation be discussed at the meeting with Politburo. The statement of comrade T. Zhivkov evoked great interest. It was accompanied with a great deal of questions and it turned into a friendly talk.

[ ... ]

In his statement comrade T. Zhivkov explained how the Central Committee ruled the party and the state, how the leading role of the party was implemented, and pointed out the difficulties and the weaknesses, which we had, quite openly and [in a] straightforward [manner]. Because of comrade F. Castro's questions, the statement of comrade T. Zhivkov was prolonged from one hour to two hours and a half.

Comrade Castro related in great detail about the hard [burden of the] capitalist legacy left to Cuba, about the country's poor natural resources, and about the difficulties provoked by the sabotage activities of the American imperialists, who forced them to keep a large army. Still, they have [achieved] success and they take measures for the further development of their economy.

Comrade Castro pointed out that the main production in Cuba's economy is the turnout of sugar. [ ... ] He announced that they had set before themselves the task to obtain 10 millions tons of sugar because they have no other resources in order to repay their debts but they had not reached that production [level]. Although nobody insisted on repayment, they think that it is not proper to go on in this way. "Comrade Zhivkov, I regret to meet you without fulfilling our obligation for the delivery of sugar which we promised you." In answer to that, comrade Zhivkov declared that the problem was clarified and that it was not us that posed it (later comrade Castro told comrade Zhivkov that the undelivered sugar would be compensated with 300 tons of nickel, which according to the Ministry of foreign trade, satisfies us).

[ ... ]

As in the statement at the first meeting, at other occasions, too, comrade F. Castro emphasized that the development of their economy had to be assisted, so that the country would be saved from poverty. "Cuba receives economic assistance - declared comrade Castro, - but we cannot live on aid until the end of our lives."

[ ... ]

After that comrade T. Zhivkov declared that he fully understood the economic difficulties and that he was willing to look for a common solution. Perhaps a special meeting of COMECON or something else is required - said he, - about which it is good to ask the Soviet comrades for advice. As far as Bulgaria is concerned, we will take on our part of the common task, no matter whether on a multilateral or bilat-

eral basis. At the moment we are discussing and resolving a number of issues about our economic and scientific-technical cooperation and we are willing to expand it and to search new forms and spheres which can reveal additional resources for the economies of the two countries.

The visits to the separate sites and the meetings were dedicated to specific topics, which in our assessment showed the positive experience of Bulgaria and were of interest for the Cuban delegation and most of all to comrade Castro. Comrade Zhivkov guided all this directly and practically led those talks, or more precisely, seminars.

[ ... ]

Comrade F. Castro accepted with great interest everything that was said, especially by comrade T. Zhivkov. However, it felt that these things were relatively new and to a certain extent foreign to him, and made a strong impression on him. It must be said that he took notes the entire time. After that we were asked on his behalf to give him the shorthand records, so that he can study the statement of comrade T. Zhivkov better.

[ ... ]

At the meeting in the district committee of Russe, the topic of discussion was "The application of modern systems for comprehensive mechanization and automation of the production, the construction of automated systems for management of the production, and the introduction of electronic-calculating equipment in industry and agriculture."

[ ... ]

Everything was accompanied with a lot of questions and great admiration on behalf of the Cuban comrades.

[ ... ]

Comrade Castro was obviously extremely satisfied. At that time comrade [Carlos Rafael] Rodriguez told me that comrade Castro wanted to be allowed to send a Cuban group to Rousse unofficially, so that they could study our experience, planning, development of models, management of production and so on.

The extent of the effect [these meetings had] on comrade F. Castro can be determined by the fact that [after] summarizing everything learned and seen, and [having] analyzed the results attained, he began to praise our achievements more and more persistently, emphasizing that no other [country]



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but Bulgaria would show best the advantages of the socialist agricultural system, [and] that the country would reach the top in this respect and it was very useful in the discussions and in the propaganda against the capitalist [model of] agriculture. As it is known from the press, comrade F. Castro regards the agrarian-industrial complexes as a big contribution in the development of the Marxist-Leninist theory for the socialist agriculture. In private conversations with us he spoke even more enthusiastically and fervently about our agricultural system and about the creative, Leninist approach of comrade T. Zhivkov.

Unquestionably, his views were getting broader and richer. The agrarian issues and the ways for developing socialist agriculture were becoming clearer to him.

[ ... ]

Thus [we achieved] the goal of acquainting comrade F. Castro with PR Bulgaria's experience in building socialism, as well as with the life of our people and the country, along with its accomplishments in the spheres of culture, tourism, [and the military,] including the training of our armed forces. Those were 10 days of continuous hard work, first and foremost, on behalf of comrade T. Zhivkov.

Comrade Zhivkov seized every opportunity - in the airplane, in the car, at lunch or at dinner - to talk and to explain one problem or another. In informal atmosphere comrade Zhivkov explained to him [comrade F. Castro] that we regard Maoism as a teaching hostile to Leninism. Comrade F. Castro declared: "Yes, the ideas of Mao Zedong are [a] delusion for the masses." In the airplane from Russe to Pleven comrade Zhivkov joked that soon he would go to Romania and probably would listen to a great deal of speeches for independence, noninterference, sovereignty and so on, "but I do not want to interfere in your domestic affairs" - concluded comrade Zhivkov. Comrade F. Castro was silent for a while and then answered: "Comrade Zhivkov, we are against the interference of the imperialists in our domestic affairs, but we support the idea that the socialist countries can and must interfere in the affairs of other socialist countries."

At the meeting with the Politburo comrade Zhivkov and comrade Castro made statements on international issues. Besides, comrade Castro considered some problems of the economic development and of the situation in Cuba, as well. I will not dwell on the statement because everybody heard it.

I will dwell only on the issue about the [May 1972] visit of [US President Richard M.] Nixon to Moscow. Comrade Castro expressed very clearly their critical attitude and their confusion. During the visit to our country, they expressed, in one way or another, their dissatisfaction with [Nixon's] visit

[to Moscow], and [explained that] they could not understand it correctly. They were informed when Nixon was going to arrive in Moscow and [knew] how he would be welcomed. When comrade F. Castro learned that there were no people in the streets to welcome Nixon, but there were the minimum most necessary by protocol courtesies, he started to clap his hands and to repeat: "This is good, this is good."

[ ... ]

The work on the communiqué went off in a calm and business friendly atmosphere and in a spirit of frankness and willingness for concessions. Practically, our views on most of the issues were identical or similar. [ ... ] There were differences of a more serious character only on some items.

The Cuban comrades suggested texts in which the role and the significance of the national-liberation movements were exaggerated. They held back from judgments about the difficulties in the international communist and working-class movement, they did not approve our text about the struggle against the deviations from Marxism-Leninism and they did not agree that the role of the communist parties in Latin America be emphasized. They strongly insisted that the war in Vietnam and the American government, and personally Nixon, be condemned with convincing phrases.

This required long discussions of some formulations until we adopted a mutually acceptable version. Our group had to explain, at length and patiently, the positions of our country, from a principled standpoint, and [in the end] succeeded in convincing the Cuban comrades to adopt our views. Of course, we had to be aware of and to take into consideration their positions, as well. Essentially, the disputed texts were prepared on the basis of mutually acceptable formulations.

[ ... ]

Our joint work on the communiqué once more confirms the conclusion that the Cuban comrades had indeed reassessed in a positive way a number of their former concepts, and now they stand much closer to our views. At the same time, it was evident that they had not yet shaken off completely some of their wrong positions. [ ... ]

#### About the economic and scientific-technical cooperation

During comrade T. Zhivkov's visit to Cuba these issues were discussed in detail on a large scale with a view of creating a model for cooperation between the two socialist countries, employing all possibilities. At the moment, on this basis, a

program for the directions and the prospects of this cooperation is being developed.

[ ... ]

It was decided to study the possibilities for cooperation in the production of electric trucks and for the construction of a plant in Cuba for the production of starter and traction batteries on the basis of Cuban lead. In the future, the emerging joint markets for electrical trucks, motor trucks and batteries in some Latin American and other countries can be discussed, as well. An agreement was attained about the building of a repair plant for tractors and attached farm equipment in Cuba. And it was decided that the Bulgarian-Cuban scientific research project-constructor bureau for agricultural machines develop a plan about the production of system machines for comprehensive mechanization for basic agricultural crops in Cuba in order to render more effective assistance to Cuban agriculture.

[ ... ]

It is deemed expedient to explore the possibility for assembling electronic calculators and electronic calculating machines in Cuba. We accepted the motion to share our experience in the application of the electronic-calculating equipment in the organization and the management of agricultural-industrial complexes. We pointed out the big experience of our country in the sphere of non-ferrous metallurgy and we offered to develop our cooperation in the sphere of geological mining and in the delivery of equipment for mines, ore-dressing factories and metallurgic works for extraction of lead, zinc and copper. (In this sphere Cuba is engaged with Romania, from which it had received 20 million dollars credit.) We suggested also receiving a group of Cuban specialists, so that they can study our experience in the sphere of the planning of the national economy and of the development of the machine-building industry.

[ ... ]

#### About the atmosphere, which contributed to achieving good results

The visit of comrade T. Zhivkov in Cuba in 1970 has left deep and lasting sentiments of confidence and friendship. The Cuban comrades highly appreciate the fact that the first visit of a leader of such a rank is from Bulgaria. And what is more important, it has had an extremely favorable effect on them in a number of ways. At the meeting with Politburo,

they emphasized once again that it was not a coincidence that their first visit for now in a socialist country was in Bulgaria.

The visit in Sofia and everywhere else in the country was accompanied with great respect and love towards the Cuban revolution, towards the delegation and personally towards comrade F. Castro.

[ ... ]

The meeting with former partisans from the "Chavdar" brigade,<sup>40</sup> which continued until after midnight, was also very well designed and organized. When comrade Zhivkov spoke about his wonderful impressions from Cuba, comrade Castro said: "Comrade Zhivkov, why are you speaking all the time about the visit in past tense. You have to speak about the future visits, as well. I would like to invite you to Cuba again."

[ ... ]

On leaving Bulgaria, comrade [Flavio] Bravo (deputy Prime Minister) and comrade Naranjo (Minister of Food Industry) declared that they were very pleased with the visit and that they were convinced that it was the best one, which had left most wonderful impressions on them.

#### About some conclusions and suggestions

The bulk of work completed gave and will give its positive results. The set goal was achieved completely. Extremely useful work was done for our bilateral relations and for our common cause. We created very favorable preconditions for the meetings of the other brotherly socialist countries with the Cuban comrades and comrade F. Castro.

The basic thought that guided comrade T. Zhivkov in all this incessant work, efforts and labor, was our great desire to be useful to the Cuban Revolution, to the Cuban Communist Party and personally to comrade F. Castro in the building of a new society, [set] on a Leninist path. They [the Cuban comrades] perceived these intentions, in the most noble sense.

[ ... ]

It is obvious that comrade Fidel Castro and the other comrades have walked a long revolutionary road. They are building a socialist society, they are guided by Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, to cooperate with our countries and first of all, with the USSR, and they are strongly opposed to imperialism.

Also, during their visit in our country they tried to make the most of it and to enrich and to strengthen their Marxist-

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Leninist views. Their attitude towards our country and our party shows an absolute approval of our policy and admiration for our successes, which comrade F. Castro expressed repeatedly.

[ ... ]

In order to attain greater and more effective results on this stage, it is very important that our countries assist decisively the economic development of Cuba, which will play a positive role for its still closer rapprochement with the socialist community. In this respect, the suggestion of comrade T. Zhivkov for discussion of the problems of the economic development of Cuba at a special meeting of COMECON is very appropriate.

After the visit of comrade T. Zhivkov in Cuba, at his suggestion, a special program for the development of economic and scientific-technical cooperation between the two countries was developed and some measures are being implemented. It is necessary to start working comprehensively for the implementation of the program, and to this end, to look for and to reveal new resources.

[ ... ]

*[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 35, a.e. 3182; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]*



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## **Todor Zhivkov, Reports to BCP Politburo on his Visit to Cuba, 31 December 1975 and 5 January 1976**

### **INFORMATION**

of comrade TODOR ZHIVKOV about his visit to the Republic of Cuba  
delivered at the meeting of Politburo of CC of BCP  
on 31 December 1975

If we are to give an assessment of the congress of the Cuban Communist Party, it has to be the following: a historical event in the life of Cuba and the Cuban revolution. An important stage in the singular development of the revolutionary and communist movement in Cuba is completed.

What does this uniqueness consist of?

The period since 1959 is a difficult period, during which three objective and mutually linked processes developed.

1. Deep qualitative changes in the economy (industry and agriculture), culture, ideological life, which determine the socialist character of the Cuban revolution.

2. Strengthening and consolidating of the hegemonic role of the working class and of its union with the rural masses and the progressive intelligence.

3. Consolidation of the subjective factor and formation and stabilization of the Cuban Communist Party as a militant vanguard, successor, and follower of the revolutionary traditions of the first Marxist-Leninist party in Cuba, of the "July 26<sup>th</sup>" movement and of the other revolutionary forces.

The congress adopted basic documents in which this revolutionary development is reflected and fixed normatively and the main directions in the development of the party, the state, the economy, as well as the political line are outlined.

[ ... ]

In the development of these materials the documents of our party are utilized creatively.

### About the report of CC, about the documents and about the Congress in general.

- Thorough and comprehensive analysis of the basic domestic and foreign problems, analysis in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism;

- Distinct, definite and open brotherly attitude to CPSU and the USSR, to their role in the Cuban revolution and the international life;

It was emphasized that:

- "They infinitely believe in Lenin's motherland."

- "Without the USSR the fighters of Cuba could have died heroically like the fighters of the Paris Commune but they would not have won;"

- "The USSR is a world mainstay of socialism."

### About China:

In his report Fidel Castro indirectly criticized the Chinese leaders and their policy. The passage in our greeting, in which the Maoists were openly condemned, was loudly applauded by the congress. Comrade [Soviet politburo member Mikhail] Suslov did not speak about the Chinese. We were the first to speak about them in our greeting and we were loudly

applauded not only by the congress but also by Fidel Castro and the other Cuban leaders.

About self-criticism:

- About the October crises and the withdrawal of the Soviet nuclear weapons from Cuba;
- About underestimating the experience of the USSR and the other socialist countries, especially with regard to economics;
- Against Utopianism and for the necessity to use economic categories: cost price, price, profit, stimulus, and so on;
- Abandoning of the wrong views about the guerrilla movement in Latin America, [and] for proceeding straight to communism and so on;
- Correct attitude to the first Marxist-Leninist party in Cuba, founded in 1925, to the working class and its role;
- "The old communists - spiritual fathers of the young revolutionaries." Three distinguished men were elected in the new Politburo, including Blas Roca.

The Congress turned onto a singular international forum: 87 delegations of communist parties, of other revolutionary and democratic movements and a great number of representatives from Latin America and Africa.  
[ ... ]

About the attitude of CPSU towards the Congress:

- Official greeting of CPSU to the Congress, published in the press.
- Greeting of comrade Suslov.
- Personal message from comrade Leonid Brezhnev.
- Leonid Brezhnev personally met and saw off the delegation in Moscow.

About Fidel Castro:

- Honest revolutionary, clever, mass leader with charisma and critical of himself.
- Lack of the necessary statesman experience. He got carried away, especially in the closing speech, about Angola and the USA. He says things against America and against [US President Gerald R.] Ford which one must not speak about. We are representatives not only of communist parties but also of states.

General conclusion:

The First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party laid the beginnings of a new historical stage in the life of the party

and the country. Now there is clarity in the line and the basic directions in the development of the socialist revolution in Cuba. There is an experienced political vanguard, [as well as] fraternal relations with the socialist community and especially with the USSR.

About the attitude towards our delegation and generally about the relations between Bulgaria and Cuba:

- Extraordinary attention. Pronouncedly warm brotherly attitude from the first till the last day. It was displayed:

- On behalf of the Congress;
- On behalf of the working people;
- On behalf of the Cuban leaders;
- Personally on behalf of Fidel Castro.

[ ... ]

All this is a new and impressive proof for lasting and positive development of the Bulgarian-Cuban relations, of the friendly sentiments of the communists and the working people in Cuba to Bulgaria, to the Bulgarian communist party, to our party and state leaders and for the huge authority of Bulgaria and the BCP in Cuba.

Reasons:

- Common socialist road of development;
- Consolidation of the socialist character of the Cuban revolution, clarifying the ideological and political views of the Cuban leaders and personally of Fidel Castro;
- Analogical historical development in Cuba and Bulgaria, approximately identical size of territory and population;
- The positive experience of Bulgaria;
- The work of the Bulgarian specialists in Cuba and the mutual visits of delegations;
- The particular significance of the correct line of our leaders to the Cuban revolution and to Fidel Castro; the visit in Cuba in 1970;
- Considerate attitude to the Cuban requests;
- The personal friendship between Fidel Castro and Todor Zhivkov also plays a certain role;
- It can be said that now we are picking the fruit that we planted in due time.

