

March 23, 1963

**From the Journal of A.I. Alekseyev, 'Record of a
Conversation with Raul Castro Ruz, Minister of the
Armed Forces of the Republic of Cuba, 6-7 January
1963'**

Citation:

"From the Journal of A.I. Alekseyev, 'Record of a Conversation with Raul Castro Ruz, Minister of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Cuba, 6-7 January 1963'", March 23, 1963, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVP RF, f. 0104, op. 19, p. 124, d. 3, ll. 5-7. Obtained by James G. Hershberg and translated by Gary Goldberg.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/177827>

Summary:

Alekseyev describes a conversation with Raul Castro regarding Krylov's visit to Cuba, PRC irritation, and seeming tensions with the USSR.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Blavatnik Family Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Secret Copy № 1
23 March 1963
Outgoing № 83

from the journal of
A. I. ALEKSEYEV

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION
with Raul CASTRO RUZ, Minister of the Armed Forces
of the Republic of Cuba

6-7 January 1963

Raul Castro and a majority of Cuban military leaders spent the entire day of 6 January and half the day of 7 January with us in connection with the arrival in Cuba of a delegation headed by Marshal Krylov.

Trips to historic places and also receptions and banquets were organized.

R. Castro was, as always, in a friendly mood and open with us. At the banquets he proposed toasts to the unbreakable Soviet-Cuban friendship, to the Soviet Army, to N. S. Khrushchev, and to Marshal R. Ya. Malinovsky.

At one of the banquets in the presence of the entire Cuban command he raised a toast to old and young Cuban Communists, to fidelity [to] the CPSU and Marxism-Leninism. He said that he was speaking officially as the First Deputy Prime Minister and Second Secretary of the ORO, and declared that the Cuban leadership would not break [its] friendship with the Soviet Union and would not allow anyone to speculate for hostile purposes on individual differences which have arisen with us in an assessment of the moment. Cuba, he continued, will not be either an Albania or a Yugoslavia.

During these meetings we managed to talk with R. Castro heart-to-heart several times. He reproached me for having sort of clammed up the last time and having talked less with the Cuban leaders. He said that they had recently talked with F. Castro about my position and had come to the conclusion that their policy with respect to the USSR had caused [prichina -SIC] me much trouble and put me in a difficult position.

I told Raul Castro that sometimes I met with individual Cuban leaders, but in conversations with them I didn't feel the previous openness. In addition, knowing how negatively you treat attempts by Chinese representatives to develop Cubans, I didn't consider it possible to be intrusive and wanted to give you yourselves time to recognize and more deeply understand the point of the actions of the Soviet government during the Caribbean Crisis. I admitted that I actually felt very uncomfortable in this situation and, although I never doubted the Cuban leaders, nevertheless, I didn't understand, for example, the behavior of the press, which sometimes was quiet about reports from the Soviet Union.

Castro replied to this that in principle he approves of my behavior since the pushiness [navyazchivost'] of the PRC ambassador had not served him well, and in such situations, he noted, we always remembered you and compared the difference [between] your behavior and the behavior of the PRC ambassador. Even this simple fact causes our leaders to have sympathy for the USSR. In addition, he said, we prohibited senior Cuban leaders from discussing and expressing their views on

delicate political questions, and therefore you have lost nothing in reducing dealings with them.

Castro declared, I should tell you as a comrade that you can be completely confident in the sincerity of our friendship with the USSR, which we neither barter away nor lose our trust in the Soviet leaders, whatever trials this friendship is subjected to.

None of us, he noted, mistakes the hypocrisy and opportunism of Chinese policy in Cuba, which tries to use any misunderstandings to the detriment of the USSR. With their unwise acts the Chinese are digging a pit for themselves here and have already caused F. Castro and other leaders irritation. For reasons of a domestic nature and a desire to preserve the unity of the progressive forces of Latin America we are forced to take a cautious policy on the question of Soviet-Chinese relations; however, this does not at all mean that we sympathize with the Chinese.

The questions of our differences are behind [us] now, and they are not worth recalling any more. Our people have not lost faith in the USSR, and the misunderstandings which arose long ago have been forgotten.

When a suitable moment presented itself, said Raul Castro, the ambassador of Yugoslavia was also on the presidium together with the ambassadors of the other socialist countries on 6 January at a banquet at the Trade Union Center. In connection with this the PRC ambassador declared a protest against his presence to L. Pena and nearly threatened to leave. He added that the ambassador of Albania was also on the presidium, on the occasion of which, needless to say, I made no introductions. Moreover, I said, we invite the ambassador of Albania to our receptions, but he demonstratively does not go and even returns to us the TASS bulletin sent him.

R. Castro asked this question, expressing a number of sharp comments against the Chinese and approved our tactic, saying that he would tell F. Castro and other leaders about this without fail.

All the conversations with R. Castro and other military leaders have had the most cordial and friendly nature and have shown that they have thought much since the days of the Caribbean Crisis and have begun to look at events more realistically.

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

[signature]