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**From the Journal of S.M. Kudryaytsev, 'Record of
Conversation with the Prime Minister of the
Republic of Cuba, Fidel Castro, 25 February 1961'**

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Summary:

Fidel Castro endorses Khrushchev's reaction to events in the Congo and agrees to support the Soviet Union in seeking to reorganize the structure of the UN. Castro discusses the presence of counterrevolutionaries aided by the United States in Escambray.

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S. M. KUDRYAVTSEV

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RECORD OF A CONVERSATION
with Minister of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Cuba
Fidel [SIC] CASTRO

25 February 1961

Fidel Castro came to my apartment on the evening of 25 February with Nunez Jimenez.

1. In accordance with instructions [I] had I presented the 22 February message of N. S. Khrushchev on the question of the Congo to Fidel Castro.

Reading the message closely, Fidel Castro said that he completely shares and subscribes to the ideas expressed in it by Cde. N. S. Khrushchev in connection with the situation in the Congo.

Fidel Castro stressed, the savage murder of Lumumba committed by the puppets of Tshombe and Mobutu at the order of the American and Belgian imperialists, with the direct assistance of Hammarskjold, has caused not only universal resentment from the peoples of the entire world, but also opened the eyes of many, especially the new African nations, to what the current UN in reality represents. This savage murder of Lumumba has convinced the governments of many African countries that it is impossible to depend on the UN, which is in essence a tool in the hands of American imperialism.

It seems to me, Fidel Castro noted further, that at the present time a more favorable situation has been created for a discussion of the proposal of Cde. N. S. Khrushchev about the need to reorganize the one-sided structure of the UN. Cuba will support this proposal of the Soviet government during its discussion in the second part of the 15th UN General Assembly session, which opens in March. Fidel Castro stressed, we completely agree with the proposal of Cde. N. S. Khrushchev that at this time it is necessary to vigorously seek a halt to the so-called "UN operation in the Congo", force Hammarskjold out of the post of UN Secretary-General, and severely punish the direct murderers of Lumumba, the puppets Tshombe and Mobutu. Fidel Castro said, the Cuban delegation being sent to the UN General Assembly session will be given the necessary instructions in this respect to act together with the Soviet delegation during the discussion of the question of the Congo. We will charge Raul Roa with closely studying the reasoning cited in the message of Cde. N. S. Khrushchev so that he can then speak from common positions with the Soviet delegation on all these questions.

Cuba has already recognized the government of A. Gizenga, Fidel Castro then declared, and we will support this government morally and defend it in the UN as the only legal government of the Congo.

In our opinion, continued Fidel Castro, with the murder of Lumumba the imperialists themselves have inflicted an enormous moral damage on themselves and put themselves in a quite difficult position. Therefore right now we ought to use this

favorable situation and give battle in the UN in order to seek a resolution of the questions raised in the message of N. S. Khrushchev. In conclusion Fidel Castro asked he be informed in the future of the reaction to this message by the governments of Afro-Asian countries, if possible.

2. In the course of further conversation several questions were touched upon connected with the situation of recent days.

Fidel Castro declared that, in his opinion, it was probable that in these days an attack will be made by the forces of external counterrevolution at Kennedy's order. On the one hand, the recently increased dropping of American weapons from aircraft and their supply on small ships to the shores of Cuba tells of this. For example, on 24 February in the area of the province of Pinar del Rio representatives of Cuban counterintelligence received a large batch of weapons from a counterrevolutionary group from the US in the open sea, including small field guns [pushki]. This counterrevolutionary group took the representatives of Cuban counterintelligence for agents of the internal counterrevolution. In approximately the same period weapons were dropped by parachute in a number of provinces, in particular in Oriente, Las Villas, and Pinar del Rio - in places where counterrevolutionary groups are evidently located, according to information of the external counterrevolution.

Fidel Castro continued, information comes to us that the Vatican is pushing Kennedy to act against Cuba more quickly. It is known that the Vatican is pursuing large and active preparations in the countries of Latin America, seeking the agreement of the governments of these countries for a condemnation of the Cuban government and a breaking of diplomatic relations with it. In recent days the leadership of the NSP [translator's note: not expanded, but probably "Popular Socialist Party", the previous name of the Cuban Communist Party when it contested Cuban elections] has received some information demonstrating the preparations of counterrevolutionary assault groups to sail from Guatemala, Florida, and Costa Rica. Finally, Cuban counterintelligence recently discovered a number of quite large counterrevolutionary groups which were seized, in particular in the provinces of Oriente, Matanzas, and Pinar del Rio. From the statements of those arrested it follows that the counterrevolutionary groups were preparing to act against the revolutionary government in the period from 28 February through 8 March. They received the order about such actions from the US.