About the prospects of Bulgarian-Cuban relations.

- The necessary objective and subjective prerequisites for strengthening and deepening of these relations exist.

- About the activities of the Bulgarian-Cuban committee for economic cooperation. We have to take measures to consolidate it.

- About some unresolved economic issues (the price of sugar, our late deliveries of equipment and so on).

- Problems in the sphere of culture.

- There is a requirement on behalf of Cuba for new specialists - fitters. We have to discuss this issue and improve the work of our specialists. [ ... ] The Cubans have no food. Our specialists use the shop for diplomats, buy food [products] and sell them. Some Cubans possess old valuables -- gold, silver (rings and necklaces). A great majority of our specialists are engaged in the "black market." Besides, we send them individually, not in groups. For each of them it has to be determined what post he is going to occupy, because when they go there, they begin to fight [over] who the leader will be. There is no political leadership. Regardless of who the comrades that intercede are, we have to make a check to give them confidentially a note -- so that we concern ourselves very seriously with these intrusions. We send there people who discredit our country. This is everywhere, in all countries.

#### About some new forms of cooperation between Bulgaria and Cuba.

- We can think about that.

- Fidel Castro promised to come to Bulgaria before or after the CPSU [Communist Party of the Soviet Union] Congress. It would be difficult for him to come to our congress.

- The expansion and the intensifying of the comprehensive relations with Cuba - this is our international and patriotic duty.

This is the most important. Now I am ready to answer your questions regarding our visit.

#### SUPPLEMENT

to the information of comrade TODOR ZHIVKOV about his visit in

Republic of Cuba, delivered at the meeting of Politburo on 5 January 1976.

TODOR ZHIVKOV:

I have to say that on the documents - the Program platform, the project for Constitution, the directives and the Statutes - which were sanctioned by the Congress and about which we gave positive assessment, have been developed by a group of Soviet comrades. This is very interesting, too. It shows that Fidel Castro and the leaders of the Cuban communist party do not only make a turn towards us and first of all, to the Soviet Union, but also that they coordinate most closely their foreign and domestic affairs with the Soviet comrades. This is very pleasing. Why? Because it is good that they treat

us well, but if they do not treat well the Soviet Union -- this would be bad.

In conversation with Fidel Castro I asked him to give the floor first not to me, but to Janos Kadar. But they did not comply and I had to speak first. Fidel Castro declared the following: "Comrade Zhivkov, bear in mind that not only do I love Bulgaria but also everybody, elected in Politburo, has no reservations towards Bulgaria. We are studying your experience - the Program, the Statutes and so on. Second, if there is something in our economic cooperation, in our trade, just say, and we will arrange it. We are ready to do everything for Bulgaria, but without declaring it [in public], so that the others will not press us. And third, I want to come to Bulgaria, but not in order to receive a generous welcome, but to talk with you."

Those were the talks that I had with him on different occasions.

We talked with comrade Stanko Todorov<sup>41</sup> and comrade Tano Tzolov<sup>42</sup> and we think that we must not dramatize the disruption that took place in our trade. [ ... ] Let's act tactically and wisely. [ ... ] At the end, we can give 100 million leva, because this is Cuba. The Soviet Union gives everything. They provide for the whole army. They pay 500 rubles for a ton of sugar.

Now, let's come to an agreement and when Fidel Castro comes, we will move forward to a broader cooperation and we will find a way to make up for the losses. There is no need to dramatize this event. [ ... ] Our party has earned exceptional trust in Cuba. We must not lose it because of the trade relations. Besides, they are on the right path, they have [established] ties with the Soviet Union and they remain true to the Soviet Union. This is a great achievement.

[Source: TsDA, Sofia, Fond 1-B, Opis 35, a.e. 5581; translated by Julia Cherneva, edited by Jordan Baev.]

#### Notes

1 Author's interviews with Cuban Ambassador to the USSR Severo Aguirre (Moscow, 14 May 1978) and with Blas Roca (Sofia, 21 September 1978). For more information about Dimitrov's contacts with Latin American leftist political leaders see: Baev, Yordan, *Por la Unidad Democrática. Jorge Dimitrov y el movimiento revolucionario en América Latina*, (Sofia Press, 1989), 5-61.

2 *Informatsionen bulletin VPMV*, Sofia, 1959, No. 3-4, 28-35; 1960, No. 7, 34.

3 TsDA, Fond 1053, Opis 6, a.e. 91, 92, 237, 388.

4 *Dokumenti I materiali za sutrudnichestvoto mezhdu BCP I PCC 1960-1981* [Documents on the cooperation between BCP and PCC], (Sofia: Partizdat, 1982), 17-22.

5 TsDA, Fond 1-B, Opis 33, a.e. 1172, 1324; Fond 28, Opis 23, a.e. 10; Fond 1053, Opis 8, a.e. 270; Opis 11, a.e. 258.



6 [See the translation of the Bulgarian record of conversation between Raul Castro and Zhivkov in Sofia in March 1965 elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.]

7 *TsDA*, Fond 1053, Opis 8, a.e. 80, 270; Opis 9, a.e. 40, 48; Opis 11, a.e. 75.

8 *TsDA*, Fond 1-B, Opis 60, a.e. 194 – published in cooperation with CWIHP at: Baev, Jordan (Editor-in-Chief), *Bulgaria in the Cold War. Documents from Todor Zhivkov Personal Records, 1956-1989, A Documentary CD Volume*, (Sofia: IK96plus, 2002).

9 In 1960 the commercial exchange started with only 500 000 USD, while in 1970 it was increased to 63 mln. USD, and in 1975 to 172 mln. USD.

10 *AMVR*, Fond 1, Opis 10, a.e. 1667, 1214; Opis 12, a.e. 108, 356, 437 - published in cooperation with CWIHP at: Baev, Jordan (Editor-in-Chief), *Bulgarian Intelligence & Security Services in the Cold War years. A Documentary CD Volume*, (Sofia: IK96plus, 2005).

11 The correspondent of Bulgarian Telegraph Agency (BTA) in Havana Andrei Apostolov even tried later on to suggest a definition for the specific model of “tropical bureaucratic socialism” in Cuba.

12 *Rabotnicheskio delo*, (Sofia), 9 March 1990; *Voz* (Bogota), 15 March 1990.

13 CC BCP Politburo member since 1938, Minister of Internal Affairs (1944-1949), Deputy Prime Minister (1949-1956), Prime Minister (1956-1962).

14 Francisco Calderio (Blas Roka) – General Secretary of Cuban Communist Party, renamed in 1944 to Partido Socialista Popular (1934-1962).

15 After Iraqi nationalist revolution on 14 July 1958 there was armed split among the new military junta and an attempt on life of its leader Gen. Abdul Karim Kassem in March 1959.

16 During the congress of Romanian Workers' Party in Bucharest there was carried out an international Communist discussion on 23-24 June 1960 regarding the Sino-Soviet political split.

17 Ruben Avramov – a CC BCP member and head of a CC BCP deptment; Konstantin Tellalov – Deputy head of “Foreign Policy and International Relations” CC BCP department.

18 Konstantin Michev – a former participant in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Ambassador to Cuba (1961-1963).

19 On the Proposal, made by the Bulgarian Foreign Minister there are signs of approval of Todor Zhivkov, First Secretary of the CC BCP, Anton Yugov, Prime Minister, and other Politburo members.

20 Karlo Lukanov – Minister of Foreign Affairs (1958-1962).

21 A member of Politburo and a Secretary of CC BCP (1958-1966). After his removal from Politburo was sent Ambassador to London (1969-1971), but in July 1971 was elected a member of the State Council (i.e. Presidency), and from 1974 until his death in 1987 served as Vice Chairman of State Council.

22 “Special equipment” was a term used in the official documentation for “arms delivery”.

23 Ambassador to Cuba (1963-1967) and Brazil (1972-1975).

24 CC BCP member and head of a Communist Party Department.

25 Entered at CC BCP “Foreign Policy & International Relations” Department’s register with incoming No. 16941 of 28 April 1966.

26 Handwritten resolution by Todor Zhivkov, First Secretary CC BCP and Prime Minister of PR of Bulgaria.

27 CC BCP Secretary (1962-1866), Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Trade (1966-1971), Bulgarian Ambassador to UN office in Vienna (1974-1980) and to the Netherland (1980-1982).

28 Petar Marinkov – a career diplomat, Ambassador to Colombia and Ecuador (1979-1982), and to Cuba (1983-1986).

29 Presented at CC BCP Politburo session of 17 January 1967.

30 First Secretary of Dimitrov’s Communist Youth Union (1965-1968), head of a CC BCP department (1968-1977), CC BCP Secretary (1977-1984), Prime Minister (1986-1989).

31 Dimitrov’s Communist Youth Union.

32 Minister of Foreign Affairs (1962-1971).

33 Ambassador to Cuba (1967-1969) and to Algeria (1976-1981).

34 This confidential report was delivered directly to the Head of Zhivkov’s Office Milko Balev in connection with Zhivkov’s visit to Cuba, postponed for 1970.

35 In November-December 1969 a CC BCP delegation, led by Boris Velchev, visited Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and Chile. After returning back home Velchev delivered a broader report to CC BCP Secretariat, which in a shorter version was sent in March 1970 to Ponomarev. On 10 June 1970 CC BCP Politburo approved Boris Velchev’s final proposal “On activation of the BCP and PRB relations with Latin America.”

36 The New York Governor went on a series of “fact-finding” trips to Latin America in the spring and summer of 1969 at the request of President Richard M. Nixon.

37 [Rodney Arismendi was Secretary-General of the Uruguayan Communist Party (PCU); Hilberto Vieira White was the founder and general secretary of the Columbia Communist Party; Jorge Del Prado was the general secretary of the Communist Party of Peru; Orestes Ghioldi was a leader of the Communist Party of Argentina.—ed.]

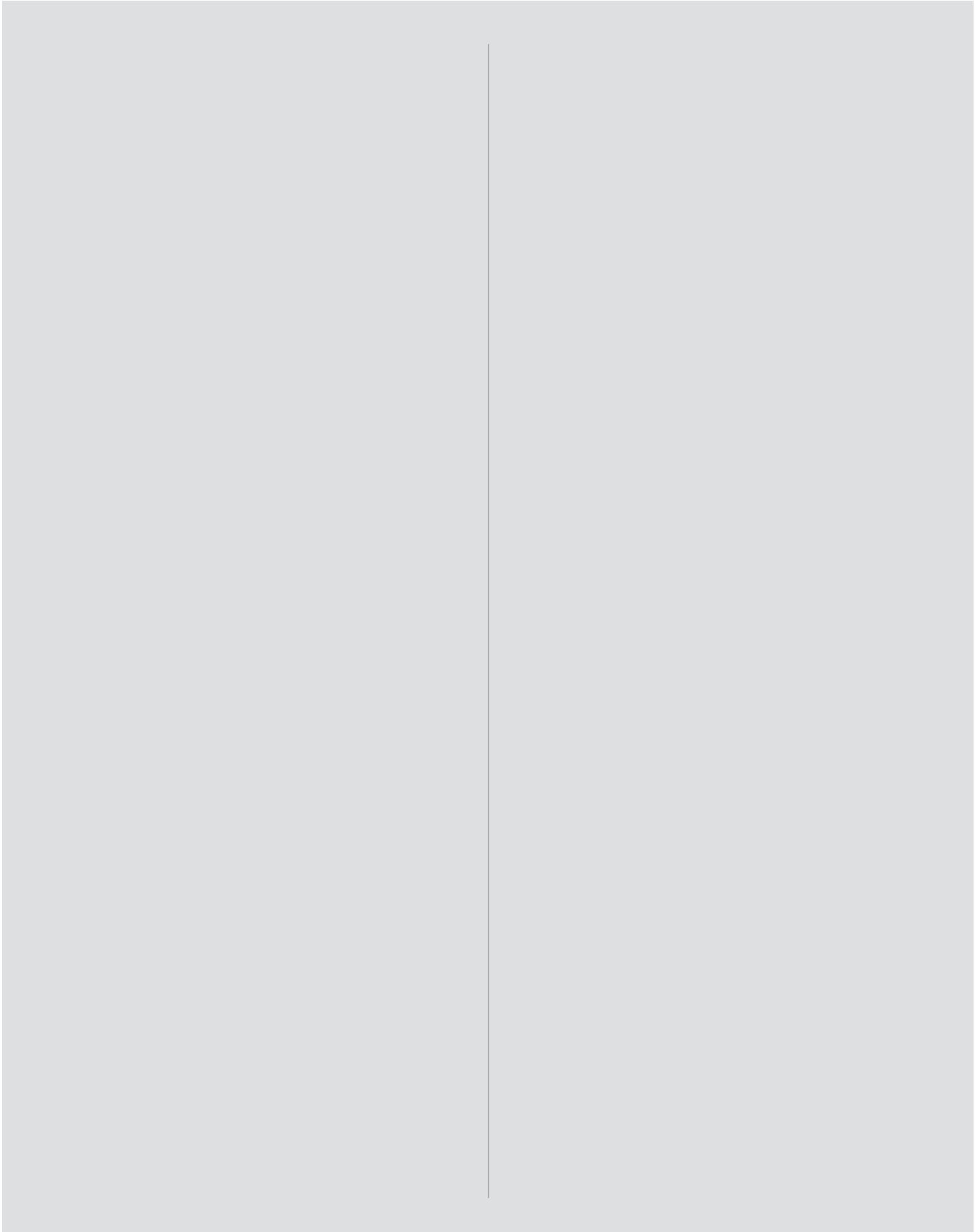
38 Luis Corvalan was secretary general of the Communist Party of Chile (PCCh).

39 Minister of Internal Affairs (1962-1969), Ambassador to Cuba (1969-1971).

40 In April 1944 the partisan detachment “Chavdar” was reorganized into brigade. Todor Zhivkov was a CC BCP political representative at the brigade. During Zhivkov’s rule, several of the brigade commanders received influential positions – Gen. Dobri Djurov became minister of defense (1962-1990), Dimiter Stanishev – CC BCP Secretary for International Relations (1977-1990), and Yordan Yotov – a Politburo member and CC BCP Secretary for Ideology (1984-1989).

41 Bulgarian Prime Minister (1971-1981) and Chairman of National Assembly (1981-1990).

42 Deputy Prime Minister and a Politburo member.



## Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 1963—A Hungarian Perspective

### Hungarian Embassy in Sofia, Report on Bulgarian-Cuban Relations, 29 August 1963<sup>1</sup>

The Embassy of the Hungarian people's Republic  
TOP SECRET!

No. 408/t.s./ 1963. Sofia, 29 August 1963

Official: Gy. Horn, secretary of III dep.

Subject: Bulgarian-Cuban relations

Written: in six copies Ref. No. 001254/1/1963

five copies to the Ministry

one copy to the Embassy

*In connection with the instruction of the Center of the above number of reference, we have proceeded [to meet with officials] in the [Bulgarian] Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, we had a meeting with the first employee of the Cuban Embassy to Sofia, and on the basis of the conversations and our experiences, we would like to report the following on the Bulgarian-Cuban relations and the Bulgarian comrades' opinion of Cuba:*

There has not been an essential change in the relations between Bulgaria and Cuba since the Caribbean [i.e., Cuban missile] crisis of last year. The Bulgarian comrades emphasized that the political, economic, and cultural relations between the two countries have been developing steadily and continuously for the past two years. At the time of the mentioned crisis Bulgaria's sympathy toward Cuba only grew stronger, at that time in Sofia violent anti-American demonstrations took place, declaring solidarity with Cuba. On two or three occasions the demonstrations were of such size that the competent Bulgarian party and government officials had to interfere to prevent the [tension] from escalating. This must be mentioned because later, through the Bulgarian specialists traveling to Cuba, quite a large number of the population was informed about the economic difficulties that caused problems in the supply of the [Cuban] population with goods and asked the competent Bulgarian officials - in letters and at meetings - to alleviate the mentioned problems by sending food.

Concerning relations between the two countries, the economic relations, which are expanding year by year, are most important.

In the past two years, trade relations have increased to a large extent, and according to the latest agreement, signed on 3 July 1963, in 1963 each party will have a 2.3 million dollar trade. Bulgaria's basic import articles are: sugar, molasses, canned fruit, iron, and copper concentrates, the country's exports are: agricultural machines, machine tools, electric running blocks, transformers, medicine, canned food, deep-frozen poultry, and seeds. During the last talks, the main problems were the price of the sugar and the supply of some important Bulgarian articles on credit. According to the agreement signed in July, Bulgaria will give a 1.5 million dollar loan to Cuba at 2% interest, the amortization of which will take place through Cuban goods between 1967 and 1978. According to the previous loans and the agreements just signed, Bulgaria has undertaken to supply complete plants and to build factories for Cuba, so in 1962 they started to build two cold-stores, a transformer factory, a cog-wheel factory, seven ice plants, and a carbide factory. In connection with the building work and the transfer of technical-scientific experience, there are now 172 Bulgarian specialists in Cuba. Apart from this, the Bulgarian Komsomol has sent 70 young plant cultivators to Cuba to convey their experience in vegetable growing. Bulgaria contributes to the training of Cuban experts too, within the framework of which 132 Cuban skilled workers are trained now in Bulgaria and 18 Cuban students study at Bulgarian universities.

