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**From the Journal of A.I. Alekseyev, 'Record of a
Conversation with Fidel Castro, Prime Minister of
the Republic of Cuba, 6 February 1963'**

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Summary:

Fidel Castro addresses his controversial speech at the Congress of Women of America and contention over Soviet missiles and troops in Cuba.

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from the journal of
A. I. ALEKSEYEV

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION
with Fidel CASTRO, Prime Minister
of the Republic of Cuba

6 February 1963

I met with Fidel Castro to pass him a letter of N. S. Khrushchev of 31 January.

F. Castro read the letter in my presence and then talked with me for about an hour and a half. His mood was good, and attitude friendly and emphatically cautionary.

Even before Fidel began to read the letter we held a short discussion in the course of which Fidel said that he knew that the Cubans had recently brought many concerns and unpleasant minutes to the Soviet ambassador. However, you [ty], he continued, as Raul told me, have not yielded to the influence of momentary sentiments and have had no doubt that we feel genuine friendship toward the Soviet Union. Your behavior was correct and time will show this. You also acted correctly, not beginning, like others (obviously meaning the Chinese) to agitate us to adopt your point of view on the questions of the Caribbean Crisis and the unity of the socialist camp, no matter what. He continued, we understand the Soviet position without agitation and hope that you can also understand ours, too.

I replied to Fidel Castro that his speech at the Congress of Women of America and some articles from the Cuban press have given food for doubt of the strength of our relations.

To this Castro said that his speech at the Congress was provoked by reasons of a domestic nature, and also by discussions of individual delegates of the Congress. It absolutely did not mean the Soviet Union or the other socialist countries.

He continued, as regards the policy of peaceful coexistence I do not at all deny it as an opportunity for a peaceful transition to socialism in such countries, let's say, as Italy and France. I also consider it a correct tactic of the Chilean Communist Party, but think that it is necessary to be ready to clash with reactionaries in the event of Allende's victory. On the whole, there are not yet conditions in Latin America for such a transition.

The first one who proposed the question of a peaceful transition in Cuba was Escalante. Then this point was picked up by some Latin American "theoreticians".

Possibly it is not so clear for everyone, but our revolution had socialist goals from the very beginning. The measures of our government, even the first ones, were directed at satisfying the needs of the workers and restricting the bourgeoisie, and carried socialist principles in them. We could not use the Marxist lexicon right away, having tactical considerations in mind and, besides, still not knowing how effective the aid of the socialist countries could be. Relying on the working class, we consciously unleashed a class struggle and the elimination of anti-Communism as the banner of reaction and imperialism. Like a person having a childhood, maturity, and old age our

revolution has passed through several stages. We weren't mature Marxists in childhood, but strived to correctly understand it and master it. The "theoreticians" turned us into lost sheep who were put on a genuinely revolutionary path by some supermen like Escalante, who convinced us of the truth of Marxism-Leninism. Therefor I had to speak sharply against these theories to put an end to them once and for all.

Fidel Castro continued, I had to speak about the Caribbean Crisis not because we oppose the Soviet point of view (for my part, you are probably right) but because individual schemers and opportunists, and sometimes honest Communists, have tried to use the Soviet interpretation of events, sowing mistrust of the Cuban leadership which, guided by revolutionary necessity, interpreted events in another way.

We tried not to raise this question any more after the Crisis; however some Soviet official materials which have been published in our newspapers have aroused disputes and commentaries <...>

He continued, our differences come from the fact that we did not understand one another at the proper time. We thought that the placement of Soviet missiles in Cuba pursued the goal not of the defense of Cuba but primarily met the interests of the entire socialist camp. We eagerly accepted this proposal, striving to make our contribution to the common cause. Castro said, I think that in a personal conversation with Cde. Khrushchev we will understand one another well. I hope that he will understand our position as we have begun to understand yours.

Then the discussion touched on the question of the fuss raised by the United States concerning the presence of Soviet troops in Cuba. Castro reported in this connection that we expect the arrival in Cuba this month of five to seven steamships which will bring several thousand Soviet servicemen who have ended their term of service and are not tied to the weapons to be left in Cuba. Fidel approved this measure, noting that this will deprive American reactionary propaganda of a trump card based on a fuss about a new military reinforcement of Cuba. At the same time Castro touched upon individual cases of indiscipline of Soviet servicemen and their not always appropriate behavior, especially when intoxicated.

At the end of the conversation Fidel Castro told about his conversation which was held the day before with special Brazilian Ambassador Camara Canto, who arrived in Cuba to investigate the circumstances of two murders committed among Cuban refugees in the Brazilian Embassy, striving to strengthen Brazil's independent policy and Goulart's position, the Cuban government is ready to agree to issue permission for all refugees who took shelter in the Brazilian Embassy to leave, including criminals and deserters. However, in this case the Brazilians agreed to hand over one murderer to the Cuban government, but not to let the deserters conduct any anti-Cuban activity in Brazil.

Castro said much to the Brazilian Ambassador about the economic ties between Cuba and the Soviet Union; moreover, it was pointed out to him that Camara Canto was strongly interested in this question.

Bidding goodbye, Castro said that the difficult time was over. He asked [me] to come to him, as before, if any questions or doubts arise. He said that no one explains our acts better than me.

USSR AMBASSADOR IN THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA □(A. ALEKSEYEV)