Fidel Castro said, Kennedy and the external counterrevolution are placing unjustified hopes on the counterrevolutionary movement in the mountains of Escambray. However, the Americans do not yet know [Translator's note: znachit, a probably typo for znayut] that the resistance of the counterrevolutionaries in Escambray has been broken and clearing operations are going on to liquidate the individual small groups having no military importance. More than 30 counterrevolutionaries have been killed in clashes and more than 300 counterrevolutionaries have been taken prisoner. There remained only a small group in the eastern part of Escambray which will be liquidated in the near future.

Fidel Castro continued, it seems to me that Kennedy thinks this is the most suitable moment for landing counterrevolutionaries, believing that the forces of the Cuban army and the people's militia are occupied in Escambray at this time and that accordingly we cannot cope with the landing parties if they are landed at a number of points of the country. However, Kennedy is deeply mistaken. His plan to seize part of Cuban territory and create a puppet government is doomed to fail. The Cuban government has carefully prepared to repel aggression, and Escambray cannot now prevent the Cuban armed forces from acting swiftly and proficiently. The protection and defense of the east coast of Cuba have been reinforced and the garrisons on the Isle of Pines have been considerably reinforced. Fidel Castro stressed, I am more than convinced that now the counterrevolutionaries will not be able secure a foothold even on the Isle of Pines, not to mention Cuba itself.

The revolutionary army and the people's militia are properly prepared for defense and are at combat positions right now. The results of the conclusion of military operations in Escambray will be published in the near future and an exhibit of the American weapons dropped into Cuba and seized by units of the revolutionary army and people's militia has been organized. Fidel Castro stressed, this will inflict a serious blow to the morale of both the external as well as the internal counterrevolution and put the US in a difficult position on the eve of the discussion of the Cuban question at the UN.

The Cuban government does not exclude that at the last moment Kennedy might have second thoughts and put off the realization of his aggressive plans, especially as in connection with the events in the Congo the international political situation as a whole do not favor American imperialism unleashing a new conflict. However, Kennedy does not want to come to the conference in Quito with empty hands, and therefore will take steps to foment a civil war in Cuba and try to undermine the Cuban revolution from within.

Fidel Castro stressed, the Cuban government is completely confident that it is able to handle any situation. At the present moment the government is deliberately not raising a fuss about the aggressive intentions of Kennedy in order to seize the counterrevolutionaries unawares if they nevertheless try to land assault groups. The defeat of the counterrevolutionary assault groups will allow Cuba to be made safe for a long time, since it will be very hard to collect new contingents of capable soldiers of the counterrevolution after this.

3. In the course of further conversation in accordance with instructions [I] had I touched on the question of Fidel Castro's plans regarding sending one thousand young people to the USSR for a year to study Russian and work in state farms. In reply Fidel Castro said that he intends to send about 1,000 youths ages 14 to 18 to the Soviet Union. All these young people have studied in school and are literate, although they have not completed a secondary education. The main goal of their stay in the USSR should be studying Russian and studying socialist methods of agriculture. All these young people are children of poor peasants and the overwhelming majority work in agricultural cooperatives and public estates themselves. It is desirable to send these young people to Soviet collective farms and state farms to study agricultural specialties...We will take steps for such a group to be prepared to leave for the Soviet Union in May.

4. Then in accordance with instructions [I] had I touched on the question of a trip to the Soviet Union of a delegation of Cuban cooperative members. Fidel Castro said that he would have requested the delegation be received in Moscow not composed of three people, as Tsentrsoyuz [The Central Union of Consumer Societies] had previously proposed, but of six - one representative from each province. In particular, he would recommend that the following people be received in the Soviet Union: 1) Major Vallejo of the Province of Oriente; 2) Major Borges of the Province of Las Villas; 3) Major Mendoza of the Province of Camaguey; 4) Captain Cesaro Alvarez of the Province of Pinar del Rio; 5) Captain Julio Suarez of the Province of Matanzas; and 6) Captain Artia of the Province of Havana...

5. At the end of the conversation in accordance with instructions [I] had from Inoizdatel'stvo [Foreign Literature Publishing House] I passed Fidel Castro an honorarium for the publication of his speeches in the amount of \$5355.98.

Expressing gratitude, Fidel Castro said that he will evidently spend this money to improve the support of the children of his deceased partisans or, possibly, to buy pedigree cattle for public estates.

AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR IN THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA
(S. KUDRYAVTSEV)