It is a problem in the economic relations between the two countries that the quality of the supplied Bulgarian goods does not always correspond to the [agreed upon] requirements, and the Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade R. Leon, visiting Bulgaria recently, also complained about it. The minister told the Bulgarian leaders that the Cuban workers had gotten used to high quality [goods] and he considered it a question of politics that no poor quality goods should come from socialist Bulgaria to Cuba, because this would undermine the prestige of socialist countries. The minister and the Cuban Embassy have asked the competent Bulgarian officials several times to discuss the question of supplying some articles of food and important machines on credit. Here they mentioned that they

badly needed accumulators, various agricultural machines, but they could not pay for them at present. They asked the Bulgarian foreign trade officials to do more intensive market research in Cuba to find such new articles that could be supplied to Bulgaria in exchange for the requested products.

Evaluating the present Cuban economic situation, the Bulgarian comrades said that they did not think the Cuban economic leaders were completely right in seeing the causes of the economic difficulties only in the earlier dependence on America and the present blockade. They do not want to realize that they have made mistakes in [their] economic policy, and because of the lack of well-trained experts, they have an idealistic approach concerning a lot of questions. They think that the countries of the socialist camp should help Cuba more as there is a danger of increase in Western, but mainly Chinese influence concerning the difficulties. Their foreign mission in Havana received such a task as to study the Cuban internal economic situation in greater depth, to look for possibilities of helping Cuba's national economy in correspondence with Bulgaria's potential.

Concerning the Cuban internal political situation, the Bulgarian comrades said they thought Fidel Castro's visit to the Soviet Union had been a crucial event after the crisis. During Fidel Castro's visit, it was most important that he emphasized the need for unity in the international communist and workers' movement. According to the Bulgarian comrades' evaluation, as a result of the visit the Soviet-Cuban alliance has become consolidated to a large extent, and they think that it was the first time that Fidel Castro had talked so clearly about the rightness of the Soviet Union's approach to solving the crisis. They think the Cuban leaders greatly appreciate the declaration of the Soviet leaders, mainly Khrushchev[s] [statement], that the Soviet Union would provide armed support for Cuba in case of any danger of aggression. Finally, they consider the visit successful because it greatly contributed to the Cuban leaders' forming a correct opinion in the argument with the Chinese Communist Party.

The Bulgarian comrades said that, although they did not doubt that the great majority of the Cuban leaders represented the correct position in the argument with the Chinese,

they found it curious that the Chinese embassy to Havana spread anti-Soviet propaganda freely and the Cubans did not protest against it at all. Furthermore, in their opinion, the Cuban middle and low cadres have not decided about these questions and [were] mainly influenced by the opinions about how to solve the crisis and by Chinese propaganda; these people are strongly attracted to Chinese views.

Cultural relations between Cuba and Bulgaria follow the cultural work plan signed by the two countries on 15 June 1963; the relations between the different organizations are significant too. In the coming period, they are not planning any relevant changes in the relations between the two countries or exchanges of delegations. It is worth mentioning that the new Bulgarian ambassador, Atanas Kalbov, was assigned the task to try to establish the widest mass relations in Cuba. As a special task he was instructed to watch the activity of the Chinese in Cuba. For him in his work Comrade János Beck, the Hungarian ambassador to Havana, was set as an example, whom the Bulgarian comrades considered one of the most popular diplomats in Cuba, with whom the Cuban leaders had a closer and more friendly relationship than with the Soviet ambassador to Havana [Aleksandr Alekseyev].

Ambassador

[Károly PRÁTH]

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Budapest

*[Source: Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j-Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik.]*

## Notes

1 Ed. note: For additional translations of Hungarian documents on Cuba and the missile crisis, see the compilation of such materials elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.

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# Yugoslavia and the Cuban Missile Crisis:

## Documents from the Foreign Ministry Archives in Belgrade

Introduced by Svetozar Rajak and translated by Radina Vucetic-Mladenovic and Svetozar Rajak<sup>1</sup>

The Yugoslav documents presented below represent a selection from the “Highly Confidential” and “Confidential” collections in the Diplomatic Archives of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Serbia in Belgrade. The primary criteria guiding the selectors was to show a less well known aspect of the Cuban Missile Crisis—the activities of the non-aligned countries or those, like Brazil, who were sympathetic to the cause of non-engagement, during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The documents chronicle communications between Belgrade and its embassies in Rio de Janeiro and Havana between 26 October and 8 November 1962. The provenance of the documents determined their focus: Yugoslav diplomats’ assessments and actions taken by Belgrade at the apex of the crisis and during the first days following its denouement. Notably, the Yugoslav ambassador’s reports of his frequent contacts with some of the highest figures in the Cuban leadership provide unique insight into their behavior during the apex of the crisis. The documents reveal a surprisingly active role of the non-engaged or non-aligned countries, notably Brazil and Yugoslavia, away from the limelight of the Kennedy-Khrushchev showdown. It is, of course, true that the impact of actions undertaken by the two countries did not determine the outcome of the crisis; however, they played a constructive role in its resolution.

To understand fully the activities of Yugoslavia and its president, Josip Broz Tito, and the motives behind them, several aspects are of importance. First and foremost, there was genuine fear among the Yugoslavs, as was the case around the world, general public or politicians alike, including the main protagonists, that the escalation may lead to a nuclear Armageddon. In addition, the correlation between the timing of the crisis and the consolidation of the new Non-Aligned Movement explains the political calculations that guided the Yugoslav leadership’s actions and their determination not to be left on the sidelines, a seemingly paradoxical endeavor for a country affiliated with the Third World at the time of the nuclear stand-off between the two leading superpowers. As the crisis itself and its chronology are being deliberated and documented in great detail elsewhere in this *Bulletin*, it is appropriate to award attention to this particular aspect. The Cuban Missile Crisis happened a little more than a year after the founding conference of the Non-aligned Countries held in Belgrade in September 1961. The gathering of the heads of state or governments of twenty-three Third World countries laid the foundation for the establishment of the Non-Aligned

Movement (NAM). Their goal was to create a tool that would enable neutral or non-committed countries to safeguard their independence and sovereignty and their right to choose their own model of development through active participation in global affairs. An essential prerequisite for achieving this goal, in their eyes, was the dismantling of Cold War structures. The Cuban Missile Crisis came both as a threat and an opportunity. On the one hand, it represented everything these countries feared and had warned against. Ideological polarization and division of the world into two antagonistic military alliances perpetuated a threat of nuclear confrontation and annihilation. On the other hand, the Cuban Missile Crisis represented one of the first opportunities for the NAM countries to demonstrate the positive effect their active engagement could have on global affairs and for the peaceful resolution of crises. It was a chance for the nascent movement to promote itself. The initiatives born out of the Conference in Belgrade, in particular those related to nuclear non-proliferation and those promoting the dialogue between two superpowers, provided legitimacy for the engagement of Yugoslavia and Brazil, the latter only being a mere observer at the Belgrade Conference.<sup>2</sup> Beside the two, other non-engaged countries, notably India and Egypt, took active part in various initiatives and were particularly active at the United Nations. Understandably, their role is not visible in the presented documents. In addition to the above, the non-engaged were interested in helping Cuba uphold its right to choose its own political system and model of development, one of NAM’s basic tenets. Within this aspect, one cannot disregard an additional concern guiding the Yugoslavs. As committed communists, they were keenly interested in the survival of the first socialist country in the Western hemisphere.

The documents presented here (together with translated Brazilian documents appearing elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*) confirm very close coordination and collaboration between Belgrade and Rio throughout the crisis. This cooperation was founded on symmetry of their political outlooks in general and on the crisis, in particular. Telling of this closeness is Brazilian President João Goulart’s message to Tito, in response to the Yugoslav President’s message of 26 October, at the height of the crisis. In this, an unusually short message, Tito even apologizing for its curtness and justifying it with the urgency of the moment, the Yugoslav President makes several points. First, he underlines that the crisis cannot be defused without two actions being taken



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simultaneously—the lifting of the “quarantine” (the blockade) and the removal of all shipments of offensive weapons to Cuba. By equating the two actions, Tito fully identified with the non-aligned standing, in collision with the Soviet and Cuban position. Secondly, Tito emphasized that the UN was the only legitimate forum for the resolution of this and similar crises. Again, this reflects the Non-aligned precept—to wrestle global issues away from the exclusive prerogative of the superpowers to the UN where the Third World has a voice. Within this point, however, Tito makes an additional demand that, if the Security Council of the UN proves to be impotent “as has often been the case in the past,” the issue must be put before the UN General Assembly. Last, the Yugoslav President insisted that the crisis demands that the Heads of the non-committed countries “must” exert pressure through personal messages to the (acting) Secretary General of the UN, U Thant, and the President of the UN General Assembly.<sup>3</sup> The response from President Goulart shows remarkable congruence of views between the two statesmen. It also confirms that securing the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to Latin America and immediate removal of Soviet rockets, together with real guarantees for Cuba, were the main motives behind Brazilian President’s important involvement and mediation during the crisis.<sup>4</sup> The Yugoslav Ambassador’s insights also confirm that Brazilian support for Kennedy’s resolution in the Council of OAS, was a genuine political decision and not a result of the loss of direction within the Brazilian leadership. Radical rhetoric in support of Cuba, coming from those close to the Government, was clearly dismissed by the Yugoslav Ambassador as resulting from the “pressure from the masses.”

Tito was keen to associate himself with Goulart and sought his partnership during the crisis for several reasons. Firstly, Tito viewed Brazil as the biggest and most prominent country of Latin America, the most influential voice of the continent. Secondly, the Yugoslav President felt strong sympathy towards Goulart, who was perceived as “progressive” and left-leaning but not a communist. Yugoslavs were convinced that Brazil would have participated at the Belgrade Conference had it not been for very strong American pressure. Thirdly, Rio as a partner was a natural choice for Tito because of the importance the Kennedy administration awarded Brazil, whether with regard to mobilizing support throughout the continent for the Alliance for Progress, for the US Resolution at the Council of OAS to endorse the blockade (“quarantine”) when the Cuban crisis broke out, or to act as an intermediary with Castro. As the presented documents confirm, Tito was informed of Goulart’s unique access and continuous communication with Kennedy or his closest advisors throughout the crisis. Tito’s Ambassador in Rio, Barišić, as evident from his reports, had intimate access (perhaps only exceeded by

Kennedy’s ambassador, Lincoln Gordon) to Goulart’s closest advisers, which confirms the Brazilian President’s sympathies towards the Yugoslav President. Coupled with his own access to top Cuban leaders through his Ambassador in Havana, an association with Goulart offered Tito an opportunity to exert more influence on events, albeit indirect, than he would otherwise have had.

The documents presented here confirm the Yugoslav Ambassador’s unique access to top Cuban leadership throughout the crisis, surpassed only by that of the Soviet Ambassador. Cuban President Dr. Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado and Foreign Minister Raúl Roa repeatedly asked Ambassador Boško Vidaković to remain in continuous contact, implying communication with Belgrade, as well. The Cuban leadership was obviously keen to maintain a line of contact with Tito. A Vidaković telegram on Friday, 26 October, following a meeting with Dorticós, reveals that the Cubans were convinced that an American invasion was imminent. Following a request from Dorticós, the Ambassador was in permanent contact with his office and kept an open line with Belgrade throughout the night of 26-27 October. According to the Ambassador, the Cubans were at this point more than ready to compromise, as long as they received international guarantees for their own security. In a remarkable insight, he also provides an account of the Cuban leaders’ state of mind during these critical hours, describing them as “deflated and dejected,” far from being belligerent.<sup>5</sup> The Ambassador’s astute observations provide a rare witness account of the mood, often fluctuating, among the top Cuban leaders during the crisis, from dejection to belligerence. Particularly telling are the telegrams of 27 and 28 October and his account of gloom among Cuban leaders after learning of Khrushchev’s decision, without alerting or consulting Havana in advance, to withdraw the missiles under US pressure. The Ambassador’s reports also suggest that Cuban decision-making during the crisis was a result of long discussions and evaluations within a wider collective, rather than a very small circle around Castro. Illustrative of the irritability and mood swings among the Cubans was Ambassador’s warning to Belgrade on 29 October that the Cuban “disappointment with the Russians may lead them to make hysterical moves...”

The exceptional communication that existed between the Yugoslavs and the Cubans throughout the crisis, as well as the level of trust felt towards Tito, remained largely unrecorded by the historiography of the Cuban Missile Crisis. It also owes much to the later constant rivalry between the Cubans and the Yugoslavs for the soul of the Non-Aligned Movement. Ambassador Vidaković was, for example kept informed of Cuban leadership’s deliberations when drafting a response to U Thant’s message. The influence Tito enjoyed among leaders

in Havana during the critical days reflected the respect and trust they felt in his impartiality and political acumen, rather than belief in his power to cardinally influence the outcome of the crisis. As Ambassador's Telegram No. 235 of 29 October divulges, the Cubans altered their draft response to U Thant's message to include Tito's suggestion to invite the Secretary General to Havana. The Cuban leadership also heeded Tito's proposal to come up with an appeal or declaration. In contrast, as Roa confided in the Ambassador, the leadership did not even "have time to think about the Chinese and their stupidities" nor did they bother to reply to Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's message.<sup>6</sup> In his two telegrams of 29 October, Vidaković conveyed that during two conversations he had during that day with Raúl Roa, the latter spoke of Fidel's frustration with the unilateral Soviet decision to remove the rockets and the accommodation with Kennedy. Cuban pride truly suffered and Roa kept emphasizing that Castro's declaration (i.e., his "Five Points" statement of 28 October) was really more aimed at the Soviets than at the Americans. At one point, according to the Ambassador, Roa exclaimed, "We exist. They have to know that – this side [the Soviets], as well as the other side [the Americans]." He then kept returning to the theme of how "hard it is for the small ones when the big ones are bargaining."

The Yugoslav Ambassador received regular updates on the atmosphere and progress of talks held between Fidel and the Brazilian envoy, General Albino Da Silva, who arrived in Havana on 29 October (and whom Goulart had sent at secret US prompting<sup>7</sup>). He revealed in his report to Belgrade (Telegram No. 239 of 30 October) that, during his first meeting with Da Silva, Fidel was antagonized by Goulart's proposals. He rejected suggestions for neutralization and UN inspections, visibly infuriated by the fact that "the Russians and the Americans" have reached an accommodation without him. According to Ambassador's account, Fidel was equally stubborn and uncooperative during his first meeting with U Thant, who had also travelled to Havana in the days immediately following Khrushchev's climb-down. In his subsequent meetings with Da Silva, however, as reported by the Ambassador, Castro accepted Brazilian proposals for denuclearization of the whole of Latin America and the embargo on atomic weapons deliveries, and had "committed not to export revolution or carry out subversive activities" throughout the continent in exchange for "guarantees for [Cuba] keeping its sovereignty and independence." According to the same report, Fidel sealed his accord with a bitter remark that Russians "couldn't think of anything better." As Da Silva later confided in Ambassador Vidaković during a long late-night conversation, "Castro could not conceal his outrage with the Russians." He attributed Castro's rejection of the UN

inspections to the latter's intention to show both sides that they should have consulted him before they agreed on anything. The Brazilian emissary further revealed to the Yugoslav Ambassador that Fidel behaved "liked a haunted wild animal that was afraid of all sorts of things," not fully understanding that if no understanding with Kennedy were reached before the forthcoming US mid-term Congressional elections, the situation could still turn fatal for Cuba. Nonetheless, Da Silva remained optimistic in the final success of his mission, which the Ambassador followed up in his report of the conversation with a caustic comment in parentheses, "(This general is very naïve)." The Yugoslav Ambassador's cynicism derived from his understanding of Cuban options. In the closing paragraph of the same report, he offered a "few hints"—that Cuba had oil supplies for only 15-20 days and that this crisis will result in a further drop in living standards of up to 20 percent. He then concluded that only the Soviet aid and assistance could help Cuba escape the catastrophe and that Castro better bear this hard fact in mind.

