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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, 22 February 1963'**

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Summary:

Fidel Castro praises an upcoming speech by Malinovsky and relates an incident of the Cuban Air Force firing on an American fishing boat.

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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

22 February 1963

On receipt of the text of the speech by Marshal R. Ya. Malinovsky I met with Fidel Castro and had a conversation with him.

Fidel said that he was already familiar with some parts of this speech in the account of the American agencies. He continued, the speech of Cde. Malinovsky is so timely and so successfully drafted for the understanding of the Cuban people that I intend to fully read those places which regard Cuba at a mass Party meeting today. You [ty] will see, he said, how the Party masses will react. Inasmuch as I am reading them, even without commenting especially, it will be clear to the people that a complete unity of views exists between us, and the differences of which [we] spoke earlier are absent. This is also real propaganda which will reach the hearts of the people inasmuch as it is being done at a moment when the masses have been prepared to comprehend it. After the Crisis the speech of Cde. Malinovsky is one of the most important events for the Cuban people. It will disarm the Chinese and put an end to the anti-Soviet speculation in Cuba.

Noting that at this stage the speech of Cde. Malinovsky replaces the Soviet-Cuban agreement of which we spoke to some degree, F. Castro nevertheless further stipulated that in the future this question nevertheless ought to be discussed and some form of agreement found which would restrain the US in their actions against Cuba.

Then Castro told about a recent incident with Cuban aircraft firing on an American fishing boat. He confirmed that the Cuban Air Force aircraft had actually fired on this boat, inasmuch as they took it for the Cuban fishing boat stolen by pirates and wanted to force it to return to Cuba. Castro said that the pilot had violated the instructions of the command and was punished for lack of discipline. He continued, in this irregular war with the US we follow such a tactic which would not give them an excuse for a conflict, but we are responsible for the damage caused them in kind. The Cuban Air Force has been given orders not to engage in battle with American aircraft violating Cuban airspace inasmuch as this might provoke retaliatory measures and the Americans have a much stronger Air Force than the Cubans, and there is no sense in getting involved in this adventure. Castro declared, therefore we are not [SIC] losing an opportunity to shoot at American pirate aircraft with anti-aircraft equipment. We will hold to the same tactic with respect to American ships which violate the territorial waters of Cuba. Only coastal artillery are used against them. Pirate boats being used by counterrevolutionaries are an exception in this case.

In reply to the US protest note delivered to the Cuban government through the Swiss Ambassador in Havana the Cubans, as Castro said, were forced to deny the fact of firing on the American boat and published a special report of the Ministry of the Armed Forces about this.

NOTE: At night Fidel Castro spoke on the radio before 6,000 members of the new Party. This speech, which was relayed by radio and broadcast on television was one of the deepest and well-thought-out of his speeches on questions of party development. In it Fidel Castro corrected individual mistaken positions which he had made in his polemic statement of 26 March 1962 on questions of party development caused by the problem of factionalism. At the end of the speech he read excerpts from the speech of Cde. Malinovsky. In this place Fidel's speech was repeatedly interrupted by thunderous applause. The entire hall and the presidium stood and chanted "Fidel-Khrushchev, we are with you!" for several minutes.

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