

March 23, 1963

**From the Journal of A.I. Alekseyev, 'Record of a
Conversation with Fidel Castro Ruz, Prime Minister
of the Republic of Cuba, 20 February 1963'**

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Summary:

Alekseyev describes a conversation with Fidel Castro regarding a warm letter from Khrushchev, the departure of Soviet servicemen from Cuba, and prospects for Cuba's relations with the US.

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from the journal of
A. I. ALEKSEYEV

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

20 February 1963

I met with Fidel Castro at the latter's apartment.

□□ presented Fidel Castro with N. S. Khrushchev's letter of 20 February. The letter was read in my presence and commented on in the most benevolent, and sometimes vigorously humorous spirit. The brothers felt in the best condition and joked much. In particular, in joking form Fidel Castro recalled the memorandum about the conclusion of Cuban-Soviet trade talks, and then said that it is better not to have diplomacy in such relations.

□□

Fidel Castro expressed gratitude to N. S. Khrushchev for the feeling of sincere friendship and asked that [his] apologies be sent for not having yet been able to reply to the previous letters inasmuch as he was awaiting the arrival of Raul from a province and would reply to everything right away. He said that N. S. Khrushchev's suggestions were very attractive and seem acceptable if no difficulties arise in the country. In his opinion, the solution of military questions during his stay in the Soviet Union is also wise.

□□ de. Pavlov, who was present at the conversation, informed Fidel Castro about the departure of Soviet servicemen from Cuba. The latter, regarding the information good-naturedly, declared that the withdrawal of a unit of Soviet troops is a wise step right now and will put the hawkish clique of the US in a difficult position. In Castro's opinion, the Soviet troops remaining in Cuba are a deterrent for the Americans and serve as one of the main guarantees of Cuba's security.

□□

□□ [English:] Vatican contracts

□□

<...>

4 [repeats the text of 4. from the previous version of the telegram, which ended in progress, followed by:]

Then Fidel Castro expressed his confidence that the US is experiencing great concern for Latin America and fears an outbreak of the revolutionary movement. In his opinion, Latin America has become one of the weakest spots of American imperialism. Therefore its foundations on this continent ought to be shaken more.

Fidel Castro said that the Cubans will pursue a policy with respect to the US which would lead in the future to the possibility of negotiations with them on contentious questions on an equal trilateral (with the USSR) or bilateral basis. The American's fulfillment of their obligations to pay compensation for the imprisoned participants of the attack on Playa Giron provides an opportunity to count on such a possibility. The

Cuban government has let the US know that on payment of the entire amount it will be ready to begin negotiations about the release of the Americans convicted in Cuba in exchange for Cubans imprisoned in the US.

Castro said further that the American authorities, experiencing difficulties with Cuban immigrants, have decided not to renew regular flights between Miami and Havana, and are refusing to transport Cubans to the US who want to leave their country on steamships. He said that he is thinking of using this for propaganda purposes to sensitize the relatives of these Cubans who live in the US against the American government. He noted that the departure of this category of people provides them with more economic benefits inasmuch as by law they leave all their property in Cuba. Politically they cause the Cuban revolution little harm. In Fidel Castro's words, as a result of the recent departure of 1000 Cubans the state came into its possession 16,000,000 pesos worth of real and personal property.

On the whole it is recently felt that Fidel Castro has developed better governing ideas and assessments. The lessons of the Caribbean Crisis have not been lost. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the very hot-headed and quick-tempered nature of Fidel, it is quite hard to be confident of his consistency. Any crude actions of the US against Cuba might bring him from [emotional] balance and deprive [him] of political prudence and the capability to maneuver.

USSR AMBASSADOR IN THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA □/A. ALEKSEYEV/