Buoyed by the extent to which Cubans heeded their advice during the crisis, the Yugoslavs sensed an opportunity to exert decisive influence on Havana's future "behavior," namely its foreign policy orientation. Immediately after the peak of the crisis had passed, the Yugoslavs seized the momentum to communicate to the Cubans "proposals" for their "change of behavior," in light of the "lessons learned from the crisis." The "proposals" were sent to the Ambassador in form of an 29 October directive from the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Koča Popović. Popović's signature suggested that the instructions were cleared with Tito. Popović repeatedly underlined a change in style and tone to be of greatest significance for the future Cuban behavior. This was Belgrade's appeal for the Cubans to tone down their "revolutionary" rhetoric. According to the Yugoslavs, as a result of the favorable outcome of the crisis the Cubans had won their place in the sun—they secured their rights to independence and to pursue socialism. This, in turn, required from Havana a more mature approach to relations with countries of different ideological orientation. Yugoslavs advised against antagonizing others, in particular the countries of Latin America. Belgrade recommended a stable and constructive foreign policy, based on genuine non-alignment. Furthermore, according to Popović, the way for the Cubans to truly remove the threat to their independence was not to serve as a Soviet stooge, antagonizing the US and fueling dangerous escalation of confrontations between the superpowers. Instead, they should pursue active and constructive engagement in the international system securing in the process the support of a great number of countries. On the one hand, this was a true reflection of the very heart of Yugoslavia's foreign policy strategy and its

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pursuit of non-alignment. However, the “proposals” for the change of “behavior” were certainly also aimed at eliminating consistent Cuban radicalism that, in the name of “progressiveness” and “socialism,” was undermining Yugoslav efforts to strengthen the Non-Aligned Movement by increasing its membership. This, they believed, was possible only through the broadest inclusivity, regardless of countries’ ideological bent. The Yugoslav “proposals” also supplemented the gist of Brazilian President Goulart’s initiative (secretly instigated by Washington) for a longer term resolution of the crisis that were conveyed to Fidel Castro by his Private Secretary and special envoy, General Da Silva, on 30 October. Given close cooperation and communication between Goulart and Tito throughout the crisis, it is highly probable that Yugoslav motives for advising Cubans to change their behavior were, indeed, not only part of an effort to obtain a constructive Cuba in the Non-Aligned Movement but to support Goulart’s initiative.

The Cubans, however, must have perceived these “proposals” as an intrusion. In my opinion, this would certainly be an aspect that would plague Yugoslav-Cuban relations for the rest of Tito’s life. Although, as underlined several times in the directive, the Ambassador was instructed to communicate these “proposals” as his “personal opinion,” they were certainly seen by his hosts as paternalistic and coming from the highest authority in Belgrade. Ambassador Vidaković, in turn, was highly skeptical of a change in Cuban “behavior.” This is particularly evident in his Telegram No. 249 of 31 October. The Ambassador reminded Belgrade that the Cuban press took note only of Tito’s first message at the beginning of the crisis and that there was only a very brief mention of the Tito-Goulart exchange of messages on 26 October. Equally, the activities of the Non-aligned countries were hardly noted, while the visit and mission of General Da Silva was not even mentioned in the Cuban press. In contrast to the Cubans’ utter lack of recognition of Yugoslavia’s support during the crisis, as was vainly hoped for by the Yugoslav leadership, the Belgrade’s Ambassador in Rio was able to report the sincerest appreciation from the Brazilian side. He also underlined a feeling of unanimous pride among the Brazilian political and military elite for the role Goulart and Brazil played in the resolution of the crisis.<sup>8</sup>

The documents presented here suggest several conclusions. On the sidelines of the big Kennedy-Khrushchev show, smaller, non-aligned countries, namely Yugoslavia and Brazil, made a substantive effort to contribute towards the resolution of the most dangerous crisis of the Cold War. Immediate inspiration for an active engagement was the new awareness created in the wake of the September 1961 Belgrade

Conference of the Non-Aligned. The attractiveness of this new global initiative of the Third World was evident in the congruence of views held between Yugoslavia, and active member of the Movement, and Brazil, whose government was sympathetic to the non-aligned principles but outside the Movement itself. As the documents show, this congruence of views enabled the two countries to work in synchrony and play a constructive role during the crisis. The documents also provide ample evidence of unknown closeness between the Cuban leadership and the Yugoslavs during the crisis, in particular its critical days. To many, it will be a surprise to learn how eager the Cubans were to take very seriously Tito’s suggestions during these fateful hours. Here, however, also lay seeds of future rivalry between Havana and Belgrade for the leadership of NAM. Finally, the documents bear rare witness to the human face of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Yugoslav Ambassador Vidaković’s unique access to high-level Cuban leaders throughout the crisis enabled him to observe and report on the personal drama, insecurities, and doubts that these people went through as the crisis evolved. The Yugoslav Ambassador’s accounts, as recorded in the documents presented, offer an insightful, albeit very limited peak into the dilemmas, frustration, disappointment, and even errors of judgment the Cuban leaders underwent in the face of possible imminent annihilation.

Perhaps the most illustrative account of the extraordinary atmosphere, fear and mind-set of Cuban leaders during the time of crisis is Vidaković’s chilling record of a long conversation with Che Guevara during the night of 8 November. It tells us so much about the dichotomy and co-existence of, on the one hand, a multi-layered dimensionality and, on the other hand, an inexplicable tunnel vision of an ideological mind. Che boasted to have been ready to cause millions of deaths in the US in the name of “defending” the working men and women of Cuba, forgetting that the act would sacrifice millions of also working men and women in the US. At the same time, his loathsome bravado could have simply been evidence of an immature adrenalin-driven cockiness of a self-perceived revolutionary and evidence of boundless fear. Most disturbing, however, is the fact that at one point in human history, during the Cold War, there were people on both sides who spent their days and nights making war calculations aimed at causing millions of deaths or a thousand-year long environmental and cultural Dark Age on Earth. Their minds were pacified by the “justification” of a higher cause.

The documents constitute, in sum, a fitting contribution to the memory and commemoration of the most dangerous crisis of the Cold War when, for far too long, humanity stood on the verge of self-destruction.



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## DOCUMENT No. 1

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 24 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FNRJ [FPRY: Federated People's Republic of Yugoslavia]

Sending: Rio  
Received: 25.X 62. at 07.30  
No. 398  
Taken into process: teletypewriter  
Date: 24.X 1962  
Completed: 25.X 62. at 08.10

Telegram  
16  
D D D

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The talk with [Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs] Under Secretary [Carlos A.] Bernardes on the 24th of October.

The last information from the MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] received here from the Ambassador in Washington [Roberto de Oliveira Campos] says that the USA is getting ready for military intervention in Cuba. The approximate plan is that US planes will start bombing Cuba in the places where there are alleged bases with nuclear weapons and that will be as soon as Cuba refuses to accept the UN Commission for disarmament. The Brazilian Government advised Cuba to invite the Commission itself so as to clear the charges about the existence of nuclear weapons. However, Cuba rejected it. The Government is of opinion that the USA is responsible for the instantaneous intensifying of the conflict and they are very worried about the unyielding attitude of the USA towards Fidel's Government. Kennedy sent a letter to [Brazilian President João] Goulart from which it can be concluded that the USA is getting ready not only for disarmament of Cuba but for the military liquidation of Fidel's Government as well. [Brazilian UN Ambassador Afonso] Arinos suggested that Brazil address the General Assembly with the proposal of deatomization [denuclearization] of LA [Latin America] including Cuba.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]



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## DOCUMENT No. 2

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 24 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio  
Received: 26.X 62. at 08.00  
No. 397  
Taken into process: teletypewriter  
Date: 24.X 1962  
Completed: 26.X 62. at 08.30

Telegram  
16  
D D D

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

There is a general feeling in Brazil that the military blockade of Cuba, for the first time in the history of the Cold War, has brought the USA and the USSR to the very verge of the war because of one LA country, making in that way LA and Brazil the center of the Cold War. The feeling of immediate danger mobilized all circles in order to find a way out. They concluded [that the] values of their former independent policy, especially towards Cuba, enable them to influence more freely and with more authority in seeking peaceful solutions. However, there are differences within Government circles regarding the real intentions of the USA as well as the ways and means for solving the crisis over Cuba. The Ambassador of the US here [Lincoln Gordon] managed quite well to convince that the US option was not the invasion. On Tuesday Kennedy phoned [Brazilian President João] Goulart explaining the reasons for the blockade. He pointed out his intentions and asked for support in which he partly succeeded. American arguments are: firstly, they have solid proof that Cuba will get atomic weapons; secondly, Kennedy must take more severe measures because of the internal pressure, that's

why his option is blockade, although he is trying to transfer this issue to the UNO [United Nations Organization] in order to alleviate the pressure on himself; thirdly, transferring Cuba's issue to the UNO he is creating a precedent against unilateral USSR actions in Berlin. Therefore Kennedy is asking the support for their plan of keeping the blockade as long as the UNO Commission disarms Cuba. These arguments had an impact on Brazil to give a support to the US resolution in the Council of the OAS [Organization of American States] maintaining reservations about the employment of belligerent powers. Brazil accepts the UNO engagement, sending a Control Commission consisted of neutral people, and expects certain guarantees by the USA about the demilitarization of Cuba. They are of the opinion that through these actions a real guarantee for Cuba could be achieved and at the same time the role of non-aligned countries and Brazil could be affirmed. Although against intervention, Brazil supports American intentions, expecting alleviating of the war dangers and shows the wish to help Kennedy, so only moderate pressure is exerted on him in the UNO without any condemnation or neglecting American interests. They also expect that there is a way out from this crisis, especially about negotiations on Cuba and Berlin and they also believe that the USSR will avoid crossing swords at seas and that it will make Cuba accept the UNO inspection. Because of the pressure of the masses Government representatives make more severe statements against the USA, that is, confrontation with the support to the USA in OAS. Prime Minister [Hermes] Lima made a statement to the unions and students that Cuba had the right to its own socialist regime. Reactionary forces exert pressure asking Lima's resignation and demand a Parliament session to deal with foreign policy.

Barišić

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



### DOCUMENT No. 3

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 25 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY  
Sending: Rio

Received: 26.X 62. at 07.00

No. 400

Taken into process: teletypewriter

Date: 25.X 1962

Completed: 26.X 62. at 08.40

Telegram

16

D D D

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

I provided to [Brazilian foreign ministry official Carlos A.] Bernardes (connection your 434418) an extract from Tito's appeal and talked about the active role of the UNO [United Nations Organization]. He is expecting directives from the Government and President. The 25th of October news about the USA preparing a military invasion [of Cuba] appears to have helped the Government realize the issue and come over more firmly to the further measures. Governor [Leonel] Brizola [of Rio Grande do Sul province] attacked severely the US imperialism on TV at night on the 24th of October asking people to stand by the President and Government who are acting for peace and the preservation of the independence of Cuba. He accused the representative of Brazil in the Council of OAS of voting for the blockade which was against the Government's directives that authorized him to vote against the whole American resolution. It seems that overburdening of both the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hermes Lima<sup>9</sup> led to the situation in which the Government lost control over the whole situation, letting Americans influence [Brazil] through the MFA [into] supporting their line. There are rumors that Santiago Dantas will take over foreign affairs again. They are expecting further complications, because the USA is demanding from all LA countries that voted for the blockade resolution to take part symbolically in the blockade of Cuba with their own ships. That is the reason why the voting of the Brazilian representative at the Council of OAS is being half-officially denied.

Barišić

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*





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#### DOCUMENT No. 4

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 25 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 26.X 62. at 07.00 (?)

No. 226

Taken into process: 25.X 62 at 23.45

Date: 25.X 1962

Completed: 26.X 62. at 07.30

Telegram

16

D

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

From the talks with the Ambassador to Brazil, [Luis Bastian] Pinto.

Yesterday [Brazilian President João] Goulart personally phoned him asking him to suggest to those here to choose a couple of neutral people to [send to] Cuba of their own choice for the sake of assurance that they [i.e., the Cubans] didn't possess any offensive weapons. P. thinks that Brazil and some other LA countries needed that because of the easier resistance to American pressure to which all LA countries were uncompromisingly exposed. He says that they have phoned Brasilia to warn at least twice a day and all that in the prime of elections.

He was a representative of Brazil to OAS. He says that the USA used unauthorized means in its pressure. Forged the resolution and published it and only at his explicit demand they corrected it 12 hours later.

They point out the unconvincing side of the stated reasons by Kennedy for such an act. He doesn't believe in installing the rocket launch sites. He pays attention to the lack of any logic in Kennedy's attitude and that of the Administration in the last ten days in comparison to the earlier period. The USA is neither naïve nor is advancing to Cuba without solid information. Personally, he thinks that this was provoked by Kennedy's need to improve his sheltered image before elec-

tions. If it weren't like that it could have been timed earlier and not twenty days before elections.

He keeps telling me the same what [Brazilian UN Ambassador] A. Arinos told to [Yugoslav diplomat Ivo] Vejvoda: [Polish Foreign Minister Adam] Rapacki used to tell them about all conditions under which Cuba started its own independent way like Yugoslavia; that there was confusion in the heads of Cuban leaders.

[Boško] Vidaković

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



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#### DOCUMENT No. 5

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 26 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio

Received: 27.X 62. at 08.40

No. 401

Taken into process: 27.X 62. at 08.40

Date: 26.X 1962

Completed: 27.X 62. at 09.00

Telegram

15

very urgent

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Comrade [Yugoslav Foreign Minister] Koča [Popović]. Talks with [Brazilian Foreign Ministry official Carlos A.] Bernardes on the 26th of October.

They were informed by the US embassy that the work on the missile launching pads was being carried on day and night and that if the work didn't stop in the next 24 to 48 hours, bombardment of these sites could be expected. B. thinks that these works are against invasion and not for nuclear missiles launching pads. They have information that there is euphoria in the US after sending back some of the Russian

ships, which he considers equal to the war victory and that Kennedy has reached the top of his popularity. They are afraid that euphoria could make the US intensify a conflict that could lead to invasion, because the US ambassador [Lincoln Gordon] claims constantly that the solution to this crisis is not only disarmament of Cuba, but also liquidation of Fidel's regime. The Soviet charge d' affaires told on 26th of October to President Goulart that in case of the invasion of Cuba the USSR would attack some of the neighboring counties, e.g. Turkey. Your liaison officer 434660 delivered him the need of permanent initiative and of activation of the UN. They are proposing [Brazilian UN Ambassador Afonso] Arinos to suggest deatomization [denuclearization] of LA and Africa through one of the nonaligned members of the SC [Security Council] (Chile, Ghana and UAR [United Arab Republic; Egypt]). They have the impression that the USA won't be against and that Cuba also accepts the idea. In coordination with his government Santiago Dantas gave an interview to the NY Times in which he developed his thesis on neutralization of Cuba, which he had already given as the Brazilian foreign minister in P[unta]. Del Este [at the OAS meeting in January 1962]. They are waiting to see if the NY Times will publish the interview and what the reaction will be; then both governments would make official steps to[ward] neutralization giving guarantees to Cuba.

The American Embassy is exerting pressure, using its military circles, to bind Brazil stronger to American plans as well as putting pressure on the government. Military dispositive gave resistance to various intrigues, so the government reacts more freely to the situation. [Brazilian President João] Goulart is preparing his response to Kennedy for today or tomorrow, in which he will stress his beliefs in the principles of self-determination and non-intervention. Santiago [Dantas] is absolutely convinced that there will be no invasion, while Goulart is a pessimist.

Barišić

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



**DOCUMENT No. 6**

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković)  
to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 27.X 62. at 00.30

No. 229

Taken into process: 27.X 62. at 00.30

Date: 27.X 1962

Completed: 27.XI 62. at 08.00

Telegram

15

Very urgent

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

For the President [Tito], [Foreign Minister] Koča [Popović].

Visited [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos at 3 PM. At 2 PM they received information that they would be attacked by the US. Expect the attack during that night. Very convinced that [the] Pentagon prevailed and the attack was inevitable. He said there would be a great surprise if the attack could be avoided tonight.

American planes fly over many sites ruthlessly photographing again the whole territory. Consider the attack to begin with classical weapons focusing at first only on bases.

Informed him about the statement and the message of our President [Tito].<sup>10</sup> Extremely grateful and wants me to convey that. They were ready for everything without any restrictions under one condition: to get international guarantees for their own security. Couldn't accept disarmament without guarantees, not to become the victims of aggression in future. Any action, no matter the form, and initial steps from our side is looked forward to.

My comment. They are absolutely sure that the attack would be tonight. They are very upset and soft. I have an impression, according to Dorticos, that they were ready to accept many things that were out of discussion in the near past. If they overestimated, it's difficult for me to judge because of the lack of the outside information, but it is the right moment to hold them to their word. I will be in permanent contact during the night with Dorticos's office.

Asking for possible suggestions. Asking for keeping the connection open in the next 24 hours.

Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]



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## DOCUMENT No. 7

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio  
Received: 28.X 62. at 01.00  
No. 403  
Taken into process: teletypewriter  
Date: 27.X 1962  
Completed:  
Telegram  
15  
Very urgent

### TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Comrade Koca. [Brazilian] President [João] Goulart is very satisfied that comrade President [Tito] sent him a message sharing his worries because the Americans are poisoned by the war propaganda and preparing the attack on Cuba. He considers that everything must be done to prevent the beginning of war, because war would bring unpredictable catastrophe and it would be hard to extinguish it if war operations start. The suggestion to address to the presidents of the SC [Security Council] and GA [General Assembly] he finds reasonable and he will do it. He sent a message to Kennedy appealing for common sense and avoiding war. His opinion is that negotiations are necessary, and that Cuba must be prevented from becoming an atomic base for it could be the constant cause of war dangers. He thinks that the UNO [United Nations Organization] could take over the blockade of Cuba during negotiations, and that the UNO should stand for deatomization [denuclearization] of LA including Cuba what he insisted on as on vital question for peace keeping in LA.

He said that he would reply to the comrade President this very day whose action he considers very useful and of current interest; he also considers that the initiatives of all countries, both aligned and non-aligned, should be further developed in order to prevent and avoid the beginning of the war. He said

that he would reply to comrade President Tito this very day and that he sent him his regards.<sup>11</sup>

In the end he mentioned the wish of his government to expand economic relationships with all countries and especially with us, i.e. with the country with which Brazil has already had old and traditionally friendly and economic relations.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]



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## DOCUMENT No. 8

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 27 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FNRJ (FPRY)

Sending: Havana  
Received: 28.X 62. at 07.00  
No. 230  
Taken into process: 28.X 62. at 10.20  
Date: 27.X 1962  
Completed: 28.X 62. at 10.45

Telegram  
15  
Very urgent

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Koča. Yours 434844.

Visited [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos at 1 P.M. Just today received U Thant's message. The answer is being edited. It will be completed in an hour and I will be given it. Their intention is to address public opinion throughout that answer. According to what he stated I conclude that there is no necessary flexibility at all. They don't have full texts either of the last message to Kennedy from Khrushchev or Kennedy's answer, so they are still not completing the final version of the answer.

Your suggestions were passed. He states that a great deal of them will be in the above answer. Commitments will be taken during the negotiations, but not unilaterally. The condition is that they are taken by the USA too, as well as the stoppage of the blockade during them.

The idea of U Thant's arrival to Cuba is very useful. Will be discussed immediately. Asked if it was U Thant's suggestion. Answered that it was our opinion. Of course, they will have to invite him. Will be answered.

They are not able to allow inspection.

The idea of a special declaration of the Cuban Government can also be taken into account. They will consult immediately. I stated that it would miss the target if it lacks new flexible elements and proofs of their readiness to warm the situation; thus there must be understood what can maximally be done.

American planes continued overflights during the day. In the west part of the island there was fire at them, but without hitting the targets. He stated that there was information from Brazil that the possible attack could be in next 48 hours.

I have an impression that they are struggling between reality and Castro's persistence. There are up against limits made up by Fidel's speech. Today there is a certain deterioration in regard to our talks from yesterday. I couldn't possibly find out more precisely how far they can go. I have an impression that D. was a protagonist of accepting our ideas. However, it seems that each issue is being discussed for too long. From the way and speed he has received me, in contrast to the other ambassadors except the Russian one, I can conclude that they care to be in constant touch with us.

In half an hour there will be a contact with D. A telegram will be sent immediately.

Vidaković

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



## DOCUMENT No. 9

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 28 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio de Janeiro

Received: 29.X 62 at 07.00

No. 405

Taken into process:

Date: 28.X 1962

Completed: 29.X 62. at 08.15

Telegram

VERY URGENT

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

This evening we received [Brazilian] President [João] Goulart's reply:

To Comrade Koca.

The text of this reply translated into Serbo-Croat:

"Dear President [Tito],

I have received with great pleasure your message of the 26th of this month concerning the 'critical situation which has been developing about Cuba.'

I was already acquainted with the statement of your Government in which you have invited the 'countries in conflict to access direct negotiations in conformity with the principles of the UN.'

Your sublime intentions, that through direct talks and diplomatic means with their appropriate instruments in the UN, you search for solutions to the crisis that worries us so much, are in full consent with the intentions of my Government and with the peaceful traditions of the Brazilian people.

Like [Your] Excellency, we, in Brazil too, receive with encouragement and hope the first results of the already made efforts in the UN and the constructive support of the acting Secretary-General U Thant with the aims to reduce tensions in direct talks.

The possibility to find an adequate solution would increase to the extent to which formulas of the guarantees were found leading to the immediate suspension of the quarantine, followed by the corresponding suspension of the weapons delivery to Cuba and stipulations of the commitments for preventing the spreading of nuclear weapons and installation of the bases for their deployment.

My opinion is that the danger of a destructive war, the threat which was always opposed by the feelings of Brazilian people, would significantly increase. Worries of Brazil about its own future would grow with the installation of such bases in Cuba or any other part of Latin America, no

matter [whether] their use could be put in the service of other powers.

As it has been well emphasized by [Your] Excellency, such a useful and opportune effort for peace will not be considered complete if it is paralyzed or not continued with the appropriate actions of the Security Council. In that case I have no doubts that everything should be done in order to ask the General Assembly to make the decision.

Following these suggestions that could be the matter of understanding and consideration in the UN, at this moment I want to draw your attention to the proposal brought by Brazil and other countries in 1961 and renewed now about the “deatomization” [denuclearization] of Latin America and Africa. Apart from its help to the solution of the particular crisis which worries us, generalizing the right of inspection, it represents a great step to the reduction of the world tension.

At the same time I want to confirm [to Your] Excellency that my Government is ready to participate in taking steps at the Governments in Washington, Havana, and Moscow with the aim of finding a constructive solution that could provide keeping the right and self-determination of the Cuban people and the reduction of armament to the defensive level excluding the possibility of repeating any military threat. In that case, Brazil had the opportunity in earlier times to propose measures which would implement a special status for Cuba through negotiations, so these proposals could be renewed.

Having this in mind, [Your] Excellency may be convinced that cooperation of Brazil in the limits of possibility will not be left out.

I repeat assurances of my personal satisfaction because our mutual aims on peace-keeping are the same and I hope that the ideals of agreement and peace-loving co-existence among nations will be strengthened so as to prevent humanity from suffering from the catastrophe of nuclear war.

Accept, [Your] Excellency, the assurances of my highest considerations.

Joao Goulart”

[Brazilian foreign ministry official Carlos A.] Bernardes delivered [Goulart’s reply and said] that he accepted publishing of these messages if we are interested in that. He wants to be informed previously so that he could ask for the formal authorization from Goulart.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]



## DOCUMENT No. 10

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 28 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 29.X 62. at 07.00

No. 234

Taken into process: 29.X 62. at 07.30

Date: 28.X 1962

Completed: 29.X 62. at 07.38

Telegram

14

Very urgent

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Our 233. [Raúl] Roa the foreign minister said that Fidel’s last declaration<sup>12</sup> was forwarded more to [i.e., directed at—ed.] Khrushchev than to Kennedy. “We have to say something when our skin is at stake” and something like that following the same line. So, it occurred to them, or at least it seems so, that they became part of the game.

Brazilian ambassador L.B. Pinto told me that the head of the military department of [Brazilian President João] Goulart, Albino Silva, was coming tomorrow, on the 29th with a special message for Fidel [Castro].

To be continued.

Vidaković

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]



## DOCUMENT No. 11



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Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković)  
to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 29 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 29.XI 62. at 08.10

No. 235

Taken into process: 29.XI 62. at 09.15 Date: 29.X 1962

Completed: 29.XI 62. at 10.00

Telegram

14

To the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs

Koča.

Tonight [Sunday night, October 28] talked to [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa at 20.00.

"We exist." "They have to know that – this side, as well as the other side." That's why there is Fidel's declaration. Our number 233. Khrushchev hasn't informed us about his last message to Kennedy. We had been informed about the previous ones. That's why we were late with this declaration. Your both suggestions were accepted immediately.

He says that they had finished with the editing of the response to U Thant when I talked to [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos. To our suggestion they immediately included the invitation. They are grateful, considering that wise. They are satisfied that U Thant accepted it at once. Our suggestion for the necessity of coming up with one declaration, appeal, etc. was understood and immediately discussed, but they were anticipated by the events. He read me U Thant's letter in which he announces his arrival with his assistants on Tuesday. He stays two days. The letter was written in very moderate way. Nothing concrete was mentioned. It is underlined that sovereignty of Cuba was undisputable, etc.

Roa has already prepared to go to the UNO [United Nations Organization]. His trip was put off until U Thant's arrival.

They don't know what the special envoy to the Brazilian president Goulart will bring.

In further talks he confirms that they didn't have time to think about the Chinese and their stupidities. They received Nehru's message concerning the conflict. They didn't answer it.

Much talks on the topic "it's hard to the small ones when the big ones are bargaining." Nothing much.

He is asking us for permanent contact.

In my opinion, they are overestimating again. It seems to me that they believe that the worst has gone away. There is a fear for them not to be disappointed with the Russians and once again make sort of a hysterical move like it had been already done with this declaration. On your behalf, I have suggested to Roa the necessity of calm and cool reactions.

Tonight Raul Castro is giving a speech. We will report.

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić and Svetozar Rajak.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 12

Telegram from Yugoslav Foreign Ministry to Yugoslav Embassy, Rio de Janeiro, 29 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Cabinet of Josip Djordja

Received:

No. 435139

Taken into process:

Date: 29.X 1962

Completed:

Telegram

VERY URGENT

Embassy of FPRY – Rio

Yours 405.

Consented and interested in an announcing the messages. If they agree, they could be announced today, if impossible – tomorrow morning. It is not necessary to pinpoint the hour. Contact immediately.

Koča

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



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### DOCUMENT No. 13

Telegram from Yugoslav Foreign Ministry to Yugoslav Embassies in Havana and Washington and Yugoslav Mission to the United Nations, 29 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: IV department

Received:

No. 435139

Taken into process:

Date: 29.X 1962

Completed:

Coded Letter

Embassy

To Havana, Washington and the Permanent Mission of the FPRY at the UNO in New York

[Brazilian President João] Goulart answered the President's message considering it in full accordance with the intentions of his Government. He emphasized that the possibility of an adequate solution could be increased if there were [measures] to suspend the quarantine immediately, followed by corresponding and effective stoppage of weapons shipment to Cuba as well as determining obligations to prevent the spreading of nuclear weapons and the installation of bases. In his opinion the danger of war could increase significantly and worries of Brazil would grow as far as its own security was concerned, if such bases were installed in Cuba or any other part of LA.

He brought to the attention the proposal of Brazil [at the UN] about the deatomization [denuclearization] of LA and Africa.

He expressed his readiness to take steps in actions toward the Governments of the USA, Cuba, and the USSR which could lead to providing the Cuban people with the right to self-determination and the reduction of its armament to a defensive level so as to prevent the repetition of the military threat. In connection with this, he reminded of the earlier Brazilian suggestion on adopting a special Status for Cuba, which could be renewed (neutralization).

For your information.

Lekić

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



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### DOCUMENT No. 14

Telegram from Yugoslav Foreign Ministry (Koca Popovic) to Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković), 29 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Cabinet of Koca Popovic

Received:

No. confidentially 435141

Taken into process:

Date: 29.X 1962

Completed:

Telegram

D D D

Embassy of FPRY – Havana

Vidakovic,

Yours 232, 233, 234, 236

Our assessments and suggestions have proved realistic, which can be seen from the fact the agreement was reached on approximately that basis.

We are being informed from New York that U Thant is leaving on Tuesday, what you have surely been informed about in the meantime.

As far as future behavior and actions of the Cubans are concerned we seemed to find best as follows, that you should express your statement as your personal opinion.

Independence, security, sovereignty and integrity of Cuba are fundamental. The only reliable guarantee for that is international—the UN. In that framework the suspension of Guantanamo is legitimate.

In setting out these proposals two things are extremely important: the way and the tone. In setting out these demands, resolutely but calmly, they should highlight the necessity and readiness for negotiations and settling all contentious issues. Nobody has doubts about their readiness to defend themselves at any cost, which they showed fully. At

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this moment, they should show common sense and constructiveness.

Secondly, the relations among LA countries shouldn't be antagonized unnecessarily, because they are their [i.e., the Cubans'] safest and the most important support in the long run.

They should show greater respect for difficulties of some of the most well-intentioned LA governments which tend to resist, as much as they can, the powerful pressure of the USA.

Going through all the troubles and the outcome of the recent crisis, they have achieved, or they can achieve and consolidate, a number of issues with the right policy. They have consolidated their existence as an independent country. Possibilities of the aggression, blockade and interference by the USA could be significantly reduced or eliminated. The importance of their country remains, but with new contents: not as a means of struggling among the big ones, but as an independent political factor of special importance to LA. Therefore, it is more important to work out and convey a suitable and constructive policy. The content of this policy shouldn't be otherwise than consistent non-alignment with equal and very developed connections with a very wide range of countries, that by no means isn't or shouldn't be in opposition with the irrefutable right to its socialistic direction of development. In that context, the internal consolidation, both economic and political, is of utmost importance.

We insist on the style and tone, which they might find especially difficult. Until recently they have enjoyed the "privilege" of being very loud as a part of being directly involved in the dispute among big ones [i.e., powers—ed.]. The price is very high.

The matter of armament. It will depend on negotiations. It's quite normal they keep the full right on all defensive weapons. Anyway they can't deal with the USA on their own. They could have been offensively armed only as a USSR base, i.e. as a means of struggling among the big ones. That proved fictions in the world division and the balance of power. So, the main point is that they, without their own weapons "equal to American ones," should be protected by international mechanisms as well as by their own policy which would attract active support of a great number of nations, what the highest guarantee is against and the means of repulsing a possible repeat of American aggression.

This is the line of your action. We are quite aware that this neither can be nor should be stated in full of each partner, nor can it bring quick results. Following this line of our action we are offering the greatest help to them. They should also help themselves with their own attitude, making our support easier.

P.S. Of course, we are not asking their recognition for our great engagement in recent hard days. We have been fully engaged in the most useful and realistic way. Doing that we have shown again our great friendship towards them. The fact that our activity was in the service of the general cause of peace keeping doesn't change anything. From their side we are expecting better understanding of our positive and constructive policy as a whole and especially towards them

Koča

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 15

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković)  
to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 30.X 62. at 09.00

No. 238

Taken into process: 30.X 62. at 10.30

Date: 30.X 1962

Completed: 30.X 62. at 11.20

Telegram

14

DDD

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Yours 435141.

On the bases of my and [Cuban Foreign Minister Raúl] Roa's agreement to keep in touch on everyday basis, I saw him again today.

They were having conferences all morning in the presidential palace.

During the conversation it was emphasized in the proper form that the further development [of the situation] greatly depended on the form and tone of their actions. The whole world is convinced of their decisiveness to defend their

independence. It's not necessary to underline that, but to act wisely and skillfully. He fully agrees personally and presents collective opinion. Their attitude is to wait and be absolutely quiet until U Thant's arrival. He will be welcomed warmly and attentively. U Thant asked that his visit should have only a working character (journalists, diplomats, manifestations, etc. excluded).

I underlined our engagement and maximum activity since the beginning of the crisis, because of the friendly attitude towards Cuba, based on principles. It is useful to draw conclusions from that. Apart from his personal satisfaction and gratitude, he wants it to be known that this belief was widely spread among the whole leadership. Long before the crisis, in one of the talks with [Cuban President Osvaldo] Dorticos, he informed him about our talks and discussed the relationships with us and need to get free of everything that was poisoning them. I remarked that the whole situation was instructive for the little ones who let them be objects in the games played by the big ones. His immediate response was that they had never been nor would ever be the object in someone's game and that they had had and would have their own policy. I did not wish to insist any further, in particular since what he has said barely hid his intimate conviction that it is [indeed] so.

Great support given in the whole world should be appreciated and kept. It is especially important for the LA countries. He fully agrees with that, underlining the role of Brazil. [Brazilian President João] Goulart's special envoy [Gen. Albino Silva] with the message for Fidel has just arrived. Doesn't know the content yet.

The above conversation was held in the familiar atmosphere as among friends, with some pranks on the account of their "great friends" the Chinese and the others.

I will slowly try to broaden the circle of the executives for contacting.

All the work done wasn't intrusive and having the spirit of your instructions. It would be necessary to keep us informed especially about the turning and changes in the UNO [UN Organization].

Vidaković

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 16

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 31.X 62. at 7.30

No. 239

Taken into process: 31.X 62. at 12.45

Date: 30.X 1962

Completed: 31.X 62. at 13.30

Telegram

-DDD-

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

From the talks with the Brazilian ambassador [Luis] Bastian Pinto.

Fidel came to the residence. Talked to [Brazilian President João] Goulart's special envoy, Private Secretary [Gen. Albino] Da Silva for a couple of hours. Informal talks. Da Silva expressed the standpoint of Brazil on all current problems and especially on the running crisis. The essence of Goulart's position defined in P[unta]. Del Este. Fidel must consider the course towards neutralization gradually if he takes into account the possibility of final relations with the US being resolved. Suggested accepting control [e.g., inspection] as a necessary measure, under the condition of lifting the blockade.

Fidel antagonized. Said that he couldn't accept the controls, stating all kinds of reasons (sovereignty, prestige). Besides, the agreement between Russians and Americans without him was a matter he couldn't either understand or accept. Da Silva explained to him the necessity of accepting the principles of the control of the UN, provided it could be done later and over the opposite side: control and monitoring of the sovereignty and independence of Cuba, possible control of the Caribbean countries, avoiding setting up bases against Cuba and similar. This was accepted by Fidel, but only as an idea. There were no concrete results of the talk. It's in progress. Goulart calls on the phone 2-3 times every day wishing to know the course of the talk.

Vidaković

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



## DOCUMENT No. 17

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 31.XI 62 at 08.20

No. 245

Taken into process: 31.X 62 at 09.30

Date: 30.X 1962

Completed: 31.X 62 at 10.05

Telegram

14

Very urgent

### TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. Tonight had talks with General [Albino] Da Silva, Goulart's special envoy. He is enthusiastic advocate of Fidel [Castro]. F. neither offered, nor accepted any of suggestions. Until now, only empty phrases. Further details continued.
2. If [one is] to believe to Brazilian and [UN aide Maj.-Gen. Indar Jit] Rikhye, the first talks of U Thant were disappointing. Fidel is very stubborn. Doesn't accept anything.
3. Tomorrow they will continue talks. Further details continued.

Vidaković

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



## DOCUMENT No. 18

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 30 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio

Received: 1.XI 62 at 11.10

No. 412

Taken into process: teletypewriter

Date: 30.X 1962

Completed: 1.XI 62 at 14.10

Telegram

14

### TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Today, in the talks with [Yugoslav journalist Jasha] Almuli, [it was] said that Fidel Castro, in his first contacts with [Brazilian President João] Goulart's special envoy gen. [Albino] Silva, accepted well the Brazilian thesis which contains following:

1. Deatomization [denuclearization] of the whole of LA [Latin America] and the embargo on atomic weapons delivery. Inspection of the fulfillment of this decision will be performed by the UNO, which would make a precedent for the overall problem of inspection.
2. Cuba would commit neither to export revolution nor to carry out any subversive activities.
3. Cuba would be given guarantees for keeping its sovereignty and independence.

The USA will accept the plan after negotiations. Russians "couldn't think of anything better."

The USA succeeded to expel Russians in the military sense from the continent but this doesn't mean any new issue of the Monroe doctrine, because all the decisions and inspections will depend on the UNO [United Nations Organization], and not on the USA.

Bonding to the bloc proved unfeasible but the small NATO in LA will not be made either. A somewhat more flexible policy is expected from Kennedy, which Brazil will try to make use of, but there will be no big changes in the Alliance for Progress.

There was a crisis because the USSR tried to violate the balance which was the basis of the Cold War. The USA came



out with strengthened prestige and the possibility of strengthening the Pentagon policy.

The influence of Brazil as well as the position of Goulart became stronger. Bonds with the UN actions brought great international recognition to Brazil. Observation: Goulart attaches great importance to the exchange of messages with Tito. He connects it with his increased activity. They are spreading interpretations that non-aligned countries, and especially Tito, want Brazil to take over the initiative.

Barišić

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 19

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Mexico (Vlahov) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Mexico  
Received: 1.XI 62. at 07.30  
No. 816  
Taken into process: 1.XI 62. at 10.55  
Date: 31.X 1962  
Completed: 2.XI 62. at 11.20

Telegram  
14

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Significant publicity and acknowledgment was given: to Tito's message and initiative; [Brazilian President João] Goulart's messages, and our activity in the UNO [United Nations Organization]. Our reputation as well as that of the nonaligned was significantly strengthened. See our 814.

Vlahov

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 20

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana  
Received: 1.XI 62. at 10.00  
No. 246  
Taken into process: 1.XI 62. at 12.30  
Date: 31.X 1962  
Completed: 2.XI 62. at 13.40

Telegram  
14  
-DDD-

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

This night had the discussion with [Gen. Albino] Da Silva, a special envoy of [Brazilian] President [João] Goulart.

He said that he came due to the permanent contact with Castro. The aim of that was to convince them to draw out real conclusions from the recent events. They were supposed to make concepts for their own policy on that basis. They had been acquainted earlier with standpoints of Brazil, but they either couldn't or didn't want to understand them. They should bond again somehow with LA [Latin America]. Internal regime is not an obstacle. Let them do what they want inside Cuba, but outside they must stick to the frameworks dictated by real circumstances which couldn't be changed either by Cuba or Castro, nor would they be able to do so in future. The only way out of unpleasant crisis is the case of Yugoslavia.

Talks with Castro were open and fully sincere. Had talked about all sorts of things. C. didn't conceal his outrage about Russians. Thus, he stubbornly refused any control [inspection] showing both sides that he must have been consulted as well. Holding his ground about the evacuation of Guantanamo base. Following his impression Da Silva concluded that F. would be very tough and persistent in his talk with U Thant. He tried to convince Castro that he couldn't let U Thant to return without anything. This situation could deteriorate terribly and even be fatal for Cuba if

everything deteriorated before the [US Congressional mid-term] elections i.e. before 5 November. He is not sure if F. fully understood that. He said that F. behaved like a hunted wild animal that was afraid of all sorts of things. Steps must be taken gradually and in stages because both internal and external situations are extremely complicated. He was of the opinion that Fidel was very honest to him and grateful that Brazil had taken such an initiative. Expressed optimism. Was of the opinion that he would succeed in main features. (This general is very naive.)

(See telegram co-ordinating no. 57)

Therefore, aspirations of Brazil are too ambitious for this moment. Cuba should be drawn into the circle of LA. Should be neutralized following the formula of Yugoslavia. Tactically, it should be based on negotiations Kennedy-Khrushchev excluding Fidel from them.

I suggest some hints: Cuba has oil supplies for 15-20 days; food supplies probably for a month; production brought to a halt; state of readiness must be prolonged due to internal political reasons. All this world fuss, even if it ends for the best, will cost Cuba in cutting down its living standards by another 10-20 percent. The only factor that could solve all these problems now as well as in the near future could be the USSR. Castro as well as all the others should bear in mind this fact and should bear it further, no matter what they said on TV and similarly. At this moment, this fact is unchangeable and obstinate.

Vidaković

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



## DOCUMENT No. 21

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio

Received: 5.XI 62. at 18.45

No. 415

Taken into process: teletypewriter

Date: 31.X 1962

Completed: 5.XI 62 at 18.55

Telegram

14

Very urgent

## TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The talks with [Brazilian foreign ministry official Carlos A.] Bernardes on 31 October.

Fidel met with Goulart's envoy [Gen. Albino Silva] in the Brazilian Embassy [in Havana]. Expressed his satisfaction with the Brazilian attitude and actions. Accepted thesis on disarmament inspection and guarantees in the UNO [United Nations Organization], although not only for Cuba itself but for the larger area.

Brazil finds it acceptable and possible to be carried out in the framework of their proposal to the UNO about the deatomization [denuclearization] of LA and Africa. F. must promise not to interfere in the political life of the neighbors.

F. demands the evacuation of Guantanamo for what, according to B., Americans stop their ears. They have evidence that the USA would accept disarmament and guarantees through the UNO and the nonintervention of Cuba. The USA had some minor comments to their proposal about the deatomization for which they are expecting unanimous support. They know that the US press praises Brazil following directives, while Kennedy has personally made some tiny friendly gestures towards Brazil, which implies that the USA will try a kind of agreement with Cuba. However, they don't expect any stronger engagements of the USA before the 7th [6th] of November [mid-term Congressional] elections. They estimate that Kennedy has assured his victory on the elections because of the popularity he had gained with this crisis, making it possible to negotiate more seriously later. He considers that the USSR has lost its prestige and confidence although at the last moment it did much to secure peace. He believes that Khrushchev's hesitation was due to the internal antagonisms and that resignations are to be expected in the USSR. I stated my opinion that the basic matter now was to make the USA negotiate and achieve guarantees about K. Their envoy is coming back on the 1st of November, and after his report he will work out the further action.

Barišić

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



## DOCUMENT No. 22

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Barišić) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Rio

Received: 2.XI 62 at 09.30

No. 416

Taken into process: teletypewriter

Date: 31.X 1962

Completed: 2.XI 62 at 10.00

Telegram

Coded Letter

14

Very urgent

TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Army extraordinary satisfied with Tito's message. They say that he hit Brazilian vanity, especially he gave them significance which they themselves didn't believe in. Tito's stimulus contributed to [Brazilian President João] Goulart's determination, and now when everything is running smoothly, everybody is grateful.

Russians counted [i.e., calculated—ed.] wrongly, but they withdrew on time. Nevertheless they are responsible for this crisis. The USA and particularly Kennedy strengthened their authority, and despite their decoy operations, they showed that they wanted peace and that they were generally right. Anyway, the real victors weren't Americans, but the "third side," i.e., Brazil and the others who insisted and proved that a peaceful solution was the only possible one.

The Army is proud of the success of Brazil and Goulart.

The Army is more united than ever before and is with Goulart. A handful of reactionaries tried to use [Gen. Emilio] Maurel Filho who couldn't cope with the situation, but the matter was quickly determined because he didn't have any support in the Army.

We would appreciate that, sometime after the solution to the crisis on Cuba has been found, Tito sends a message to Goulart and even more to the Brazilian people congratulating them on their success.

Barišić

[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]



## DOCUMENT No. 23

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 31 October 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 1.XI 62. at 15.00

No. 249

Taken into process: 1.XI 62. at 15.00

Date: 31.X 1962

Completed: 1.XI 62. at 16.50

Telegram

14

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

There has been only the first Tito message after the blockade in the Cuban press in the first days since the beginning of the crisis, concerning Yugoslavia, as the indicator of the political reaction and understanding of particular events. It was short information, but placed very well. "Revolución" gave captions on the first page – "Tito asks for urgent [UN General] Assembly Session" and "Hoy" had a headline "Tito urges for lifting the blockade." Then news on Tito-Goulart messages [on] 26 [October] were mentioned in the moment of the culmination of the crisis. Besides the meeting of U Thant with the ambassadors of the sides involved in the dispute, he was only visited by the "Yugoslav delegate V. Popovic." Among a number of telegrams, there was one from our Unions and that was all.

The role of the nonaligned countries during the crisis was presented only through individual cases of the countries, and not as a coordinated action. UAR [United Arab Republic; Egypt] and Brazil were only mentioned. The visit of [Brazilian emissary Gen. Albino] Da Silva wasn't mentioned at all in the press, [nor was] the letter from [Mexican President Alfonso López] Mateos.

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The action of U Thant had one of the central places concerning the publicity in all that time. His coming and talks were defined as “he is coming to talk and not to make an inspection.” The greatest attention to mass manifestations of solidarity with Cuba all over the world, “people with Cuba.”

-- USSR had the most prominent place [in the Cuban press] until its acceptance of disassembling of the bases. With bombastic headlines [such as] “USSR will respond”, editorials about the “great leader”, press full of pictures of C[astro]. Among troops, there is pompous preparation ahead of his [i.e., Castro’s] speech tomorrow.

-- With regard to Sino-Indian clashes, nothing [in the Cuban press]. About Chinese declarations and manifestations of solidarity [with Cuba], [in the Cuban press there is] a lot. Today, the entire editorial from “Renmin Ribao” [“People’s Daily”] related to the Soviet decision to withdraw “offensive weapons” and [expressing] whole-hearted support for Castro’s 5 points.

Vidaković

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić and Svetozar Rajak.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 24

Telegram from Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, Belgrade, to Yugoslav Embassies in Havana and Washington and the Yugoslav Mission to the United Nations, New York, 2 November 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: IV department

Received:

No. 435662

Taken into process:

Date: 2.XI 1962

Completed:

Coded telegram

DDD

To the Embassy of the FPRY

Havana, Washington

To the Permanent Mission of FPRY at the UNO-New York

According to the report of our Embassy in Rio the Brazilian concept, which Castro was informed by [Brazilian emissary Gen. Albino] Da Silva, mainly includes:

1. deatomization [denuclearization] of the whole of LA [Latin America] with the inspection of the UNO [United Nations Organization], which would make a precedent for the general problem of inspection.
2. Cuba’s commitment that it will not “export” revolution and make any subversive operations.
3. guarantees to Cuba for its sovereignty and independence.

Allegedly Castro welcomed the idea of the above plan.

Brazilians think that the USA could accept it after negotiations.

Lekić

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 25

Telegram from Yugoslav Foreign Ministry to Yugoslav Embassies in Washington, Havana, Mexico, Caracas, and LaPaz, and Missions in Santiago de Chile, Montevideo, and New York City (United Nations), 3 November 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: IV department

Received:

No. 435762

Taken into process:

Date: 3.XI 1962

Completed:

Coded letter

Telegram

To Yugoslav Embassy

Washington, Havana, Mexico, Caracas, La Paz, Santiago de Chile

Legation of FPRY – Montevideo

Permanent Mission of the FPRY in UNO – New York

Embassy in Rio on Army's reaction:

Extremely satisfied with Tito's message which contributed to [Brazilian President João] Goulart's decisiveness on Cuban crisis.

Russians withdrew in time, although responsible for the crisis. Kennedy consolidated his reputation. The USA proved that they wanted peace, besides demonstrating its power.

However, Brazil and the others proved that the peaceful solution was the only way.

They would like that comrade President [Tito] sends his message to Goulart and even more to the Brazilian people, as soon as the Cuban crisis approached the solution.

The embassy states that the Army is more united than ever and is with Goulart.

Lekić

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Radina Vučetić.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 26

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 8 November 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 8.XI 62. at 09.30

No. 260

Taken into process: 8.XI 62. at 09.30

Date: 8.XI 1962

Completed: 9.XI 62. at 09.40

Telegram

14

-Very urgent-

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On [the] conversation with Mikoyan.

USSR guarantees independence of Cuba and because of this the American imperialism cannot deprive the Cuban people of independence.

Talks are not yet finished. With substantial patience and gradually the Cuban leadership will nonetheless understand the basic reasons of Soviet tactics. He [Mikoyan] thinks that he will have to stay a few more days. USSR unconditionally gives Cuba all necessary material help, without which the Cuban revolution could not exist. They started talks about economy while political talks are still ongoing. He says he is an optimist, still.

Vidakovic

*[Source: Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Rajak.]*



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## DOCUMENT No. 27

Telegram from Yugoslav Embassy in Havana (Vidaković) to Yugoslav Foreign Ministry, 8 November 1962

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FPRY

Sending: Havana

Received: 9.XI 62

No. 63

Taken into process: 9.XI 62

Date: 8.XI 1962

Completed: 9.XI 62. at 14.00

Telegram

14

- Very urgent -

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

[Yugoslav Foreign Minister] Koca [Popovic].

I talked with [Ernesto "Che"] Guevara this night.

Their strategic and tactical conceptions are very clear and very simple. Inspection in Cuba they will not allow to anyone. Khrushchev believes Kennedy's guarantee, [but] "we never do." The question of rocket weapons is a Russian matter. If they [i.e., the Cubans] had them, they would install them in every centimeter of Cuba and if necessary would fire them



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without a second thought into the heart of the aggressor—New York. Since they don't have them, they don't have to declare themselves.

The [US] blockade is also practically the matter of the USSR. Cuba has four small vessels, thus her [i.e., Cuba's] opinion has no practical meaning. Things that are within their sovereignty, this is where they are firm. On their territory or in their territorial waters—there are no inspections. Every [US] vessel in their waters they will sink, they will down every plane; they still have enough arms.

If there is a direct attack they will defend with all their might, whether they are alone or are being helped. On the critical night of the 27 October he gave instructions to his own staff: since rocket bases could be destroyed in the first attack, and many leaders could be killed, the fight has to be continued, without prisoners, until death. (All this with the intonation of sorrow that they were denied the opportunity for "honorable suicide").

He noted that their fighting determination is known to everyone and asks what are their [i.e., the Cubans'] conceptions on the political plane; what and how do they think to use and nourish the factors of moral political support which Cuba received during the crisis. [He] says that these factors have no practical meaning. No morale exists. Where have those factors ever played any sort of role[?] He never saw it. They said so to U Thant as well. The main factor is struggle and their determination to fight to the death. "Homeland or death" ["Patria o muerte"] is not an accidental slogan. It has been thought through very deeply. There is no compromise with imperialism. Those are basic factors, the rest are trifles and nonsense [*trice i kučina*]. (Non-engagement [i.e., non-alignment].)

Towards imperialism one should have a policy of a hard fist and not compromising. It is true that the American imperialism is not a paper tiger but a real one. If the socialist elephant turns its back this one [i.e., the tiger] would jump on its neck and defeat it. The concrete struggle around Cuba represents a loss for the socialist world because of the USSR's policy of retreat. The decision by the Pentagon and the rest of the military in the USA to attack Cuba on the critical 27 October is an immediate result of previous Soviet steps that showed weakness. They came to a clear conviction that the USSR will not enter a war because of Cuba. If the USSR had responded firmly and clearly to the blockade: "if you open fire at our vessel...we will [fire] rockets at New York," the situation would be completely different, imperialism would be scared off.

With regard to Latin America and the support of [its] governments, the position has not changed an inch, on the contrary, the traditional position of the Second Declaration

[of Havana], [is] even accentuated. There is no support there [that they can depend on]. When they [i.e., the Americans] push [Brazilian leader João] Goulart against the wall to declare himself he will show himself the same as [his predecessor Janio] Quadros. The path for Latin America is revolution, the same way as they are doing in Venezuela. This does not mean the imminent victory of socialism, it is a question of years of struggle with which imperialism could not come to terms. A road within the confines of legality, alliance with different bourgeois groups as is promoted by the communist parties of Latin America, does not lead anywhere. A road of elections towards peaceful changes is absurd.

In many specific cases they do not agree. With uprisings in P[uerto]. Cabello and Carupano the same as in this last one.<sup>13</sup> They openly said [this] to Venezuelans. They gave them very clear instructions to stay clear of cities and to go into guerrilla [war] and then after this with the ripening of conditions the cities fall as ripe pears. No power can control villages in huge areas. The villager is the basic revolutionary force. The industrial worker in Latin America is in an advantageous position compared to the villager. He participates in the division of plunder and exploitation. This is the explanation of the opportunistic character of the communist parties of L[atin] A[merica]. Their main base is the working class of the cities, etc., etc. In the last few years in Columbia the guerrilla is gradually acquiring this form. Thus, armed and continuous, consistent struggle will tire out imperialism and lead to victory. Although they [i.e., the Cubans] do not manage [these armed struggles] directly, they encourage [them] with all available means.

Everything said above he says that it is his own opinion. "Well this is how we Marxists are and everyone can have his own opinion." (Obs[ervation]. Beside the three of them [i.e., Guevara, Fidel Castro, and Raul Castro—ed.], the rest either do not have them [i.e., their own opinions] or if they had their own opinions they are worth nothing.)

Talks with [Anastas] Mikoyan are still ongoing and he cannot say anything more specific about the results. They do not agree with Khrushchev's tactics. They do not agree with his conception of the struggle for peace. Nikita—appeasement; they—fist. Certain compromises, even shabby [ones], they must find. M insists on a common communiqué. How to do it they still don't know. What to say in it? [They are] putting it off.

They started economic negotiations as well. They [i.e., Cubans] without Russians couldn't even move. M promises everything. Only this year they are 200 million dollars in deficit to the Russians. Next year it could easily be double. The Russians are obliged to help the revolution. They will certainly do it.

They said their positions to U Thant. In the closed meeting between Fidel and U Thant, the latter expressed sympathies for their struggle and said that he's on their side, the rest is known.

Yugoslavia, as he says, has fully identical positions with the Russians on all current issues. He wanted to say, here you see we are the only ones fighting for the purity of Marxism-Leninism, for revolutionary-ness.

On the Chinese theme he beat around the bush [*vrdukao*]. He didn't want to say anything openly. They do not know what is the essence of the Sino-Indian conflict and this is the reason they do not declare their position. They are considering it currently.

This and the manner in which he interpreted things in conversation with me represents the basis of their preoccupations. The interpretations are almost identical to what we have already heard at different levels. Previously, we could not take these positions too seriously. However, after this test [i.e., after this talk with Guevara—ed.], yes. This should not be taken as demagoguery. They firmly believe that the people follow them and will follow them even into suicide. (It is possible that Castro and his brother think the same.)

This dose of courage and tenacity, now that the main danger has passed, points towards something that should be opposite to this. However, in every case, the drunkenness of courage and self-criticism is great, who knows what kind of imprudence can be done[?] Definitely, they can't do without big everyday excitement. Very little or nothing is being done.

Vidakovic

[Source: *Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMIP), Belgrade, Serbia, PA (Confidential Archive) 1962, Kuba, folder F-67. Obtained by Svetozar Rajak and Ljubomir Dimić and translated by Rajak.*]

## Notes

1 Lecturer in International History, Academic Director of LSE IDEAS Center, London School of Economics and Political Science.

2 Brazil's status at Belgrade was somewhat awkward and unclear, owing to a simultaneous, unrelated government shake-up at home, and came amidst some criticism by US officials for Brazil to attend a "non-aligned" conference when in fact it was already "aligned" (through the 1947 Rio Treaty and the Organization of American States) with Washington. See James G. Hershberg, "'High-spirited Confusion': Brazil, the 1961 Belgrade Non-Aligned Conference, and the Limits of an 'Independent' Foreign Policy during the High Cold War," *Cold War History* 7:3 (August 2007), pp. 373-88—ed.

3 Message from President Tito to the President of Brazil, Goulart, 26 October 1962; AJ (Archives of Yugoslavia), KPR (Cabinet of the President of the Republic), I-1/114. See the translation from a copy in the foreign ministry archives in Mexico City, included in the collection of Mexican documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

4 In fact, although some outside observers (including many Brazilians) attributed Goulart's mediation efforts at the height of the Cuban missile crisis—including the sending of a special emissary to Havana—to his collaboration with Tito, it had in fact been secretly solicited by the United States. On this, and Brazil's efforts to mediate between Havana and Washington in 1960-62, including Yugoslav-Brazilian contacts regarding Cuba, see James G. Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962," pts. 1 and 2, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:2 (Spring 2004), pp. 3-20, and 6:3 (Summer 2004), pp. 5-67—ed.

5 The Yugoslav ambassador in Havana consulted closely on October 26 and succeeding days with his Brazilian colleague, Luis Bastian Pinto; see Bastian Pinto's cables in the collection of translated Brazilian documents on the missile crisis published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

6 Regarding the Chinese, and Cuban attitudes toward them, see the translated Chinese documents and commentary elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

7 See Hershberg, "The United States, Brazil, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962," cited above—ed.

8 Not all foreign diplomats in Brazil reported such pride regarding Goulart's mediation attempt—see the disdainful reports of Chile's ambassador, citing Brazilian newspaper commentaries, published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

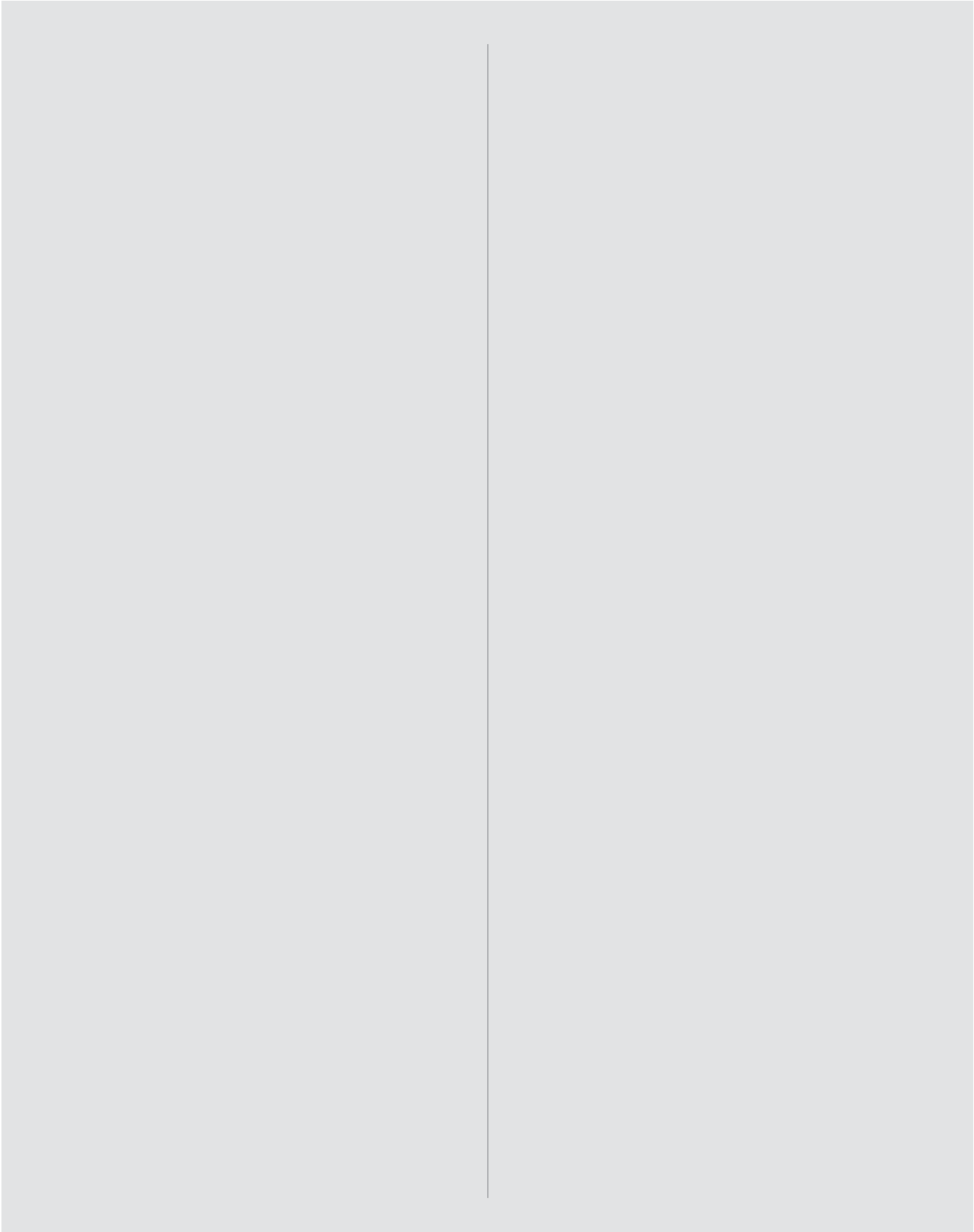
9 Premier Hermes Lima was then also serving as foreign minister due to the illness of Santiago Dantas.

10 Possibly a reference to Tito's message to leaders of neutral (or neutral-leaning) countries, e.g., Tito to Brazilian President João Goulart, 26 October 1962, translation in the collection of Mexican documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis published elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*—ed.

11 Goulart here refers to Tito's message to him the previous day, October 26, included in the selection of translated Mexican documents on the missile crisis elsewhere in this issue of the *Bulletin*—ed.

12 A reference to Fidel Castro's 5 Points statement of 28 October, issuing conditions for a settlement of the conflict that included US evacuation of Guantanamo—ed.

13 A reference to mid-1962 military uprisings in Venezuela, in the port of Puerto Cabello and the northeastern city of Carupano, both of which were crushed by loyalist pro-government forces—ed.



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# East German Reactions to the Cuban Missile Crisis

Introduced by Mark Kramer

These two documents from the archive of the former Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED – the East German Communist party) give some sense of the measures being taken by the East German authorities and other Warsaw Pact governments during the initial days of the Cuban missile crisis. The first item, a protocol and annex from the SED Politbüro meeting of 23 October 1962, only hours after President John F. Kennedy’s speech announcing the discovery of Soviet missile bases on Cuba, outlines a wide-ranging campaign of “peace” propaganda to be undertaken by SED officials at all levels. Similar campaigns denouncing the United States and expressing staunch solidarity with Cuba were pursued by all the Warsaw Pact countries throughout the crisis. Such campaigns were not new — peace propaganda efforts had been a staple of the Soviet bloc since the late 1940s — but these latest efforts took on special urgency as the crisis unfolded.

The second document, a telegram from East German Ambassador Rudolf Dölling, who had been representing the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the Soviet Union since 1959, was sent to GDR Deputy Foreign Minister Otto Winzer on 26 October 1962. The telegram offers snippets from a briefing that Dölling and other ambassadors from the Warsaw Pact countries had received that same day from Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasilii Kuznetsov. During the meeting, Kuznetsov laid out basic information about the standoff and expressed satisfaction that the United States was “under pressure from neutral states,” such as Ghana, Egypt, and Brazil. The most interesting part of the telegram comes toward the end, where Dölling notes that the Czechoslovak and Polish ambassadors were able to provide Kuznetsov with up-to-date information about the status of their countries’ ships that were near or within the perimeter of the US naval blockade against Cuba. Dölling notes, in a mild rebuke, that he himself had been unable to provide comparable information about East German ships in the area when asked by Kuznetsov. He writes that “because Kuznetsov has asked for [this] information, I think it of utmost importance that I be kept informed about the position of the GDR’s ships and the orders they have received.” Whether he subsequently received this information from the GDR government is unclear.

The highest East German authorities, like all the other East European Warsaw Pact leaders, had not been consulted or informed about “Operation Anadyr” (the secret deployment of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba) by Nikita

Khrushchev at any point before Kennedy delivered his speech on the evening of 22 October, US east coast time (1:00 a.m. East German time). Even though the East-West showdown over Berlin in October 1961 was still fresh on everyone’s minds, and even though tensions resulting from the US government’s discovery of the missiles in Cuba nearly sparked a renewed confrontation over Berlin in the fall of 1962, East German officials had been left in the dark about the secret deployments. By coincidence, a leading Cuban official, Blas Roca, was in the GDR when the Cuban missile crisis erupted (see my translation below of an East German memorandum recounting a conversation with Blas Roca in Havana later in the year). Blas Roca spoke at a “Hands Off Cuba!” rally staged in East Berlin on 26 October, a rally that stemmed directly from the program adopted by the SED Politbüro on 23 October.

SED First Secretary Walter Ulbricht traveled to Moscow on 1 November for consultations regarding Cuba and the security of Berlin and the GDR, two issues that Ulbricht (and his Cuban counterparts) hoped to keep separate. The leaders of other East European Warsaw Pact countries also came to Moscow for consultations at this time. Some of the discussions were multilateral; others were bilateral. (For an example of such meetings, see the Czech record of Khrushchev’s comments on the missile crisis on 30 October 1962 to the visiting Czechoslovak Communist Party leader, Antonín Novotný, printed elsewhere in this issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*.) Ulbricht returned to East Berlin on 5 November, but during his four days in Moscow he held intensive consultations with Soviet officials, including one-on-one discussions with Khrushchev on the evening of 1 November and again on 2 November. The East German records from these talks, which I obtained by chance in the late 1990s from the former SED archive (SAPMO), got misplaced when dozens of file cabinets of Cold War Studies documents were moved to a new building at Harvard in September 2005. I will continue to search for these notes and will translate and present them in a future issue of the *CWIHP Bulletin*. Efforts to find records at SAPMO from East German leaders’ conversations with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko when he visited the GDR on 23 October 1962 have proven unavailing thus far, but if the records turn up either at SAPMO or at the Russian Foreign Ministry archive or Russian Presidential Archive, they, too, will be made available by the Cold War International History Project.



## DOCUMENTS

### **Record of Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) Central Committee Politbüro meeting, 23 October 1962**

Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party  
Internal party-archives  
Records of the extraordinary meeting of the politburo of the Central Committee

Tuesday October 23rd, 1962 in the conference hall of the politburo

Agenda: 1) Visit of comrade Gromyko, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union 2) US aggression against Cuba

Rapporteur: comrade Ulbricht

present members: Ulbricht, Matern, Stoph,

Ebert, Leuschner, Honnecker, Warnke, Norden

present candidates: Mewis, Verner, Hager, Kurella Grüneberg, Apel

others present: Mittag, Axen, Kiefert

absent (excused): Grotewohl, Neumann, Mückenberger, Fröhlich, Pisknik, Baumann, Ermisch Reimann

called in:

ad 2): Florin, Stibi

chair : Ulbricht

keeper of the minutes: Mittag

beginning: 10 am

end 11.15 am

#### Items

1) Visit of the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union comrade Gromyko Rapporteur : Ulbricht

The information about the arrival and the visit of comrade Gromyko is noted.

2) US-aggression against Cuba:

Comrades Norden, Florin and Stibi will work out the general lines for our mass-propaganda dealing with the US-aggression against free Cuba.

(annex nr. 1)

Area administrations and district committees are to be informed about the decisions.

[signed] Ulbricht



### **Annex number 1 for record 46 of October 23rd 1962**

Socialist Unity Party of Germany

Berlin October 24th, 1962

Central Committee

To the First Secretaries of area administrations and district committees

Comrades!

On October 23rd, 1962, the politburo decided on the following directive:

#### Concerning the provocation of US-imperialism against Cuba

In the night of October 22nd to 23rd, the US-Administration imposed a blockade on Cuba which President Kennedy had announced in a speech full of anti-Soviet invective.<sup>1</sup> This is to be considered a crass violation of international law, a blow against freedom of the seas, and against free trade, it is impudent interference with the very national affairs of Cuba and with all nations entertaining normal relations with Cuba.

In its note of October 23rd, 1962 the Government of the USSR protested against the aggressive intentions of the US. This note is to be read and commented on in all firms and LPGs [Cooperatives of Agricultural Production]. A large protest movement against the flagrant violation of International Law, the Charter of the United Nations and against the threat to peace must be organized. The arguments against American imperialism acting as international policeman against the freedom of nations is to be linked with concrete arguments against revisionists and militarists in Western Germany.

Imperialist circles in the US mean to dictate to Cuba its political course, the establishment of its political system, and which arms it may own for its defense. In the note of the Soviet Union special emphasis is put on the right of all nations, be they big or small, to self-determination, to decide on their way of life and to take the necessary steps to safeguard their security.

Imperialists in the US are not willing to accept the fact that the Cuban people have cast off the dominance of US monopolists and big land-owners. They intend to force Cuba again under the imperialist yoke although Cuba has made use of its right to self-determination.



The United States of America, the most powerful State of the capitalist world, many times bigger than little Cuba and with thirty times more inhabitants, is pretending to feel threatened by the Cuban people! This State of all States, having military bases in Japan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Western Germany and many other countries, even in Cuba, that constitute a permanent threat to peace, this State means to dictate to Cuba which steps to take or not to take to safeguard national security and security of its citizens! This is definitely an attempt at violating the sovereign rights of free and independent Cuba. Not only are the US-imperialists illegally keeping their powerful military base in Guantanamo, Cuba, which dates back to colonial times, not only are they staging armed attacks against Cuban villages, they are now trying to strangle little courageous Cuba with an outrageous blockade.

After attempts of economic blackmail by imposing a trade embargo, and after the attempts of bandits, paid and trained by the US, to land in the Bay of Pigs had failed, and after threats and pressure to halt navigation to Cuba had been of no avail, the US are now resorting to a blockade, exerting direct aggression.

The US-imperialists have taken steps against free Cuba. This is an obvious blow against the program of general and complete disarmament as initiated by the Soviet Government and supported by most nations in the world.

The very US-Government that so often is speaking of "self-determination" is now imposing a blockade on free Cuba; Cuba that has fought for its right to self-determination and national independence! But the Cuban people have taken security measures to safeguard Cuba's independence. Repeatedly Cuba had declared itself willing to settle all differences of opinion between the US and Cuba by way of peaceful negotiations. The US all of a sudden has now imposed a blockade!

It is typical of the aggressive and violent character of US-imperialism that it does not think it necessary to consult with its own allies. On the contrary, its allies had simply been presented with a *fait accompli* to drag them into the military adventure-policy of US-imperialism against Cuba.

The US-Administration does not approve of the Cuban Government taking the necessary safety measures against continuing American threats and provocations and against recurring attacks of military bandits. Acting in the national interest of its people the Cuban Government asked the Soviet Government for delivery of arms for defensive purposes only. The request of the US that the Cuban Government should remove military defensive arms from Cuban soil can only be considered as an invitation to the Cuban people to expose itself unarmed to the imperialist sharks. In its note the USSR was quite right to emphasize the fact that it had several

times suggested to withdraw all foreign troops from foreign regions. But so far, the US administration has opposed these suggestions. There will be nobody so gullible as to believe that it is in the interest of peace for Cuba to renounce its defensive weapons.

Once again Bonn imperialists are the first to side with the aggressors and enemies of peace. The Bonn Government as well as the West-Berlin Mayor [Willy] Brandt hastened to applaud the American US-imperialists and promised them support for their dangerous enterprise. Their political intention is disturbance of peace. Numerous neutral countries responded with indignant outrage to Washington's new attack against world peace. The protest includes some of its own allies, as it is reflected in comments of quite a few bourgeois [news]papers and public personalities. Clearly the peoples of the world oppose neo-colonial arrogance and disturbance of peace. They are against the American imperialists' wish to act as world-policeman.

All freedom-loving people are disgusted at the methods the US-oligarchy is using to establish its tyranny in free Cuba. The first reactions of many countries in the world show that the new aggressive acts of the US result in its further isolation.

Forty-four years ago the attempt of imperialists, in particular of the Americans, failed to defeat the young Soviet Union by blockade and military intervention. They also failed in their imperialistic aggressions against Egypt, Algeria, etc. The peace-loving world will succeed in defeating this new provocation, too.

A broad campaign has to be set up with slogans like "hands off Cuba", "stop US-Aggression against free Cuba", "protect the Cubans' right to self-determination", "break the Yankee-blockade of free Cuba." Peace-loving people all over the world side with Cuba. Cuba is fighting for a just cause, that's why it will be victorious in the end. The peoples must be more vigilant to preempt the aggressors.

In connection with the campaign against the American aggressor it is important to explain the existing balance of power. There is a power as strong as the US. This is the Soviet Union. It assists nations fighting for their freedom and allows them to determine how to lead their lives. The Soviet Union is conducting a far-sighted policy. It is necessary to demonstrate that in the current international climate powerful weapons, for instance missiles and nuclear arms in the hands of the Soviet Union, are the decisive means to prevent aggressive imperialistic forces from unleashing an apocalyptic world-war.

Making use of the above-mentioned key-words the National Front must organize solidarity-rallies in cooperatives, institutions, universities and schools and send a solidarity-message to the Cuban Mission in Berlin.

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Workers, scholars, and other intellectuals, artists, women, young people, pastors should speak out in public. On Thursday there will be a big central demonstration on August-Bebel-Platz.

This campaign is to be linked with the mass-competition concerning preparations for the 6th [SED] party-conference. Competition will strengthen our Republic, our socialist fatherland and free Cuba in every working-place. Industrial and agricultural productivity will increase the power of the socialist camp, and hence the power of peace. The GDR will be made stronger by mass-competition and aggressors will be defeated.

Anything that could increase the war-psychosis incited by the United States should be avoided. Our tone has to be firm and prudent. Our security and strength depend on the unity of the socialist camp, on peace-policy, and continuous growth.

With calm and with nerves of steel we in the GDR will continue our peace-politics of socialist progress.

With socialist regards

Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany  
Politburo

*[Source: DY 30/J IV 2/2/853, Die Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (SAPMO), Berlin; obtained for CWHIP by Hans-Hermann Hertle, translated for CWHIP by Regina Schmidt-Ott.]*



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**Telegram from East German Ambassador, Moscow, to East German Secretary of State (First Deputy Foreign Minister) Otto Winzer, 26 October 1962**

COPY

Telegram nr.172/62 Comrade [Rudolf] Dölling, Moscow to Secretary of State Winzer 26.10.1962

On October 26th, comrade [Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily] Kuznetsov asked the ambassadors of the People's Republic of Poland, CSSR [Czechoslovakia], People's Republic of Bulgaria, Romanian People's Republic, and GDR to attend a meeting. He informed them about the situation and the measures taken in the last 24 hours regarding the aggressive acts committed by the US. Emphasized that U Thant's letter and Khrushchev's response had been made

public in the press, [and] Kennedy responded, published in TASS. The US insists on a halt to arms-delivery and removal of existing missiles. Resolutions of US, SU, and Cuba dealt with session of Security Council. The neutral States, Ghana, and United Arab Republic [UAR; Egypt], submitted their well-known resolution, missing fundamental issues. Security Council: no vote on the resolutions, meeting adjourned with regard to talks U Thant is having at the moment. Today, U Thant is having individual talks with [Soviet UN Ambassador Valerian] Zorin, [US UN Ambassador Adlai E.] Stevenson and the Cuban representative. After receipt of Khrushchev's letter U Thant has again resumed talks with Khrushchev. Draws again attention to dangerous situation, concerned about potential clash of ships, hopes to avoid it. Submits proposal suggesting that SU instruct its ships to avoid the ring-blockade [*"Rayon des Auffangens"*] of US ships to allow for the possibility of a peaceful settlement. The Soviet Government will give such an instruction to captains of Soviet ships. U Thant has handed a similar letter to Kennedy proposing not to engage Soviet ships in order to avoid conflict and play for time. This is to allow for discussions to settle the problem according to UNO-regulations. Zorin received orders to accept U Thant's proposal: Comrade Khrushchev appreciates U Thant's efforts, is ready to do everything in his power to liquidate the crisis, and to come to a peaceful settlement. Captains were ordered to avoid the American ring-blockade for a certain time.

The Soviet Government deems development of situation unfavorable for the US, as it is under pressure of neutral States. Nevertheless [it] will emphasize that danger of open conflict has not been warded off nor the possibility of further provocative acts by the US. The Soviet Government instructed its captains accordingly to fully explore the possibilities of a peaceful settlement.

Comrade Kuznetsov asks the ambassadors to inform their governments. The Ambassador of the CSSR asks whether such directives applied to all ships notwithstanding their freight. Comrade Kuznetsov replied in the affirmative. Emphasized that the ring-blockade of American warships was to be avoided for a certain time as clashes were possible. Comrade Kuznetsov did not comment on the remark that the US was preparing an armed invasion of Cuba. He, however, stressed that talks between U Thant, [Valerian] Zorin, [Adlai] Stevenson, and the Cuban representative were ongoing.

Robert Kennedy had met with [Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly F.] Dobrynin yesterday. Comrade Kuznetsov then asked whether there were any news from our ships, told us that according to the latest information the GDR-ship "Völkerfreundschaft" was within the ring-blockade. On October 25th at 5 pm, it is being escorted by

an American war-ship en route to Cuba. CSSR-Ambassador says that three of their ships are concerned, two en route to Cuba, one in Havana. Polish Ambassador indicates one ship involved. Both ambassadors informed Kuznetsov about the orders the ships had received from governments. I was unable to give information as I had not received any. As Kuznetsov has asked for information I think it of utmost importance that I am informed about the position of GDR-ships and the orders they received.

Dölling [signed]

*[Source: DY 30/J IV 2/2/853, Die Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der Deutschen*

*Demokratischen Republik (SAPMO), Berlin. Obtained for CWIHP by Hans-Hermann Hertle, translated for CWIHP by Regina Schmidt-Ott.]*

### Notes

1 Ed note: US President Kennedy actually announced the blockade ("quarantine") of Cuba in a televised speech beginning at 7 pm, Washington time (after midnight in Germany), on Monday evening, 22 October, but it did not actually go into effect until 10 am Wednesday, 24 October.

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# Cuba's Irritation over the Missile Inspection Issue

## Notes from a High-Level Cuban-East German Conversation

Document translated and introduced by Mark Kramer

This memorandum was compiled by the head of the East German legation in Cuba, Karl Lösch, recounting a conversation he had with a leading figure in the Cuban Communist regime, Blas Roca Calderio. The date of the conversation is not specified in the memorandum, but the content (referring to events that occurred in November and early December 1962) suggests that it was in late 1962. The document is dated 8 January 1963, four days before Cuba and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) formally established diplomatic relations. The memorandum was apparently submitted to the East German Foreign Ministry by Lösch during a trip back to East Berlin as the GDR prepared to elevate its ties with Cuba. Fritz Johne became the first full East German ambassador to Cuba in July 1963, and Lösch went on to become the GDR ambassador to Algeria.

Blas Roca, who was a member of all the highest organs of the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution (renamed the Cuban Communist Party in 1965) until his death in 1987, had visited East Germany in October 1962 for celebrations marking the 13th anniversary of the founding of the GDR. He had arrived in the East German capital on 5 October and was still there seventeen days later when the Cuban missile crisis unexpectedly began. Blas Roca was among the speakers at a "Hands Off Cuba!" rally held in East Berlin on 26 October, at the height of the crisis. Both he and the head of the East Berlin party committee, Paul Vermer, sought to avoid any links between Cuba and Berlin when they spoke at the rally. Although Blas Roca declared that Cuba "already has Russian armaments and intends to obtain more," he added that "like the USSR, we want to have all controversial issues settled in negotiations." Both he and Vermer eschewed any threats against Berlin and sought to portray the two issues as entirely separate.

Lösch's memorandum touches only briefly on Blas Roca's trip to the GDR and instead focuses mostly on the contentious aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis. Observers at the time were well aware that Cuban leader Fidel Castro had been angered by Nikita Khrushchev's willingness to agree to international inspections of the removal of Soviet SS-4 missiles from Cuba. Documents that have been released over the past twenty years from Russia, Cuba, and other countries have underscored just how deep the rift between Cuba and the Soviet Union was over this matter. Echoing Castro's view, Blas Roca expresses concern that "this infringement of Cuban sovereignty" could endanger Cuba's role in all of Latin

America and "potentially deal a blow to the revolutionary process in Latin America." He accuses Soviet leaders of being "evasive" and of repeatedly failing to offer an explanation for the "damage [they had] done to Cuba's sovereignty." Lösch claims that Blas Roca appreciates the Soviet Union's role in having "preserved the peace" (presumably a reference to avoiding a US invasion of Cuba) "during those critical days" in October 1962, but he acknowledges that Blas Roca and the other Cuban leaders will not be satisfied until they receive a detailed explanation from Moscow about the inspection issue.



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### Record of Conversation with Comrade Blas Roca in the Building of the National Committee on \_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup>

I got together with Cde. Blas Roca at the building of the National Committee to pick up from him materials not yet delivered from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to use the opportunity to have a conversation with him. Cde. Blas Roca was very enthusiastic about his stay in the GDR and about the attention that that had been paid to him and his wife, and he expressed thanks for the great help that the GDR had given him personally, and explained that he would convey his thanks personally in a letter to the Central Committee for the hospitality and assistance extended to them.

During our conversation he asked about our state relations, and after I recounted everything that had happened since his departure [from East Berlin to Prague] on the 3rd [of November 1962], he said it had been very impulsive and promised to take care of the matter immediately to settle it.

We then spoke about the Cuban [missile] crisis. Cde. Blas Roca told me that the main problem lies in the as yet unresolved question of why the Soviet Union in the letters from Cde. Khrushchev to Kennedy had offered international inspections, even though Cde. Fidel Castro had previously expressly rejected any international inspections on Cuban territory. This infringement of Cuban sovereignty is a source of concern for all the comrades. If this fact is not taken into account in all [future] actions, it could have a significant adverse impact on Cuba's role for developments in Latin America and potentially deal a blow to the revolutionary process in Latin America.

Cde. Blas Roca said that the [Anastas] Mikoyan visit [to Cuba in November 1962] had produced no satisfactory results for the Cuban National Committee and the Cuban government because he offered no explanation for the problem of why Khrushchev had offered inspections in his letters to Kennedy.<sup>2</sup> Cde. Blas Roca described how when he attended the party congresses in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Italy he had tried to receive such an explanation from the Soviet comrades who were present there, [Otto] Kuusinen and [Leonid] Brezhnev.<sup>3</sup> These comrades had replied evasively, offering no explanation for Soviet behavior and implying that the Cuban friends overestimated the [revolutionary] process in Latin America.

Cde. Blas Roca said that the National Committee must no longer spend time on discussions of secondary problems, and he repeatedly came back to what he himself believed (and the other comrades even more so) was the main question to be clarified, namely, why the Soviet Union had offered no explanation for the procedure it had agreed to. Whether it was because of an error in diplomatic practice or because of time pressure or some other motives, they had a right to be informed by the Soviet comrades about it.

I had the impression that Cde. Blas Roca properly understands and evaluates the role of the Soviet Union in preserving the peace during those critical days. He did not criticize the removal of the missiles and [Il-28] bombers or link it to the question still outstanding. The damage that in his view has been done by the Soviet Union to [Cuba's] sovereignty is — both for him and for the other comrades — the one problem that must be satisfactorily explained by the Soviet Union to the Cuban side.

Berlin, 8 January 1963

Lösch [signed]

### Notes

1 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: No date was filled in here, but the conversation seems to have taken place in mid- to late December 1962.

2 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: This is referring to the visit by Anastas Mikoyan, a member of the Soviet Presidium and one of Nikita Khrushchev's closest aides, to Cuba on 3-26 November 1962 in an unsuccessful bid to mend relations between the two countries. Serious tension in the Soviet-Cuban alliance had emerged after the Soviet Union affirmed its willingness to permit international inspections of the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba. For translations of Soviet transcripts and reports from Mikoyan's visit, along with a perceptive introduction by Vladislav M. Zubok, see *CWIHP Bulletin*, No. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 59, 89-109, 159. For a full Soviet record of Mikoyan's mission to Cuba, including exchanges both with the Cubans (and others in Havana) and with Khrushchev in Moscow, see Sergio Mikoyan, *The Soviet Cuban Missile Crisis*, edited by Svetlana Savranskaya (Washington, DC/Stanford, CA: Wilson Center Press, Stanford University Press, 2012).

3 TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The 8th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party was held on 8-14 November 1962; the 8th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party took place on 20-25 November 1962; and the 10th Congress of the Italian Communist Party was held on 2-8 December 1962.